

# **INFORMATION HANDBOOK**

**2011**

Canberra Montessori Society Inc

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## **SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

### **1(a) Preamble**

This handbook is directed towards families interested in enrolling their children in the Canberra Montessori School. It provides information about the Canberra Montessori Society, the Canberra Montessori School and the expectations of families involved with the school.

### **1(b) History of the Canberra Montessori Society Inc**

The Canberra Montessori Society Inc (CMS) was formed at a public meeting in August 1980 by a group of parents interested in providing Montessori education in Canberra. The Society was formally incorporated in May 1981. Soon after its formation the Society submitted a proposal to the ACT Schools' Authority for the establishment of a government Montessori programme catering for children aged from 3-6 years. This was consistent with the Schools' Authority's aim of promoting diversity in the government system, as well as its encouragement of community participation in public education. Negotiations were eventually successful leading to the establishment of the Yarralumla Government Montessori Pre-school in 1982.

In the meantime, in 1981, the CMS established its own school, the Canberra Montessori School, to meet the immediate demands for Montessori education and in view of the protracted nature of negotiations with the Government and at that stage, their uncertain outcome.

The Canberra Montessori School currently now operates five pre-primary (Cycle 1) classrooms, for children aged 3 to 6 years. Four classrooms are located at Holder and one at Red Hill.

In 1982 negotiations also commenced with Weetangera Primary School for the establishment of a Montessori primary programme to operate as a special stream within the School and to provide a follow on for graduates from the 3-6 programmes. These negotiations were eventually successful, leading to the establishment of a Montessori primary class for children aged 6- 9 years (Cycle 2), at Weetangera, in 1986. After operating as a bridging program in 1988, the Weetangera Montessori class ceased to exist at the end of that year.

In 1995, it was decided that the time was right to begin work on the development of a Montessori Primary School in Canberra. A Primary School Subcommittee consisting of CMS parents, representatives from the Yarralumla Government Montessori Pre-school and from the Independent

Montessori Association was created. In 1996, a Primary class for children aged 6 to 9 began at the School's Yarralumla campus.

In 2003 the school built its own premises at Holder and now operates two Cycle 2 (6-9 years) classrooms and two Cycle 3 (9-12 years) classrooms.

In 1996, the CMS piloted two Montessori Under 3's sessions (for children aged 18 months to 3 years). Led by a trained Montessori Director, the Under 3's environment was established as a playgroup, in which parents attended with their child and learnt about the Montessori philosophy first hand. There are now five Parent Toddler sessions per week.

### **1(c) Functions of the Canberra Montessori Society Inc**

In addition to the responsibilities associated with the administration of the Canberra Montessori School, the Society's involvement also includes:

- ❑ the dissemination of information relating to Montessori educational philosophy through meetings, workshops, information and open days;
- ❑ the establishment and maintenance of a library of books on Montessori educational philosophy and child development;
- ❑ promotion and furthering of Montessori education not only in the ACT but throughout Australia through contribution to national networks;
- ❑ support in the establishment and operation of Montessori training courses and provision of opportunities for practice teaching for Montessori trainees;
- ❑ promotion of courses, seminars, meetings etc. to further understanding and development of parenting skills;
- ❑ liaison with appropriate educational authorities to further the rights of the child in society;
- ❑ co-operation with training colleges in the provision of information on Montessori educational theory and practice teaching for students of early childhood.

The CMS has membership of:

- ❑ Montessori Australia
- ❑ Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
- ❑ North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA)

- ❑ Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools (APFACTS)
- ❑ Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA)
- ❑ Association of Independent Schools of the ACT (AIS)
- ❑ Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW)

### **1(d) Aims of the Canberra Montessori School**

The Canberra Montessori School follows the educational philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Its aim is to assist in the total development of the child social, emotional, intellectual, physical, cultural and spiritual - so that the child will be better prepared for life and able to adjust to the changing conditions of their environment. The Montessori approach to education is child centred and is based on mutual respect and co-operation. Montessori education offers children the opportunity to realise their potential and seeks to promote:

- ❑ self-confidence and self esteem
- ❑ a sense of achievement and self worth
- ❑ a sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions
- ❑ independence
- ❑ a sense of security
- ❑ tolerance
- ❑ co-operation with others and a sense of community
- ❑ respect for the rights and needs of others
- ❑ concentration and persistence in completing a task
- ❑ initiative and self motivation
- ❑ good work habits
- ❑ a joy of work and a love of learning
- ❑ creative intelligence and imagination
- ❑ ability to discriminate and judge.

In order to achieve these goals the School provides an ordered and secure environment where the child feels free to explore and discover. The Montessori environment is specially prepared to meet the needs of the child at each particular level of development. The CMS has a set of values, which it holds fundamental to the operations of the school. The Values Paper helps to maintain a vision and acts as a guideline for a range of activities within the community including leadership and administration.

## **SECTION 2 - PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM**

### **2(a) Introduction**

The Montessori curriculum is an integrated one where all aspects of a child's learning (e.g. music, writing, reading, mathematics, science, art, craft, culture, and physical activity) are presented as part of an interrelated whole. Many of the activities performed by the children at an earlier age are an indirect preparation for a later skill and the environment allows the discovery of new and exciting things about material often worked with throughout their developing years.

Great care is taken in the preparation of an environment tailored specifically to meet the child's needs. Furniture and equipment are child-sized. Everything in the environment has a place. Activities are complete and attractive. Activities emphasise the process, not the end product. Although the Montessori program has definite structure, it is flexible and open to individual interpretation. Each Montessori classroom is unique, in reflection of the physical environment, the Director's personality and the dynamics of a changing class group.

The Montessori classroom is a rich environment and provides a wealth of experiences through which children have the opportunity to acquire a range of social, emotional, physical and academic skills. Children will take advantage of these opportunities in different ways depending on their own

interest, maturity, personality, home background and pace of development. During their time in the programme children have the opportunity to develop self-confidence, independence, responsibility,

tolerance, concentration and a joy of learning. These, together with various academic skills, which they will also acquire, provide a firm foundation for their future learning.

### **2(b) Characteristics of Montessori Education**

Far more than a method of education, the Montessori philosophy of education is an attitude and approach to the child and to life. Its success for the child will to a certain extent depend on the degree of consistency and co-operation between the home and class. Parallel with the development and learning of the child can also be a process of growth for parents as a greater understanding of their role in their child's education develops.

Both at home and at school a child is treated with the same respect that adults would accord to another adult. Self-confidence is encouraged

through showing appreciation and acknowledgement of attempts and achievements but without judging. Through the order and routine of both home and school environments the child will acquire a sense of security.

At school, children work spontaneously in a prepared environment. Within limits, they are free to choose their own work, and work at their own pace, to move around and communicate with others in the classroom. The limits imposed are in relation to the collective interest and this means that children learn to have respect for the rights and safety of others and for the environment. This is the Montessori approach to self-discipline. They learn to use care with materials, to help other children and to become a co-operative member of the group. This enables each child to enjoy the freedom that is offered, while displaying a developing discipline.

The classroom is a society in itself, fostering equal opportunity for all where the child can develop socially.

Classes have a vertical age structure, spanning three years. Younger children have the opportunity to learn by observation and absorption of the work of older children, while the older children also have opportunities to teach the younger ones, thereby acquiring a greater depth of understanding as well as greater confidence and competence.

Children work with concrete materials, which isolate important concepts and skills. Many of these materials are self-correcting. Activities are self-directed so that children have a sense of control over their own learning and are able to follow their own interests.

The Montessori approach is child centred and allows an unfolding of each child in an atmosphere of co-operation rather than competition, according to his or her own true nature. The role of a Montessori Director is in constructively guiding children in their learning rather than teaching them.

## **2(c) The Montessori Cycle 1 (3-6) Programme**

### **Characteristics of the 3-6 year old child**

The 3-6 year old child is at the sensitive period of the absorbent mind. It is this absorbent mind which allows the child to learn easily using all the senses.

3-6 year old children have a strong sense of order and feel secure and confident in an environment based on routine. They love to work with concrete materials and perform real-life activities. Children learn through imitating and then by doing, but they are more concerned with the

process of doing rather than the end result. These children have no sense of time and will continually repeat a task until the process is mastered.

3-6 year old children are happiest working independently and at their own pace.

### **Curriculum**

Children of approximately three years enter an environment, which they explore and make their own. Activities include:

### **Practical Life**

These exercises allow the child to continue to develop self-control and co-ordinated movement over tasks seen around the home. They are particularly important for the very young child as they help to satisfy the need for meaningful activity.

These activities help to develop abilities directed towards:

- ❑ caring for the self e.g. polishing shoes, doing up buttons;
- ❑ care of the environment e.g. washing up, arranging flowers;
- ❑ care of each other e.g. preparing and serving a snack;
- ❑ control of movements e.g. pouring without spilling.

Practical life exercises are fundamental to the whole programme. They lay foundations for the 3 year old for their later activities in other areas. The activities are done not only for their own sake but also to develop inner discipline, organisation, independence and orderliness of the classroom.

### **Sensorial**

The activities in this area are designed to bring order to the wide range of sense impressions - sight, taste, touch, smell and sound - that the child has already received. These impressions provide a key to the environment, in bringing children to an awareness of differing qualities. In this way an external order is presented to the child, from which inner order can be built.

### **Language**

Language development is an integral part of all activities in the classroom and involves all areas of the environment. Spoken language forms the basis for the child's written work and later understanding of what has been written i.e. reading.

### **Mathematics**

The program lays the foundation in maths concepts with concrete materials. The maths apparatus can take the child from an initial understanding of the meaning of the numbers 1 to 10, to a comprehension of the decimal system and all the way to the four processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The materials are designed to take

children from a physical concept of numbers, through to an abstract level of understanding of mathematics.

### **Culture**

This area is as wide and varied as possible. Activities give the child early experiences in arts, craft, music and movement, basic science, geography, history, fauna and flora.

### **Outdoor activities**

An important part of a child's development is their activity in the outdoor environment. The indoor and outdoor environments are closely related. Children extend their social skills through co-operative interaction. Concepts explored with classroom materials are applied to the wider outdoor environment. Nature and its fascination for the young child are brought into the classroom from outside. A range of exciting outdoor play equipment fosters physical activity.

In addition, the programme is broadened by taking children on excursions. These may include for example, trips to the park, a farm, fire station, art gallery, post office, theatre or puppet show. Also visitors, with special skills and interests to share, may be invited into the classroom e.g. musician, policeman, foreign language speaker or craftsperson.

## **2(d) The Montessori 6-12 Programme (Cycles 2 and 3)**

### **Characteristics of the primary age child**

At around six years of age children have reached the time in their lives when intellectual (mental) and emotional growth are linked.

The child is on an endless quest for knowledge and has unlimited energy to research and explore this knowledge. They have a keen memory with the ability and desire to learn. But they have also reached the developmental stage called the "reasoning mind". The child wants to be given more than just the facts and needs to know the reasons as to why and how things are the way they are. The child is also developing a moral sense of what is right and wrong, fair and unfair. Socially, children crave the world outside their home and family. Their peers are very important at this stage of development. Children will want to be accepted by and to be like their peers.

During these primary years the child is discovering the world and their place within it.

### **Method**

Montessori primary education is designed to meet (in a carefully prepared environment) the intellectual, imaginative and emotional needs of this stage of the child's development.

The Montessori Primary School environment caters for the evolving child from the concrete to the abstract. The environment also has the added advantage of familiar materials from the pre-primary programme (e.g. moveable alphabets, map displays and golden beads) but is designed to develop the child's imagination leading to the development of abstract thinking.

We reverse the teaching method used in most schools by giving students a picture of the whole, or a frame of reference, before introducing individual subjects. For example, our students learn about the creation of the universe before going on to study topics such as the solar system, the physical features of the earth, weather patterns, the countries of the world and their inhabitants, their customs, flags and so on.

### **Curriculum**

All subjects that are covered in conventional primary schools are covered in our Primary curriculum. The Montessori philosophy and curriculum also encourage and foster learning extension into the areas of interest and capability expressed by the individual child.

The following subjects make up the Primary curriculum:

### **Mathematics**

The magic of primary mathematics opens up with the story of why humans needed mathematics and how we learned to calculate. This then leads on to the reinforcement of skills gained in pre-primary - in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Fractions and decimal fractions, laws of arithmetic, squaring, square root, multiples and factors, divisibility, cubing, cube root, velocity, simple interest and problem solving are all basic to the mathematics programme.

### **Geometry**

Geometry is the branch of mathematics with which Montessori children are already familiar from their sensorial work in pre-primary. In primary children engage in a detailed study of plane and solid figures, equivalence, the Theorem of Pythagoras, area and volume.

### **Language**

Language is studied in a wide variety of contexts such as stories, novels, poetry, drama, letters and articles. It is continuously developed through all the areas of the curriculum increasing the child's own personal expression in words.

The history of language and how writing is developed is introduced as a precursor to the study of the components of language. Students consolidate their skills in reading and writing and progress to spelling, punctuation, handwriting, paragraphs and note taking. They look at the lives of authors, time lines of literature in general and then nationally.

### **Social Studies and Science**

Human Relations, Geography, History and Biology are areas of study which are interrelated and linked within the Montessori primary curriculum.

Although outlined separately below they are studied in an integrated way within the classroom. Covered also in the course of this work are things like Anthropology, Astronomy, Zoology, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Economics, Government, Philosophy, Political Behaviour and Sociology.

### **Human Relations**

This is the organising centre or unifying theme for all the cultural subjects. It deals with the fundamental needs of human beings recognising that in all places on the Earth and at all times in history, they are the same. In History the needs of people are used as a guide for the child's research into how people over time have met their basic needs. In Geography the influence of Physical Geography on meeting these needs is studied along with the influence of climate, seasons, natural resources etc.

### **Geography**

Having being introduced to the origin of the earth students go on to study how the earth is constituted - to examine its elements. This includes:

- ❑ Physical Geography - an understanding of the physical compositions of the earth and their formation
- ❑ Scientific Understanding of Natural Phenomena - to help students understand the dynamic geographic forces at work on the earth through the use of experiments and impressionistic charts
- ❑ Mapping and Graphing - to give children knowledge of how to properly read maps and graphs and how to create their own
- ❑ Political Geography - to give knowledge and understanding of the reasons behind political boundaries and the different varieties which exist (e.g. countries, states, provinces and capitals)
- ❑ Economic Geography - allows for the study of human interdependencies and how these are affected by political and physical boundaries.

### **History**

This study follows the development of the solar system, life on Earth, the development of humans, early civilisations and recorded history.

The child first needs to understand the passage of time and its expression in linear form (calendars, dates, growth charts etc). Then follows the divisions of time (year, month, week, and hour). It is then possible to start to detail the history of the earth and the story of creation; the evolution of the earth and of life; then of mankind and those that came before us; then the study of our own nation and state.

### **Biology**

This is the study of the physical structure of life and its development over time. It covers Botany and Zoology; both presented on similar lines.

First is given an overall view of the development of life on Earth, then increasing detail of classification systems which have evolved giving the child not only a means to understand each organism in relation to the whole, but an understanding of the evolutionary changes which have taken place over millions of years.

The aim is to have children develop, through understanding, a sense of love, responsibility and respect for nature and their environment.

### **Music**

A specialist music teacher is employed by the school. The music programme includes music history and literature, instruments of the orchestra, percussion, vocals, work with the Montessori bells, rhythm and beat etc.

### **Creative Arts**

A specialist art teacher is employed and art is studied through a variety of processes such as hand development, beginning tools, advanced tools, painting techniques, design and aesthetic awareness. The aim is to enable children to communicate ideas visually. Included also is a study of the historical development of artistic expression.

### **Personal Development, Health & Physical Education (PDHPE)**

The aim is for our children to acquire both fine and gross motor skills in a non-competitive co-operative environment. A physical education teacher is employed to coordinate the sports programme for children in Extended Day through to Cycle 3 and activities are designed to develop locomotor and non-locomotor skills, hand-eye and foot-eye skills.

### **Languages other than English (LOTE)**

A specialist Korean language teacher is employed to offer children an introduction to Korean language and culture.

## **2(e) Afternoon Programme**

This programme has been developed in recognition of the fact that many families work or study outside of the core school hours of operation. The CMS co-ordinates an Afternoon Programme at Holder for pre-primary aged children.

The Afternoon Programme, while different from the Montessori primary and pre-primary programmes, remains consistent with Montessori principles and philosophy. The programme is fully licensed and offers a relaxing but stimulating environment, which aims to foster a secure, family atmosphere.

## **2(f) Parent Toddler Programme**

The Parent Toddler Programme currently operates six mornings per week. A parent/carer attends with their child for 2 hours, once a week, in an environment especially set up to facilitate the child's growing need for independence. The Parent Toddler Programme differs from playgroup because the emphasis is on catering for the child's urge towards independence and faith in the child's capabilities.

The room contains only child-sized furniture and activities that match the children's physical proportions and their stage of development. The age range of the children is from the time the child walks independently to the time the child is three years of age.

The range of activities offered are:

- language enrichment exercises
- exercises to refine eye-hand co-ordination and visual discrimination
- practical life exercises
- art activities
- group music activity

All work is set out in such a way that children can use the materials with the minimum of adult assistance and parents are made aware of the importance in allowing their children to complete and repeat tasks without interruption or interference. In this way children build up their concentration span.

## **SECTION 3 - ORGANISATION**

### **3(a) Licensing and Registration**

The school's Cycle 1 (3-6) and Afternoon Programmes, are licensed under the ACT Children and Young People Act 1999 by Children's Services, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services Office of Child Care (DHCS). The licensing process ensures that the programmes are operated in a way that ensures the safety of the children being cared for and educated and that their developmental needs are met. It is based on the ACT Centre Based Children's Services Conditions for Approvals in Principle and Licenses August 2000, copies of which are available from the school office. Ongoing assessment and inspections are undertaken by the staff from Children's Services.

The school is also registered under the ACT Education ACT 2004 for years K-6. The registration process involves a panel of Educationalists and representatives from the Non Government Education section of the ACT Department of Education & Training assessing the school's curriculum, staff, management, policies, procedures and premises.

Contact details for the DHCS and NGSO are available at Appendix G.

### **3(b) Staffing**

#### **Teaching Staff**

Our aim is to ensure that Montessori Directors in the school hold an Association Montessori Internationale Diploma (AMI) or equivalent. In addition to their Montessori Diploma, they must also have the appropriate tertiary qualifications in early childhood or primary education.

Generally, AMI training courses are of one year's duration, involving an intensive program of lectures, seminars, preparation of materials and curriculum documents, observation and practice teaching of Montessori education theory and practice. Central to the training of a Montessori Director is the preparation of oneself, the revisiting of traditional teaching methods and approaches to the child and the freeing from preconceived ideas about children's learning.

A key aspect of the courses involves training in the observation of the child and the development of faith in children to reveal themselves through their work. For most Montessori Directors, their coming to Montessori education

involves considerable commitment and sacrifice both during training and their later work.

**Assistants** are employed for morning sessions in the Cycle 1 classes (and where large numbers of children are present, in the extended day sessions) and full-time in the Cycle 2 and 3 classes.

### **Administration Staff**

The School employs a Principal who is responsible for the day to day management of the CMS, a Bursar, Assistant Bursar, Office Manager and an administrative assistant.

### **3(c) School Structure**

The Montessori programme is of approximately 9 years duration broken up into 3 cycles. It is expected that children will complete the entire programme. Children enter at the age of 3 and for approximately the first 2 years they attend a half-day session of 3 hrs from 9.00am to 12.00noon for 5 mornings per week. This provides a regular and established routine at an optimal time of day for learning.

Entry into the programme after the age of 3 may occur in special circumstances with the concurrence of the classroom director if there is a vacancy but the child's sensitivity to certain aspects of the programme may have passed and settling in may prove more difficult. The hours of attendance of a new child to the class will usually be reduced in the first days (or weeks) in the class to facilitate a smooth transition to the Montessori environment.

Decisions on the timing of entry of children into the class are made by the classroom Director and the Principal, on the basis of their placement on the waiting list, an assessment of the needs of each individual child and the classroom as a whole.

At about 5 years of age children generally move into extended day sessions and remain until 3.00pm Monday-Friday. Readiness for movement into this stage of the programme is assessed by the Classroom Director. The extended day sessions give the child the opportunity within a smaller group of children to refine and consolidate the skills learnt in the first 2 years and build upon them developing greater confidence, competence and concentration. Increasingly difficult tasks may be tackled as the children move towards the abstraction of the primary years. The older children become models for the younger ones acquiring a sense of responsibility and increased confidence through their position as leaders in the class and their ability to teach others what they have learned.

Around the age of 6 the child has developed the adaptability, confidence and maturity to move on. At this point they enter the second cycle (6 to 9) class. Readiness for this move is determined through consultation between Directors. Entry into the primary programme of a child who has not completed the first cycle will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Classroom Director and it is usual to have a term's trial period. Finally, 9 year olds move on to the third cycle.

### **3(d) Rosters and Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is essential in a community based school. Not only does it enable costs to be kept down and the school kept viable, but also parents are more closely involved with their child's school environment and thus more aware of the needs and features of the school.

Parents assist with maintenance of equipment and the outdoor environment, as well as being part of the School Board. In addition, parents are required to assist with fundraising activities (further discussed in Section 3(f)). Either parent may become involved in any of these tasks.

Parents with special skills in areas such as craft, drama, music, foreign language or culture may also become directly involved with the children by contributing these skills in the class. Apart from their possible use in specialist areas or helping out on excursions, parents do not generally take an active role in the classroom. Nevertheless, parents are always welcome to observe their children in the class, in consultation with the Classroom Director as to the appropriate time.

### **3(e) Parent Education**

It is hoped that a child's experience at school will be a continuation and extension of the parents' nurturing and that the Director will build on the strengths that parents have fostered. To achieve this, good communication between parents and Classroom Director is essential. Parents attracted to a Montessori programme for their children will generally aspire to the attitudes and approaches to the child which are consistent with those in the class. These include:

- ❑ treating a child with the same respect as an adult;
- ❑ having a consistent approach to the child;
- ❑ providing encouragement and refraining from correction unless absolutely necessary;
- ❑ providing an ordered and secure environment and routine;
- ❑ allowing children to work at their own pace and without interference;

- ❑ allowing children the choice of whether to work alone or with others;
- ❑ allowing children to be actively involved in decision making;
- ❑ allowing children to have responsibility within their capabilities.

The challenge of parent education is to develop a better understanding of how to achieve these goals in parenting.

Parents who have chosen a Montessori education for their child are encouraged to extend their knowledge and understanding of Montessori philosophy through reading (books may be borrowed from the School library) and attendance at workshops, general meetings, information days and educational nights.

Parent meetings are held regularly and provide the opportunity for families to gain more information about the classroom program and related aspects. Regular classroom observations both before and after your child commences in the programme enable you to follow your child's development as well as acquire a greater understanding of features of the Montessori programme and the classroom dynamics within the school.

### **3(f) Parent Information**

Parents are encouraged to observe a class as a means of gaining a greater appreciation of the Montessori approach to education and the functioning of a Montessori classroom. Classroom Directors can be contacted to arrange a suitable time.

Parents of children attending the School are welcome to discuss with the Director any issue regarding their child's development. Formal interviews with parents are held twice a year and written reports for primary children are given.

Should matters of concern arise at any other times, parents or the Classroom Director may request an interview. Smaller day-to-day matters can be raised with the Classroom Director at any time. Good communication between parents and the Classroom Director is regarded as vital to the well being of the class and children. It is the parent's responsibility to raise matters, which may be worrying them. These might, if appropriate, also be discussed with the class parent or the Principal.

### **3(g) Fundraising**

The Society relies on fundraising to meet both on-going and developmental needs of the school. Over the years, fundraising has been

used to finance the purchase of indoor and outdoor equipment for the classes, building and equipment maintenance, classroom extensions and library acquisitions. Parents in the school are required to contribute to fundraising activities or pay an amount set by the school in lieu of taking part in these activities. While the extent of a family's involvement in fundraising may vary over time, a basic level of support is expected on an on going basis.

As interests and abilities of members vary, the annual fundraising programme includes a range of activities and reflects a number of aims - that activities may involve either parent, are enjoyable and provide a reasonable return for the time involved. Fundraising events have included the annual fair, annual auction, cake stalls, sausage sizzles, raffles, wine drives, dinners, children's theatre etc.

Parents are also expected to contribute to the school's building fund as a voluntary contribution, which is tax deductible. Further information about the Building Fund is contained in Section 4(e).

Parent involvement is essential in a community based school. Not only does it enable costs to be kept down and the school kept viable, but also parents are more closely involved with their child's school environment and thus more aware of the needs and features of the school. Parents assist with maintenance of equipment and the outdoor environment as part of their Community Hours as well as being part of the School Board or fundraising and social events committee. Either parent may become involved in any of these tasks.

Parents with special skills in areas such as craft, drama, music, foreign language or culture may also become directly involved with the children by contributing these skills in the class. Apart from their possible use in specialist areas or helping out on excursions, parents do not generally take an active role in the classroom.

## **SECTION 4 - ADMINISTRATION**

### **4(a) Board of the Canberra Montessori Society Inc**

The School is governed by a Board whose role is to focus on strategic issues of organisational purpose and direction, and achievement of corporate goals. The Board delegates responsibility for the day to day management of the School to the Principal. Membership of the Board is made up of parents and members of the wider community who have an interest in Montessori education. The Board is elected at the Annual General Meeting

of the Society and parents and interested persons are encouraged to nominate.

#### **4b) Principal**

The Principal is responsible for all aspects of school management including accommodation, staffing, financial affairs and the co-ordination of educational leadership within the School.

#### **4(c) Fees**

The Canberra Montessori School receives government funding (for children 5 years and over). Fees are set at the minimum level necessary to cover the operational expenses of the School (salaries, rent, equipment, electricity, phone, insurance, consumables and other administrative expenses) and are supplemented by fundraising.

1. Fees are due and payable at the end of the last week of the preceding term, except for Term 1 fees which are due by the end of the first week of term.
2. If for any reason another arrangement is required, this must be arranged with, and confirmed in writing by, the Bursar.
3. In all cases, the arrangement must provide that all fees for each academic year are paid in full by the end of the year.
4. Parents are responsible for ensuring that all fees are paid by the due dates agreed.
5. Fees outstanding after the due date will attract a late fee unless opting for payment by another arrangement.
6. If fees continue unpaid, and a satisfactory arrangement is not entered into, the classroom director and the parents will be notified that the child's continuing enrolment is in question. The school reserves the right to terminate enrolment for non-payment of fees. In the event of this occurring, the conditions of paragraph (9) below will still apply.
7. In some cases, at the school's discretion, the student may be permitted to complete their cycle.

8. Fees for children commencing part way through a term will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. There is no provision for reduction in fees for pupil free days, staggered entry at the beginning of Term 1, for any period a child is temporarily absent from class due to holidays, illness or parents' commitments.
9. Parents who wish for any reason to withdraw a child from the school must give **A FULL TERM'S NOTICE IN WRITING TO THE BURSAR. IF SUCH NOTICE IS NOT GIVEN, A TERM'S FEES WILL BECOME PAYABLE IN LIEU.** Parents who wish to withdraw a child for a term or more, for travel or any other reason will be charged the tuition fee, payable before departure.
10. All fees outstanding at the departure of a child from the school, including any fees in lieu of notice, remain payable to the school. This debt should be paid as soon as possible after the departure, and a written arrangement for this entered into between the school and the parents. If this is not done, the school will place the account in the hands of a collection agency.

The School reserves the right to review fees at any time. Generally this will be done annually in the last term of the year.

#### **4(d) Capital Entry Fee**

A once per family Capital Entry Fee, at a rate determined from time to time by the Board, is payable before commencement in the School. This contributes to the maintenance and development of the School's capital resources.

#### **4(e) Building Fund**

The Canberra Montessori School has established a building fund to meet expenses incurred in the construction, extension, alteration or maintenance of buildings used for the Canberra Montessori School.

The fund is registered with the Taxation Office and donations over \$2 are tax deductible. Cheques should be made payable to the "Canberra Montessori School Building Fund".

The major purposes for which building fund donations have been used to date are the extension of the Red Gum Classroom and more recently the new school buildings at our permanent home in Holder.

#### **4(f) Transfers**

The School is always keen to include interstate and overseas transfers from other Montessori schools. However offers of enrolment will depend on the availability of places and the needs of individual classes at the time.

### **SECTION 5 - ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL**

#### **5(a) Enrolment Procedure**

Enrolment procedure is designed to ensure that all families have a sound understanding of the Montessori Philosophy and our school before committing to our nine year programme.

All families are asked to book a time for a tour of the school and to observe in a Cycle 1 classroom before registering for the school. Following observations a registration form should be submitted (a non-refundable application fee applies). It is preferable for both parents to attend the observation and tour. Registration on the waiting list does not automatically guarantee enrolment into the school. Families must also be financial members of the Society for the duration of their time on the waiting list.

#### **5(b) Enrolment Criteria**

Criteria for entry to the CMS reflect the school's desire to ensure that families involved in the school have a commitment to Montessori education. Selection criteria (not in any order of priority) include:

- ❑ Commitment to 9 year programme
- ❑ That parents have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Montessori Philosophy
- ❑ That parents have a commitment to participate in and support activities and policies within the school community.
- ❑ Age of child
- ❑ Siblings
- ❑ Age and gender balance of the classes
- ❑ Date of registration.

Please note that if a sibling has been withdrawn prior to the completion of the full 3-12 programme we cannot guarantee that a place will be offered.

The vertical age structure of the classes is an integral part of the Montessori programme being provided by our school. Children who will not be completing the entire three cycles, for reasons other than transferring from Canberra, will not usually be offered places in the School.

When all factors are equal, the child's age at the date of the acceptance of your waiting list application will become the deciding factor.

It is CMS policy not to accept children over the age of 3.25 years into the school unless they are transferring from another Montessori school, a vacancy in their age group exists and the above criteria are satisfied. Again, each application is considered on an individual basis.

When a child has been accepted, the class director of the classroom that the child will attend arranges a meeting with the parents and an orientation process for the child.

### **5(c) Notification of Place**

When a formal offer of a position in the School is made this should be accepted in writing within two weeks of notification. If the position is refused, the child's name may be removed from the waiting list.

### **5(d) Accepting an Offer of Place**

The School provides a range of information directed towards ensuring that families are able to make an informed decision when accepting an offer of place in the Canberra Montessori School.

- ❑ This handbook provides background on administrative and operational aspects of the School and Society as well as some introductory information about Montessori educational philosophy and the goals of the Montessori pre-primary and primary programmes
- ❑ There are various opportunities to obtain information through workshops and meetings organised by the School
- ❑ The School Bulletin, also available on our website, is produced and distributed every term and provides articles about Montessori philosophy and further information about the school

- The Principal will endeavour to answer any questions you may have in relation to the school or Montessori education in general, either at an interview before your child is offered a place or by phone.

### **5(e) Conditions for Acceptance**

On the formal acceptance of the offer of a position, the following conditions must be agreed to:

- (1) That the Capital Entry Fee is paid in accordance with clause 4(c)
- (2) That parents will abide by the policies of the Canberra Montessori Society/School as described in the School "Information Handbook" and elsewhere
- (3) That membership of the Canberra Montessori Society will be maintained for the duration of the child's time in the Canberra Montessori School
- (4) That parents assist with Community Hours, fundraising and other activities as required
- (5) That the child will complete the entire programme unless exceptional circumstances intervene
- (6) That should a child be withdrawn for any reason, one full term's written notice, or a term's fee in lieu is required

### **5(f) Preliminary Procedures – Cycle 1 (3-6)**

Following acceptance of a place, the Classroom Director will arrange a meeting with the parents. A further meeting will then be organised with the child prior to starting in the class, to familiarise the child with the environment. Parents are encouraged to discuss ways of familiarising their child with the coming experience of the Montessori environment. Children must be fully toilet trained prior to commencing in the school.

Familiarisation visits are made available for all prospective primary students and parents.

Generally a child will move into the primary programme from Cycle 1 close to the child's sixth birthday. The timing of such a move is determined by the respective Classroom Directors in consultation with the parents and the Principal.

## **APPENDIX A:**

### **LOCATION AND STAFF OF THE CANBERRA MONTESSORI SCHOOL'S PROGRAMMES (2008)**

#### **HOLDER CAMPUS (Cycles 1-3 and Administration)**

**Address:** 35 Mulley Street HOLDER ACT 2611

**Telephone:** 62871962 **Fax:** 62872107

#### **CYCLE 1 - (3-6) PROGRAMME**

**ACACIA** – Director: **Sarah Beresford-Jones**

**BANKSIA** - Director: **Leanne van der Merwe**

**CASUARINA** - Director: **Lynn Cousins**

**DRYANDRA** – Director: **Tomomi Ohashi**

**RED GUM** – Director: **Eileen Savage**

#### **CYCLE 2 - (6-9) PROGRAMME**

**GREVILLEA** – Director: **Kerrie Pillay**

**MELALEUCA** - Director: **Anca Ardeleanu**

#### **CYCLE 3 - (9-12) PROGRAMME**

**KARRI** – Director: **Carolyn Hunter and Jackie Kirk**

**AFTERNOON PROGRAMME**

**GUMNUT - Director: Nicole Chudinski**

**PARENT TODDLER PROGRAMME**

**SCRIBBLY GUM - Director: Aine Barker**

Red Hill Classroom

Address: 28 Astrolabe Street RED HILL ACT 2603

**All enquiries to School Office at Holder**

## APPENDIX B: OPERATING HOURS

**Parent Toddler Programme:** One session per family, per week.

AGE	SESSIONS	TIME
18 months - 3 years	Monday to Friday	9.30 pm to 11.30 pm

### Cycle 1 (3-6):

AGE	SESSION	TIME
3 - 5 year olds	Monday to Friday	8.45am to 12.00noon
5 - 6 year olds (extended day)	Monday to Friday	8.45am to 3.00 pm
3 - 5 year olds Red Gum	Monday to Friday	8.40am to 12.00 noon
5 - 6 year olds Red Gum (extended day)	Monday to Friday	8.40am to 2.40 pm

### Cycle 2 (6-9) and Cycle 3 (9-12):

AGE	SESSION	TIME
6-12 year olds	Monday to Friday	8.45am to 3.00pm

**Afternoon Programme (Holder):** sessions are as follows:

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
12.00 noon to 3.00pm	3.00pm to 5.30pm	12.00 noon to 5.30pm

Refer to the Afternoon Programme brochure or contact the office for more information and fee structure per session.

## **Appendix C: SCHOOL OFFICE DETAILS, LOCATION AND HOURS**

The School Office is open

**Monday to Friday: 8.30am - 3.30pm**

The Principal, Office Manager, Administration Assistant and Business Manager are located at the CMS Holder campus:

**35 Mulley Street  
HOLDER ACT 2611**

**Telephone: 62871962 Fax: 62872107  
Website: [www.canberramontessori.com](http://www.canberramontessori.com)  
Email: [office@canberramontessori.com](mailto:office@canberramontessori.com)**

The Red Hill classroom has an Administration pocket in which letters, requests and cheques can be left. Cash payments must be brought directly to the office at Holder. Staff accept no responsibility for cash payments left in the pockets.

For general school information talk to the Office Manager or Administration Assistant. For questions of a financial nature, speak with the Business Manager.

All correspondence should be directed to:

**The Principal  
Canberra Montessori School  
35 Mulley Street  
HOLDER ACT 2611**

## **Appendix D: FURTHER READING ON MONTESSORI**

David Kahn (NAMTA) "A Parents Introduction to Montessori Pre-school"

Terry Malloy "Montessori and Your Child - A Primer for Parents"

Maria Montessori "The Absorbent Mind"

Canberra Montessori Society "Peace - A Montessori Approach"

Paula Polk Lillard "Montessori, A Modern Approach"

North American Montessori Teacher's Association publication "A Parent's Guide to Montessori Elementary"

## **Appendix E: Licensing and Registration Contacts.**

Office of Children, Youth & Family Support

The Director

Children's Services

Office of Children, Youth & Family Support

Dept. of Disability, Housing & Community Services

GPO Box 158

Canberra 2601

Tel: 6207 1105

[www.ahcs.act.gov.au](http://www.ahcs.act.gov.au)

Non-Govt. Education Section

The Manager

Non-Govt. Education

Dept. of Education and Training

PO Box 1584

Tuggeranong 2901

Tel: 6207 5111

[www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)

