



Knysna Montessori School

6 – 9 Environment

Parents Handbook and Information Guide

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INTRODUCTORY WELCOME

We would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to all our 6 - 9 Parents, old and new.

This brochure contains important and useful information about our 6 -9 environment for you to read and keep on hand for easy reference.

However, should you have any queries, need any further information - or even just need a shoulder to lean on! - please remember that our Staff have an Open Door Policy.

We are always happy to make ourselves personally available should you wish to see us for any reason.

We value your support and hope that you will continue to enjoy the growth of your child/ren within this loving and caring Montessori environment.



ANNUAL EVENTS

Please note that parents are welcome at all appropriate school events, but that the following first three events are **COMPULSORY**, and for the sake of your child, we ask you to make every effort to attend:

- **Orientation Day - (Compulsory attendance for new parents and pupils):**
The day before school opens, all new children are invited to visit the school, meet their teacher, find their locker and familiarize themselves with their school surroundings before the big start the following day.

- **Parent Information Evenings - (Compulsory attendance):**
These meetings are held on evenings during the first term and afford all parents the opportunity of meeting other parents. It also gives parents a chance to ensure that all their contact details on the school records are current and correct, which is of vital importance in the event of our needing to urgently contact you. These meetings give an excellent overview of Dr Maria Montessori's methods and philosophy. They relate to specific age groups, cover the current stages of development of your child and inform you of how to assist at home as a Montessori parent. Meeting dates for this year will be in the term newsletter and year calendar. Please organize babysitting while you attend.

- **Annual General Meeting - (Compulsory attendance):**
The Annual General Meeting is held at the end of every Third term. It is a feedback session and a voting meeting. It also covers finance and any questions for the Trust.



Orientation Day for Grade R, Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9 children:

This is held in the third or fourth term. The students visit the next environment to which they will be moving the following year, to meet their teachers and to meet children of the next phase. This gives them the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their coming new environment.

Children busy with craft



Annual Events cont./

Outings:

Class outings will occur once a term for all. We ask parents to kindly assist us to ensure safe transport. Details of destination and cost will follow nearer to the time of each outing. Please make sure that you sign the permission slip issued before each outing. Children without a signed permission slip will unfortunately not be able to attend.

Family Camp:

This is held in the First Term and is an opportunity for families and staff to get to know one another in an informal environment.

Athletics Day, Galas and Sporting Events:

These are opportunities for friendly competition between our children on the sports field or in the pool. Parents are welcome to attend - and sometimes even be prepared to participate! Please ensure that your child is present at all these events as they are important for social growth.

International Day:

This day in the 4th term is spent learning to appreciate different cultures and nationalities around the world. The children dress up in national costumes and bring a plate of eats from their chosen country to share with the other students.

Optometrist:

During the First/Second term, all NEW children have their eyes checked free of charge by Muir Optometrists.

School Play:

Details will follow nearer the time, and we encourage parents to get involved with props, costumes and make-up.

Spring Tea:

Our Spring Tea is held on the first Friday in September every year- weather dependent. . Parents supply eats and drinks. The children invite someone special (e.g. a grandparent), and present music and poetry. It is important for **every** child to have someone special there on this special occasion. The highlight of the event is the wearer of the best-dressed hat (for the adults only), and we have had some spectacular creations over the years!



Annual Events cont./

School Photos: Formal photos are taken by a professional photographer in the Third Term.

General Knowledge Quiz:

At the end of every term, the children write a small factual test, assessing their general knowledge. A floating trophy is handed out to the child with the best general knowledge for the term. This is to encourage parents and children to read, ask questions and expand their minds.

Closing Ceremony:

This is an annual event held in the last week of school. The evening involves a display of the children's musical/cultural achievements during the year and children who are graduating to the next phase receive a certificate. We invite all families to join us on the Friday Market field for a picnic afterwards. Please note that children are to come dressed in uniform.

ALL ABOUT OUR SCHOOL WEEK

The term calendar and sport calendar for each term will be made available within the first week of the new term.

Daily Drop-off and Collection Routine

Please note that class starts at 7:45m sharp. Latecomers are disruptive and should enter the class as quietly as possible. All latecomers should report to the office and sign the latecomer's book.

Focus is on the children; in the morning we encourage them to put away their bags and enter their classroom independently. Therefore should you wish to communicate with the teacher, please either write a message in the communication diary, or do so at pick up time between 2.00pm and 2.15pm. If necessary, a formal appointment can be made through the school office.

School ends daily at 2:00 pm, children will gather in their classes and parents should collect them from class. Any child not collected by 2:15pm will go to Aftercare and the parents will be billed accordingly.

Children in this age group are not allowed to wait on the premises outside of the school property and will be sent to aftercare, if someone is not there to collect them. If your child is walking home from school, please notify us in writing. If someone other than usual is to collect your child, please make sure that the office knows so that all relevant staff is notified, to ensure the safety and security of each child.

We ask parents to please make sure an adult accompanies a child at The Friday Market. Children may NOT be dropped off and left - again, for their safety and security. School closes at 11am on the last day of each term. Aftercare follows as per normal.

Sport

Sport is scheduled into the timetable during the school day. Sport matches are held after school. If your child is participating in an event, a diary note will be sent home with the details. Please sign and return the slip so it can be given to relevant coach.

Summer sport: Swimming, cricket and athletics (Term 1 and Term 4)

Winter sport: Netball, hockey and soccer (Term 2 and Term 3)

Swimming: School costume, white swimming cap and interhouse colour swimming cap, swimming goggles

Cricket: School sport shirt, white p.t pants and appropriate sport shoes

Athletics: School sport shirt and white p.t pants

Netball: School sports shirt, white p.t pants and appropriate sport shoes

Hockey: School sport shirt, white p.t pants, appropriate sport shoes, hockey socks, hockey stick, gum guards and shin pads

Soccer: School sports shirt, white p.t pants, appropriate sport shoes, soccer socks and shin pads

Club Days

Junior Club Days are not compulsory. As spaces are limited, children are encouraged to select one club per term to allow for all to have a chance of belonging to a club.

Details of clubs on offer are available at the school office.

Extra-mural Activities

Various qualified individuals run their activities from our premises or on their own premises. All communication should be with the extra-mural instructor involved, However, there is a post box outside the office where payments may be made. If your child is leaving during school hours to attend an extra mural activity, please inform us in writing of his extra mural schedule. All forms and information are available at the office.

Aftercare

This takes place Monday to Friday after school until 5pm, and is available as an optional extra. There is a change of staff between 2:00 and 3:00 daily, which means that new staff on duty **must** know who has left the premises. ***It is imperative that every child in Aftercare be signed out in the aftercare book to enable the teacher on duty to know the whereabouts of each and every child.***

Library:

All children are encouraged to use our own Library. The choice and variety of material helps children to foster a love of books and reading.

Eisteddfod:

This is a national participation Cultural Event which generally happens in the Second Term. Our children are encouraged to participate in poetry or other appropriate categories.

Reading Folder:

Children have a plastic PVC reading folder. It is important that the reading folder comes to school on the date indicated on the reading form so that the teacher can issue the child with a new reader. The reader needs to be read at least three times; firstly for practice, secondly to memorize the words and thirdly for expression and fluency. Repetitive reading at this level is essential! No reading folder means that the child cannot get a new reader. Please help the children to be responsible and create a love for reading.

Homework:

Knysna Montessori School has a no homework policy. We do however encourage reading daily, in English and Afrikaans. If the directress requires your support with a particular concept, then she will contact you directly.

Assessments:

Children in our environment are continually assessed on a daily basis. With daily/weekly informal tests we collect marks and calculate average percentages. This is known as 'continuous assessment.' However, the children are assessed not only on their marks but on their all-round abilities. We have a general knowledge quiz at the end of each term.

Assembly:

Assembly is held every Friday at 13:30pm in the Amphitheatre for the entire school from Grade R - Matric as well as all staff. We encourage children to receive reminder messages from this weekly assembly and pass them onto their parents in this session.

GENERAL INFORMATION

MEALS**School Meals**

This is an optional extra for which parents may sign up at the office. The menus are changed weekly and are posted on the notice board. Meals provided are cooked, balanced meals, and children are encouraged to eat most of their meal and one vegetable or salad on their plate. Dessert is served twice weekly and fruit on the other three days. Please note, any child requiring breakfast must eat at the hostel before 8am. Breakfasts are no longer served after 8am in the classroom.

Lunch Boxes

If your child brings lunch to school, please ensure that you pack healthy meals and snacks. No chips, sweets or fizzy cool drinks are allowed at school.

Snacks and Teatime

We provide these on a daily basis, consisting of brown bread sandwiches and refreshment, usually water. Tea is served in the morning during class time, and again in the afternoon at Aftercare. Children staying late also get fruit or biscuits in the late afternoon, but you are welcome to pack an extra snack or fruit to nibble on through the day. We would also like to encourage the children to bring a piece of fruit daily to chop up and share at the tea table in the class.

Water:

Every class has drinking glasses and a dispenser of fresh water available to the students. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. They can also sip from their water bottles in their bags.

Baker's man/Tuck Duty

Friday is Baker's day. Every child gets a chance to supply something baked to the class about twice annually. Please check when your child is on duty; the list is posted on the notice board at the entrance, and the child on duty will receive a necklace that week to remind you that he/she is on duty. All children should bring R5 on a Friday to buy their goods, and the money collected goes towards buying accessories for the class.

Please note that we ask the children to bring something baked or homemade which parent and child have created together!

HEALTH ISSUES

Accidents

If your child has an accident at school, the teacher will assess the situation, and notify you in any case, so that the child can be observed for any delayed side effects. If it is necessary, you will be notified immediately to collect your child.

This is one of the main reasons why it is imperative that we have your correct contact details.

Lice

We check for lice on the first day of every term. Any child with live nits or lice will be sent home for treatment until completely clear. A medical clearance certificate from the clinic must be provided before returning to school. Long hair must be tied up to prevent the spreading of lice.

Illness

If your child has a **fever or a contagious illness, diarrhoea, is vomiting or on antibiotics, please keep him at home until he is well.** If a child shows any symptoms of illness at school, parents will be phoned and asked to collect him. If medication must be administered at school, please ensure that medication and

correct dosage is handed over to the office and not left in the child's bag. Preferably, children on medication should not attend school until they have completely recovered.

Hats, Caps and Sun block

Most parents are aware of the dangers of over-exposure to our strong South African sun. Please make sure that your child arrives at school with adequate protection for outside play and sport.

NO HAT, NO PLAY in summer or on hot days. School hats and caps are available at the office.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Recommended Reading

We encourage our parents to read "How to raise an amazing child the Montessori way", by Tim Seldon, who was one of our main guest speakers at the South African Montessori Association Conference hosted by our school in 2008

Stationery:

A stationery list is available at the office.

Toys/Cell phones & Electrical Gadgets:

Please note that **NO** toys, cell phones or electrical gadgets are allowed at school. The school cannot be held responsible for loss, breakage or damage of any of the above items brought to school. These items will be confiscated and kept in the office safe until the end of term. Cell phones must be handed in at the school office each morning and collected at the end of the school day.

Lost property:

The school cannot be held responsible for lost property. Please mark **all your** child's possessions clearly and encourage your children to look after their belongings by placing them in their own lockers. There is a lost property box on the deck which you may check for lost misplaced items. Lost property is handed out every Friday by the class teacher but it is difficult to return unmarked items to their rightful owners. If you check possessions on a daily basis whilst collecting your child from school, lost property should seldom be an issue. Make your child responsible for packing his bag daily as this helps with this process.

Art Apron:

If you are particular about your child's clothes getting paint-spattered at school you can provide an art apron or big old T-shirt, which can be left in his locker to be used for art.

Birthday Policy:

We would like the parents of this age group to become involved and assist their child in putting together a timeline of his/her life which includes photos and events for each year lived. All children in the Montessori environment then bring this timeline

to school on a birthday and do a Montessori birthday ring with their own timeline. We also ask parents to let each child donate a book to our school library on their birthday to encourage the concept of giving and not only receiving. This does not have to be a bought book; it can be a book selected from the child's bookshelf at home. The book then has a specially printed label pasted inside, stating who donated it and the date on which it was donated, so every time someone reads that book they can recognize the donor. Please ask your child's teacher about the booklist. We do not allow parties at school. However, cakes may be brought to school on birthdays to share with the class. Children may wear civvies on their birthday.

FUNDRAISING

The Friday Market

This is our own supper and craft market, and our main source of fundraising. All school parents are expected to do no more than two bar duties per year as their contribution to fundraising which involves serving drinks at our Friday Market bar from 5:00pm - 8:00pm on a Friday evening. Both the D6 communicator and the notice board contain the parent duty roster.

If for any reason you are unable to attend your allotted duty, please notify the office, or find a replacement. If you have to miss your duty, a fee is applicable in order to pay for a staff member to stand in for you.

The Friday Market is our main annual fundraiser, but should we be raising funds for something specific, we will inform you and ask for your support

COMMUNICATION

Class Representative:

We have formed a Parents Event Committee and ask that one parent from each class represents that class. We will meet once a term and work towards assisting the school's 'wish list' and maintaining open channels of communication with all parents. Class representatives will be appointed at the 6 - 9 Parents Evening.

Class Lists

We will post class lists on the white board for the first two weeks of term. **Please check that all your details are correct.**

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE ARE ALWAYS ABLE TO REACH YOU.

Once details have been updated, a copy will be given to each parent so that birthdays and contact details are available.

Newsletters

Newsletters are a vital source of information about current and future events. Please read your newsletters and diarize important dates. Additionally you will be asked to download the d6 communication app which will display news, resources and reminders of events on the calendar.

Notice Boards

There are notice boards at the entrance of your child's class and at the main office to inform you of all that is going on. The boards may be used for advertising or interesting articles etc., but the office staff must first screen, approve and stamp all material before it may be displayed.

Reports and Parent Meetings

At the end of the First term, you will receive a short report/ graph, and will be expected to attend a formal parent feedback meeting regarding your child's progress. At the end of the Second Term, there will be a formal report, and an open parent evening to which you bring your child, and view his class and work, and chat informally to his teacher. (A formal appointment can be made if necessary). At the end of the Third Term you will receive a graph, and will be expected to attend a formal parent feedback meeting regarding your child's progress. In the Fourth Term, parents receive a formal report, but no feedback is necessary unless required by parent or teacher. Parents may request to see teachers during the term. Please book an appointment at the office.

Absence from school

If your child is ill and will not be attending school, please phone the office and leave a message to notify his teacher, as we are always concerned about the children. If your child will not be attending school for any other reason, please notify the school in writing, contact numbers may be found on the last page of this brochure.

IN CONCLUSION ...

Should you need to discuss any of the above, or have any queries, please remember our open door policy, and don't hesitate to call on any of us at appropriate times. We hope you and your child have a wonderful, happy and productive journey through The Knysna Montessori 6 - 9 environment with us!

SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

Knysna Montessori School
4 Narnia Lane
Narnia Village
Welbedacht
Knysna, 6571
Western Cape

P.O. Box 2237
Knysna
6570

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THE 6 - 9 TEAM:

Sonia Heaton - Head Directress

Sonia Heaton - (6-9)

Lindiwe Leve - Assistant

Nakkie Pretorius - (6-9)

Johanna Phillips - Assistant

Catherine Heaton - Reading support

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