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PARENT HANDBOOK

Please take the time to read this document carefully and keep it in a safe place for reference.

Mission statement

We are a Montessori school offering the Hout Bay community an authentic Montessori environment focused on enabling each child to fulfil their unique individual potential academically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Our teachers are heart centred and mindful guides connecting with each and every child, focused on a love of learning, self-awareness and respect for self and others.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

General Manager	Mat Tyrrell	072 512 0514
Head of Primary:	Abi Landman	071 886 4256
Head of Pre-school:	Justine Norman	082 436 6202
Administrator:	Lily Lukic	082 461 9593

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairperson:	Johan Human	082 452 7697
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PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson:	Heath Fairhurst	079 128 7859
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ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTS

School phone:	Lily Lukic	021 7903309
Fax:		0866 189140
E-mail:		admin@houtbaymontessori.co.za



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Programmes and communities

Hout Bay Montessori has a close knit team of highly qualified teachers and assistants who work closely together to encourage a child's spontaneous desire to learn in an environment designed to stretch the child's mind and stimulate their natural curiosity. Children attending this school build confidence, independence and character that prepare them for the challenges in life ahead. Montessori's principles for working with children are based on a holistic approach that begins at birth and builds over the years as children mature. Understood correctly, it has the advantage of working very well with a wide range of children from diverse backgrounds. It is an entire system that has been tested over the past 100 years and is just as meaningful today as it was then and is thriving and constantly gaining in popularity around the world. Maria Montessori taught that a child, who feels heard, is respected and develops competence, will develop a far greater level of emotional well being than a child who is only loved and doted upon. Our wonderful team of teachers share the conviction that if children believe they are capable, independent human beings, they will experience success in school and in later life.



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Educational goals

Hout Bay Montessori strives to serve the local community by providing an **authentic Montessori environment** and education for all the children in our care. We believe in Dr. Montessori's philosophy that all children are unique and curious about their world, and are born with a desire to learn. We respect these characteristics and strive to provide an environment where the child will have a quality learning experience.

Our Staff is constantly working on the curriculum. We know we provide an educational programme with a difference! We are committed to creating a learning environment that emphasises respect for the child, freedom of self-expression, self-education, love of learning and personal and social responsibility.

School history

HBM is 34 years old. This school is a flagship in educational institutions in Cape Town. Hout Bay Montessori was founded in April 1984 by a group of dedicated parents who greatly admired the works of Maria Montessori and desired a Montessori education for their children. Over the years, it has been in several different buildings around Hout Bay, and has grown to providing a nurturing and inspiring environment for over 100 children.

Class structures

nursery classes

Hout Bay Montessori has one nursery class with three adults in the environment. We enrol a maximum number of 18, one and a half to three year olds. The focus in the nursery class is to make the child's first school experience a happy, nurturing and safe one. Learning basic social skills; lots of vocabulary enrichment through conversations, songs and games; development of gross and fine motor skills and toilet training make up most of the nursery curriculum.

pre-school classes

Hout Bay Montessori has three pre-school classes. Each one has two adults in the environment. We enrol a maximum number of 24 three to six year olds in each. The formal Montessori three year curriculum begins with the three year old. The child explores the Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics and Culture areas of the class. Learning

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takes place one-on-one and each child progresses at his own pace. Preference is given to those children who plan to complete all three years of the programme.

primary classes

Hout Bay Montessori has two junior primary groups (6 to 9 year olds) and a senior primary group (9 to 12 year olds). Our junior primary has 2 co-directresses for up to 20 children each. Our senior primary class consists of two directresses and up to 25 children. The Montessori Primary curriculum is incredibly special and unique. Please request and read our document: *"What to expect in a Montessori Primary classroom"* for a more detailed summary of this aspect of our school.

Parent teacher communication

We try to stream line the channels of communication in order to be as effective as we can be, You can expect:

Newsletters, SMS's, Whatsapp class groups. We also keep you informed via teacher e-mails and the class whiteboards.

Fundamental to the operation of the school is the expectation that all members participate and support the school whenever possible. Should you have any comments or suggestions, we encourage you to contact Mat at mat@houtbaymontessori.co.za

Parent-teacher communication is essential to ensure that we are meeting your child's needs and addressing them in a culturally sensitive manner. Throughout the school year, you will hear from your child's directress on a regular basis regarding your child's developmental progress.

Parents and teachers meet formally twice a year for a conference detailing aspects of your child's progress in school. Parents who are interested in holding additional conferences outside of these times are welcome to contact their child's directress directly. Please remember that the end of the day is a hectic time during which all teachers are pre-occupied with assisting children prepare for dismissal. Parents wishing to discuss their child's progress in school are encouraged to make an appointment (telephonic/in person). This way, there will be no distractions.



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You can expect the following: School staff to respond to phone messages and emails promptly according to the urgency of the message, However Teaching staff will only respond to messages when they are not teaching; up until 6pm during week days only.

Mobile devices & Social media

As part Hout Bay Montessori mission of ensuring a dynamic and engaging environment in which to work is uninterrupted by unnecessary and distracting communications, have decide on the following:

MOBILE DEVICES: a portable, wireless computing device that is small enough to be used while held in the hand or on the body such as a smart phone, smart watch or tablet.

SOCIAL MEDIA: forms of electronic communication (such as web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).

Use of Mobile devices at Hout Bay Montessori

No mobile devices may be brought onto the school premises by students. The only exception being:

- If the directress has indicated that students will be using smart technologies in the classroom and/or social media.
- (is there any other reason the staff would allow students to have cell phones)
- If a parent has requested that a student have access to a cell phone due to after school events. The cell phone must be handed in to the office manager and will be given to the student at the end of the school day.
- Mobile devices may not be used to bully or abuse another student through social media or any other platform.
- Students who choose to submit content onto websites or other forms of social and online media must ensure that their submission does not reflect poorly on the school or bring the name of the school into disrepute.
- Students must use their mobile devices with due consideration to the ethos of Hout Bay Montessori School and at all times being cognisant of the code of conduct.

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- The school advises the following:
 - All mobile devices brought to school are pin/password protected to prevent unauthorised use.
 - All mobile devices have location tracking enabled in case of loss or misplacement.

Going out

In the primary school, we incorporate “going out” into our curriculum. We usually go out once a term. As far as possible, we choose a destination that supports what we are learning in the term’s great lesson – the museum, planetarium, observatory etc. Admission and transport to venues is charged on your first invoice of the year. We usually organise a bus that accommodates all of us, parents are welcome to transport their own children too. Please note this only occurs in the Primary programme (6 to 12 year olds).

Extra-mural activities

Hout Bay Montessori organises a host of extra-mural activities that are open to the children. All the extra-mural activities have been chosen to give your child the opportunity to boost his/her self-esteem, enhance co-ordination, develop life-long skills and discover their own unique talents and interests.

All activities are billed by the extra-mural co-ordinator. They all consist of 8 lessons per term. A full schedule with further details – days and times – is made available as school starts at the beginning of each year.

Please pay in full for the term before your child starts the class. Full refunds will be given for children who enrol in a class that is subsequently cancelled.

For children wishing to withdraw from an activity, written notice must be received by our administrator five school days prior to the activity in order for the co-ordinator to refund payments. No refunds will be given for any extra-mural activities that have been missed due to any personal leave by your child whether this is due to sickness, public holidays or any other personal matter.

Safety policy

Health and safety is our first priority in the school. We have a principle of full and immediate disclosure and complete transparency around any issues of health and safety. We are vigilant in using the bolts on all the gates, and ask parents to PLEASE do the same. Parents
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and teachers are responsible for the safety of everyone's child – not just your own, so please be vigilant in keeping us all safe too.

We continue to take careful stock of our own procedures, knowing we can always improve and increase safety in our school. This includes:

1. ensuring children are monitored and in sight at all times;
2. keeping a record of children's attendance, and regularly monitoring to ensure all children are present;
3. developing a safety plan and continually updating and improving it in the face of experience;
4. ensuring that physical security of the environment is suitable, and where it is not, making it the duty of staff and parents alike to inform the management immediately verbally and in writing. The more eyes, the greater the safety;
5. doing a regular safety and security check of the environment, points of danger, exits, locks, distractions, and reporting danger areas to the school;
6. increasing consciousness about safety awareness and acting early in risk points. This would include being very vigilant about safety, both in the environment and in our own ability to cope.

Lunch service

Hout Bay Montessori is able to provide your child with a hot lunch in school. Lunch is served in your child's class as a family meal. We serve lunch at 12h45. They serve each other and wash their own dishes (in true Montessori style). We strive to cater for special dietary requirements as far as possible. We use only free range meat, chicken and eggs and organic vegetables as far as possible. We also offer gluten free meal. Please have a look at your child's noticeboard for the menu planner.

Please contact Lily to confirm your meal preference

Bursary scheme

"It is not the child as a physical but as a psychic being that can provide a strong impetus to the betterment of mankind."

The parents and staff of Hout Bay Montessori are very passionate about the bursary scheme. It is a fund to provide a brilliant education start for children from families who can't afford it, from Hout Bay.

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We want to contribute to a better South Africa and at the same time give our children a more representative learning community in which to build their life skills.

We have three bursary children enrolled at the school, thanks to your generosity. We have a robust selection process, working with James House and other community organisations in Hout Bay, and a team of parents and staff engaging with passion and rigor on the topic.

Please help, and give to a child, aiding her or him to reach their true potential. A Montessori education guides our children to believe that they have the ability to change the world, their world. As parents we need to set an example for our children. So please help give a child the opportunity to develop emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually, so that he or she will have the foundation to grow and learn further, becoming someone who will play a proactive and constructive role in our world today.

Please contribute – stipulate your choice on the school fee agreement form.

School hours

The school is open Monday to Friday, except for holidays. Gates are opened at 07h45. The pre-school children are welcomed in their classes from 08h00 and primary at 07h45. School begins for primary classes at 08h00 and preschool classes at 08h30. Their day ends at 12h30 – unless they're staying for lunch.

Nursery - ends at 12h00 (12h30 with lunch)

Preschool - ends at 12h30 (13h00 with lunch)

Primary - ends at 14h30.

School ends at 12h30 (13h00 with lunch) for the whole school every Friday.

We cannot over-emphasise the importance of prompt arrival. Late arrivals are disruptive and children arriving late miss a very important time of their school day. Therefore, in the interest of your child, please be punctual. If you require your child to stay for lunch or aftercare, please make sure he/she has been told. If you need them to stay and haven't told them, please phone Lily and she will make sure she lets him/her know. Children can feel anxious when they aren't sure of their daily schedule.



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Attendance and absences

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged. If your child will be absent from school due to illness or extended leave, please be sure to phone Lily in the office, so she can let the directress know. Children are not permitted to take holiday time outside of the allotted school holidays. Primary Parents, if your child is at school, but is unable to participate in Sport, please send a note along that day.

Security policy

It is essential that we have a clear and accurate record of who is authorised to collect your child from school. Therefore, we ask that you provide Lily with names of exactly who is allowed to pick him/her up. **If you want your child to go home with a friend or someone else NOT on your list, make sure you let the directress and/or let Lily know.** We will phone you if there is any discrepancy. We will not release a child into the custody of anyone not identified as an authorised person unless we receive instruction from a parent/guardian.

Should the people authorised to collect your child change during the year, please inform us immediately. It is important that you inform both Lily and your child's directress of these changes.

Change of address

Should your address and/or contact number change during the course of the school year, please inform Lily immediately. We must be able to contact you in case of an emergency.

Dress code

Help your child to dress appropriately for school activities, both indoors and outdoors. Please remember that the children will be painting, sitting on the floor, participating in physical education activities, as well as working and playing outdoors during a typical day. No child should feel inhibited to participate due to the consequences of soiling his/her clothes at school. We don't allow superhero outfits or any t-shirts with branding on (e.g. "Ben 10" or "Barbie").

Please make sure all items are clearly marked:



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1. indoor shoes with rubber soles (Winter) – to stay at school
2. hat (Summer) – to stay at school
3. snack pack (healthy food and water)
4. backpack

Sun smart policy

We ask that all children wear sunhats and have sunscreen applied before coming to school during the hot weather. Please pack extra suncream – they will be encouraged to re-apply through the day. Water is made available to the children at all times, in their individually marked water bottles. Please maintain your child's bottle by taking it home, cleaning and filling it every day.

illnesses

The health of our school children is of paramount importance and we would like to work together with you to ensure your child stays healthy throughout the school year. Out of consideration for the health of others, please do not send your child to school with active cold symptoms such as a heavy cough and/or a runny nose.

In addition, your child must not be sent to school if he/she has any signs of fever or sickness. Your child must be fever-free for ONE FULL DAY before returning to school. If we find that a child has an illness or condition that will affect the health of his/her classmates, we will notify you to take the child home immediately

Please inform us of any contagious disease or illness your child contracts (conjunctivitis, chicken pox, head lice etc.) so that we can notify other parents as soon as possible. Please keep your child out of school until he/she is no longer contagious.

Medications

Only prescribed medication may be brought to school for administration by your child's teacher. Medication must be handed directly to your child's directress in its original container with specific instructions.



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Accidents and incidents

The teachers at Hout Bay Montessori are first aid certified.

In case of a minor accident, the child will be tended to by a staff member. Appropriate first aid will be administered when needed (ice, pack, bandages etc.) and the injury will be reported to the person who picks up the child.

In case of a serious accident, the parent or person responsible for the child will be immediately notified. The preferred physician listed on your child's Medical Form will be phoned to ask for his/her recommendation.

If the child needs to go to the hospital and the parents cannot be reached, the child will be transported to the closest hospital or the school will call for an ambulance. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital until the parent arrives. The HBM staff members strive to keep your child safe to the very best of their abilities. However, if an accident does occur, parents are expected to assume responsibility for any medical expenses incurred.

Food and snacks

Breakfast is a very important part of the day; please ensure your child eats a healthy and nutritious breakfast before coming to school.

Children must attend school with a snack packed. We encourage healthy food choices. Great snack suggestions for school are fruit or dried fruit, a sandwich or crackers with water. We have a sugar policy, which prescribes that **no items of food with sugar listed in the first three ingredients be packed in your child's snack**. This includes fruit juice, muffins, and most low-fat flavoured yogurts.

Lunch is prepared at school and served in your child's class for whoever is signed up. The Staff supervise lunch, with the children serving each other and eating together in a sit-down family setting. We encourage independence and table manners at this special time.

Sweets and toys

Please do not send your child to school with anything other than the mandatory stationery list. Jewelry etc. can be a distraction in class, or can get lost.

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Birthday celebrations

Birthdays are such a special time, and in your own special way you let your child know how happy you are that he or she was born. In the school environment we approach this special time from still another angle – what your child's virtues are that their peers acknowledge or love.

We prefer to make the day a “child-centred” day rather than a “food-centred” day. Therefore, we ask that in terms of the food and special snacks, parents **bring something healthy your child can hand out**. There is no need for birthday cakes, ice cream, juice or party favours of any kind (balloons, hats, etc.)

If we can help you distribute party invitations to your child's party outside of school, we are happy to do that.

We're green

Hout Bay Montessori is committed to teaching our children to be environmentally aware. They are taught to recycle paper and plastic, pick up litter outside and re-use what we can. HBM belongs to a local organisation, called THRIVE, that ensures a sound and interactive eco-curriculum is in place.

Classroom observations and visits

Observations provide the best explanation of the classroom curriculum and your child's specific progress. We strongly encourage parents (mothers or fathers) to come to the school to observe their child working in his/her classroom environment. This is always a very positive experience for the child and a great source of pride.

We set aside the second, third and fourth terms for parent observations. Please make an appointment with your child's directress if you would like to observe. We allow one parent at a time and ask that younger siblings stay home.

Parent participation

We need you!

Hout Bay Montessori is a parent-owned school, which means every family is obliged to give of their time to contribute to the benefit of the school community in any way you would like.

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An important benefit to volunteering is that it validates that caring and awareness are the building blocks of becoming a global humanitarian citizen. This is truly part of the Montessori curriculum and acknowledges the child's natural kindness and generosity. The child also sees that the school is important to the parent.

Tuition

School fees are payable quarterly in advance, for four school terms per year.

Please note that one full term's written notice must be given if your child leaves the school, or a term's fees will be charged in lieu thereof.

Fees are subject to an annual increase.

Please refer to the school fees document for a breakdown.

Parent charter

Our Parent Charter is an important document that explains the structure of our school, all stakeholders roles and responsibilities and lines of communication. Please keep the brochure handy, so you can refer to it when needed.

What is a Montessori education?

The term Montessori embodies both a philosophy and a method of education. It is based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, a noted Italian educator and physician (1870 – 1952), who revolutionised early education by advocating that children be allowed the freedom to explore and develop his/her own creative potential through a wealth of self-teaching educational materials.

Montessori operates on the principle of freedom within limits. Every programme has its set of ground rules which differs from age to age, but is always based on core Montessori beliefs: respect for each other and for the environment.

Montessori programmes focus on the development of each child's full potential using teachers specially trained in the Montessori method and philosophy, using both concrete teaching materials and a well-defined innovative curriculum tailored to a three-year cycle.



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What makes Montessori education unique?

The whole child approach: the primary goal at a Montessori programme is to help each child reach full potential in all areas of life. Activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth and physical co-ordination, as well as cognitive preparation. The holistic curriculum allows the child to experience the joy of learning and to develop self-esteem and independence.

The prepared environment: in order for self-directed learning to take place, the whole learning environment – room, materials and social climate – must be supportive of the learner. The directress provides necessary resources, including opportunities for children to function in a safe and positive climate. The directress thus gains the children's trust, which enables them to try new things and build self-confidence.

The Montessori materials: Dr. Montessori's observations of the kinds of "toys" which children enjoy and return to play with repeatedly led her to design a number of multi-sensory sequential and self-correcting materials which facilitate learning of skills and concepts. They include hands-on mathematical materials and activities to develop the child's sensory perceptions and refine his sense of awareness. Our Staff follows "Montessori principles" as they structure new activities for the classroom.

The teacher is called a "directress". The Montessori teacher functions as a facilitator of learning. She is a role model, designer of the environment, resource person, demonstrator, record-keeper and observer of each child's growth and development. She encourages respect, and loves each child as a special, unique individual; she also provides support for parents and joins them in a partnership to nurture the development of the child.

Three Hour Work Cycle is one of the most important units. The work cycle represents one of Montessori's earliest observations about children's development: that, left uninterrupted, children would process through a regular and predictable pattern of engagement. The pace of the classroom, then, is ideally matched to the development of the child when the day's schedule allows for three-hours of uninterrupted time in the prepared environment.

Important Documentation available on our website:

- Admission Policy
- Hout Bay Montessori Constitution

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- Complaint's Procedure
- Health Policy
- Child Abuse Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Safety Pack