



BISHOPS WALTHAM Montessori

“Help me to do it alone”

Maria Montessori

A warm welcome to Bishops Waltham Montessori School

You can contact the school by calling **07393 044 780**
This is also the out of hours number, please feel free to ring at
any time, during the weekdays and holidays.

You can also contact Miss Danielle and Miss Beverley via
email: **bishopswalthammontessori@gmail.com**

We will endeavour to answer emails as quickly as possible,
but in an emergency please contact us by telephone.

Bishops Waltham Montessori School
Little Shore Lane, Bishops Waltham
Hampshire, SO32 1ED



We would like to welcome you to Bishops Waltham Montessori.
Our aim is to build a learning environment where we show
due regard for the development and understanding of the
uniqueness and dignity of each child.

This is the start of your child's education and, for some of you,
the first time that you have set foot in an educational setting
since you were a teenager! We understand that you will have
lots of questions and hope this handbook will help answer
some of them

We are very much looking forward to getting to know you and
your child and supporting them during
these very special early years.
Please do not hesitate to
contact us with any
questions.



Starting at school

Prior to your child starting school, they will have two pre-start visits and if required a home visit. Miss Danielle will call to arrange these. These sessions are individual for each child, some children may have already attended another setting or for some this may be their first school.

The first session is usually about an hour and is an opportunity for you to explore the classroom with your child. You will be introduced to your child's key person, who will help your child get to know where everything is.

The second session is also around an hour long and often the children feel comfortable staying without a parent for some of the time, other children may need their parent to stay. Your child will be supported by their key person at all times.

Once your child has started at school they may be confident to stay for the whole session with the teachers and their new friends others may initially need a couple of shorter sessions whilst they are settling in.



Your child's key person

- Before a child starts at Bishops Waltham Montessori school they will be allocated a key person, this is to ensure that all children
- have the opportunity to form an attachment with one special person. Attachments with other members of the Montessori team are also encouraged as they help to support your child's social and emotional needs.
- Your child's key person is responsible for:
 - A home visit (if required) along with Miss Danielle before your child starts.
 - Completing, with you, the 'all about me' booklet that gives us information about your child to help us understand them better.
 - Liaising with you at the beginning and end of each session.
 - Day-to-day care and the education of your child.
 - Maintaining communication via home to school links.
 - Highlighting individual aims for your child's future development while at school.
 - Contributing to the planning process so that your child's needs and interests are met.

Transitional toy

Your child may have a favourite toy, this could be a teddy, blanket or even a ball! Some children may like to bring their special toy to school, which we welcome, your child will always have access to their toy, which they can store in their tray.

Your child's school day

Montessori times and routines:

Drop off

Montessori arrival is from 9am each day – with an option to drop off earlier at the breakfast club from 8am (an additional charge is made for this.) If your child is joining us for an afternoon session arrival is at 12noon, this enables us to enjoy lunch together as a group.

A member of the Montessori team will greet you at the door, the other teachers will help to settle the children in the classroom.

At the door, you can help your child find their draw and coat peg and pop their lunch boxes onto the trolley.

Please bring your child into the classroom where they will be greeted by a teacher who will help them choose an activity. This is probably the best time to say goodbye to your child for the morning/day.

If you need to speak to a member of the Montessori team please talk to the teacher on the door or Miss Danielle. Please be mindful that the teachers with the children must give priority to settling the children.



Pick up

We generally have three pick up times 12noon, 1pm or 3pm. We are however very flexible and happy to accommodate different collection times.

When you arrive to pick up your child they will be in circle time, during this time we share news, sing songs, play games, partake in experiments, explore materials and discover the sound of the week – to name but a few! It is a very special group time for the children. There will be a member of the Montessori team at the door whilst the teacher leading the circle will say goodbye to your child.

Their day bag

Please provide your child with a complete change of clothing although in case of accidents, we do have a small supply of clothes. If your child has recently been potty trained we ask that more than one change of clothes be provided daily.

Below is a short list of suggestions for Montessori clothing:

- Easily washable and practical garments – we have lots of fun at Montessori, but not all of it is clean, although we provide aprons when painting or cooking, a little always gets through!
- A full change of clothes and spare pants
- Nappies and wipes if necessary
- Slippers
- Sun hat
- Named sun cream when sunny
- Warm coat, hat, gloves and scarf
- When wet - waterproof coat and trousers
- Wellington boots

Please ensure all items are clearly named.

Food at school

Packed lunches

Lunch is between noon and 1pm. The children help lay the table with plates, cutlery, jugs of water and flowers, we then all sit down together, this is a lovely, social time for the children.

When your child arrives at school please place their lunch box on the trolley and please ensure you include cool packs in your child's lunch box to maintain freshness.

Children should not bring any item containing nuts to school we are a nut free setting, please check the ingredients of all the food your child brings with them for lunch.

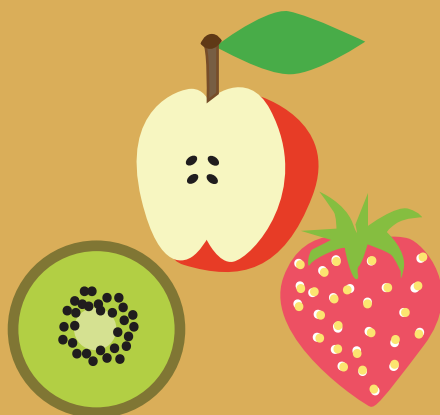
We promote healthy eating at school and encourage children to eat a balanced diet.

Fruit rota

We have a fruit rota in place at Montessori and invite your child to bring in a small amount of fruit of their choice during their designated week.

This gives your child the opportunity to feel they are contributing to their school by bringing in something to share with their friends.

The fruit rota is voluntary, please do not feel that you must bring in fruit, we always have plenty at school.

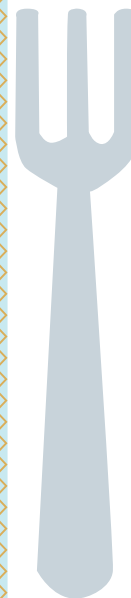


Snacks

We encourage independence at Montessori and snacks are always available. We have found that the children are hungry at different times throughout the day and free snacks meets the needs of individual children. We promote inclusive practice at Montessori so please discuss any dietary needs, including medical or cultural, with your child's key person.

We provide a healthy range of foods and you will see a blackboard with today's menu at the entrance gate. We have plenty of variety and encourage children to choose from the fruit bowl.

Part of becoming a capable child is learning to drink from a glass and use crockery. We understand that this may be a new skill for some children and we will support them with this. We find that children are keen to become independent with this skill just like Mummy, Daddy or older siblings.



Sound box

At Bishops Waltham Montessori, we have a weekly sound, where we look at letters from the alphabet and objects which have the same initial sound.

The sound box is a wonderful opportunity for your child to share something from home, we welcome food to share, photographs of family members, pictures or toys. The children love to share a treasured item from home.

Weekly activities (all subject to change)

Monday – Cookery

Tuesday – Piano Lessons

Wednesday – French with Miss Gaelle

Thursday – Dance with Mimbies and Miss Lucy

Friday – Sports session with Active8 Minds

At the centre of all our group activities is the Montessori ethos, children will be invited to join in with the various activities but are not required to. We also follow the interests of the children and if a child requests, we may carry out any activity on any given day.



Topics at school

We feel it is important to allow the children opportunities to explore topics that are relevant to them, for instance we will learn about seasonal changes which are indicated by festivals throughout the year such as Christmas, Bonfire night, Diwali, Chinese New Year and Easter. Children are able to further their understanding of the world through the diverse and transient curriculum.

We provide opportunities for the children to learn about topics which are of interest to them and welcome any additional information you would like to share with us.



Book Corner

Outings

Taking children on outings is an important part of their education and small outings may be organised throughout the school year. Outings may include a walk to the village to visit the fire station, to post letters, a trip to the WI market next door to buy a cake for snack or a visit to the church, to name but a few! You will be asked to sign a form to give permission for your child to participate in these activities. Please speak to Miss Danielle or your child's key person if you have any concerns about Montessori outings.

Security, health and safety

The door to Montessori is locked at all times unless the children are outside playing.

The side gate is opened at drop off and pick up times so that you can access the classroom to collect your child. You are welcome to come in to the classroom when settling your child in the morning.

At Montessori, the safety and welfare of your child is paramount therefore If you require another adult to collect your child would you please inform us in the morning and fill out a permission slip. A password may also be required.

When dropping off or collecting your child you may use the Jubilee Hall carpark situated next door, this is free and ideally located.

Illness and injury

Please refer to our 'Managing Children with Allergies or Who are Sick or Infectious' policy which is situated on our policy and procedure shelf in the classroom.

As a rule, if your child is sick or has diarrhoea please do not bring them in for at least 48 hours to avoid the spread of infection.

If your child has a temperature please do not bring them in for at least 24 hours after. If your child is unwell and requires Calpol it is advisable they remain at home to rest and recover.

If your child becomes unwell at school we will telephone and ask you to take them home. If you are unavailable your emergency contact will be informed.

If your child sustains a minor cut or bump the teachers will deal with the incident and administer first aid as appropriate. Incidents are recorded and you will be asked for your signature at the end of the day if your child has been treated.

In exceptional circumstances, we will administer medicine that has been prescribed by a doctor, such as antibiotics, antihistamine, epi-pens etc. We will require you to fill out a form giving your permission and details of the medication. The medication will then be taken to a secure cupboard and dispensed by the trained staff. If your child has a more detailed medical condition please see Miss Danielle to discuss.

Policies and procedures

We have written detailed policies and procedures for all aspects of our school life. You will be emailed with updated policies and procedures every August, you can also find a hard copy in the classroom. We encourage you to make yourself familiar with these and we invite you to have your input.

Toilet training

When your child is still in nappies they will be changed by their key person to ensure consistency in the routine.

When you feel your child is ready to start toilet training please come in and discuss their routine at home so that we can be consistent with this at school. We have smaller trainer seats and potties.

Montessori children have free access to the loos which are in the classroom and are shown how to use them. We do supply baby wipes, latex gloves and nappy sacks if your child has an accident during school hours. If your child has any allergies please supply your own baby wipes and please let Miss Danielle or your child's key person know. Children are taught how to wash and dry their hands independently.



Early Years Foundation Stage or EYFS

why do we have one?

This is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for future learning and success. From when your child is born up until the age of five, their early years experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure – supporting their development, care and learning needs. Nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and childminders are registered to deliver the Early Years Framework.

What does it mean for me as a parent?

Much thought has been given to making sure that your child is safe and cared for. Within the EYFS there is a set of welfare standards that everyone must follow. These include child to staff ratios, administering medicines and carrying out risk assessments.

Ensuring my child is being treated as an individual

Every child has individual learning needs and the EYFS works to provide for those needs through the curriculum, which is designed to be suitable for children of this age, and through its assessment process which gives clear goals for the children to attain before moving onto the next stage. When planning, staff use observations of the children to inform their choices of activities and consider their likes, dislikes, strengths and areas of development.

What will my child be learning?

Throughout our Montessori school your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through seven areas of learning and development whilst encompassing the Montessori curriculum.

1. Communication and Language

2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

3. Physical Development

4. Literacy

5. Mathematics

6. Understanding the World

7. Expressive Art and Design



Communication and Language

Communication and Language resonate throughout the Montessori environment. We explore the written and spoken word and extend each child's knowledge of letter and sound using a holistic approach.

Within the school your child will have the opportunity to expand his/her language acquisition through songs, discussions, rhymes, stories, books and everyday communication skills as well as learning the sounds and shapes of the individual letters. We will visit the local library which enables the children to explore and discover books and all the library has to offer.

Personal social and emotional development

An area where many varied life skills are introduced such as pouring drinks, laying a table, learning to do up zips and bows, caring for plants and developing good manners. These skills can be used in everyday situations and increase a child's independence, self-esteem, confidence, to develop respect for others, to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings thus helping them to become a self-reliant member of the community.

Much of the learning that takes place at Montessori occurs through purposeful play, as this motivates children to follow their own path of learning and make sense of their environment. Through play children develop independence, concentration, motivation and confidence in their abilities.

Physical Development

Movement is an important part of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, we firmly believe that children will develop a deeper understanding of a concept if they are physically involved. Every area of the classroom involves physical input. Children also need the freedom to move and access the areas of the curriculum that are of interest to them and for this reason we set up the environment, both indoors and out, so the children can do exactly this.

Fine motor skills are honed in all areas of the classroom but especially the practical life area. These activities specifically train the muscles needed for mark making and early writing. Practical life exercises will help your child physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually. The children utilise real life objects and activities, such as threading, pouring, transferring and polishing. This promotes independence, and in turn your child's sense of self-worth will become stronger and more positive.

Children have free flow access to the outdoors which allows the children to develop greater control of their gross motor movements. Children play, learn and grow in our ever-changing outdoor facilities which include large construction, bikes, sand and water, planting and growing, large mark making, group games and climbing activities. The children are also encouraged to participate in dance, yoga and physical education. Physical activities are used to help children recognise the importance of keeping healthy and the changes to our body when participating in exercise.



Literacy

The Montessori literacy materials are based on a carefully structured phonic approach where the children first learn sensorially by tracing sandpaper letters with their finger whilst being told the sound. Each week the children are introduced to a letter of the alphabet through the sound box as described on the previous pages. We listen to sounds and continue to use physical movement and fine motor skills to develop handwriting skills and letter and number formation.



Mathematics

Through using a varied range of equipment and exercises, each child has the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of simple to complex mathematical concepts such as numbers, counting skills, simple sums, measurement, fractions etc. The materials are self-correcting so that a child can see at a glance if a mistake has been made and put it right without help. The five senses, tasting, touching, listening, seeing and smelling are explored using specially designed Montessori equipment in the Sensorial area these will help a child sort, match and compare objects thereby testing their powers of observation and discrimination.

Understanding the World

Within this area the child is introduced to concepts of science, geography, biology and history giving a greater understanding of the world. Globes, puzzle maps, continent folders and tactile land forms all help to form a bridge between the child's knowledge of the immediate environment and the wider world.

We engage in mini experiments with the children, such as the volcano experiment which uses bicarbonate of soda and vinegar. We encourage the children to show a sense of curiosity and to explore the environment identifying similarities and differences, asking questions and using everyday technology to support their learning. Family members and past and present events are used to develop an understanding of history as well as the beliefs and cultures of others and ourselves.

We have resident giant African Land Snails and each year we hatch ducks and chicks, which help the children to develop and demonstrate care and concern for living creatures. The children are encouraged to plant and grow vegetables for the snails to feed on. At various times in the year the children have the opportunity to care for and look after tadpoles, caterpillars, hatching chicks and even the occasional visit from Miss Lorraine's tortoises. This introduces the children to growth and life cycles in a very hands-on and visual way.

Expressive Arts and Design

Encouraging children to think creatively is an integral part of the Early Years curriculum and we aim to develop their imagination through art, design, music, dance, role-play and stories. We use these mediums to help the children express their feelings and emotions and communicate their ideas and preferences.

The children are free to access the creative areas of their environment whenever they wish, as well as participating in adult-initiated activities that help them make comparisons and links between different pieces of art, music, dance and yoga.

Painting, gluing, cutting, collage, junk modelling etc. are always available for free choice work. In addition, we offer a structured adult-led activity linked to our topic, in every session. Mark-making materials are always available; chalkboards, whiteboards, notebooks, paper and writing and colouring tools encourage children in playwriting and the development of pencil hold and control.

Children at Montessori learn by playing and exploring, being active and independent and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. We encourage the children to choose their activities, be responsible for putting them away when they have finished and for developing the life skills of self-care and an awareness of others. Most importantly we understand that every child is unique and will progress at different rates throughout their time with us at Montessori and we plan and develop their curriculum to enable this. Our holistic approach to education allows us to help each child to reach their own potential.

As a parent, how can I help when at home?

All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development, and have a long-lasting effect on your child's learning. Even making time once a day to do one or more of the following things with your child can make a real difference to your child's confidence as a young learner.

Reading stories – develops literacy, communication and language skills.

Talking about the day – develops concentration, communication and language skills.

Cooking – develops mathematical skills, physical development, communication and language & literacy skills.

Playing simple games – develops turn taking, social skills, communication and language skills.

Garden games – develops social skills, physical development, communication and language skills.

Gardening – develops knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, communication & language skills.

Meals together – develops physical development, social skills, communication and language skills.

Where can I go for further information?

You will find extra information on the Early Years Foundation Stage at birthto5matters.org.uk/information-for-parents. It is a very useful guide and will give you an insight into Montessori life, however, the most informative place to find out more is from your child's teacher – please do ask as many questions as you need, we really do welcome speaking with you.

We believe that the education of your child is a three-way partnership: your child, you and us. It is therefore important that you feel fully informed regarding your child's progress. We hold parent's meetings every term – or whenever you would like. We also build a learning journey profile for each child using the online platform 'Tapestry', it maps your child's development through pictures, observations and summaries covering each area. You will be sent a confidential link to access this. Tapestry is updated continuously and will alert you when a new observation is recorded.



Contact details

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