

Happy Vale Montessori School



PARENT HANDBOOK

Our Children Work ● They Progress ● They Self Perfect

"...just as the embryo becomes a child and a child becomes a man, the human personality is formed through its own efforts." Dr. Maria Montessori

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THE MONTESSORI APPROACH

Happy Vale Montessori School undertakes to help each child reach their full potential in all areas of life. Activities promote the development of: Social Skills; Emotional Growth; Physical Coordination and Cognitive Preparation for future intellectual academic endeavours.

THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

In order for self directed learning to take place, the whole learning environment - classroom, materials and social setting / atmosphere - must be supportive of the child. The teacher provides the necessary resources and together, the teacher and child form a relationship based on trust and respect that fosters self-confidence and a willingness to try new things.

THE MONTESSORI DIDACTICS

Dr. Maria Montessori's observations of children, what they enjoy and go back to repeatedly, led her to design a number of multi-sensory, sequential and self correcting materials to facilitate learning.

THE MONTESSORI TEACHER

At Happy Vale each 'Auntie' functions as a designer of the environment, resource person, role model, demonstrator, record-keeper and meticulous observer of each child's behaviour and growth. She plays a very unobtrusive role in the classroom - The children rarely need to be motivated by her, as the child's need for self development is its own motivation.

The 'Aunties' are trained to recognise and appreciate that:

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
- Children possess an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from their environment that is unlike that of the adult both in quality and capacity.
- The most important years of children's growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.

- Children have a deep love and need for purposeful work. They work, however, not as an adult for the completion of a job, but for the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity which enables them to accomplish their most important goal: the development of self - their mental, physical and psychological powers.
- Children learn through their own errors to make the correct decision versus having the teacher point it out to them.
- Each child learns at a different pace and allows that growth to happen.
- Children are quiet by choice and out of respect for others within the environment - The Montessori classroom allows children to return to the "inner peace" that is a natural part of their personalities.
- There is an emphasis on concrete learning rather than on abstract learning - Children need to experience concepts in concrete "hands-on" ways.

Although extensive training is required for a full Montessori credential, including a minimum of a college degree and a year's student teaching under supervision; at Happy Vale all the aunties undergo in-house training and practical workshops given regularly by the principal who is a fully accredited Montessori Directress from St. Nicholas Montessori College, London, UK and an affiliate member of the Association Montessori Internationale.

Association Montessori Internationale



GOALS OF A MONTESSORI SCHOOL

The primary goals of any Montessori school should be to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment for creative learning. The primary goals for the children who attend Happy Vale Montessori School are:

To develop a positive attitude toward school

Every child engages in a learning task that particularly appeals to him. Because he finds the activities geared to his needs and level of readiness, he works at his own pace, repeating the task as often as he likes, thus experiencing success. In this manner, he builds a positive attitude toward learning itself.

To develop self confidence and independence

Tasks are designed so that each new step builds upon tasks already mastered, thus removing the negative experience of frequent failure. A carefully planned series of successes build inner confidence and assure him that he can learn by himself. These confidence building activities likewise contribute to the child's healthy emotional development.

To develop extended concentration and perseverance

Effective learning presupposes the ability to listen carefully and to attend to what is said or demonstrated. Through a series of absorbing experiences, the child forms habits of extended attention, thus increasing his ability to concentrate.

To foster an abiding curiosity

A deep, persistent and abiding curiosity is a prerequisite for creative learning. By providing the child with opportunities to discover qualities, dimensions and relationships amidst a rich variety of stimulating learning situations, curiosity is developed and an essential element of learning has been established.

To develop initiative and persistence

By surrounding the child with appealing materials and learning activities geared to his inner needs, he becomes accustomed to engaging in activities on his own; gradually developing initiative - an essential quality in leadership.

"Ground rules" call for completing a task once begun, for replacing materials after the task is accomplished. Natural persistence is thereby accomplished.

To foster inner security and sense of order

Through a well ordered, enriched but simplified environment, the child's need for order and security is intensely satisfied. This is noticed in the calming effect the environment has on the child. Since every item in the Montessori classroom has a place and the ground rules call for everything in its place, the child's inner need for order is directly satisfied.

THE MONTESSORI CHILD'S WORK

The materials are easily within the child's reach and placed on shelves at their level. The items found on the shelves in the classroom are referred to "materials" rather than "toys."

The children "work with the materials" rather than "play with the toys." This allows the children to gain the most benefit from the environment by giving them a sense of worth - the same sense of worth adults experience as they go to their jobs and do their "work."

THE MONTESSORI CLASSES

Ducklings Classroom (24 to 36 months)

The Ducklings' classroom offers very young children a unique year of self development in a tender atmosphere of special understanding, respect and support.

Everything in the environment is proportionate to the child's size and is designed to be safe and aesthetically pleasing for children. The Ducklings classroom is simpler and slower paced than the early childhood (three to six year old) classrooms.

Ducklings are given opportunities to work in the development of language, art and music, sensorial understanding and practical life. The practical life area is particularly emphasized as the activities in this area give children the chance to develop skills to care for themselves and their environment; activities are simple and can be accomplished by each child.

Activities encourage control of movement, grace and courtesy. They offer repetitive cycles of activity, helping the child establish patterns of order and sequencing. Due to the fact that these are very real activities, each child becomes grounded in reality, building the child's self esteem is the

ultimate goal and this is accomplished through repeated successes with these activities. All activities are presented by a teacher to an individual child alone, except when an activity requires the participation of all the children together such as music and movement.

Through song and dance and freedom of choice, the children have access to a variety of large muscle activities that offer them opportunities to jump, climb, balance, crawl or skip. These exercises, as well as creative art activities are offered for each child to choose. This freedom in a safe space is crucial to development; however, it is always tempered by two important limits that will be beneficial for a lifetime, respect for others and respect for the environment.

Hummingbirds, Sandpipers & Seagulls Curriculum (3 to 6 years)

Children choose their activities from open shelves with self-correcting materials and work in distinct work areas - on tables or on rugs on the floor. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community" working with high concentration and few interruptions.

The Hummingbirds' and Sandpipers' classrooms include the following components:

The Practical Life Exercises enhance the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and refinement of physical movement and coordination.

The Sensorial Materials enable the child to order, classify, sequence and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, weight, temperature, mass, colour, sound and shape.

The Montessori Math Materials are concrete manipulative materials, allowing the child to internalize the concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations and memorization of basic facts.

The Language Materials introduce the child to each written letter by its sound and encourage muscular memory through the touching of Sand Paper Letters. Various presentations allow children to link effortlessly, sounds and their written symbols and ultimately to write; Dr. Montessori recognised that writing as a coding skill comes before reading, a decoding skill. Basic

skills in writing are developed through the use of the sandpaper letters together with pencils or crayons and paper.

While letter sounds are being learned the child is introduced to objects and words as a matching exercise. These objects will then be used together with a Moveable Alphabet allowing the child to 'build' words in a phonetic way. Reading follows as the information is absorbed. Pictures and word cards follow in preparation for tackling printed text in the form of simple phrases and then sentences. All materials encourage oral language development. The child is also provided with materials for Geography, History, Life Sciences, Music, Art and Drama education.

Each class will also have an elliptical line on the floor. This is generally used for "walking on the line" activities that help children develop grace, balance, follow simple instructions and for the "silence game" where an individual child can practice sitting without making a sound. The line is also frequently used for a large group meeting area. It is here, or in some other designated area, where the class meets as a whole. Often a class will have one or two large group meetings each day. One will usually serve as an opening meeting and precede the individualized work period and another will serve as a closing or transitional group time preceding the next activity. The group meetings may be used for large group presentations of materials, movement, music activities, group celebrations, snacks, games and discussions.

Introduction of the Materials

The children are introduced to any material in the classroom through careful one-on-one presentation by the teacher. The teacher slowly and precisely uses the material in its intended way while an individual child observes.

During such a presentation unnecessary words and movements are avoided and actions are broken into discernible steps in order to increase understanding and the chance for success when the child uses the materials independently. A particular point of interest may also be shown to attract the child to the materials.

At times it is appropriate and desirable for the teacher to offer some additional instruction to the child. This usually occurs at a separate occasion after times of repeated concentrated work with the materials has been observed. The teacher may then re-present the exercise in order to show variations or extensions or to help the child learn the terminology involved.

Discipline

Ground rules protect the rights and liberty of each individual child and the group as a whole. They promote the internalization of pro-social behaviours and values including: self-control, consideration of 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 an emphasis on safety, respect for others / environment and the result benefits all members of the group:

- The child is free to select a material to use from the shelf and take it to a suitable table, floor and/or other designated work space.
- The child is free to use the material as long as they like as long as it is treated with respect.
- After using the material, the child returns it to its place on the shelf, in the same condition in which it was found, for the next person to use.
- The children restore the environment, clean up spills and messes, put rugs away in proper order, and push chairs in etc., after each activity
- The child is free to work alone - no child is forced to share materials they have chosen.

Other common ground rules may need to be established to insure safety if special equipment is used, when travelling as a group, or when staying within supervised areas

Positive Guidance

Positive guidance uses redirection, verbalization of misunderstandings, consistency and acceptance of feelings, firmness and fairness. Children are encouraged to express their feelings verbally as well as to discuss and resolve conflicts rather than "act out" their feelings. In certain situations, a brief "time-out" is used to allow a child to calm down and recover self-control before resuming group activities.

The Community of Children

An essential part of the learning environment is the other children in it. The Montessori classroom provides ample opportunities for making friends, interacting with others, and developing consideration for others, learning how to cooperate and fostering an understanding of interdependence. In the prepared environment, cooperation and a sense of community are stressed.

Individual differences are easily accepted and appreciated while each child is treated and taught as an individual. Children of different ages and development are often together in the same group. This provides abundant opportunities for learning and helps to create a sense of family while everyone contributes and takes responsibility for the functioning and maintenance of the environment.

The social life of the children is a vital aspect of the Montessori classroom. Assisting the development of social skills is vital to the implementation of an effective Montessori environment and it is important that the complexities and ups and downs of relationships are supported and enhanced by adults sensitive to the needs and social development of children.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips encourage broad awareness of the environment and develop self-assurance in children. They also provide opportunities to improve social skills and discover exciting new worlds. Children three and older will periodically travel on field trips. Notice will be posted at least forty-eight hours in advance. Parent participation in these excursions is encouraged and appreciated. **When a class goes on a field trip, all children present that day must participate.** For safety and identification, each child must wear their Happy Vale printed PE shirt . A First Aid kit is always taken and attendance is checked often. Typical field trips include:

George FL Charles Airport, Union Nature Trail & Zoo, Hoofprints Horse Riding Ranch, Castries Library, Desmond Skeete Animation Centre, Mamiku Gardens, Pigeon Island Park, Gros Islet Fire Station, Delcer Cocoa Plantation (Hotel Chocolat), Rainforest Skyride, Caribbean Cinema.

One adult will supervise each group of 5.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Children may not enter or leave the Centre unless accompanied by an adult. Upon arrival, please be sure a staff member completes a health inspection of the child before the accompanying adult leaves.

Departing children will normally be released only to parents or other persons shown on the "Child Release Authorization List" form. Any person not known to the staff must give a special "Code Word," designated by parents at the time of enrolment. Please call the Centre (and identify yourself by using the Code Word) or complete a "Special Release" form in advance if someone different (not regular) will be coming for your child. We will ask for the Code Word and positive identification when they arrive.

Happy Vale Montessori School maintains daily attendance records. If your child arrives late for school (after 9:00 am) please be sure to sign your child "IN". If you arrive early to take your child before the end of the school day please sign your child "OUT", on the "SIGN-IN & SIGN-OUT LIST" for the class. The attendance sheet is also used during evacuation drills to ensure all present are accounted for and safe.

ARRIVAL TIME

For the convenience of our parents, Happy Vale opens daily at 7:00 am. Depending on their age, children may need to be dropped off in rooms other than their assigned class, since teachers have different starting times ranging from 7:00 am to 7:30 am.

We ask parents to bring children to the Centre no **later than 8:00 am** each day they attend. These precious early moments allow your child to interact with friends and have an opportunity to explore and adjust to the physical environment, setting the tone for the day. Before structured activities begin at 8:30 am. Children, because of their late arrival, miss some of these activities such as Praise & Worship time, story time, or a favourite play period or vital individual tuition.

These morning hours usually include planned group activities, which are important in helping children develop social skills and abilities involving interaction with their peers as well as self-discipline.

Equally important is the opportunity for a personal greeting from their teacher. These personal greetings are crucial elements of the bonding process between children and teachers, where friendship and trust are established and nurtured. Once individual and independent activities are

underway, teachers must devote their attention to the other children in the class and will not have the freedom to interact with a late arrival child. Please call the Centre if you expect to bring your child to class late and please notify the office when your child will be absent.

SAYING "GOODBYE" (SEPARATION)

To help achieve the goal of allowing your child to become independent, emotionally healthy, and well adjusted, we recommend the following practices with children age two and older beginning school for the first time:

- Children should be walked in, not carried.
- Present your child to the class auntie on arrival. The greeting between teacher and child is invaluable. Many things about the child's health and state of mind can be determined in that brief time and nothing should interfere with it. The teacher will then help the child join into classroom activities.
- Good-byes at school should be part of a normal, everyday routine every child goes through. Separation should be sweet and brief, with reassurance about the planned pick-up time.
- Parents should encourage children to make friends with the teachers and look forward to being at school without feeling guilt or disloyalty to a parent. Please refer to the section entitled "ARRIVAL TIME" for further information.

VISITING

Happy Vale has an "Open Door" policy on parents' visits. We recognize and support parents' desire to see and spend time with their children whenever they can.

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

Participation in parent/teacher conferences is an important activity. This is a time of sharing, which benefits the child, the parent, and the teacher.

Happy Vale Montessori School believes in a strong partnership between the home and the Centre to assure the best experience for the children.

Lead Teachers will invite you to participate in a parent conference twice a year to discuss your child's developmental progress. Guidelines to help you prepare for the conference are available from the office.

A parent or teacher may request a conference at any time as need arises.

PARENT COMMUNICATION / INVOLVEMENT

Happy Vale strives to assist parents in understanding the developmental stages their children experience.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school and observe how their child interacts with the staff and other children. Brief conversations with teachers are always welcome, while longer discussions should be arranged by appointment. If you call in advance, you will be assured of having adequate time for discussion with individual teachers or the Principal.

All parents of children enrolled at the school are automatically members of Happy Vale's **Parents in Partnership (PiP)** which was formed to promote and facilitate communication and fellowship among parents, management, teachers, and staff to provide a strong and stable environment and sense of community for the children. Notices of PiP meetings are posted in advance. The parent "**2 Hour Power Volunteer Opportunities Programme**" encourages parents to be actively involved in the development of the environment and a way to become more familiar with procedures and activities while enhancing and enjoying the fellowship of children and staff. Sign-up forms are available from the office.

The Office and individual classrooms use a variety of methods for communicating with parents. In recent years, email has proved to be quite effective for disseminating information to families and is now used extensively. The School's website, www.happyvalemontessorischool.com provides easy access to child development & parenting information. Parents of our Ducklings can expect to receive a written "Daily Report," detailing their child's experiences throughout the day for their first few weeks at Happy Vale.

Every child has a **FISH baggie** and this is used to send information home on a daily basis. Parents should always use the **FISH** to send payments of Tuition Fees, Meal Plan Fees, Sports, Field Trips, and any written information. There is a basket in each classroom for these bags and they must be placed in the basket every morning as the Secretary will collect them and use the bags to send receipts and hard copy emails to you. Phone calls to parents are made only when absolutely necessary.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in helping in your child's class or with specific activities please see your child's class auntie. If you are unable to come to school to help but are interested in having projects sent home to cut, colour

or copy, please let us know.

HANDLING PARENT CONCERNS

If a problem exists, the Centre wants it corrected as quickly as possible. This can only be achieved if it is identified immediately. Parents are asked to follow the protocol below:

- Parents with concerns should **first** discuss them with the **Lead Teacher** of their child's class.
- If the Lead Teacher cannot resolve the concern independently or to the satisfaction of the parent, the Parent or Lead Teacher may bring the matter to the attention of the Director who will schedule a conference with all parties to ensure a satisfactory outcome is reached.

Tips for parents:

- Listen carefully to what your child's teachers have to say. Remember that they spend a significant amount of time with your child and can share expertise about their development.
- Don't jump to conclusions or seek the commiseration of other parents, if you have questions or concerns about your child or the school's approach to learning. Speak directly to your child's teacher or to the principal.
- Understand your role and responsibilities. Happy Vale Montessori School traditionally works hard to be "family-friendly," providing the daily FISH bag, newsletters, emails, website and web calendar, for parents that focus on details of events, issues, scheduling and other important information. Make a point of familiarizing yourself with all communication and ensuring that you have made a note of important activities.

A working relationship between school and parents remains crucial.

When teachers make the extra effort to include parents in programme activities, and parents take time to attend and participate, children are the beneficiaries.

Parents and teachers may look at young children's learning from different perspectives, but they share a common goal: that their children receive the best possible education.

Support ongoing class work and activities by checking the **FISH** Baggie for current work! Also please support your child with encouraging the following:

- Cleaning up after play (Everything in its place)
- Discussing shapes and colours in their environment

- Practicing number recognition and counting objects
- Practicing letter sounds (simple 'I Spy' using sounds not names of letters)
- Cutting paper with scissors
- Dressing themselves / Buttoning, snapping, zipping, and tying, putting on socks and shoes
- Encourage independent eating - try not to feed your child!

Help your child become an independent, enthusiastic, curious learner. You don't need to buy a lot of special toys or equipment to turn your child into a creative thinker. The best thing you can do is to be a good listener and to talk with your child as you go about your normal, everyday activities.

ABC's and 123's Earlier Is Not Always Better

Many parents are concerned when their children appear not to be learning letters and numbers. They feel that bookwork and homework in a preschool programme will better prepare their children for primary school.

We could give your children workbooks. We could make them memorize the alphabet. We could drill them. We could test them. But we know that if we do, your children are going to lose something very important. If they haven't been given hands-on experiences, they won't have explored objects enough to know what words like "hard, harder, hardest" mean. If they aren't allowed to string beads, button, dress up, cut, paste, pour, and draw, they won't develop the small muscle skills they need for writing.

Math involves more than rote counting and memorizing facts; it involves logical thinking. To acquire the foundation for logical thinking, children need many opportunities to count objects, sort them into piles, and add some to a pile and take some away.

It is by playing games like these that they will come to understand addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. Without these concrete experiences, children may not understand what they are doing and why.

Worst of all, children who are rushed into academic subjects too soon, may lose their enthusiasm for learning and lose their sense of themselves as learners. They should be encouraged to see themselves as explorers, discoverers, problem solvers, and inventors.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Happy Vale Montessori School does not discriminate. Children and staff of all races, nationalities, and religions are welcome.

However, all children enrolled at Happy Vale shall be expected to participate in Christian Praise and Worship every morning.

The Centre supports inclusion of all children, regardless of their abilities. To implement inclusive practices, the Centre will undertake to develop appropriate training programmes which will prepare parents and staff to meet the needs of children and their families.

PRE-REGISTRATION / WAITING LIST

Pre-registration for September can be arranged several months in advance by completing the registration forms and submitting the required non-refundable fees.

Children can be "wait listed" at any time. There is a non-refundable administrative fee for Wait Listing. Siblings of children currently enrolled receive priority.

ENROLLMENT

Children may be enrolled for existing openings by completing and providing the following:

Registration Form with 1 current passport sized photograph

Registration Fee

Fee Deposit

Child Release and Emergency Contact Form

Photo Copies of: Birth Certificate, National Health Card (this must indicate that the child has had all necessary immunization prior to entry into school).

These documents will remain in your child's file for a minimum of 5 years after withdrawal from the centre, thereafter they will be archived.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT

Children are initially assigned to a class group based on their age, skills, and overall level of development as evaluated by the Director and Lead Teachers involved. Normally, all children enrolled are advanced to a new class at the beginning of each "school" year in September. Interim class re-assignments may occur at other times when recommended by the Director, based on

reassessment of developmental progress and availability of space, following a consultation among Lead Teachers, parents, and the Director.

FEES & PAYMENT PROVISIONS

Tuition Fees: Payments are due **on the first school day of each month**, in advance. A late charge of two percent (2%) per school day is due if payment is received after the sixth school day. The child's Enrolment shall be terminated if payment is not received by the end of the third week of term. When tuition fees increase, Parents will increase pro rata the amount on Deposit.

Please refer to RATE SHEET: Fees and Deposits are subject to periodic review.

Optional Enrichment Classes: Payment for Swimming, Physical Education, or Football are also due on the first school day of each month, in advance.

Supplies Fee: will be due at the start of the September Term in full. A pro-rated Supplies Fee is due if registration occurs after September.

Deposit: Each year, from September to December, following the first month of attendance, the Deposit may be refunded in full following cancellation of enrolment, provided the Centre has received one full month advance written notice of withdrawal **effective the last day of the month**.

Each year, from January to April, the Deposit becomes **50% refundable** after notice is given of withdrawal. From May to July the deposit is **non-refundable** and will be regarded as a "reservation fee" to hold the Child's place for September (Children must remain continuously enrolled to retain their place). *All other payments are entirely non-refundable.*

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Enrolment will be considered terminated if:

- The Centre receives one full month advance written notice of withdrawal, effective the last day of the month;
- Payment is delinquent beyond the third week of term;
- The Parents fail to comply with Registration Agreement, the Parent Handbook, or any other rules of the Centre;

- The Centre determines it is unable to meet the needs of the Child, or that it is not in the best interest of the Centre or other children enrolled to have the Child continue in attendance;
- There is serious illness or death of the Child.

SCHEDULE / HOURS OF OPERATION

Happy Vale Montessori School is open from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm, Monday to Thursday inclusive. Fridays and Last Days of Term end at 12:30pm; A "Late Stay" option to 5:30 pm is available at an additional cost of \$5.00 per day. (You will be required to sign your child 'OUT' after a Late-Stay period).

HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS

Happy Vale Montessori School will be closed for all school holidays and Public Holidays:

Additional closings may be necessary due to weather conditions or severe water rationing. In the event of unexpected severe or worsening weather conditions during the day, please monitor broadcast Radio/TV stations or call us, as *Happy Vale Montessori School will close if The Ministry of Education requests closure* and children must be picked up immediately. The Centre will re-open when public schools re-open or at the discretion of the administration.

CLOTHING / TOYS / PERSONAL ITEMS

Happy Vale Montessori School uniforms must be worn Monday to Thursday inc. Children enrolled for Physical Education shall wear the uniform PE 'T' shirt and shorts or PE Skirts with short tights on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To encourage development of independent bathroom skills, children's shorts and underclothing should be 'easy-fit' for them to manipulate with a minimum of assistance.

Children must wear shoes which are practical as well as comfortable.

Flip-flops are prohibited except on special activity days.

A complete change of clothing (every item labelled) may be sent to school these items should be placed in a marked Zip-Lock plastic bag and given to the teacher.

Except for special items needed to smooth the transition from home (such as a 'blankie') **toys are not permitted.**

Personal belongings from home for "show-and-tell" or "colour days" must be marked with the child's name.

Children must not be given candy, gum, or money to bring to school.

The Centre will make reasonable efforts to safeguard children's personal belongings and clothing, but will not be responsible for lost or damaged items. **Everything your child brings or wears to school should be permanently labelled.**

MEALS AND SNACKS

All containers and lids must be labelled with the child's name when bringing snack and lunch from home. No 'junk' foods or highly salted snack foods, sweets or chocolate will be permitted. Absolutely NO PEANUTS or foods containing peanuts are permitted.

The Centre has a catered snack and lunch programme which provides well balanced and nutritious snack menus with fresh fruits every day. A varied lunch menu includes vegetables whenever possible. Meals are served family style, allowing children to participate in setting and clearing tables. Notify the Director of any special dietary restrictions.

PARTIES

Birthdays are an especially exciting time for young children and the Centre will be pleased to help your child celebrate with classmates and staff.

However, the only food items permitted are birthday cake or cup cakes, cookies, pizza and individual juice drinks. For the present we regret that we cannot accommodate ICECREAM / ICICLES. Parent participation is welcome, but not required. Balloons are a choking hazard for young children and should not be brought into the Centre or placed in party bags. Party bags should not contain any of the following please:

- No bubble- or chewing gum.
- No Hard Sweets or Nuts or nut products
- No toy weapons of any kind
- No latex balloons
- No glass containers

LIVE PETS AND ANIMALS

Because they play a valuable role in children's development, from time to time, classrooms will have safe, live "pets" such as gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, tropical/gold fish, tadpoles, hermit crabs. In accordance with common

sense and licensing regulations, children and staff will practice good hygiene and hand washing when pets or their "accessories" are handled. Children in the Centre shall not have direct contact with chickens, ducks, reptiles (turtles, lizards, snakes), or amphibians (frogs, toads). Children may not bring their live pets from home into the Centre unless pre-arranged for a one day visit.

HEALTH - ILLNESS EXCLUSION POLICY

All children are required to have on file a physician's report verifying overall good health and required immunizations. Current information on immunization status must be maintained while the child is enrolled. Children of three are required to undergo a "Three Year Assessment" while at four years and older are required to have vision and hearing screening as well.

Children are to be checked upon arrival each day for any visible indications of illness. If a child appears ill while at school, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up the child immediately.

The reasons for excluding children from remaining in school are:

- a sick child's presence poses an increased risk to others.
- A sick child cannot participate in routine activities and require more care than the staff can provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group

Children should remain at home or will be sent home if found to have:

An Ear Temperature of 100.4 or higher. Oral temperature of 100.4 or higher or Underarm Temperature of 99.4 or higher.

Conjunctivitis: "Pink/Red eye", redness of the eye and/or lids, usually with secretion of yellowish discharge and crusting.

Bronchitis: The cough may be dry and painful but gradually becomes productive with a slight elevation in temperature.

A **rash** you cannot identify which has not been diagnosed.

Impetigo: red pimples which become small vesicles surrounded by a reddened area. When blisters break, the surface is raw and weeping. Impetigo can affect skin anywhere on the body but often attacks the area around the nose and mouth.

Ringworm: a fungal skin condition that is very contagious - red, scaly, itchy and looks like it has a red halo around it.

Diarrhoea: two or more times within 24 hours (watery BM's that look different and are more frequent than usual.)

Vomiting: within 24 hours.

Head Lice: live contagious insects or their nits (egg sacs), that infest hair. Children will not be readmitted without being free of live lice and nits, and must have a written note from a physician, local health authority, advance practice nurse, or physician's assistant stating that they are no longer contagious and may return to school.

Any **communicable disease**, including Measles, Chick Pox, Mumps; until the child has been treated by a physician and has been cleared for readmission. Should your child contract a contagious illness, please notify the Centre immediately so other parents can be alerted to the possibility of exposure. Children may be brought into school if they have a mild allergy, a non contagious allergic rash, diaper rash, prickly heat, dietary or medication loose bowel, and can cope successfully with the programme. Staff should be alerted to anything out of the ordinary.

Children's exclusion and readmission to the programme is subject to review by their receiving classroom auntie and / or a Director.

If your child has a chronic illness or disability, please discuss a plan for reasonable admission/exclusion criteria with a Director.

Children who are taking antibiotics are not permitted to return to school until the course of medication has been completed and the child's doctor has indicated in writing that the child is well enough to return.

Children who have been cleared by a doctor but require cough suppressants may return to school but all directions as to delivery of medication must be in writing.

All medication must be furnished in the original prescription container, with an appropriate dispenser, marked with the child's name, date, and directions for use; placed in a labelled plastic ("Zip-Lock") bag and handed to a staff member.

The school accepts no responsibility or liability for any error or omission regarding administration of medication.

By helping us to observe good health standards, you will be protecting your child and the others at Happy Vale Montessori School. Thank you for your compliance.

In the event of an injury or medical emergency, trained staff will immediately administer first aid and notify a Director if further assistance is needed. If we believe the situation may call for parent involvement or professional medical attention, the Centre will attempt to contact a parent or other authorized emergency contact. If the condition is serious, the Centre will call 911 for an EMT response or will transport the child to a hospital Emergency Room.

EMERGENCY PLAN

The following safety precautions have been established to help ensure the safety of children and staff in case of Fire/Earthquake:

- Emergency evacuation drills are held regularly without notice. Parents present at the time should participate in the drill.
- Emergency Evacuation Points: The School of Music Car Park / SSU Headquarters Compound
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in every classroom.
- The daily register of attendance and children's arrivals and departures is used as an attendance checklist during safety drills.

CHANGES TO THE PARENT HANDBOOK / POLICIES

The Centre, at its discretion, may change any policy contained in the Parent Handbook. Parents will be notified of any changes by email or written notice distributed in the FISH baggies.