



***Broadmeadow Montessori***

***Children's House***



**INFORMATION BOOKLET**

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## ❖❖ *Broadmeadow Montessori Children's House* ❖❖

### **Introduction**

Hello and welcome to Broadmeadow Montessori Children's House.

Maria Montessori endeavoured to develop a method of education that would assist in the overall development of humanity in the broadest sense. Inherent in her philosophy and method of education are values relating to the child in society, the role of education and so on. Such values are fundamental to the operation of a Montessori school.

Kirella Kids Pty Ltd Director Kirsti Freeman own and operate Broadmeadow Montessori Children's House. You are welcome at any time to phone or contact us if you have any enquiry, concern, suggestion or need clarification on anything relating to our centre. Kirsti will be managing the centre and will be available most days on the centre numbers or email. If a matter is urgent or you wish to keep your concern private you may email us on our home email which is checked daily: **Newcastle.montessori@gmail.com**

We will keep you in touch with any issues relating to management of the centre via your newsletter, a direct letter in your pigeon hole or on the centre noticeboard. You can contact us at any time as we welcome your comments and constructive criticisms.

### **Philosophy Statement**

At Broadmeadow Montessori Children's House we adopt and endorse the philosophies of Maria Montessori in her approach to children, her method of education and her overriding aim of development of human potential. Her approach is based on "following the child" - on recognising and responding to the developmental needs of children.

Our Montessori educational program is underpinned by the National Quality Framework the Early Years Learning Framework and by the following beliefs and principles.

1. To put the needs of the child as top priority in the formulating of policy and practice in the centre.
2. To provide a secure, safe and happy environment where children and families can feel respected and welcome and know that their input is valued.
3. To nurture a lifelong love of learning.
4. To foster the natural development of qualities such as independence, self-confidence, self-discipline and persistence, which contribute to the development of the child's personality.
5. To provide a Montessori program, the content of which is determined by the learning sensitivities prevailing during the period from three to six years.
6. To provide a unique prepared environment that encompasses purposeful activities and materials that are readily accessible and always available to the children. The children are then free to follow their interests.
7. To acknowledge that learning may occur independently but is also a social activity and that children (and adults) may learn best when they can share their ideas as equals, with each other (peer learning) and with adults (teaching, mentoring, guiding and collaborating).
8. To provide opportunities for families to find out about and participate in the education and care of their children according to their own needs, interests and opportunities.
9. To support families in the education of their children by providing a program that reflects the cultural values and diverse backgrounds of the children. To demonstrate respect for individual family practices in a non-judgmental and professional way.

10. To understand that learning is broad based and dynamic and address this by catering to all learning styles (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile, plus logical, social and solitary).
11. To create an environment in which staff are enthused and positive and work well together to achieve our common goals.

### ***Information Privacy Statement***

- The primary purpose for which we collect information is to enable BM to provide your child with an individual developmentally appropriate program that is educational, stimulating, nurturing and safe.
- Certain information needs to be collected, in accordance with administration of Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate, regulations or legislation that directly relates to the operation of the service.
- BM discloses personal and sensitive information to the service educators for the specific purpose of administration and education of your child.
- BM will obtain parent/guardian permission before disclosing a child's personal and sensitive information to a professional attending our service for the specific purpose of providing a service for your child. This includes early intervention teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, doctors and counsellors.
- BM include your child's name, age and specific needs in their children's folder and on their individual portfolios. Your emergency contact details will be included in our emergency contact folder. Access to these is generally limited to the administration and educators of the service.
- BM takes all reasonable precautions to ensure the personal information we collect, use and disclose is accurate, complete and up to date. Please ensure you inform the service of any changes to the information supplied.

### ***Policy Booklet***

Broadmeadow Montessori Children's House have compiled a booklet containing policies of the centre. These are reviewed regularly. A copy of the booklet will be emailed to each newly enrolled family. Please read through and familiarise yourself with centre policies. Feedback\suggestions regarding our policies would be most welcome.

### ***About the Children's House***

Broadmeadow Montessori Children's House is a private Montessori Preschool established to broaden the base of Montessori education available in the Hunter. It is part of the vision to expand Montessori education into the 0-3yr, primary field and beyond.

The centre is open 48-49 weeks per year, between the hours of 8am and 4:30pm. A casual booking can be made up to 12noon on the day concerned.

- The morning Montessori work cycle runs between 8 am and 11.30 am. We ask that where possible children arrive by 9am - this will ensure they get maximum benefit from the program.
- It is preferable that when children first start they have shorter days. Be guided by your child. Educators will assist in helping you to know how your child is going and to adjust the times to suit your child and yourself.

The centre is closed for Public Holidays (including Newcastle Show Holiday if gazetted), for which fees are not payable. It may close occasionally for one or two days of the year for educators to attend Montessori teachers' workshops (which are held in Sydney) and the annual conference which is held in a different Australian venue each year. Fees are currently not charged for these days. The Centre will be closed for at least three weeks over Christmas and fees are not paid for the Christmas shutdown period. However, children are due back on our reopening day (usually around 20<sup>th</sup> January) and fees begin to accrue from our reopening day.

### ***Beginning at Montessori***

The starting age may vary according to the time of year the child was born and his/her readiness as assessed by the Directress (in consultation with the child's parents), but generally children may begin at the centre once they turn three. (Children must be toilet trained before starting as we do not have adequate nappy changing facilities). Prior to starting, parents and children have visited the centre and observed the classroom. This enables the whole family to familiarise themselves with our centre and the way we operate. This is particularly

important for the child. Unfortunately we are limited in the numbers we can enrol by our licence. **Once we reach full numbers children will need to wait for a vacancy to occur before they can attend.**

The Extended Day program, (explained below) is available to the older children who continue on for their third year of the program. This may be their kindergarten year.

### ***Families Visiting the Centre***

Family and siblings are very welcome at our centre but we do ask you to be mindful of the following guidelines when visiting.

The centres are set up for 3-6 year olds and so we request that adults and siblings visiting respect this and help maintain the normal classroom guidelines that operate throughout the day. This helps your pre-schooler if this consistency is maintained. These include:

- Walking inside
- Using a quiet voice
- Not interrupting children who are working
- Not sitting on the tables

Please be aware that long social conversations can lead to parents forgetting to supervise children sufficiently. Children of all ages running around outside, unsupervised, climbing trees etc. is not appropriate and poses a WH&S risk to other children and the visitors.

Inside there are many small pieces of equipment that could be dangerous if swallowed. Activities randomly taken from the shelf can result in pieces being lost and extra work for educators to tidy up. **It is not appropriate for anyone other than the enrolled children to take activities off the shelf.** They may however demonstrate to a parent or sibling how an activity works and invite them to participate. This needs to be initiated by the enrolled child themselves. This will include packing away the activity when finished.

It can be difficult for enrolled children to remain behaving appropriately and puts extra pressure on educators when these things occur. So we do ask you to guide your children visiting with you in appropriate behaviour in the children's setting and help educators by supervising them at all times.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and co-operation in this matter.  
(Checked 06/16)

### ***Your Child's Development and Progress***

There are many factors which will affect your child's progress at the centre. Please keep us informed of events at home or any changes in the child's life or routines. Parent illness, new baby, marriage break-up, a death or moving house can have a significant impact on a child and will affect them. If educators are aware that these changes have or are occurring they can provide better support for your child. Any concerns regarding individual children may be approached through any educator confidentially.

Children's daily activities during the Montessori work cycle are observed and recorded. This is transferred weekly onto their individual record sheets. Although we cannot observe everything every child does (we are aiming for their independence of choice and activity - so we can't expect to be present at each activity) this gives us a picture of where the child is up to, which enables us to facilitate work in areas where the child needs more direction. We also keep ongoing records of the children's social, cognitive and emotional development. All educators have input into these records on a regular basis.

Children with a disability or requiring special needs will be catered for through individual programs designed to meet those needs. Referral agencies such as the Special Education Unit at Newcastle University and other professionals are called on for assistance where appropriate.

Educators are available for discussion and information about your child's development and progress, either informally or by making an appointment. If you require detailed information/reporting of your child's progress a formal interview time must be organised.

Parents are encouraged to observe the classroom from time to time. Please take the opportunity to come in for observations during your child's time at Montessori, to observe them within the workcycle. We believe that this is the best way for parents to gain an understanding of how their child is progressing. You can also take this

opportunity to look at your child's records. If coming for a formal interview it is often helpful to you and educators if you have had a recent observation. See educators to make a booking.

Children completing the three-year program will automatically be given a detailed written report of their progress and achievements. (Revised 06/16).

### ***The Extended Day Program***

Montessori recognised the sensitive periods in the development of children's lives when they show strong interest in certain aspects of their environment. She designed her program to introduce aspects of learning at a time when the children are most receptive. The third year at Montessori is the culmination of this process. The EDP can replace the normal kindergarten year.

The extended day program involves working with the more advanced materials and activities. It is the time when those budding and developing skills can blossom and bear fruit. It is also the year in which these children become the "leaders" in their classroom (instead of being the babies in "big" school). This boosts their confidence, independence and self-esteem, and manifests itself in positive ways within the classroom. These children provide role models for younger children, and they often instruct younger children, reviewing concepts themselves in the process. Patience and confidence are reinforced and practiced.

The children in this group usually display a high amount of independence and initiative. In their afternoon sessions the new activities and skills they learn enable them to arrive in the mornings and choose or continue an activity they were working on previously. This is a positive influence on the class as a whole - it provides good role models for the younger children (who look forward to their turn as extended dayers), it builds your child's self-esteem and consolidates all that has taken place in your child's development over the past two years.

Children will be offered a place in the extended day program as they are ready for it. Criteria will include their level of independence and ability to initiate tasks, their stamina and concentration, their age, working companions and interest are all carefully considered. Entry into it is not based solely on age, nor is it an automatic progression, there will be discussion with parents, a phasing in period and at completion of the program children will be given a written document stating their experience and achievements. This should be helpful when they continue their schooling. Generally speaking a child completing the extended day program will continue on to a year 1 class or the Montessori 6 - 9 class. Because they are a year older they will commence a new school at an age when they are better equipped to deal with change. Their confidence and self-esteem will be high and their cognitive and academic development will be well advanced. Also to participate in the extended day program children will need to attend five days per week. Further information about the curriculum and operation of this will be given during your child's second year or on request.

All children approaching school / extended day age will be invited into the extended day group on an occasional basis. They will also be checked for readiness for the extended day program and/or school. If your child turns five between April and August talk to Bhavani about your options.

### ***Number of Days in Attendance***

The Montessori program is a three-year program for 3-6 year olds. As we are a long-day care Centre we also need to balance the traditional practice of a Montessori program with the provision of all day care for parents requiring that and so we offer a range of options, i.e. 3 days (Mon, Tues, and Wed), 2 days (Thurs/Fri) or the 5 days.

More recently we have responded to the needs of working families by providing care across the M-W and Th-F divide however our preference is for children to attend either in the early part of the week or on Thursday /Friday. The extended day program requires children to attend four days per week at least from 9am to 3pm.

### ***Commonwealth Child Care Benefit (CCB)***

This is a means-tested benefit administered by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. Families have the option of receiving the benefit as a fee reduction through the centre, or as a lump sum paid directly to families quarterly. Application forms are available from the Family Assistance Office (phone 136 150) and must be lodged prior to your child starting at the Centre to gain the fee reduction.

Families must be assessed for CCB before they gain access to the Child Care Rebate (CCR). The CCR is not means tested and covers half of the fee paid in certain circumstances e.g. both parents working or studying and even in some cases of volunteer work. The hours worked need not be more than a few each week.

(Checked 06/16)

### ***Priority of Access***

We follow the Government's guidelines for priority of access, which are:

- Priority 1 is given to a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
- Priority 2 is given to a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act;
- Priority 3 any other child.

Within each category the following children are to be given priority; children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children in families which include a disabled person, children in families with a non-English speaking background, children in socially isolated families, children of single parents.

The service operates a further priority list: siblings of present or past families, children transferring from another Montessori program in another city or country and children who attend the 0-3 Montessori Playgroup at Mayfield.

(Checked 06/16)

### ***Bond and Payment of Fees***

A bond equivalent to two weeks full fees, plus the first two weeks fees, must be paid before your child commences at the centre. **The Bond must be included with your enrolment forms.** After receipt of your enrolment form we will send you a Confirmation of Enrolment detailing the start date and the balance of enrolment fee due. This amount must be paid by cheque, postal order, cash or EFT on, or prior to, commencement. **The Bond will be applied to your Statement when you give two full operational weeks written notice of your intention to leave the centre.** If no notice is given your bond will be retained in lieu of notice. If you can give more than two weeks' notice it would be greatly appreciated.

Fees may be paid weekly, fortnightly, monthly or longer according to what suits you, but are payable in advance. Apart from the initial enrolment fees all regular fees are paid via Ezidebit. If you pay by credit card please be aware that there will be a significant fee applied to the payment. You will need to talk/email Dani/Kirsti to confirm fee amounts and first debit date.

Unless you are paying the full fee (no CCB or CCR to be applied to your account) we will need to wait to check your fee payment until after our first return to DEEWR which identifies your family and child. This can take 10 days or even longer where there are problems identifying the family or child so please bear with us. Once set up the fee system flows relatively smoothly.

(Checked 06/16)

### ***Arrears***

We hope that the Ezidebit payment system will ensure that fees do not fall into arrears. If you are experiencing difficulties please notify Kirsti so that some means of payment can be negotiated. Should you leave the centre owing monies for fees we will pursue payment and the matter may even be placed in the hands of a debt collector.

### ***Fees for Non-Attendance***

Please note that fees are payable for the full time the Centre is open, inclusive of Public Holidays and any holidays or sick days you may take. All fees are payable in cases of non-attendance to maintain your child's place in the centre. You must sign the relevant attendance sheet in respect of any absences.

**NB: CCMS may be affected by some cases of non-attendance (see separate information)**

Special cases of hardship will be dealt with by management at their discretion.

No fees are payable over the Christmas shut down period or for Public Holidays when we are shut.

### ***Late Fee***

In the interests of your child and the Centre we encourage you to be punctual when picking up your child.

After 4.30pm the charge will be \$15.00 per 10 minutes as 2 staff members (at overtime rates) must remain until all children have been collected. **Parents who are consistently late will be charged at 2 times the rates.** (No fee assistance is claimable on late fees).

### ***Hours of Care***

On enrolment at the Centre you must notify us of the days and hours of care you require. If you need to change arrangements please speak to educators and fill in a change of care arrangements form. Please be aware that although we will do our best to meet your changed needs it may not always be possible. Casual care is sometimes available on days not booked for but must be arranged with educators ahead of time.

### ***Family Contact and Notice Board***

Notices will be placed in your Family pigeon hole marked with your name (above the lockers). It is the responsibility of parents to collect notices (and statements) from your pigeon hole. Statements will be emailed to you (if possible) regularly and on request. Please check your statement on collection and immediately inform Dani/Kirsti if there is a discrepancy. **Please read notice board daily.**

### ***Educator and Child Interaction***

We aim to provide a safe, happy, secure environment where children have a definite understanding of acceptable behaviour.

There are certain basic, clear and consistent limits that have been set for all children. Most are common sense limits which would also apply at home, such as preserving safety standards, encouraging a caring attitude towards other people, the equipment and the classroom. These are maintained in order to avoid confusion and for the protection of children, educators and the environment.

### ***Parents' Role***

As a parent you are the most important influence in your child's life. No-one loves and cares for your child as you do. The Montessori Children's Centre provides an extension of your home and a unique collaboration between parent, child and educators is achieved. The Montessori program also offers parents creative principles and philosophy and a new understanding of their children that can be incorporated within the home environment. Parent education, reading and observation are encouraged. As a parent you may wish to contribute and be part of the centre community by participating in any number of the following activities:

- Attending information and parent education meetings.
- Supporting open day activities.
- Helping on excursions.
- Participating in working bees.
- Bringing something from your culture in.
- Providing scrap material - boxes, containers, computer paper, etc. for craft and Construction activities.
- Fund-raising for equipment.
- Undertaking a special activity with a group of children such as cooking, teaching a song in another language or English, sharing something of your profession or cultural background.
- Offering ideas and suggestions about our activities.
- Observing the classroom / your child in action and provide us with feedback.
- Participate in surveys, accreditation feedback and other general feedback.

Any help will always be appreciated and it is a good way to get to know the educators, other families and children.

### ***Family Picnics***

During the last week of each Public School term we hold parent picnics. All families are welcome to attend. This is a great opportunity for you to have lunch with your child, meet other parents and get to know the educators working with your child a little better. Each family is asked to bring a rug and their lunch with them. More information about the day of the picnic and time will be given in our term newsletter.

## **Accreditation**

For a centre to be eligible to operate as a long-day care facility, it must, among other things, apply to be assessed against *the National Quality Framework and Standards*.

This is an ongoing process and involves input from families as well as educators and management. There will be family involvement through consultations, etc. but also on an informal basis. Your feedback is welcome and important, so please feel free to contribute in whatever way you can. The maximum accreditation period is 2 years so this is an ongoing process.

## **Arrival and Departure**

### **General**

- Please use Broadmeadow Road as your access, observing the parking limits. **It is a condition of our DA that parents do not use the rear lane and staff car park.**
- Please use the access down the left hand side of the building and enter the classroom through the locker area at the rear of the building.
- Please notify educators if you are going to be late to pick up your child. Late fees are applicable.
- If your child is not attending on a particular day please phone the centre before 8.45am on 4961 1884.
- Children must only be on the premises during opening hours (8.00am to 4:40pm). Strict adherence is necessary as educators are employed outside operating hours to update records, clean, set up and prepare for the next day.

### **Arrival**

- Sign in your child on the ipdad. This is a requirement of DEC, the Centre, and Department of Health and Human Services (to ensure payment of CCB). If your child is absent for whatever reason you are still required to sign the attendance sheet for that day(s) (upon return) stating the reason(s) for the absence. In some cases CCB may alter (see allowable absences information from DFCS).
- Use the comments column to note any change in the child's normal routine that we need to know and talk to educators about it.
- Complete medication forms if required (as stated in policy booklet).
- Please say goodbye to your child each morning. It is normal for some children to experience some separation anxiety. Most children will settle. Do not steal away as this does not develop feelings of confidence or trust in your child. You may ring the Centre at any time to see how your child is going.

### **Departure**

- Please be prompt to collect children so that you are off the premises by 4.30pm•Ensure that an educator is greeted so that they know the child has been collected.
- Sign your child out on the ipad.
- Have child collect bags and craft. Pick up medicine and notices from your pigeon-hole.
- If for any reason the designated person cannot pick up your child please phone the centre with the new arrangements. If the person coming is not named on your persons to collect authorisation they will need to provide photo identification to staff. Please note: you must provide the centre with a list of people authorised to collect your child before the need arises to use them. Please keep this list current.

### **Absences**

- You will need to sign the attendance sheet for any days your child is absent. You are allowed up to 40 days unexplained absences before your CCB is reduced. Absences supported by a medical certificate will not count against your allowable absences so if you think you may exceed your allowable absences please provide medical certificates where these are appropriate.

### **Lockers**

- Upon arrival your child's belongings should be placed in his/her locker. Their morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack should be in separate, named and marked bags/containers. Please try to avoid cling wrap and plastic bags as we aim for reduced waste. The morning snack should be placed on the table beside the fridge. Lunch and afternoon snack should be put in the children's fridge.

- Encourage your child to carry their bags themselves and to organise their fruit break, lunch and afternoon tea. It all aids their independence.
- Changes of clothes, plus a warm top should be in your child's bag. A hat should be provided each day. All belongings should be named.

### **Safety**

The following guidelines must be followed at all times:

- The centre is a smoke free zone.
- Gates and latches must be kept shut at all times. Gates are fitted with self-closing hinges and magnetic latches. Please do not let the gates "bang shut" as this reduces the life of the latches. On windy days please check that the gate closes and is latched. Please do not lift children up to open the gate or allow them to climb on the gates. Be aware of other children and adults and ensure no one slips past while you have the gate open.
- Umbrellas and raincoats must be taken away by parents and if still needed brought back in the afternoon.
- The following are not to be brought and/or left in reach of children -
 

Glass jars/bottles	chewing gum/lollies
Money	balloons
Styrofoam/polystyrene	ropes
Plastic	toys
Dress up clothing	

### **Clothing**

**All clothing must be clearly labelled, including shoes.** This is most important to avoid confusion with lost articles and to enable staff to return items to their correct location.

- Clothing should be comfortable and able to be played in (i.e., doesn't matter if it gets dirty).
- Children need to wear suitable clothing for taking themselves to the toilet. All in one suits or overalls, or jeans with tight zips and studs may make it difficult for your child.
- **Children need a broad brimmed hat to wear** whilst playing outdoors. (**Baseball caps are not adequate**) Clothing must also provide protection from the sun e.g. tops and dresses with sleeves, T-shirts (no halter necks, bare shoulders).
- **Thongs, clogs, rubber boots and slippers are not suitable as they can be dangerous when children are using outdoor equipment.**
- **Good, comfortable shoes** are essential for outdoor play, climbing and when on walks and Excursions. If children come in in unsuitable shoes they will be encouraged to play in bare feet.
- Changes of clothes and warm tops must be provided (with names on) and **a hat with name**).
- Dirty/wet clothes will be placed in plastic bags and put in your child's locker to be taken home.
- Lost property will be located in the box beside sign in cupboard - please check daily. All articles of clothing not clearly labelled, and unclaimed within three (3) weeks, will become the property of the Centre and used for spare clothes.
- Please do not send your children in dress up clothing (eg Batman suit), wearing jewellery or in clothes which you would not want to be marked.

### **Rests**

The centre has sleeping mats, with sheets and blankets, available at the centre for children who would not normally require a rest. Educators closely observe children and suggest a rest where appropriate and children are encouraged to let educators know if they would like to rest. No child is coerced to rest – it may be suggested but they make the final choice. All linen is washed after each use.

If your child will need a rest routinely during the day, please talk to educators about this and supply a "bed bag" containing sheet/blanket and if necessary a sleep toy.

### **Family Library**

We have a family library with books, videos and magazines covering Montessori education as well as general material relating to parenting and children. Please let educators know when you borrow a book, fill out the borrowing book, and then return it within two (4) weeks to enable circulation.

### **Newsletters**

From time to time newsletters will be printed to keep you informed about what is happening at the Centre, e.g. Excursions, visitors, children's activities, teachers workshops, fundraising and general items of interest. Please keep these in your family resource folder for future reference.

### **Birthdays**

Families are asked to prepare a small poster with a photo representing each year of your child's growth and development. This is displayed in the class room. All of these events aim to give your child a sense of history and time.

Every child's birthday is celebrated with a small ceremony. A candle on a plate represents the sun. Whilst holding the globe of the world, the child walks around the 'sun' and the Directress recounts significant events in each year of the child's life. After the child has circled the 'sun' the same number of times as his/her age the class sing *Happy Birthday*. The candle is then blown out and "Happy Birthday" is sung.

A small snack for the children to eat after afternoon tea may be provided. The snack can be patty cakes or individual serves of slice, fruit, sliced vegetables or dips. Heavily decorated cakes look enticing, but often turn out to be not so appetising. Cutting a large cake can also be impractical for educators. We use this time to practise courtesy and develop social skills. Restriction of colourings, flavourings and additives would be appreciated. Please do not use chocolate and remember **no nuts** please. If your child is unable to eat any or all of these treats please enter this information on your enrolment form and talk to educators. You will need to provide an alternate treat for your child to have at the centre for some birthday celebrations.

If your child's birthday is during the holidays or occurs at the weekend, please check with the Directress to organise a suitable day for celebration.

### **Sun-screen/Hats**

Please make sure your child is sun-screened with a broad-spectrum 30+ SPF before arriving or on arrival at the centre during the weeks when we are running our summer program (i.e. when the children are playing outside as you arrive).

We re-apply sun-screen before children are allowed outside to play in the afternoon. Also make sure each child has a hat that shades face, neck and ears and shirts which cover neck and shoulders as much as possible. (I.e. no bootlace straps or vests). **If you do not want sunscreen applied to your child please provide a letter to this effect and discuss management of sun with staff.**

### **Fruit Break/Lunch/Afternoon Snack**

**Our centre is a nut free centre.** Please make sure that no form of nuts, nut products or products containing nuts are sent to the centre.

- Please provide your child with an appetising snack for fruit break e.g. especially fruit, plain biscuits, cheese, vegetables, dried fruit, yoghurt, small sandwiches, etc. These also make a nutritious snack to pack for afternoon snack packed in a **paper bag or small box with their names clearly marked.** (Food that requires peeling, slicing and cutting e.g. apples or oranges give the child a chance to develop these skills).
  - Lunch too needs to be packed in a container **with the child's name on it.**
- Containers** – we encourage children to be self-sufficient so their food containers need to be as simple as possible. E.g. paper bag which can be recycled, plastic zip lock bag, small simple box. **If you transport food to the centre in a padded bag please empty the bag into the fridge and remove it. We do not have room in the fridge for large bags/boxes.**
- Please do not send any drinks – filtered water is available.
  - **No sweets, chocolates, chips, nuts, cakes, commercially pre-wrapped food or carrot sticks** (carrot sticks are considered a choking hazard, children may bring carrots prepared other ways e.g. grated, ribbons etc.).
  - Please try to avoid foods with artificial colouring and preservatives as these can affect behaviour. Also foods with high sugar or fat content.

This sounds very restrictive but just let common sense prevail and remember the simplest option is often the best – fruits, vegetables and some form of cereal – bread, crackers, rice cakes, wraps etc.

- **With your child's help, select a pottery mug for their individual use at the centre. Be sure that it is small enough for your child to easily handle and to carry when full of water. Put their name on it with permanent marker (available at Centre if needed). The children are encouraged to use their own mug, to wash, dry and put it away when finished with.**
- Health, food and safety regulations means we can no longer reheat food.

### **Toys/Money**

No toys, money or dress-up costumes etc. are to be brought to the Centre. This rule is standard in Montessori classrooms and we ask parents to observe this strictly as it can cause distractions, upsets and arguments within the normally calm environment. We also cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys.

### **Observations**

Observations in the classroom are welcomed and can be booked with the Directress.

During this time we will ask you to sit quietly and observe, so as not to disturb the children. You will also be welcome to provide us with any verbal or written feedback, and/or questions. During the morning break or at pick-up time there will be an opportunity to talk with the Directress about your observation. If you wish to view your child's records and have a fuller more formal report on your child you will need to book a time when the Directress is able to spend time with you.

### **Family Helpers**

During 2010 families requested that we begin a system of family helpers. This was to allow them an opportunity to more closely observe the classroom in action. They also wanted to observe their child in the setting and get some idea of how they interacted with their peers. From March 2010 it has been possible to book in and spend some time interacting with the children in the classroom.

### **Excursions**

The children will be taken on excursions from time to time. Routine excursions, i.e. short local walking excursions that do not cross main roads require a general permission note that is signed on enrolment and updated each year. With excursions of a larger nature individual permission is sought giving full details of the excursion. It is your responsibility to check the details to see where, when and how your child will be taken on an excursion. Families are encouraged to participate in excursions and your assistance is necessary if we are to meet the child/educator ratios required. We greatly appreciate this kind of support. Some excursions may involve additional costs.

### **Fire Drill and Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

We regularly conduct fire drill and emergency evacuation procedures practice. All family members and visitors are required to participate if they are present at the time of a practice, so please familiarise yourself with the procedure. Be aware that if you arrive during the middle of a practice you must not enter the centre, but must join the group. We discuss the need to practise these drills and go through the procedure the day before the drill to help minimise any fears or concerns children may have.

### **Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy and Procedures**

#### **Aim**

To ensure the personal safety and security of all children, educators, family members and visitors by providing a safe, secure environment where certain routines and emergency procedures are followed.

#### **Statement**

The centre will plan for and respond effectively to fire and emergency evacuations.

Evacuation may be required in the event of a fire, *chemical spill, earthquake, gas leak, flood, bush fire or other intrusion to the centre*. Planning for and responding effectively to fire and emergency evacuations is important to ensure safety of children, educators and visitors to the centre.

### **Procedures in Place**

In the case of an emergency, the educator appointed as Communication person is responsible for calling 000, for ambulance, fire services or police

To effectively plan and respond to fire and emergency evacuations, the centre will:

- Ensure educators and children participate in *quarterly fire drills and evacuation procedures*.

- Ensure casual staff, volunteers and students are aware of emergency procedures before they commence work. (Copies of our Emergency Evacuation Procedures are displayed near exits).
- Encourage families to read our Emergency Evacuation Procedures.
- Identify and plan for potential emergencies (WH&S checks).
- Have a fire extinguisher and fire blanket readily accessible near areas where fires are likely to start, such as the kitchen.
- Ensure fire extinguishers and other equipment are tested twice annually (by a recognised authority) and are in good working order, fire exits are clear (all doors in centre should be easily opened in an emergency), install smoke detectors, test regularly and replace batteries when required.
- Keep records and evaluations of testing and evacuation practices.
- Have an evacuation pack which is regularly checked.
- Display near all centre phones, current emergency telephone numbers.
- Prominently display at each exit the centre emergency evacuation plan.
- Ensure the safety of all children and adults before attempting to extinguish a fire.
- Ensure educators wait for the *all clear* before re-entering the building.
- Ensure counselling and debriefing services are available for all those involved in an emergency situation, if required.

Educators shall:

- Be familiar with our Evacuation Procedures 1 and 2 and the roles of Communications Educator, First Aid Educator and Responsible Person.
- Know the location of the extinguishers, fire hoses and alarms in the building.
- Ensure that all persons have left the building, checking each area, including bathrooms and offices.
- Know that the Responsible Person will be the person to attempt to extinguish a fire if it is appropriate and poses no danger. Accordingly the Responsible Person will be the last to exit the building.
- Make appropriate arrangements for disabled persons.
- Whilst at the designated assemble area, check attendance roll to ensure that all children, educators and other adults are accounted for. Report to the Responsible Person on the status of the evacuation e.g. how long the evacuation of the building took.
- Remain ready to assist in any way directed by the Responsible Person.
- Assist in the completion of the Emergency Evacuation Evaluation.

**Legislation;** Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care; Standard 2.3.3

*Revised: Dec 2011; Dec 2013; 2014; June 2016 S.L.*

*Review: Review June 2017*

## **Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

### **Evacuation Procedure**

See **emergency exit diagram** to view emergency exits and meeting points. Evacuation exit 1 is the exit through the back of the building, through the glass sliding door. Meeting point 1 is at the back of the yard by the sandpit. Evacuation exit 2 is through the front door. Meeting point 2 it in the far corner of the front garden.

1. Alarm sounds (Smoke alarm).
2. **Responsible Person** nominates which emergency exit is to be used, then delegate's **First Aid Person** and **Communications** person. If possible **RP** will check all rooms to ensure everyone is out of the building, close windows and doors and turn off air conditioner before exiting. (If she deems it safe to do so, she may make an attempt to extinguish the fire using the fire equipment installed)

3. Children and adults to move to **nearest educator** who will escort them to the exit nominated.
4. **Nearest educator** helps children move out of classroom, counting heads as children go through and directing children to move to the gathering area. Other adults present exit along with children. All adults will focus on remaining calm and reassuring children.
5. **Communications person** collects sign in sheet from verandah area (if possible – alternatively the Montessori daily record may be used). She also collects the phone and the emergency contacts file as she goes to join educators, children and other adults on site at the nominated meeting point.
6. **Communications educator** phones emergency services on 000, when she joins others at the meeting point.
7. **First Aid person** collects first aid box and the evacuation box (along with asthma puffers and epipens) before exiting.
8. **First Aid person** provides first aid if necessary.
9. **Administrator** picks up laptop and mobile phone, shuts office and proceeds to meeting point.
10. **Responsible Person** notes time taken to evacuate fully, reassures children, checks head count and completes a roll call using attendance sheet.

**No persons are to re-enter the building unless authorised to do so by the Emergency Services or Responsible Person.**

*Revised Jan 2012; Jan 2014 SL; Jan 2013; Jan 2015; June 2016*

*Review Jan 2018*

***Do not collect any belongings while evacuating. Responsible Person may retrieve bag/s before exiting if safe to do so. This is to provide a 2<sup>nd</sup> mobile phone for emergency.***

#### *Relocating to Emergency Centre*

In the event of an emergency where it is no longer safe to remain on centre premises educators and children will relocate to one of our emergency centres. **Our emergency centres are Newcastle Police and Community Youth Club (PCYC) located on Young Rd Broadmeadow and The Entertainment Centre located Brown Road Rd.** The steps in emergency procedures will be completed before relocating.

The decision as to which emergency centre will be used will be the responsibility of the **Responsible Person** based on the situation and circumstances.

Once it has been decided to relocate the following procedures will adopted:

1. The **Responsible Person** will contact the PCYC on 4961 4493 or The Entertainment Centre 4921 2100 to let them know we are coming.
2. The **Responsible Person** will put on a fluorescent vest (located in emergency box) before leaving the centre.
3. **If relocating to the Entertainment Centre**, educators and children will walk to venue using the closest exit depending on which meeting point they are at. The attendance register or Activity record, emergency contacts and first aid and evacuation boxes (along with asthma puffers and epi-pens) will be taken with them by those responsible.
4. **If relocating to PCYC** educators will walk with children to the venue. There is one road, which will need to be crossed when relocating to the PCYC. Educators will use the caution tape located in the emergency box to provide a boundary for children to cross and to help with supervision and safety.
5. Once at the venue another roll call will be completed by the **Responsible Person**.

6. The **Responsible Person** together with other available adults will remain with the children at all times to reassure them and to help keep them calm.
7. **The Communications person** will attempt to contact families or emergency contacts. Media services e.g. radio may also be used to notify families.
8. The **Communications person** will have the centre mobile phone to receive any incoming calls while they stay near the children.
9. Educators will stay with children until all children have been collected by authorised persons.

Revised October 2011: Oct 2013 SL (Katherine added Jan 2013); Oct 14; June 16

Review June 2018

### **Lockdown Procedure**

A lockdown may be necessary in circumstances where the outdoor environment poses a danger to anyone outdoors.

Examples may be:

- A hold up nearby and there is a suspect considered dangerous around, or on the premises.
- An intruder e.g. non-custodial parent, anyone affected by drugs or alcohol, anyone with a weapon.
- A gas leak outside.
- Smoke due to another building on fire.

**If there is a circumstance where a lockdown is necessary for the safety of the children and educators, the following procedures will apply:**

1. An alarm (whistle) will be sounded to alert all educators to begin lockdown procedures.
2. The **Responsible Person** will activate the duress buttons on the security alarm panel (4444).
3. **RP** will nominate two educators to secure the building by locking doors and windows and closing shutters.
4. **RP** will also contact emergency services on 000 and inform them of the circumstance **and keep in contact about what is happening.**
5. **All other Educators and adults** present will gather children in the safest indoor area, which provides the greatest protection e.g. out of sight, away from windows. (Front carpeted area)
6. **When everyone is safely gathered the Responsible Person** will take a roll.
7. The **Responsible Person** will contact the Approved Provider as soon as they are able to and notify them of the situation.
8. Educators and children will remain together in one part of the classroom/building ensuring that all people stay clear of the windows and doors **until the all clear from emergency services is given.**
9. Once all clear is given, the **Responsible Person** will email children's families to inform them of the situation and give the all clear for collection.

**Please note that during the lockdown, families will not be contacted as this may put more people in danger due to the unknown circumstances outside.**

Revised: June 2012: 2013 SL (Katherine added Jan 2013); June 14; June 16

Review June 2018

### **Outdoors Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

If an emergency occurs when children are outdoors playing that requires all educators and children to move to the evacuation meeting point, the following procedures will be employed:

1. Once danger has been identified **first educator to become aware of the danger** will sound the outdoor alarm, which is 3 blows on a whistle. Whistle is located in shed. It may have to be blown inside the back door of the main building to alert any educator or children inside.
2. **Responsible Person** will nominate a **First Aid person** who will, if possible, collect first aid and evacuation boxes including asthma puffers and epipens from the building.
3. **Responsible Person** will nominate a **Communications person** who will, if possible check the inside rooms for children and adults, collect the phone, emergency contacts list and sign in sheets for children and educators.
4. **Everyone must remember that their safety is critical and only enter the building if it is safe to do so.**
5. **Other Educators** will direct children and any adults present to meeting point 1 (sand pit).
6. **The Administrator** will bring laptop and mobile phone, shut office and proceed to meeting point 1.
7. **Responsible Person** will phone emergency services on 000, as soon as they join others at the meeting point.
8. The **Responsible Person** will take a roll to check that all children and others are safely gathered at the meeting point.

**No persons are to re- enter the building unless authorised to do so by the Emergency Services or the Responsible Person.**

*Revised June 2012: 2013 SL (Katherine added Jan 2013); June 2014; June 2016*

*Review June 2018*

**Legislation:** Education and Care Services National Law Application Act 2010; Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011; Part 4, Div 5 R 97-1(a, b), 2, 3 (a, b), 4; Reg. 98; Quality Standard QA 2, St 2.3, E 2.3.2, 2.3.3

**Sources:** Fire Protection Association Australia ([www.fpaa.com.au/](http://www.fpaa.com.au/))

*Managing Risks in Children's Service*, Caton S. Roche, D. 1999.

*Managing OHS in Children's Services*, Tarrant S. 2002.

*Health and Safety in Children's Centres Model Policies and Practices* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised (2003) University of NSW  
Work Cover NSW [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)

### **Recycling and Waste Reduction**

As part of our program we will be endeavouring to show the children the value of recycling.

- We have established 3 compost bins and 3 worm farm for suitable food scraps.
- We ask you to save containers, packets, boxes (large and small), lids, etc., computer paper - anything that can be used by busy hands.
- We have recycle bins both in the classroom and in the outside area.
- We ask that you consider waste when packing lunches and minimise cling film and plastic bags

### **Educators**

All educators employed by the Broadmeadow Montessori Children's House must have a genuine interest in Montessori philosophy and a Montessori education for children. They will participate in Montessori workshops each year. Full time educators are required to possess or obtain Montessori teaching qualifications.

### **Educator Training and Qualifications**

Most Montessori classrooms have at least one Montessori trained educator. In regional areas this can be difficult to maintain and schools often have to wait until trained educators move into the area. This is one of the reasons management require permanent full time educators to complete a Montessori qualification. This means that we presently have four educators with Montessori qualifications. However, educators without Montessori training are guided and mentored by the trained Montessori educators.

Our centre has a Montessori director, responsible for the program, and management (Kirsti) responsible for the day to day running of the centre. She is also the **Approved Provider** of the service. Bhavani is the centre's **Nominated**

**Supervisor and Montessori Directress** and shares in the running of the centre. Other educators will also hold accreditation as **Responsible Persons** who may be in charge of the service in the absence of the Nominated Supervisor. They must also hold State Early Childhood training at Diploma level and/or Early Childhood Teacher Qualifications.

All educators must hold or be actively working towards at least a Certificate 3 qualification. In addition to this there are other local in-service courses run for Early Childhood Workers. Educators are also required to have a current first aid certificate and training in anaphylaxis and asthma management.

Before casuals and educators start with us they visit the centre to meet with educators, providing a copy of their resume. They are then invited to do at least 2 hours observation in the classroom. This allows them time to familiarise themselves with the centre without the pressure of responsibility. They are given Montessori literature to read along with the appropriate staff handbook and information. Where possible management will give casual work to someone before making a permanent appointment. This facilitates better and longer term training and helps orient educators into a Montessori philosophy and approach. They are guided carefully as they embrace the philosophy. Other qualifications, initiative and enthusiasm are all valued, along with genuine interest in Montessori education. From time to time we will also take a student for the practical component of their course. For further information about this talk with management or the Montessori directress.

(Revised 06/16)

### ***In General***

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Communication between educators and families is an essential factor in meeting the needs of the family. Do not hesitate to talk to the Directress, educators, or Approved Provider (Kirsti) about any concerns you may have. This is such an important stage in your child's life and we must all make sure that it is as fulfilling and happy as possible. Thank you for choosing our centre!

**STAFF 2017:**

Kirsti Freeman                      Administration and Management  
Bachelor degree in Teaching- Primary and Bachelor of early  
childhood studies.  
Diploma in children’s services.

Educators

Bhavani Nathan                      Montessori Director  
(Mon, Tues                              Nominated Supervisor  
Thurs & Fri)                              Montessori Diploma 3-6  
Diploma in Children’s Services  
Advanced Diploma in Children’s Services

Shuchita                                      Diploma in Children’s services  
Montessori Diploma 3-6

Mo McGinnis                              Certificate 3 in Children’s Services  
Montessori Certificate 3-6  
Studying Diploma

Jessica King                              Certificate 3 in Children’s Services  
Enrolled for Montessori Training

Deepa Ramasamy                      Certificate 3  
(Mon, Tues, Thurs)

Samantha Kelly                              EC Degree  
(Wed)

Contact Numbers

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