



**VANCOUVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL (Est. 1972)**

**8650 Barnard Street**

**Vancouver BC**

**V6P 5G5**

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**website: [www.vancouvermontessorischool.com](http://www.vancouvermontessorischool.com)**

## **HANDBOOK OF SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### **THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM**

#### **A Child-Centered Community**

**The Prepared Environment** - Material Which Invites Activity

**Practical Life** - Skills of Daily Living

**Sensorial** - Exploring the World

**Cultural Subjects** - Broadly based and Integrated

**Mathematics** – Explored with concrete materials, understood through abstraction

**Geometry** – The measurement of the earth and the study of shapes and solids

**Language** – From spoken word to reading, writing and creative expression

**History** – From early humans to the study of civilizations

**Geography** – The laws of the universe, the work of air and water, human cultures

**Biology** – A comprehensive study of the animal and plant kingdoms

**Science** – An experiential understanding gained through hands on experiments

**French** – The fundamentals of expression and comprehension

**Elementary P. E.** – Skill development and cooperative games

**Working Outdoors** – The natural environment, gardening

**Art, Music, Elementary Computer** – Fully integrated into the curriculum

**Field Trips** – To supplement learning acquired in the class

**Elementary Outings** – Individual and group directed “research” trips

A Montessori education provides your child with an integrated, individualized, and academically challenging program that meets his/her changing developmental needs from year to year.

*We acknowledge and thank the Coast Salish Nations of Musqueam, Tseil-Waututh and Squamish, on whose unceded traditional territories we teach, learn and live.*

## VANCOUVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL HISTORY

Prasannata Runkel began the Vancouver Montessori School in September 1972 with eight children. Since our beginnings, Vancouver Montessori School has enjoyed staff and children from many diverse backgrounds. Prasannata has seen Vancouver Montessori School through four sites and three changes in authority; from independently owned by Prasannata, to a Limited Company owned and operated by Prasannata, and then finally to a Society in 1977. Six close friends and supporters of Montessori formed the Society and a small society continues to employ Prasannata as Principal, Administrator and Head Directress.

Prasannata's background includes a BA in Psychology as well as two years as a health worker with the Peace Corps in South Korea. Though previously Prasannata had worked with children in many diverse situations, she chose Montessori as her life work, feeling that Montessori truly meets the needs of the child. Soon after establishing VMS, meditation became part of her life. She has studied meditation since 1974 with spiritual philosopher, musician, poet & artist Sri Chinmoy. Prasannata was also a long distance jogger having completed the New York City marathon four times and participated in several twelve-hour walks and two ultra marathons. She is one of the founders of the BC Montessori Association and served on the board of the Montessori Teacher Training Centre of British Columbia as its President until 2017.

Roni Bamendine Jones is the school's Administrator of Operations. She joined the school in 1977 after 13 years in banking. Roni has worked along side Prasannata since the school's second location of two classrooms and has been instrumental in seeing the school to its present location. She was a strong force in the beginning days of the BC Montessori Association and served on the Board of Directors for several years. Her experience brought her to the Board of the Montessori Teacher Training Centre of British Columbia in the early eighties where she continued to serve as a Board member until 2017.

Vancouver Montessori School functions financially on fees, fund-raising and donations. In September 1977, we were fortunate enough to receive a federal tax deduction number enabling individuals and companies to donate tax-deductible dollars to the school. In 1979, we received a Vancouver Foundation grant enabling us to partially pay for the equipment in one of our new classrooms. In the spring of 1982, we became eligible for partial funding from the Independent School Support Act for school-aged children. 1993 was another significant year for Vancouver Montessori School. We received a Go BC grant to help with preschool basic construction costs and a relocation grant from the Ministry of Women's Equality. We are deeply grateful to have received such support.

The parents of Vancouver Montessori School have continued to be its strength through various events - fundraising raffles, Pizza Fridays, car-pooling, our Parent Committee and more; and of course, feeling that Montessori was their choice of education for their child.

All of us at Vancouver Montessori School deeply appreciate the efforts of the parents.

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*“Montessori is an attitude, not just a teaching system, not just a technique. One must have a great love and understanding of each individual child. Montessori is a spiritual attitude towards Mankind and Mankind begins with childhood.”*

## Parking/ Drop off & Pick up

### Safety Over Convenience

The Vancouver Montessori School goal is to have a **safe** and efficient school zone. The co-operation of all drivers is needed and appreciated. We have a Vancouver City Police approved parking/drop-off plan to address the importance of safety, traffic flow and ease of parking for our parents. We have a permanent Parking Patrol person at drop-off and pick-up times. Please note the staggered drop-off and pick-up times.

1. School front has approximately 4, **five minute parking spots.**
  2. No left turns (or u-turns) on Barnard Street - please take time to drive around the block.
    - Travel south – park on the West Side of Barnard Street only.
    - Travel North – park on the East side of Barnard Street & North side of school lane.
  3. Please do not turn around in, use, or block neighbors' driveways.
  4. NO Backing into traffic.
  5. NO Double Parking or Stopping (blocking traffic flow).
  6. NO Passing in School Zone.
  7. Please watch for directions from the Parking Patrol – we will help you park.
  8. Hold children's hands at all times when crossing.
  9. Let children in and out of the car on the sidewalk side of the car (not the street side)
  10. When crossing Barnard Street, please do so with the Patrol guide (not in between cars).
  11. Sorry, no cars lining-up down the street – move to the first vacant spot.
  12. Please do not arrive to the Barnard Street AREA before the time indicated below.
- **8:20– 8:30 Extended Day & Preschool arrivals Only.**
  - **8:30 – 8:40 Elementary Arrivals Only (No Preschool or Extended Day cars).**
    - Driveway area **drop-off – No Parking** (please note signs) approximately 5 car lengths
  - **11:30 Preschool Parking for Pick-up.**
  - **12:50 Preschool Parking for Drop-off.**
  - **3:00 Extended Day Parking only for Pick-up.**
  - **3:15 Rooms 4, 5 & 6 Elementary Parking for Pick-up - please do not arrive before 3:05.**
  - **3:30 Room 7, 9 & 11 Elementary Parking for Pick-up - please do not arrive before 3:20.**
  - **4:00 PM Preschool Parking for Pick-up.**

We encourage parents of older children to take the time to park on Southwest Marine and walk to and from school. We all appreciate the efforts of our parents and thank you so much for supporting this “plan”. It runs very smoothly, quickly and most importantly **safely** when we all co-operate.

### ***Mission Statement***

Maria Montessori saw the child and family in a very universal sense - the microcosm within the macrocosm. She realized that in an environment of love and respect the child was actually creating himself, growing to his true potential. She observed that when the child is allowed to Do, to Act, to Become with love, respect and discipline (first by the parents, then by himself), the child then treats others with the same respect and love, allowing them also to Do, to Act and Become.

The family all learns from one another; the parents allowing and encouraging the growth of the child and thus experiencing themselves growth and development. As the family functions harmoniously in the community, it affects the surrounding society and then finally all of mankind. Gradually the world becomes the ideal place Montessori saw possible - free from wars and all poverty's of mind, body and spirit.

Montessori education in the classroom is a continuation and reflection of the parents' encouragement of growth - allowing the child to learn at his or her own pace by filling the environment with specific materials for the child's eager hands to discover therein. Montessori felt that the child "absorbs" from birth through six, all within his environment. The Montessori classroom thus provides the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, math, cultural (art, music, geography and so on), for the child to satisfy these tendencies. Then, as the "rational mind" begins functioning from ages 6-12, the child can learn many facts abstractly - gaining a truly Montessori "cosmic education" of how our Earth was formed and the different areas of study that arise from man's observation of his Earth: geology, botany, zoology, Earth history; and his culture: art, music, history of civilizations and so on.

Maria Montessori envisioned a peaceful and dynamic world where all growth - physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual could proceed according to each individual and family's needs to the benefit of all mankind.

Maria Montessori felt the child truly holds the Key to Peace on our planet.

### **READING LIST**

- "The Absorbent Mind" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "The Discovery of the Child" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "Maria Montessori: Her Life and Her Work" by E.M. Standing
- "The Secret of Childhood" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "A Montessori Handbook" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "The Child in the Family" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "Montessori and the Special Child" by R.C. Orem
- "From Childhood to Adolescence" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "Montessori and Your Child" by Terry Malloy
- "Montessori and Music" by Elsie Braun Barnett
- "Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "The Montessori Method" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "Spontaneous Activity in Education" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "The Montessori Elementary Material" by Dr. Maria Montessori
- "Between Parent and Child" by Dr. Haim Ginotte
- "Montessori - A Modern Approach" by Paula Polk Lillard
- "Infant and Child" by Gezell
- "Children: the Challenge" by Rudolph Dreikurs
- "The Child and Reality" by Jean Piaget
- "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
- "How to Talk So Kids Can Learn by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
- "The Montessori Way" by Tim Seldin & Paul Epstein
- "Parents' Guide to the Montessori Classroom by Aline d. Wolf
- "Montessori Read & Write by Lynne Lawrence

*“a child's inner life is nourished by an environment warm with love” – Maria Montessori*

## **VANCOUVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **RECORDS**

Vancouver Montessori School complies with the requirements of the Personal Information Protection Act (BC). Personal information is protected by safeguards appropriate to the sensitivity of the information. Personal information will not be used, disclosed or retained for purposes other than those for which the information was collected, except with the permission of the individual, or as permitted or required by law. Student records may consist of, but are not limited to, attendance records, health and emergency information, assessments, developmental and academic progress reports, accident reports and parental authorization for various school activities. Vancouver Montessori School stresses the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of children, their families and our staff. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our school. Parents have a legal right to see any information that is forwarded to other schools.

### **PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS**

Vancouver Montessori School has adapted the best practical guidelines on Procedural Fairness for Independent Schools as prepared by the Federation of Independent Schools and The Montessori Administration Handbook (NAMTA).

### **RESOLVING CONCERNS**

If you have a question regarding your child, ask his teacher. Teachers will be happy to meet privately. Teachers are your first resource to answer your questions and resolve your concerns. If a resolution is not reached, please set up an appointment at the office to see the Principal, Vice Principal or Administrator. We desire to do the very best for your child. When we handle areas of concern quickly and with care, we achieve our goals for your child without disruption.

### **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Vancouver Montessori School's goal is the self-directed child – the child that has inner discipline. To that end, from the age of 3 years when a child begins Montessori School, the child is offered tools that will encourage this. By the time the child is 5 years old many hurdles have been passed already. By having one item of each didactic material in the class, the child can choose to work alone, invite a friend to watch, or to work together with him/her. This control and responsibility that each child has solves many difficulties before they start. If the child does show that he still needs limits set by an adult, we first will determine the child's motivation and then tailor our responses to that, always with the goal in mind of self-control for the child. The child may need to leave the group (i.e. work at an “alone” table for awhile). If even being in the class is too much, we upon occasion may have the child take his work to a younger or older class and work there.

**Playground Incidents** (as well as in the classroom): If an incident does occur, all children involved are brought in to the office:

- the incident is discussed until all agree what happened
- then we try to express if we like what happened (no!)
- then we figure out what can we do differently next time – what our responsibilities are on the playground. Usually, 1 or 2 times with this procedure and the children have figured out how to handle many situations that arise.

The incidents are recorded and monitored. If the incident repeats, we inform the parent that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> incident, the child goes home from school i.e. they are showing us that they can't be in the group. We rarely need to take this step with a child. In addition, at the elementary level, we have classroom meetings – these deal with all issues that affect the children as a group. These are based on an Adlerian model and are used by many Montessori schools worldwide. We have offered Adlerian workshops to all our staff in the past years.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Our safety procedure standards are given high priority, but we are always open to any improvement and a review to keep a high standard:

- The school has an internal alarm system on all doors.
- We have parking/security person on premise near our front door at arrival and pick up times which stop cars from coming onto our property and monitor any possibility of strangers entering the property.
- Playground use is always supervised by two or more adults – with a supervisor always scanning the border for anything unusual.
- Windows to the lane are not left open when the class is empty.
- When on field trips children using a washroom are accompanied by an adult.

An office person watches who enters the building. Parents needing to attend to office business are invited to knock on the door.

Parents are asked to please pickup children at the back gate at dismissal times NOT the hallway, with the exception of Room 11 who will pick up outside the Barnard Street front/cloakroom door.

- The front door will remain closed at dismissal to best monitor the children and monitor who comes into the building.
- Late parents or parents who need to do business in the school at these times can knock on the door and the office staff will be available to let you in. Please keep in mind classes are in session until 4:00 pm so hallways do need to be free from noise and crowds.
- At dismissal late children will be brought back into the office through the back playground door; 5 minutes past pick up time, with the last teacher securing the door and alarm (all school doors are on an alarm system during the day).

## **FOOD AT SCHOOL – VMS IS A PEANUT FREE SCHOOL**

Children may have food sensitivities, allergies or special/restrictive diets. It is important that the school encourage and follow through with a healthy approach to any food consumption at school.

1. Snack – Food preparation is a very important Practical Life activity. All the children love the opportunity to prepare an apple or carrot to share with a friend and/or the class. Donations to Preschool & Extended Day classes are 6 apples and 6 full sized carrots and or bananas on Mondays and the same on Wednesdays. Please let your child's teacher know if you wish to contribute.
2. Lunches – Although sharing lunches is very generous, we must ask parents to not encourage this. The lunch supervisors will send back home 'sharing' food as well as candy & sugar drinks. Thank you for your co-operation.
3. Birthday celebrations are welcomed in the class. The Preschool children participate with a song and actions about how the Earth moved around the Sun and each time this happens the child becomes a year older. In this celebration we ask parents to send with their birthday child pictures of each year leading up to the present birthday & healthy muffins or snack to share. Please see your child's teacher beforehand. Although very generous, please, leave loot bags, balloons, candy, sugar icing, cakes, etc. for home celebrations and do not bring them to school celebrations.

We appreciate that parents inform the office of any allergy or sensitivities their child may have. If your child has these sensitivities/allergies and must not participate in any of the above, please make special arrangements with the class teacher.

## **PICTURES**

For privacy issues, no pictures or videos may be taken of children other than parent's own child without written consent. Pictures taken in class and at class activities are taken for in school use only.

**IT IS IN THE CHILD'S BEST INTEREST TO ARRIVE ON TIME AND BE PICKED UP ON TIME. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE CHILD NOT MISS THE BEGINNING LESSONS OF THE DAY, PLEASE ENSURE THE CHILDREN ARE ON TIME.**

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The staff has numerous duties to perform before school and after pick-up time. Sorry, staff cannot be responsible for transporting students to and from school.

## **ARRIVAL**

Upon arrival, room 3 and 8 children will be greeted at the playground gate and rooms 1 and 2 are greeted at the walkway doors. Good-byes should be said outside the gate and classroom door. The children remove their own coats and boots or outdoor shoes and put on their indoor shoes inside the classroom (this is a practical life exercise). Elementary children are dropped off and line up in front of the school 8:30 to 8:45. Please pull right up to the curb.

## **DISMISSAL**

Dismissal will be at the back-playground gate (not the classroom door) for all classes with the exception of Room 11 which is at the Barnard Street door. Please wait at the gate and your child will be brought to you after the teacher has said "good-bye". Please **DO NOT** come into the playground, as we must monitor very carefully who picks up each child. Please inform the office ahead of time if any children are to be picked up early. If anyone other than parent or guardian is to pick up your child, the office must be informed in writing prior to pick up. If picking up your child early, please wait at the classroom door for your child to come to you. Please do not enter the class as it disturbs the other children at work and flow of their day.

## **MEDICATION**

Any medication/herbal remedies to be administered at school must be handed directly to the office staff and not sent in the care of the child. The medication is kept in the office and must be accompanied by written authorization in order to be administered. Forms are available at the office.

## **CLASS TOURS**

All new children and children with new teachers will have a scheduled classroom tour. We ask the children to please bring Mom and Dad, but please make other arrangements for siblings. These tours should take an average of ten minutes. (See your August letter).

## **NEW PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

New children are scheduled to start two at a time per day. This makes it easier for those who may need individual attention. If a child does have difficulty separating from the parent at first (and this does happen), we ask the parent to leave the child with the Directress/or and come back for pick-up at a pre-arranged time, usually in 30 minutes. Each day we extend the time a little longer to gradually ease the child into the group. We have found in the past that this procedure is easier for the individual as well as the group rather than having the parent stay with the child. Children should be toilet trained by the time they start school (in the beginning "pull ups" are acceptable if needed). Please do not send children to school in diapers.

**ABSENCES** – Please note that excessive absenteeism may affect your child's placement for the following school year.

We ask that the school's office be informed of any absenteeism and the reason. Please call the office (604-261-0315). **Children in Extended day and Elementary must return with a note confirming the nature of the absenteeism, dated and signed by the parent.** If Elementary or Extended Day children miss school due to a vacation, please inform the teachers in writing ahead of time. Assignments can be prepared for the child and handed back upon return. These are requirements under the Independent School Support Act for funding and an audit on attendance is done yearly. Your co-operation is appreciated.

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*"The role of the adult is to respect what the child can do for himself"*

*Maria Montessori*

## **LUNCH**

Full day children are asked to bring their lunch and, for sanitary reasons, a cloth place mat which will go home every day for cleaning. **Please, no candy or gum with lunch.** The lunch hour consists of a supervised 1/2 hour eating time and supervised 1/2-hour outdoor activities. Please bring a water bottle daily with the child's name on a label. Lunch begins with a moment of quiet or a song. Children will eat what they need within 1/2 an hour, so lunch not finished by the end of eating time will go back into the lunch box and be sent home. This will be an indicator whether the child has too much lunch or some things that they specifically do not like. Encouraging children to participate in making their lunch yields the best results! The children will take back home any recyclable items from their lunch kits. Please clean them and help your child recycle them daily. **Outdoor fresh air time is very important, so please see that the children are dressed according to the weather; if it rains – hooded rain jacket and boots.** Children are expected to participate in lunch hour outdoor activity and 1/2 hour active play for preschool children, **light rain or shine** "There is no bad weather, only wrong clothes."

**RECYCLING** is an important issue at school. We encourage the children to use re-usable containers and utensils, thermos, and cloth napkins at lunch. Any items sent with lunches that can be recycled will be sent home for recycling. Please avoid styrofoam, plastic spoons and wrap, and waxed paper container drinks. Children will actively participate in their classroom re-cycling procedure. Parents will be asked to help out too!

## **EXTRA CLOTHING & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

All children need to have a pair of plain, non-skid, rubber-soled (earthquake aware) indoor shoes or slippers to be left at school. All elementary children are asked to bring a **LABELED** change of clothing in a **LABELED** bag. Preschool children need to bring only a **LABELED** change of clothing as the school provides labeled bags.

**EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS KIT** (see sample in the front office. These kits must be renewed yearly).

Each child must bring to school a large see-through Ziploc plastic bag (freezer quality is best) with the following items inside (in addition to rubber-soled shoes and a labeled change of clothing):

- 1) Label with child's picture, name, address, phone number and medical needs as well as parents' work name, address & phone number on a lanyard.
- 2) List inside with:
  - 1 emergency contact 100 km. outside Vancouver
  - 2 emergency contacts in Vancouver
- 3) Small flashlight with batteries.
- 4) Small "space" survival blanket (available at Mountain Equipment Co-Op).
- 5) Snak-pak (cheese & crackers), canned fruit with flip-off top (No Peanuts).
- 6) Family picture.
- 7) Tiny comfort toy.
- 8) Band-Aids - small & large.

**PLEASE, NO PRODUCTS THAT CONTAIN OR MAY CONTAIN PEANUTS**

Similar kits, including water, should be kept in your car for smart Earthquake Preparedness.

## **BRINGING ITEMS TO SCHOOL**

Articles pertaining to class subjects, outing souvenirs (leaves, shells, pictures, etc.) are most welcome (times to be arranged with the Directress/Director). Please leave toys at home.

### **SNACKS**

Children attending 1/2-day class need not bring snacks to school. Each class has healthy snack items to prepare as a part of the practical life activity. Please have children bring a water bottle daily labelled with their name.

**Please, no candy, gum, or products containing peanuts at school.**

*“We must not wait upon him – but educate him to be independent” Maria Montessori*

### **CELEBRATIONS**

Birthday celebrations are a welcome event in the classroom! The parent can bring "healthy" cupcakes or snack. Please arrange this with the Directress/Director before hand and please, no loot bags. To avoid hurt feelings, teachers will not hand out invitations to private parties. If you have a special family, cultural or ethnic celebration you would like to share with your class, please arrange it with the Directress/Director. We view our Christmas time/holiday celebration and parties as a coming together of all cultures - a time of giving and sharing. All the families are invited! Watch newsletters and bulletin boards for details.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

The school requires written permission (see your parent contract) from the parent to allow the child to go on any field trips. If you wish not to sign the field trip permission slip in the contract, it is important that you give your permission and any details for each trip, otherwise the child will not be able to leave the school. Teachers will carry the children's emergency medical information and attendance record for each field trip.

Vancouver Montessori School acknowledges that its much-appreciated volunteer drivers need be aware of the following requirements while transporting children:

1. Drivers have a current driver's license.
2. Drivers have adequate liability insurance on the vehicle.
3. All occupants will be seat belted/in booster seats according to law.
4. A small child will not be seated in the airbag-protected seat.
5. Drivers have no criminal record or history of driving while intoxicated.
6. A small Earthquake Survival Kit and First Aid Kit be carried.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

Services offered by Vancouver Coastal Health include hearing, vision and dental screening. Referrals can be passed on to the Health Nurse. Other services that may be provided by Vancouver Coastal Health at parent's or school's request are those of a speech and language therapist, physiotherapist and psychologist. For the protection of all children, please ensure that your child's immunization schedule is kept up to date and that he/she **remains at home if unwell or has any infectious condition**. A community health nurse from South Community Health Centre, (6405 Knight Street – 604-321-6151) visits the school on a regular basis and she would be pleased to discuss any concerns or questions you might have regarding these services or the health of your child. Children who are not immunized must have a letter on file signed by a parent, stating the reason for not immunizing. The children's records of immunization are shared with the Health Department for permanent recording. Please keep the school updated on tetanus shots.

### **FIRE, EARTHQUAKE & LOCK DOWN DRILLS:**

These drills are done periodically as per requirements and are recorded.

### **STUDENT TEACHERS**

Vancouver Montessori School welcomes teachers in training from the AMI Montessori Teacher Training Centre of B.C. These students visit our school for observation and practice teaching periodically throughout the school year and are under the direct supervision of the classroom Directresses/Directors.

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*"such experience is not just play...it is work he must do in order to grow up"*

*Maria Montessori*

## **NO SCHOOL**

1. Staff meeting "In Service Days" are held approximately four times a school year either for 1/2 day or full day (see calendar) as well as two weeks at the end of June. This gives the staff time to be together as a group to share ideas, update record keeping, and work on projects and materials for the classrooms.
2. Professional days are once or twice a year. This is a day that the staff will visit other schools and/or attend workshops and refresher courses.
3. Workshops and professional development days are essential for the growth and development of the class and teachers. It is a time when people from various Montessori Schools and training programs get together to learn from Montessori Workshop Leaders and also share ideas and experiences. They are a wonderfully rewarding experience for all. There are usually two workshops per year. We feel it is important for our staff to attend.
4. Holidays are scheduled at Christmas, four-day weekend Mid-term Break, Professional Development Days, Spring Break, Easter, and other statutory holidays. Please see the calendar.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The children will bring home periodic newsletters and notices regarding various events and/or changes that may come up during the school year. This information will also be posted on the school website parent login message center. Please read these and inform nannies, sitters or carpool drivers to do the same. Each classroom has its own email for individual class news and classroom needs: i.e. field trips, snack and flower donations, paper cutting volunteers, art supply donations, recycling help, Fundraising Committee Representative, Garden Helper and Class Parent. The Parent Committee notices are also posted on the website as are notices regarding Parent Education,

## **INTERNET COMMUNICATION**

Internet communication can be fast, easy and save time and paper. VMS will communicate by regular paper newsletters and our website. [www.vancouvermontessorischool.com](http://www.vancouvermontessorischool.com). The main school email [www.vancouvermontessorischool@telus.net](mailto:www.vancouvermontessorischool@telus.net) is used for all school business. The classrooms will have class emails for classroom needs.

The website contains a parent link and you will be given a password in your August email to access the school calendar and updated notices. It will be the parent's responsibility to check this regularly. Emails from the school/staff will not contain any child's personal information as to progress, concerns or sensitive issues. As with paper communication, all emails of official school business are approved by the administration before sent.

"There is no such thing as a private email"

**INTERNET POLICY:** Preschool, Extended Day & Lower Elementary do not have access to the internet. There are no computers in the Preschool or Extended Day Classes

## **OBSERVATIONS AND CONFERENCES**

Twice yearly, in fall and spring, we schedule compulsory parent observations and conferences. These schedules will be posted on the class bulletin boards. It is important for the children to have parents attend, so please do sign up. Individual conferences may be arranged at other times with the Directress/Director. We also have several weeks of public and student observations, which can be arranged with the office after the fall parent observations. If you wish to confer with the Directress/Director, **please wait until they are not involved with**

**the children's activities as we do feel strongly that it is not appropriate to discuss the children in their presence.** Your Directress/Director will be more than happy to arrange a meeting time after school.

### **VANCOUVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL ACTIVE PLAY POLICY FOR PRESCHOOL**

In order to support children's healthy physical development, and to meet the requirements of The Community Care Licensing for preschool, VMS is required to implement outdoor active play for 30 minutes, rain or shine. Parents are asked to please have children dressed appropriately for the weather.

*"a child's self-image is created by attitudes of others"*

Maria Montessori

### **PARENT MEETINGS**

***Orientation Meetings*** are held approximately 3 times a year for new and interested parents. Our meetings are held at the beginning of the school year for new parents and at registration time in February for the parents interested in the following year. The purpose of these meetings is to inform parents on Montessori philosophy classroom instruction, answer any questions, and meet our staff. It is an absolute must for new parents to attend these meetings!

For your convenience, teachers hold both afternoon and evening parent meetings regarding the classroom. Please note that Parent Meetings for classes are compulsory for New Parents. (see calendar)

### **PARENT EDUCATION NIGHTS - TBC**

We are pleased to offer two parent afternoon and evening talks based on information regarding Montessori Education. These topics vary in content every year and parents can learn more by attending every year.

- All School – Silent Journey

3 to 6 topics may include:

- The Practical Life area and the link to the home environment.
- The Sensorial area and its impact on further studies.
- Mathematics from the concrete to the abstract.
- Language: vocabulary enrichment, reading, writing and links to the cultural topics.
- Theory and Philosophy.

At the elementary level topics include, but are not limited to:

- Theory and philosophy

A 'Great Lesson' will begin each of the following evenings as we explore geography, history, biology, math, geometry and language:

- The Creation of the Universe
- The Coming of Life
- The Coming of Humans (plus art and music in the Montessori setting)
- The Story of Language
- The Story of Numbers

### **FOR INFORMATION ONLY:**

- **Elementary** school fees are **NOT** tax deductible
- **Preschool & Extended Day aged children's fees** – talk with an accountant or Revenue Canada to see if you meet the criteria to claim tuition fees as a childcare expense
- **Affordable Childcare Benefit Claims** will be applied upon approval from The Ministry of Children & Family Development. Childcare Benefits will be refunded after tuition fees are paid according to your contract with the school.

*“the most favorable time for a child to learn is when she wants to do it herself” Maria Montessori*

**VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES** are greatly appreciated and very valuable to the staff. At our first meeting of the year, we will have sign-up sheets at the class bulletin boards for these areas:

1. **PARENT COMMITTEE** representatives and leaders.
2. **CLASS PARENT** to help organize field trips, telephoning, special events and whatever comes up. This can be shared by several parents throughout the year.
3. **MATERIAL RESOURCE PARENT** to help with paper supply, paper cutting, book covering, etc.
4. **RECYCLING PARENT** to help with class recycling - trips to recycling center with small groups of children.
5. **WEEKLY** laundry help, snack and flower donations

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

In accordance with Montessori Philosophy, parents of all elementary and extended day children will receive a progress report at the teacher/parent conferences in November and March. Four year old children will receive a January and June report. The final progress report for each child will be issued in June. If parents require extra copies, please bring your child's report to the office for photocopying. However, if a family requires two reports (and/or specific instruction), a request detailing any special instructions must be given to the office in writing prior to report time. Please note Vancouver Montessori School does not issue 'reference' letters as our reports are extensive and accepted as such by other independent schools.

### **YEAR END CLEAN-UP**

This is the time of year that the entire school is cleaned from top to bottom; from walls and windows to the smallest piece of equipment; repairs and painting. This care of the environment is essential for the children's new school year.

**PARENT FUNDRAISING EVENTS** are held periodically throughout the year. Many parents have been very helpful with organizing and participating in these events. We are very thankful to everyone for their efforts. The Vancouver Montessori School is a registered charity. Your cash donations to the school are **TAX DEDUCTIBLE!**

**PARENT COMMITTEE** – The VMS Parent Committee is made up of volunteer parents who meet once a month during the school year. The **purpose** of the committee is to support the school and the students of Vancouver Montessori School by:

- a) Raising funds to provide materials and support activities which benefit and enhance our children's school experience.
- b) Promoting and assisting students/classes with their charitable projects.
- c) Promoting and encouraging goodwill in the spirit of Montessori philosophy.

For further details such as meeting times, committee lists, contact information, volunteer signup sheets, and information on parent supported activities, please go to the Parent Login on the schools website.

\* \* \*

*“the child has his own laws of development...it is a question of following these...not imposing ourselves upon him...”*

*Maria Montessori*

## **FRENCH**

French is taught as a second language both at the preschool and elementary level. The French program at Vancouver Montessori School is consistent with the Prescribed Learning Outcomes outlined by the BC Ministry of Education. At the preschool level, French is introduced in a thematic approach through vocabulary words, songs, and interactive language activities. At the elementary level, French is continued in a communicative and experiential approach through a study of different themes and is integrated with music, language arts and visual arts as well as with the daily school life during lunchtime and recreation. Emphasis is placed on oral, written and listening skills, grammar and comprehension, with a view of helping students to develop an appreciation for language and an understanding of culture.

**9-12 INTERNET USAGE AT SCHOOL** – This is monitored closely by the teachers and safeguards are in effect. The children will be given an “Internet Permission Form” to be signed and agreed by both student and parent.

**ELEMENTARY PE** – Children go by school bus to the gym at the Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson Street from October to April. In the warmer months and when it is nice out, PE will be held at a local park. The primary aim of physical education is to enable all students to enhance their quality of life through active living. There is an increasing awareness of the importance of providing children and youth with meaningful and enjoyable movement experiences. Movement and play are focal points of children’s lives and critical to all aspects of their growth and development. A physical education program provides opportunities for all students (no matter what level of skill) to be active regularly while developing an appreciation of and enjoyment of movement. The physical education component of a child’s schooling is just as essential as other subjects. Students, who participate in (sports) these activities benefit from enhanced memory and concentration, develop problem solving skills and have a more positive attitude towards self and others. All this tends toward improved mental attitude, health, behavior and attendance!

## **The Importance of the Three Year Cycle in a Montessori Learning Environment**

The Montessori ‘prepared’ environment groups children together in three distinct programs: Pre-school and Extended Day for children aged two and a half to six, Lower Elementary for children aged six to nine, and the Upper Elementary for nine to twelve year old children. While there is over-lap between programs each grouping is designed to best answer the child’s needs as explained in Maria Montessori’s description of the Planes of Development. In essence a Montessori Environment is designed to allow children sharing the same needs of development to be grouped together.

## **The Extended Day Year**

Experience has shown that an ‘explosion’ into abstract skill development happens during the third year in the pre-school program. It is for this reason as well as because of the child’s general maturity level, and the increased social needs of the child, that the Extended-day or full-day program for five to six year olds was developed. This is the period when all the learning absorbed by the child during the two previous years of Montessori education suddenly ‘fits’ together, makes sense, and the child begins reading, writing, doing math

and showing other spurts of intellectual growth. Some may not start reading and writing during the third year, but as general observation, the process usually begins during this year of synthesis. This ‘explosion into learning’ seems to happen effortlessly only because the ground work was laid during the previous two years. Children will also move in and out of abstract application of their previous learning during this transition period and for this reason it is particularly important that they remain in their familiar environment to allow for deepening and consolidation of their skills. Of course, each child is unique and this exact timing of this educational growth spurt within the third year varies.

The learning habits a child establishes early in life can also make a difference in how well he does later in school. A quality Montessori education fosters such qualities as initiative, concentration, self-discipline, a sense of order, persistence in completing a task, responsibility, creative self-expression and the love of learning. All these qualities are valuable in forming good study habits later in a child’s educational experience. The longer the child can reinforce his good habits and learning skills, the higher the probability that he will internalize them and make them a permanent part of this learning repertoire.

As quoted in Questions Parents ask about Montessori Kindergarten, one parent put it this way: “... The third year is so productive.... Everything the child has learned up to then seems to fall into place and he’s ready to meet other challenges. He has the foundation.”

**Benefits of completing the Three Year Cycle in the 6 to 9 class:** As teachers working closely with a group of children over a three-year period, we are impressed with many of the skills and behaviours we observe in the third year students. The third year in the 6 to 9 class provides many opportunities for the children to work on their public speaking skills while presenting projects to their own class, and sometimes to all three 6 to 9 classes. These presentations and other completed projects, allow the children to get recognition for their advanced skill level, and nurtures self esteem, by demonstrating for the individual recognition of their own progress. Their increased skill level also allows the children to integrate their interests and abilities. They are now able to follow through on their ideas and produce work they are proud of. Through this process they have become conscious learners, able to integrate information into a contextual framework and explain what they have learned to their teachers, classmates and families. As demonstrated during group discussions, in their third year, children become more analytical. They are better able to state their opinions and back them up with examples and a line of reasoning. They have also learned to accept different points of view. Being the oldest among three age groups allows the third year child many opportunities to confirm their knowledge in small ‘teaching’ situations with a younger child.

They take on many leadership roles within the class, ranging from running class meetings, organizing special events or arranging schedules within the class. Children who have been in the 6 to 9 Program for three years have developed a special connectedness. They have helped create an environment of trust. By getting to know each other well through a wide variety of experiences, they have become comfortable with one another and are able to recognize and respect each others strengths and differences. Within the elementary program, we strive to create a strong sense of community. The third year children in particular are able to benefit from the co-ordination between all the elementary classes. The whole teaching staff is interacting with all the children. By the third year, the children see all the teachers as resources, people who are interested in what they are doing, and who will take the time to point them in the direction they need to go. They are able to adapt to different teaching styles and feel comfortable in a variety of learning environments.

### **Benefits of the 9 to 12 Program**

Children entering the 9 to 12 environments are self-motivated learners. They continue to build on research and reasoning skills that they developed in the 6 to 9 classroom. Through in-depth studies of ancient cultures, they are able to place themselves within the framework of human history, to relate math, science, languages, grammar, etc. to the needs and accomplishments of peoples. The environment balances the child’s developing imagination and powers of abstraction with concrete, hands-on materials. Through key presentations, they gain the skills and knowledge they need to go out into the world as explorers. With the integration of disciplines in

the classroom, the children can pursue their own interest at their own pace, and through their own curiosity achieve a well-balanced education. 9 to 12 children are preparing themselves through work to join the adult world, and the classroom is their laboratory.

*“The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six”*

Maria Montessori

### **Peanut Allergy Alert**

Please do not BRING ANY FOOD that contains  
Or “may contain peanuts”

**PLEASE READ FOOD LABELS CAREFULLY!**

### **DONATION TO VANCOUVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

Enclosed please find our donation in the amount of:

\$100.00\_\_\_\_ \$200.00\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name\_\_\_\_\_

(please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

With Gratitude!