



**Mahurangi  
Montessori  
Primary  
Trust**

**Montessori Unit  
at Matakana Primary School**

**Information and Enrolment Pack**



[www.montessori-matakana.co.nz](http://www.montessori-matakana.co.nz)



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### MONTESSORI EXPLAINED

Montessori is an educational philosophy that is used successfully throughout the world from preschool through secondary and has been in existence for over 100 years.

Dr Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952) was Italy's first female doctor and developed a scientific approach to education. She based all her work on the principle that schooling should work *with* the child; not *against* it. In her first school in the slums of Rome, she witnessed what had previously been considered impossible: previously unruly, unmanageable children who were given time and space to explore a range of interesting equipment, free from adult interference, slowly transformed into sociable, communicative and considerate children. She was able to deduce that children have a natural curiosity and desire to learn, without the need for rewards or punishment and without constant adult intervention: *"The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, "The children are now working as if I did not exist.""*

Teachers in a Montessori classroom will first be quiet observers, identifying each child's needs and stage of learning. Only then do they become active in guiding and encouraging, generally on a one-to-one basis. Learning is supported by beautiful Montessori equipment, which is usually self-correcting, offers systematically graduated lessons and generally isolates one principle. Montessori gives children the opportunity to keep succeeding, with each new step mastered at their own pace. The result is an inner self-confidence and a lifetime love of learning. Montessori saw the child as the creator of himself: *"The foundation of education must be based on the following facts: that the joy of the child is in accomplishing things great for his age; that the real satisfaction of the child is to give maximum effort to the task in hand; that happiness consists in well-directed activity of body and mind in the way of excellence; that strength of mind and body and spirit is acquired by exercise and experience."*

Montessori saw the value in developing the *whole* child. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of social responsibility towards the community and environment, as well as a moral responsibility. They learn that everything is interconnected: climate, crops, culture, architecture and so forth. They come to see themselves as part of a much bigger picture, one to which they ought to contribute constructively. Children of all cultures and creeds respond well to Montessori.

## HOW MONTESSORI WORKS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Montessori Primary programme reflects the specific needs of the six to twelve year old child. This is a **period of stability** after the rapid developments of the first six years of life and before the upheavals of puberty.

During the primary years, children are **hungry for knowledge**. They need to know everything about everything. They are able to undertake research and have a basic understanding about cause and effect. During this plane of development, they start to **move from concrete to abstract concepts**.

Socially, there is a **herd instinct**. They have the need to cluster together, even whilst working independently. They enjoy controlling their own games and outdoor activities, developing these themselves with minimal adult intervention.

The children are also busy developing an **awareness of morality and social conscience**. They understand the links between their acts and the needs and rights of others.

Dr Montessori referred to teachers as directors or directresses as their role is to direct, guide and facilitate a child's learning.

The Montessori curriculum has been matched with the New Zealand curriculum objectives. The New Zealand curriculum is presented within the Montessori framework. There is a daily, uninterrupted three-hour work cycle, during which children chose work. There is an expectation that each child is engaged in challenging and meaningful activities throughout a work period. There is no choice not to work although it is appreciated that we all need moments of rest and quiet contemplation. Work is chosen based on lessons that have been presented by the teacher. Although children have freedom to choose their work, they are required to cover all curriculum areas within each week. The teacher ensures that numeracy and literacy are given priority. The number of activities completed in a day and the length of time spent on each piece of work depends on the child and his or her individual needs and interests. The teacher guides and monitors the children in their decision-making.

## THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

- Children are grouped in classes of mixed ages and abilities. Younger children look to the older ones in the class for guidance. Older children become role models, often found teaching the younger children, thus reinforcing and consolidating their own learning.
- Montessori teachers are trained to teach children one at a time or in small groups. Children are used to working independently. The teacher is therefore able to manage a large class of students of varied abilities all at once.
- Children's confidence grows as they work through tasks that build on each other. A carefully planned series of successes ensures that the child believes he can learn by himself.
- At any given time, different children will be studying any number of different areas, at varying degrees of complexity. All subjects are interwoven, not taught in isolation.

- Children are free to move around the room rather than remain at allocated desks.
- Children are able to work on any material that has been presented to them, at any time, moving on when ready. With the exception of national testing and grading, there is no need for frequent assessing and testing. The teacher always maintains comprehensive records of each child's development and progress.
- Both adults and children respect concentration and do not interrupt those who are busy at work. The children will follow a three-hour work cycle in the morning to develop powers of concentration and minimise interruptions.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE MONTESSORI PRIMARY PROGRAMME

These general educational aims are not exhaustive and cover a broad range.

### Physical Objectives

- Develop a body with movements that are mastered and controlled
- Develop the fine co-ordination needed for writing and handling materials
- Learn sports, which can be enjoyed into adulthood.

### Emotional Objectives

- Develop an awareness of one's own feelings and of one's effects on others
- Establish a sensitivity to and consideration for the feelings of others
- Foster a positive self-image.

### Intellectual Objectives

- Master the tools and skills necessary to actively pursue knowledge
- Gain an understanding of how to find information, research and utilise various media
- Become an accomplished learner, independent of the adult.

### Content Objectives

- Understand the evolution of life and the interdependence of humankind and nature. Foster a responsible feeling towards an ecological whole
- Nurture a desire for co-operation and peace between people and nations
- Understand that all people have the same basic needs and appreciate the ways in which those needs are met.

## **BENEFITS OF THE MONTESSORI PRIMARY PROGRAMME**

The main aims for a successful primary education are for children to have confidence and to build and nurture a love of learning.

The Montessori philosophy provides each child with extended, uninterrupted periods of time in which to develop their emerging intellectual abilities in all areas of the curriculum.

Children can take each step independently as they become ready, without feeling threatened by being pushed ahead too fast, or stifled by being made to wait for others to catch up.

Learning is self-paced, based on each child's own needs.

Some six year olds may be working with reading and writing materials generally intended for eight year olds. Similarly, a nine year old may benefit from reviewing maths lessons designed for a younger child.

Every successful step in the learning process builds the child's confidence to take further risks and make wider explorations.

Individual learning plans are developed for each student based on needs. The plan will offer challenging activities, providing opportunities for success, so reducing frustrations.

The multi-age class allows children to match their temperaments readily - timid older children can become confident with younger ones. Self-confident children can hone leadership skills. Such a class structure encourages tolerance for difference.

The three-hour work cycle helps children better connect with their work than shorter work periods. The large amount of tactile, concrete learning materials helps children to literally 'get in touch' with their learning.

Individualised attention and the uncompetitive setting helps the students learn with confidence.

Starting primary school at six has also shown to be particularly beneficial to boys. Montessori permits a reasonable amount of movement within the classroom. This suits boys who can become frustrated when their need for big muscle movements is constrained. Their fine motor skills frequently develop about a year behind girls'; Montessori not only supports this skill development in preschool and primary with concrete materials and exercises, it also allows boys to move at their own pace to master this skill.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE MONTESSORI UNIT AT MATAKANA SCHOOL**

A volunteer group of parents, keen to extend the benefits of a Montessori education into their children's primary years, first met in April 2007 and formed the Mahurangi Montessori Primary Trust (a charitable trust) in September of that same year. Its aim was to establish a Montessori class in a State Primary school which would allow access to the school facilities and to be part of the wider community. The trust approached two local primaries. It was accepted by the Trust that some compromises to 'absolute' Montessori would need to be made. Some testing of the children's progress would be mandatory. In addition, neither school was a "full primary" i.e. could not keep

children on past the age of 10/11 (Year 6). Alternatives to a State school host were judged too expensive and risky. Rapid progress was made with Matakana Primary School. This school had the potential for spare classes. It was receptive to other educational approaches, having hosted George Parkyn School for the Gifted. Matakana School accepted the Montessori Unit into the school in late 2007. The class opened with eleven students in February 2009.

## HOW THE MONTESSORI UNIT IS RUN

### ADMINISTRATION

On a day-to-day basis, the class runs under the policies of Matakana School's Board of Trustees and the teachers are answerable to the School Principal. However, the Trust itself, is independent of Matakana School and is responsible for facilitating the provision of Montessori education including the curriculum, teachers, training and professional development, specialised materials and equipment, managing enrolments and collecting fees to make this all possible.

### INTEGRATION WITH MATAKANA PRIMARY SCHOOL

We strive towards as much integration as possible, whilst preserving the key elements of Montessori. The class achieves the three-hour work cycle in the morning and joins in with school-wide activities where appropriate in the afternoons. The students share in the school's facilities and extra-curricular activities. Although it is not part of the Montessori philosophy, the Montessori unit participates in school and national assessments in literacy and numeracy. This information is used to determine National Standards as required by the Ministry of Education.

The class is simply referred to as 'Room 15'.

### TEACHERS

**Jackie Kirk:** Jackie became passionate about Montessori when her eldest son started in 2006 at the Montessori Preschool in Blenheim. She embarked on her professional Montessori journey in 2009 when she was involved in the setup of a Montessori Primary class. Prior to completing an International Montessori 6-12 (AMI) Diploma in Sydney in 2011, Jackie's family moved to Australia where she taught the 9-12 class at Canberra Montessori School until 2014. She subsequently moved back to New Zealand and joined the Montessori class at Matakana Primary school at the beginning of 2015.

**Kelly Norton:** Kelly came to teaching late in life and fell in love with the Montessori philosophy 'purely by accident'. She completed her training at AUT in 2014, specialising in Montessori education in her final year. Kelly went on to teach children aged 3-6 at a Titoki Montessori School, before joining the Matakana Primary School Montessori class in 2016.

Kelly grew up in the Mahurangi area. She is a passionate learner of te reo Māori and her interests include reading, travel, languages and spending time with her whānau.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We actively welcome and rely on parental support and input to our Montessori community. The enrolment form invites parents to suggest how they can best assist. Some of the activities that require parent participation are:

- **Trust** – although the Unit is part of Matakana Primary, the Trust officers work to keep the classes running. The officers, or trustees are parents who volunteer their time. They are not professional administrators. All parents are eligible to stand for election to the Trust at the AGM;
- **Fundraising Help** – as required. Suggestions are welcome as the Trust is always open to fresh ideas;
- **Working Bees, gardening, general maintenance, cleaning etc** – This can include making materials by colouring, laminating, cutting, binding, sewing, etc, inventory stock takes, repairing shelving, etc. The bees will be a bit of a social get-together too;
- **Curriculum Contributions** – The teachers welcome parents with particular skills, knowledge or interests to share them with the class;
- **Parent Education** – this gives parents the opportunity to learn more about different aspects of Montessori.

## VISITING THE CLASS

### Adult visits

If, after reading this Information Pack, you would like to see more for yourself, we recommend that you come for an **observation visit**. Interested parents should call the enrolments administrator, to make an appointment (contact details are on the last page). Appointments are necessary to limit the number of adults in the class and keep disruption to a minimum.

An observation usually takes place at 10 am and takes half an hour. At the end of the observation, you can have a discussion with a class teacher.

**Parent Information Evenings** are typically held once or twice a year depending on demand and are a forum for parents to come and view the classroom and learning materials. The teachers and trustees are available to answer any questions you have.

### Children's visits

For Montessori pre-schoolers progressing through to Primary, or for children transferring from other Montessori classes, there are half-day **orientation visits**. These typically take place once a week over the five weeks before the child's agreed start date. The aim is to familiarise the new entrant with class routine and school layout.

All children's visits are conducted without parents remaining to watch.



## ENROLMENT INFORMATION

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

The school prefers to take children who have had a good grounding in Montessori methods through attending sufficient sessions and terms at a Montessori pre-school; **generally for three years**. Children are ready for the Second Plane (Primary) around the age of six.

Siblings do not have automatic right of entry into the unit but we will try to accommodate them. They are, however, assessed on their own merit and required to meet the enrolment criteria.

The school reserves the right to limit the number of children with special needs to ensure we can cater for the special needs of those children as well as the needs of all other children. The school will maintain a workable Montessori class in the interests of all children attending.

Detailed eligibility criteria and the enrolment process are outlined in the following pages.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

#### CHILD'S HISTORY OF LEARNING IN THE MONTESSORI ENVIRONMENT

When selecting children for places in the Montessori Unit at Matakana Primary, the school, in the interests and wellbeing of the classroom, will enrol those children best prepared for the Montessori Primary environment. An eligible child will need to have completed a **minimum** of two years and generally three years at a Montessori preschool. It is the Trust's strong recommendation that by the age of five years, children should be attending five full days at the Montessori preschool before entry to the primary school classroom at age six.

The final year at a Montessori preschool is a very important year in the life of a five-year old child as it is now that he/she begins to develop leadership qualities, takes on more responsible roles as well as understands the links of his/her acts and the needs and rights of others. Younger children in the classroom aspire to the work of their older classmates who in turn act as 'little teachers' reinforcing their own learning.

Older children transferring in from out of town or overseas Montessori schools are welcome.

As noted above, siblings will not be accepted as of right. They too are required to meet the entry criteria.

Children with Montessori backgrounds who have attended mainstream schools since leaving Montessori preschool **may apply if they attended their Montessori pre-school until the age of six**. In each case any enrolment decision will depend on the eligibility and suitability of the child, and class capacity. If accepted, the Trust requires the child to have a trial period of one term to assess how well the child appears to cope with self-directed learning and the multi-age grouping. A permanent place in the unit is offered to the child on completion of a satisfactory trial period.

## **FAMILY COMMITMENT**

All primary caregivers should attend the enrolment interview as Montessori education is most effective where a child's caregivers understand and co-operate with the long-term programme. Parents and caregivers must show understanding of the Montessori philosophy of teaching and fully support its methods. They must agree to support the MMPT, the Montessori teacher and the Trust's relationship with Matakana Primary School's Board of Trustees, management and community. Parents and caregivers must be willing to be actively involved and support, to a reasonable level, all initiatives the Trust engages in including fundraising ventures, working bees, equipment making and social events. We are very happy for parents to indicate their own particular skills and preference for areas they would like to assist with.

Parents and caregivers will be asked to sign a form entitled 'Contract for Services'. This is a contract that sets out terms and conditions which parents and caregivers agree to abide to at all times. Parents and caregivers are expected to communicate with the Trust and the teacher in an open and reasonable manner.

Parents and caregivers acknowledge that every place in the Montessori classroom can be reviewed at the beginning of each year and is dependent on adherence to the Contract for Services.

## **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

For any potential student to be considered we must receive a completed enrolment form and consent form together with the requested enrolment fee. Parents are strongly advised to submit the enrolment form when their child turns 4 to establish priority in the event of a shortage of places. Children may be enrolled onto the waiting list as young as parents wish by completing a Registration of Interest form. It is important that younger siblings are also enrolled as soon as possible.

The enrolment procedure varies according to the age and background of the child in question, namely:

- Children with Montessori backgrounds joining the class as they turn six
- Older children with Montessori backgrounds
- Children with Montessori backgrounds returning from another educational system
- Children without Montessori backgrounds

## **CHILDREN WITH MONTESSORI BACKGROUNDS JOINING THE CLASS AS THEY TURN SIX**

Most of our new entrants will be in this category. We have two enrolment interview rounds each year in March and September to consider these enrolments. The enrolment interview precedes entry by one to two years. This serves two purposes:

- To confirm places with successful applicants so that arrangements can be made to ensure continued Montessori preschool education until entry to the primary school
- To enable unsuccessful applicants to consider alternative schooling options before the child's fifth birthday.

The interview is between both of the parents/caregivers, the child and the Montessori Enrolment Committee. This is a chance for both sides to explore expectations and suitability. It is given that parents/caregivers have a basic understanding of the Montessori philosophy prior to the interview. The Enrolment Committee considers a number of factors but the key considerations are the welfare of the Montessori class and a smooth transition for the child.

Parents will be notified of the results of their child's application in the month following the enrolment interview and are asked to notify the Trust in writing within one week of their intention to accept the place. Upon acceptance of a place, parents will be asked for a fully refundable bond to secure the child's place (\$800). This will be requested along with a signed acceptance form.

### **OLDER CHILDREN WITH MONTESSORI BACKGROUNDS**

This situation typically arises with families moving from out-of-town Montessori primary schools and is handled on an adhoc basis. On receipt of a completed enrolment form, the Enrolment Committee informs parents if there is space for the child, and if not, when space may become available. If space is available the enrolment fee will be due before an interview is organised for both sides to explore expectations and suitability. The Enrolment Committee makes the final decision on whether a place will be offered. Parents will be notified of the results of their application within a month after the interview. Those offered a place would be asked for the bond (\$800) at this time.

### **CHILDREN WITH MONTESSORI BACKGROUNDS RETURNING FROM ANOTHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

Children with Montessori backgrounds who have attended mainstream schools since leaving Montessori preschool will also be considered, providing they stayed at Montessori preschool until they were six and space is available. After submitting the application form and fee (\$40) an enrolment interview will take place with the enrolment committee.

The Trust makes the final decision on whether a place will be offered. The child is required to have a trial period of one term, to give the teacher the opportunity to assess how well the child appears to cope with self-directed learning and the multi-age grouping. A permanent place in the unit is offered to the child on completion of a satisfactory trial period. The bond (\$800) is requested at this time.

## **CHILDREN WITHOUT MONTESSORI BACKGROUNDS**

It is not the intention to accept children with little or no Montessori experience or children under six. In circumstances that the Trust deems to be exceptional and only where a suitable place is available, we may consider such a child. After submitting the application form and fee (\$40) an enrolment interview will take place with the enrolment committee. A full and comprehensive academic, behavioural and social record from the child's current school will be required.

The Trust makes the final decision on whether a place will be offered. The child is required to have a trial period of one term, to give the teacher the opportunity to assess how well the child appears to cope with self-directed learning and the multi-age grouping. A permanent place in the unit is offered to the child on completion of a satisfactory trial period. The bond (\$800) is requested at this time.

## **ALLOCATION OF PLACES**

Selection will be based on a variety of factors. These include date enrolled on waiting list, the child's history of learning in the Montessori environment, the child's overall suitability, willingness of the family to participate in activities to support the class, the gender balance in the classroom and the ability of the Enrolment Committee to make places available for siblings. The Enrolment Committee retains the right to make all enquiries necessary to obtain information that may assist it in reaching a decision in any particular case. All enquiries will remain confidential. Confirmation or denial of placement into the Montessori class remains ultimately at the discretion of the Principal of Matakana Primary School.

## **WAITING LIST**

A child's name may be placed on the waiting list at any time by completing a Registration of Interest form, this can be done online or via hardcopy to the Enrolments administrator.

Children listed on the enrolment forms of older siblings are automatically placed on the waiting list.

As each child on the waiting list turn 4 years old, the enrolment administrator will contact the family to initiate the enrolment process.

## FEES

The class may attract partial funding of the teacher's salary from the Ministry of Education, depending on its roll. Montessori class parents, through the Trust, fund a portion of the salary, equipment, professional development, relief teachers and additional teachers for specialized subjects. This income also funds some extracurricular activities, MANZ membership (including quarterly Montessori Voices magazine), and other related costs. The fees requested are set at an amount deemed necessary by the Trust to maintain the class. The Trust reserves the right to vary the fees it asks for as necessary. All parents are expected to pay requested fees as per the Contract for Services.

The following table lists the fees (GST inclusive) per child which are explained further below:

Fee	Amount	Comment	When Requested
Upon application	\$40	One-off, non-refundable	Upon application
Bond	\$800	One-off, refundable if one term's notice is given to the Trust of parent's intention to withdraw the child from the class	Requested at time of acceptance as confirmation of place.
Term's Fee	\$800	Each term, non-refundable	Two weeks in advance of new term starting

In addition an annual donation is also payable to Matakana Primary School, see following page.

**Application Fee:** we request that completed enrolment forms, available from the Trust or online on our website, be accompanied by an application donation. This initiates the enrolment process and does not guarantee the offer of a place in the class.

**Bond:** this is equal to a term's fee and is requested on acceptance of a place in R15. The bond will be returned on the child's departure from the class or offset against the child's final term fee. Written notice of one full term is required when a child is leaving the class. If inadequate notice is given, and no suitable replacement can be found for the departing child, the bond will be kept as a contribution towards the cost of running the class for the term following the child's departure.

**Term's Fee:** each term there will be a fee requested. This is payable to the Mahurangi Montessori Primary Trust (MMPT) by cheque or automatic payment direct into MMPT's bank account - National Bank 06 0483 0101921 00, Reference Child's Full Name. The fee is requested in full, two weeks before the commencement of term. Please contact the Trust if you need to discuss alternative options.

**MANZ Membership Fee:** our class is a 'Montessori Association of New Zealand' (MANZ) member school. Each family is required to pay annually a membership fee – currently the Trust covers this cost through term fees.

**Matakana Primary School Donation:** as an enrolled member of Matakana Primary School you are requested to pay this donation annually. This donation enables the children to be part of the wider community of social and sporting activities, have equitable use of the facilities and access to all educational support available in a state-funded school. Donations are set at \$120 per child and \$200 for 2 or more children. A statement is issued when your child starts school. This donation is tax deductible and a receipt will be issued.

## MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

If the Enrolment Committee discovers an application contains a false statement, they may request the Principal reverse the acceptance of enrolment and determine that the said child/children is/are no longer eligible to remain in the Montessori class.

Examples of situations that would be considered false statements (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list) are:

- If a child attends a lesser number of pre-school sessions after acceptance than is stated on the application form
- Failure to disclose all information regarding a child's behaviour and educational needs at the time of application and interview, or failure to disclose a change in circumstances following application and interview.

The onus is on the applicant to notify the Trust of any changes to any information relied upon by the Enrolment Committee during the interview/enrolment process.

## TRUST OFFICERS' CONTACT DETAILS

Please refer to our website for current Trust Officers'. [www.montessori-matakana.co.nz](http://www.montessori-matakana.co.nz)

Contact us at: [info@montessori-matakana.co.nz](mailto:info@montessori-matakana.co.nz)

## RECOMMENDED READING MATERIALS

**Montessori Madness, A Parent to Parent Argument for Montessori Education** by Trevor Eissler  
Published by Sevenoff, LLC ([www.montessorimadness.com](http://www.montessorimadness.com))

**Montessori Today** by **Paula Polk Lillard (1996)**  
Published by New York: Random House

**Montessori: A Modern Approach** by **Paula Polk Lillard (1973)**  
Published by Schocken Books

**The Absorbent Mind** by **Maria Montessori (1949)**  
Published by India: Theosophical Publishing House, also by BN Publishing

**The Montessori Method** by **Maria Montessori**  
Published by BN Publishing

**What is Montessori Elementary?** by **David Kahn (1995)**  
Published by North American Montessori Teachers' Association

**At Home with Montessori** by **Patricia Oriti (1994)**  
Published by North American Montessori Teachers' Association

**The Montessori Way – An Education for Life** by **Tim Seldin and Paul Epstein, PhD (2003)**  
Published by The Montessori Foundation

## INFORMATIVE WEBSITES

[www.montessori.org](http://www.montessori.org)  
(The Montessori Foundation)

[www.montessori-namta.org](http://www.montessori-namta.org)  
(North American Montessori Teachers Association – books listed above can be ordered through this site)

[www.montessori.org.nz](http://www.montessori.org.nz)  
(Montessori Association of New Zealand)