

PARENT HANDBOOK

Mission

The mission of Bryanston Montessori is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating Montessori environment that will help children develop within themselves the foundation for a lifetime of learning, thinking, and living. We believe that our small community's deep commitment and dedication, which comprises our school's children, parents, and staff members, is vital in fulfilling this mission. We are a child-centered community that honours individuality and encourages respect for one another and oneself.

Values and Objectives

Our program rests on these core values and objectives:

- Respect Self-respect, respect for others, tolerance, honesty, Integrity and responsibility.
- Compassion Concern for one another, humanity, kindness, peacefulness, understanding, acceptance, and warmth.
- Love of Learning Discovery, exploration, working together, curiosity, and ownership.
- Service: A lifelong commitment to giving something back. Through service to others who are in need.
- Independence Doing for oneself, understanding one's own capabilities.
- Interdependence Responsibility to and healthy dependence upon one another, a love of community.
- Excellence Quality in all that we do to serve the children and cultivate the pursuit of excellence within our students.
- Universal Understanding: A global perspective and an understanding of being part of something bigger than.

Pre-Primary Curriculum

The Montessori preschool classroom is a "house" for children. Children choose their work from among the self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves and work in specific work areas. Over a period, the children develop into a "normalized community," working with high concentration and few interruptions. Normalization is the process whereby a child moves from being undisciplined to self-disciplined, from disordered to ordered, distracted to focused through work in the environment. The process occurs through repeated work with materials that captivate the child's attention. This inner change may suddenly happen for some children, leading to deep concentration. In the Montessori preschool, academic competency is a means to an end, and the manipulative materials are viewed as "materials for development."

In the Montessori preschool, five distinct areas constitute the prepared environment:

- Practical Life area enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement.
- The Sensorial area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions about length, width, temperature, mass, colour, pitch, etc.
- The mathematics area uses manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of numbers, symbols, sequences, operations, and memorization of basic facts.
- Language areas include oral language development, written expression, reading, grammar study, creative dramatics, and children's literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed using sandpaper letters, large and small movable alphabet, and various presentations, allowing children to link sounds with letter symbols effortlessly and express their thoughts through writing.
- Cultural area activities expose the child to geography, history, and life sciences. The integrated cultural curriculum includes music, art, and movement education.

The Bryanston Montessori preschool environment unifies the child's psychosocial, physical, and academic functioning. The primary objective of our environment is to provide students with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security, a sense of order, pride in the physical environment, abiding curiosity, the habit of concentration, patterns of initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. This foundation will enable them to acquire more specialized knowledge and skills throughout their school career.

SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

We undertake to provide a safe and loving environment for your child and cherish them as an individual. Please carefully read the school policies & procedures so that all understand the general running of the school.

Admission to Bryanston Montessori School

1. School tour
2. Receive validation from the school regarding an available placement.
3. Completion of school application form and submission of related documentation
4. Proof of payment of Registration Fee.

Each child will need the following:

Please pack a backpack for your child daily, including the following:

- A change of clothing
- Water in a labelled water bottle

Yearly Supplies

Each child is required to supply the following at the start of the New Year:

- 4 Carlton/Roller Towels
- 2 Boxes of Tissues
- 12 Rolls of Toilet Paper
- 4 Bottles of Liquid Hand Soap
- 6 Packets of Wet Wipes (Pack 64 wipes or more in each packet)
- 1 Ream of White Photocopy Paper

All the children in the environment use these supplies throughout the year. Should your child start during the year, these supplies will be prorated.

Tips for "Tear-Free Goodbyes"

- Arrival – the teacher will greet you at the door, which is on duty. Allow the teacher to show the child where their locker is. They will unpack their bag and lunch boxes, and it's best to say goodbye.
- Never sneak out. When it is time to go, say goodbye to your child. As tempting as it may be, leaving without saying goodbye to your child risks their trust.
- Once you say goodbye, leave promptly. A long farewell scene might only reinforce a child's sense that a preschool is the wrong place.
- Do not linger. The longer you stay, the harder it is. Let your child know you will pick them up and say, "See you later!"
- Learn the other kids' names. When you can call your child's classmates by name ("Look, Matthew, there is a space at the train table with Eli and Katie"), school seems much more familiar and safer.
- Communication. You will receive a message by 10 a.m. to let you know how your child is doing. This will be for the first week only.

School Hours

Bryanston Montessori offers two attendance options:

Half Day 07:00 - 13:00

Full Day 07:00 - 17:00

Both half and full-day attendance will be served a hot lunch at 12h00, and for children attending full-day, an afternoon snack at 15h00 is provided.

Our school runs on the three-term independent school calendar. The Holiday programs operate for two major holidays and are available to all children. The school's annual shutdown is in December.

Holiday Fee:

- All fees include the Holiday Program as per our school calendar.

Drop-Off/Pick-Up Times

- Children are to be dropped off by 08:30.
- A late arrival causes a child to miss part of the work cycle and is highly disruptive to the class, not to mention a security risk to all inside the school.
- Our school gate is LOCKED at 08:30 sharp.
- Should you be late, please know you will be required to return the next day. Please do not ring the school bell and put my staff in an awkward predicament of turning you away.
- Should your child/ren be in any form of therapy and require arriving late on certain days, please communicate this to a teacher.
- If somebody else is collecting your child, please notify us in advance, as we will release your child when we have contacted a parent.

Late Pick Up

Pick-up times: 13h00 Half Day
17h00 Full Day (or throughout the afternoon)

- A fee of R50 will be charged for every 5 minutes you are late (after 13h00 & 17h00)
- You must sign an acknowledgment of lateness, and an invoice will be emailed to you, which must be settled immediately.
- Management will pay all late fees directly to the relevant staff member who was asked to care for your child outside of required school times.

Fee Conditions and Payments

School fees are compulsory and payable in advance.

- Fees are payable on or before the 1st of each month for monthly and term payment options.
- If paying annually, fees are due to be paid in full by the 7th of January of the New School Year.
- Overdue payments will attract interest at the end of each month.

Withdrawal Notice:

- A whole calendar month's written notice is required if you intend to remove your child from the school.
- The monthly fee is still payable in cases of absence from school owing to illness or holiday.
- Fees will be deemed unpaid until proof of payment is received.
- In the event of overdue payment of the school fees, interest will be charged at a maximum rate permissible by law.
- The parents and legal guardian authorize Bryanston Montessori Pre-Primary School to carry out any checks and traces that may deem fit with any registered credit bureau or credit reference and to list them with any credit bureau in the event of this account not being paid within the period for payment.
- The parents and guardians confirm that any notice required to be delivered to them as needed in law may be given to them at the address set out in the Application Form.
- The parents and legal guardians confirm that they are jointly liable as co-co-principal debtors for paying any fees, notwithstanding any other indication and nomination of any other person in the "Person Responsible for Payment of School Fees."
- A 10% discount will apply for a second sibling who attends school during the same period.
- We reserve the right to deny admittance to any child whose tuition is unpaid by the due date.

Attendance and Tardiness

- Regular and punctual attendance is critical to ensuring a positive experience for your child. Consistency and routine are essential elements in a child's Montessori experience.
- Erratic attendance can lead to missed lessons, interruptions in the child's natural learning process, a sense of alienation from the classroom activities and routine, and social isolation.
- Please notify the school of your child's absence for any reason.
- Punctual attendance is also expected of all children for reasons other than illness.
- Consistent tardiness disrupts the classroom and shows disrespect for the teacher and other students. It is common for children who regularly arrive late to school or miss school frequently to exhibit negative behaviour.
- If a parent and child consistently arrive late, the parent will be asked to come in for a conference with the office to discuss rectifying the situation.
- If the behaviour continues, we may ask that the child be taken home upon late arrival at school.
- Should it become apparent that a family cannot support the school's missions or goals, it may be necessary for the administrator to consider whether it is in the school's best interest to keep the child enrolled at Bryanston Montessori.

Medical

Emergency Care

- If an accident or sudden illness occurs, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child.
- The child's emergency instructions are on file; the school will contact the parents immediately.
- If necessary, the child will be transported to the hospital by ambulance or emergency vehicle.
- Your child's medical details on file will determine whether a private or government/state ambulance/medical vehicle is called.
- The consent statement, signed by the parents, will accompany the child so that treatment can be immediately in the parent's absence.

Injuries

- In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be administered by a qualified staff member, and the child will be made as comfortable as possible.
- A written accident report will be filled out for any injury requiring first aid, and the information will be given to the parent at the end of the school day.
- On occasion, parents will be called regarding accidents or injuries that do not require emergency care but may require a parent's further attention or for which a parent may want to seek non-emergency medical care.

* Please note that while every effort is made to promptly give parents an accident report, there may be situations when an accident is communicated verbally before the information is completed (e.g., a minor injury occurring on the playground just before pickup time).

Vital Information

It is imperative that you please keep us informed of any change of address, telephone numbers, medical conditions, change of medical schemes, and change of legal guardianship. The parents are responsible for keeping the school notified of any changes.

Sick Procedure

Please notify the school before 8:30 if your child cannot attend school.

- A sick child or a child showing signs of illness may not be brought to school until they fully recover.
- Should your child be on any medication, such as antibiotics, please keep them at home.

- No staff member is allowed to administer any medicine at school.
- Please notify the school immediately if your child is absent due to a contagious or infectious illness.

Symptoms requiring removal of the child from school:

Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature of 37,8 degrees Celsius or higher taken under the arm (a child needs to be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school, that means the child is fever-free without the aid of fever-reducing substance-e.g., Panado.)

- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhoea, earache, irritability, or confusion.
- **Diarrhoea:** runny, watery stools or two or more loose stools within the last 4 hours.
PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY HAVE HAD DIARRHEA
- **Vomiting:** 2 or more times in 24 hours. Note: please do not bring your child if they have vomited the night before or on the way to school.
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking, or continuous coughing.
- Runny nose (other than clear), draining eyes or ears.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or other spots resembling childhood diseases, including ringworm.
- The child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the other children's health, safety, or well-being in our care.

Note: If you are still determining whether bringing your child is okay, please call ahead to ask us. We may require a doctor's decision on whether the child is contagious.

Snack Time

The school supplies a mid-morning snack to all the children at school.

- WE ARE A **NUT-FREE SCHOOL**; NO PRODUCTS CONTAINING NUTS OR NUT TRACES MAY BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL.
- The school takes no responsibility for lost water bottles that do not have your child's name marked.

Reports/ Communication

We believe that communication is essential and encourage every family to speak with their child's teachers whenever a problem or something that may be significant occurs in the child's life.

Bryanston Montessori has a strong focus on maintaining regular communication with our parents:

- A weekly diary with feedback will be sent home on a Friday afternoon/an opportunity for parents to communicate, too.
- Information via email and WhatsApp throughout the year.

We have a record-keeping file that keeps an up-to-date record of all activities your child is working on in the classroom and your child's actions in the outside area. If you would like to discuss your child's progress or any concerns, you are most welcome to set an appointment to discuss the matter.

Cell Phone Communication:

In keeping with today's times, we use WhatsApp facility to communicate. However, I request that all parents respect the school times, 07h00 to 17h00, when communicating with any staff member. Please do not message before or after school hours. This is out of courtesy for their private time.

Non-Discrimination Policy

- Bryanston Montessori admits students of any race, colour, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded or made available to students at the school.
- It does not discriminate based on race, colour, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies and admissions policies.

- We pledge to represent our school truthfully and accurately to the public and internally to our parent community.

EXTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES

Bryanston Montessori pre-school has an extensive extra-mural program that is made available to children. We offer the following extra-murals:

TUESDAY POTTERY



This is an extra mural where children love and will develop skills needed for school and life. Struggling with skills that are not adequately developed can lead to a child suffering unnecessary stress at school and later in life.

Using pottery and some craft lessons, many essential skills are practiced during lessons with Kids Pottery Hub. We have included a motor-skills development program in their exciting lessons. With careful planning and knowing how to enhance these critical skills, Kids Pottery Hub gives its lessons with specific goals. As with any skill that must be accomplished, practice is fundamental; thus, our lessons are ongoing.

Creativity Development Children are motivated to solve their problems that creations will present.

Fine-Motor Development Muscle strength, hand function, hand co-ordination, hand skills, and eye movements

Cognitive Development Concepts like shapes, numbers, colours, attention, concentration, and memory

Emotional Development Co-operation, experience, and expression

Perceptual Development Shape and space perception and directionality

Life Skills Ensuring children evaluate their results, identify and have the opportunity to self-correct, and know they must organize and be responsible for their workspace

WEDNESDAY KINDERMUSIK

Kindermusik has been voted the best international early childhood music and movement program. Based on decades of research since 1978, experts, therapists, child psychologists, and musicians have developed each activity.

The programs are all age-appropriate and incorporate basic school concepts.

Having Kindermusik in the early years can profoundly impact a child's life. It contributes significantly to musical, physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. The program is based on the belief that musical activities stimulate growth in every area of the brain and nurture the whole child's development. Activities are designed to encourage multisensory learning, simultaneously employing and integrating several senses and stimulating multiple brain areas.

"Changing the world one child at a time."



THURSDAY DANCE MOUSE

The primary aim of DANCE MOUSE is to encourage children to enjoy dance expression and to increase their passion and love of dance. Should children only want to dance for fun (whether talented or not) or to do exams and competitions, they can choose.

- They are teaching children technique and rhythm and increasing their overall self-confidence.



- Dancers are exposed to proprioception skills and various other activities that enhance their sensory, vestibular (balance), and gross motor skills at a steady and controlled pace. Vagus nerve-centering techniques are used to self-calm and refocus.
- Offers a solid foundation of dance, body, and spatial awareness. Dancers become aware of their bodies, limitations, and strengths.
- It is a great emotional release and cardio workout for both boys and girls, offering them an overall sense of well-being.
- Dancers achieve all the above while dancing to the latest music and, most importantly, having loads of FUN!

FRIDAY PLAYBALL

Playball is a sports program that is age-appropriate and covers critical life skills and the fundamental physical development of young children: stability (balance), locomotion (movement), and manipulation (ball skills).

The small class numbers (maximum of 8 children in a class) facilitate personal attention and individual development. Our mission statement embodies our approach to learning and how the responsibility of teaching the children weighs on us as teachers and sports coaches.

Playball's mission is to use sport to develop every aspect of a child's life. The program includes various skills that prepare the children for confident and competent sports participation in all popular ball sports.



Parking

- When collecting your child/ren from school, you must park and exit your vehicle.
- Please pull into one of the parking spaces of the driveway. This way, we can more easily control traffic during arrival and departure.
- Moving traffic through the parking area smoothly is essential to avoid lines or traffic in the parking lot.
- Please follow the general rules of the road when entering and exiting the parking lot.
- Do not leave unattended cars parked in the driveway while running.
- Never leave children unattended in cars. It is not the responsibility of the school's security to watch them.
- Children must always be supervised in the parking lot.
- Once the children leave the school through the gate into the parking area, the person picking them up is responsible for their care and safety.

Discipline

- Bryanston Montessori uses positive discipline, implemented in a developmentally or age-appropriate fashion to meet the individual child's needs.
- Our focus is on how to help children resolve problems and empower them to have a successful experience in the classroom and school community.
- Our discipline policy aims to provide an environment that promotes respect and safety for each person and the shared space.
- The prepared environment reduces the need for discipline within a Montessori classroom.
- The teachers keep engaging activities available for the children, so there is never a lack of something interesting for each student to do.
- The teacher may also redesign the work areas, jobs available, number of children allowed in a work area, etc., in response to classroom behaviour.
- For younger children, the primary method in a Montessori classroom is redirection – moving the child from a disruptive activity and engaging them in something more productive. Emphasis is put on directing a child to what they may do (making appropriate choices) rather than telling them what they may not do.
- For older children, the primary method used in a Montessori classroom involves the child making respectful and constructive choices. This may be done using mini-conferences, reflective listening, questioning, giving limited options, making agreements, helping to resolve conflict, etc.
- Occasionally, in unsafe physical or verbal behaviour or a persistent problem, a child may be removed from the classroom for a period to collect him or herself and to allow the staff to help resolve the situation.
- Parents will be notified of significant or persistent disciplinary problems at school promptly. If it is necessary to involve parents in resolving an issue at school, it will be done with a spirit of cooperation and to help the child.
- Parental support during that time is very much appreciated. Through conferences, goals will be mutually agreed upon. If the goals cannot be met within an allotted time, further professional help or other school placement will be considered for the child.
- Parents or faculty may call upon the administrator to act as a facilitator. Should it become apparent that a family cannot support the school's missions or goals, it may be necessary for the administrator to consider whether it is in the school's best interest to keep the child enrolled at Bryanston Montessori.
- To provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for all children, suspension or expulsion procedures may be executed in the event of severe and persistent behaviour problems. Such behaviour includes but is not limited to defacing or damaging property (school or other), profanity (verbal or written), violence, threats of violence, blatant disrespect, disorderly conduct, and endangering the safety of self or others. The principal will determine this disciplinary action upon consultation with the faculty.

Language

Bryanston Montessori is an English medium school. Children will be addressed in class, and the material will be presented in English.

Clothing

- Children should be dressed in clothing they can put on and remove easily. This encourages independence and minimizes toilet accidents.

- The school will not be held responsible for torn, misplaced, or soiled clothes, and encourage parents to dress their children in clothes that allow them to paint, play, and take full advantage of their school environment.
- Please mark all clothing items and shoes.
- A school sun hat will be supplied for your child and kept at school.
- A spare set of emergency clothing must always be kept in your child's school bag. The school does not have extra clothing; therefore, should your child require a change of clothes and there are none in their bag, we will contact you to drop clothing off for your child.
- If your child is not toilet trained, please ensure you supply sufficient nappies and baby wipes in your child's bag daily.

Sun Protection Policy

- Sun protection is applied on school days before the child is allowed on the playground.
- All children are required to wear their school hats while outside.
- We have a strict rule: "No hat, no play!"

Playground And Activities Policy

- Children can play on the playground and invent games and entertainment.
- However, the school staff can terminate any activity (or game) detrimental to any child/ren involved.
- The school staff also has the right to terminate any activity (or game) if children are excluded from the action. This will be assessed daily and dealt with in daily circles as a "Grace and Courtesy."
- If the continuation of this activity (or game) develops into a positive outcome, it will be allowed to continue.
- Continuous adverse effects of the activity will result in the permanent termination of the game.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Physical:

- Inflicting physical pain of any form.
- Taking, using, or damaging any article belonging to another without permission.
- Making/forcing another to do something against their will.
- Any other physical activities which may diminish the dignity of another.
- Saying or writing anything hurtful or damaging about another person.
- Verbally attacking, threatening, teasing, mocking, racial slurs, hate speech, foul language, and name-calling, thereby diminishing the dignity of another.

Bullying will be dealt with by:

- As far as possible, bullying behaviour should be identified and addressed proactively.
- All parties involved will be interviewed, investigated, and documented if a bullying incident is reported.
- A Peace Corner meeting will be held to stop any further bullying incidents. Should the Directress deem it necessary for the parents of both parties to be contacted?
- Close observation of both parties will be done for two weeks. If bullying behaviour occurs again, a follow-up investigation and report will be done, a parental interview will be arranged, and behaviour modification will be outlined.
- This could include professional counselling with regular report backs.
- An improvement in behaviour will be required if the child is to remain in school.
- If the behaviour does not improve, the child will be suspended, and dismissal may occur.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusive Practice Policy

- As part of the Montessori Cosmic education, religious festivals and traditions from across the globe are explored and discussed from a cultural point of view.
- We welcome children and families from all diverse cultural, socio-economical, and racial backgrounds.
- Our resources and practices include non-sexist materials that value women's and men's achievements.
- Children with unique needs and abilities are welcomed to our school if we can cater to their needs and are subject to our Admissions Policy.
- We aim to create a happy, safe, and prosperous environment where all children can prosper and thrive.

Immunization Policy

The school requires a copy of every child's immunization card to be handed in with their enrolment form.

Child Protection Policy

Keeping our children safe and from harm is our highest priority. The school will act immediately if any abuse or neglect is suspected.

Emergency Plans and Evacuation Procedures

- Emergency plans will be adhered to in terms of the instructions posted in each environment.
- These plans include fire emergencies.
- All staff members are familiar with the school's fire drill procedure.
- These fire drills are held regularly to ensure the children understand the procedure well.
- Each environment is fitted with a hand-held fire extinguisher, and staff members are trained in using them should the need arise.

Birthday Rings

- These are celebration days, and we would like to make it extra special for your child.
- On the day of your child's birthday, we have a unique birthday ring for your child that we would love you to attend.
- You are asked to bring ONE of the following: a cake or some cupcakes, popcorn or ice cream & cones or ice lollies are great too. (Normally in summer) it will begin at 11:00 a.m.
- Please liaise with one of the teachers to book a suitable date for your child's birthday ring.

Toys

No toys are allowed at school; this distracts the children and causes strife. All toys are to please be left at home or in the car.

School Equipment

If bits of our school materials come home in suitcases or pockets, please return them. The Montessori materials are very costly, and the materials must be complete.

Disabilities

Bryanston Montessori welcomes all children, including a child/children whom minor physical disabilities may impede.

HIV/Aids

We teach all children never to touch someone else's blood and always use gloves to treat wounds. All cuts must be covered with plasters. Staff is first aid trained.

Sexual Curiosity

It is not uncommon for children of various ages to become sexually curious. Our policy is to distract the child and watch for further episodes. We will inform the offenders' parents and explain that parts of their body covered by your swimming costume are private and no one may touch or look at them (except Mom, Dad, Doctor, or Nanny).

We explain to the children that if someone tries to touch them privately, shout NO, NO, NO, and tell an adult who looks after them. We advise parents never to overreact.

The children's general ground rules

- Respect for others – you may not hurt (this includes hitting/kicking/biting/pinching/bullying) another child or disturb another child's work.
- Self-respect – you may not do things that endanger your safety.
- Respect for equipment – you must use the equipment carefully and return it to its place, ready for someone else to use.
- It would be best if you were shown how to work with the equipment before it becomes available for choice.

- We have daily “grace and courtesy” presentations. These groups demonstrate positive social behaviour, which helps the children adapt to life in a group and learn socially acceptable behaviour. (For example, how to say please and thank you.)

Acceptance Of Policies and Procedures

Please read, understand, and accept the Parent Handbook, Policies, and Procedures. This Parent Handbook, Policies & Procedure Guidelines may be amended and updated as and when required. Any changes to this document will be communicated to all parents.