

# PARENT HANDBOOK



**Montessori East**  
Primary & Pre School



Montessori East  
8 Wellington Street  
Bondi NSW 2026

T: +61 (0)2 9130 8313  
W: [montessori.nsw.edu.au](http://montessori.nsw.edu.au)  
E: [admin@montessori.nsw.edu.au](mailto:admin@montessori.nsw.edu.au)

# CONTENTS

MONTESSORI EAST | 02

This Parent Handbook will assist you to become an informed partner in your child's education and will optimise his or her learning experience while attending Montessori East.

## **Section 1: School Philosophy**

Welcome

Our Purpose

Our Values

Montessori Education

## **Section 2: General Information**

How does the school operate?

Community

How can I get involved?

Parent Education

What's going on at school?

Other important information

Student Conduct

## **Section 3: Cycle 0 & 1 (0-6 yrs)**

General

Afternoon programs

Routines

## **Section 4: Cycles 2 & 3 (6-12 yrs)**

General

Routines



# WELCOME

MONTESSORI EAST | 03



Your child is enrolled in an education environment where wonderful things happen every day.

Learning at Montessori East is approached in a way that considers the child as a whole being.

We believe that children flourish and learn best when they feel secure and happy in their environment, without stress, and with independence.

We aim to nurture in children their natural love of learning and to support their intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development.

Our ultimate goal is to prepare the child for *their* life and the world they will live in. Today we live in an era where technological and social structures are changing rapidly and we cannot predict with certainty what knowledge today's children will need when they reach maturity. We do know, however, that they will need to be lifelong learners with a sound intellectual base. A conclusion most thoughtful educators agree on is that the foundation of a good education for the 21st century is to **learn how to learn**.

Bill Conway  
Principal

# OUR PURPOSE

MONTESSORI EAST | 04

- We advocate an approach to education that is holistic and engaged with the community.
- We provide a dynamic environment, dedicated to supporting children's natural development so that they become resilient, compassionate and confident human beings.
- We work to equip each child with the skills and attitudes they need to become lifelong learners, and to reach their individual potential.
- We contribute to a healthy society that is peaceful, compassionate and sustainable.





# OUR VALUES

MONTESSORI EAST | 05



**Being part of Montessori East is an education for life for the entire family. The values we instill are interwoven into the school culture and curriculum and are designed to endure through to adulthood.**

## **BALANCE.**

Equal emphasis is on cognitive learning, creativity, communication and social and emotional development.

## **CARE.**

Respect the dignity of the innate capabilities of each and every child.

## **CHOICE.**

Through choice comes self determination, a will to learn and responsibility.

## **DISCOVERY & CURIOSITY.**

Curiosity and exploration are given due time and space.

## **INDEPENDENCE.**

Independence thrives when individuals are given appropriate freedoms and responsibilities.

## **QUALITY.**

Teachers and students are encouraged to strive to do, and to be their best.

## **COMMUNITY.**

Strong partnerships between the family and the school are central.

## **SERVICE.**

Care and compassion lead to an aspiration to serve others, and gives the child a sense of purpose, direction, achievement and happiness.

# MONTESSORI

**Dr Maria Montessori** was an inspirational educator who developed a unique method of education based on research into childhood learning that follows the development of the child. While her legacy is over 100 years old, her research and methods are more relevant today than ever before.

**The Montessori child** is different. Responsible for, and guided to self direct their own learning pathway and ultimately their futures.

We want every child to be:

- an independent thinker
- a lifelong learner
- emotionally balanced
- creative in their problem solving
- comfortable in their own skin
- respectful of themselves and others
- able to make their own choices
- inspired to reach their potential
- happy to offer their service to help others
- confident in themselves
- aware of their place in the world and what they do can make an impact.





# THE CLASSROOM

MONTESSORI EAST | 07



## Montessori differs from mainstream education in a number of ways:

- **Children are grouped in multi-age classes of three years** with the same teachers. The teacher gains a deep understanding of each child and their needs. This provides a very stable environment where balance across emotional, social and academic development can be achieved.
- **Children are given many opportunities to make choices** in their day and they are expected to show appropriate independence. This teaches them to be self-disciplined and self-directed with their school work.
- **Lessons are given individually or in small groups** by the teacher throughout the day. The lessons are given according to the progress of each child and therefore not restricted by the age of a child.
- **The daily schedule is broken into two long periods of uninterrupted work time.** A morning and afternoon work cycle is 2-3 hours. This gives children the opportunity to spend time delving into subjects and promotes concentration skills.
- **The peer group structure** of mixed age groups provides a life-like social model. The children lead by example and learn from each other. Mentoring is an enjoyable part of each child's classroom experience.

## **Recognised independent school.**

Montessori East is an approved education and care service under the NSW Dept of Education and registered with the NSW Education and Standards Authority (NESA). The school is a member of the NSW Association of Independent Schools and the Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA).

## **A rich curriculum.**

The Montessori East curriculum is based on the highest standard Montessori program which is internationally recognised. It fulfils all syllabus requirements from the [NSW Education Standards Authority \(NESA\)](#). The [Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority \(ACARA\)](#) recognises the Montessori National Curriculum as an alternative national curriculum. Children may sit for NAPLAN tests in year 3 and year 5.

## **Governance.**

Montessori East is run by the Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association (ESMA), a not-for-profit company. The members of ESMA are primarily parents associated with the school. The ESMA Board oversees the management and operation of the school and supports the principal in the school's growth.

## **Principal.**

The Principal is appointed by the Board and is responsible for the operational and educational running of the school. The Principal attends all meetings and is a point of contact for parents with general enquiries about the school.

## **Teachers.**

Each classroom is run by a lead teacher and support teachers. Lead teachers are qualified Montessori trained and have university teaching qualifications.

## **Class parents.**

Two to three parents from each class are appointed to assist the class teachers and school with communicating activities and events, and to be the point of contact for all parents.

## **Parent Participation Scheme.**

The PPS scheme requires that each family contributes 4-hours of volunteer time per term. Common jobs include canteen, maintenance, committee work, fundraisers, making class materials, gardening. There is a log book in the office to record your hours.



# PARENT EDUCATION

MONTESSORI EAST | 09



**Parent Education sessions are held once a term. They are designed to give parents a better understanding of Montessori education. Attending these events enriches the experience for both parents and children.**

## **Events include:**

- **Silent Journey** - parents are taken on a journey through the cycles and learn how the levels are articulately scaffolded and interlinked.
- **Cycle kick-offs** - Classroom teachers give an update of the year ahead.
- **Graduate Return** - Year 6 graduates return to share their experience of transitioning into high school.
- **Journey of Service** - Year 6 students share their experience and learnings of their service at the Thai orphanage in Thailand.
- **Curriculum** - An overview and focus on how Montessori covers a curriculum area such as Maths and Language.
- **Short talks** - These are brief 30-40 minute sessions in the morning or afternoon on a variety of interesting parenting and curriculum topics.

**We try to keep families well informed about what is going on in the school.**

## **Email.**

Our main method of communication from the school is email.

## **Orientation.**

Prior to your child commencing you will be asked to attend an orientation meeting with your child's class teachers.

## **Transparent Classroom.**

Transparent Classroom is an online tool for sharing information with parents on their child's progress in the classroom, as well as a portal to sign approval forms for excursions. Each family member receives a personal login.

## **The Bulletin.**

This is our regular news channel that covers school events and news from the classrooms. Issued every Thursday via email, it only takes a few minutes to read.

## **Website.**

The website [montessori.nsw.edu.au](http://montessori.nsw.edu.au) is updated with interesting blogs on parenting and Montessori education and to access forms for Canteen, ordering Green Gradz and booking events.

## **Social.**

Follow us on Instagram @bondimontessori and Facebook for latest highlights, educational posts.

## **Annual Report.**

A report summarising the school's year is available from 1 July. It can be viewed on our website on the Governance page.

## **Noticeboard.**

School events are advertised on the school noticeboard at the school's entrance.

## **Project updates.**

Progress updates on the relocation of the school and high school are held in each term. Alternatively, please contact the office at any time should you have any questions.



# QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CHILD & ME

MONTESSORI EAST | 11

## Education

- Your child's experience in the classroom
- Your child's progress, including transition to the next cycle
- Classroom procedures, materials and activities



Lead  
Teacher

## Administration

- Canteen, After School Clubs
- Fees
- Parent Participation Scheme (PPS)
- Book an observation in a classroom



School  
Office

## Understanding the school

- Social parents
- Fundraising activities
- Class activities or clarifications from Parent Handbook



Class  
Parent

## At home

- Enquiries about the general education program & how these can be supported at home.



Education  
Leader

## Concerns

- Questions or concerns that haven't been answered or addressed by your first contact.



Principal



Board  
President

## **Immunisations.**

All families are requested to show their immunisation records prior to entering the school. Due to law changes we are unable to enrol children at pre-school age who are not vaccinated. More information can be sought at [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

## **Medication.**

Please inform your class teacher if your child is under any medication, including paracetamol. Medication can only be administered by staff if written authorisation has been provided.

## **Allergies & Asthma.**

Please inform the school if your child suffers from any allergies. Severe allergies are controlled at school through an action plan, provided to the school by the parent in consultation with a physician.

## **Health issues & illness.**

It is common for schools to see outbreaks of illnesses that spread quickly. Good self-care habits can help minimise these outbreaks, but they're impossible to control completely. Children should not be sent to school if they show signs of an illness, such as vomiting or have a fever.

## **Fee policy.**

The school's fee policy is available at anytime on the website and from the office.

## **Parking.**

There is a 5 minute parking zone directly in front of the school plus a public car park at the end of Wellington Place which runs down the side of the school. Parking or dropping off in the staff car park is not permitted at any time.

## **School absence.**

If your child becomes ill and will not attend school that day, please telephone or email [admin@montessori.nsw.edu.au](mailto:admin@montessori.nsw.edu.au) by 9am the same day. For longer absences please inform the class teacher via email or letter.



# SEMESTER REPORTS & ASSESSMENT

## **Semester reports.**

Reports are prepared for children from five years of age. These reports are given to parents in June and December each year. Reports cover the child's progress in curriculum areas and general development. These reports meet the federal government requirements for school reports.

## **Assessment.**

The Montessori teacher is trained to observe, monitor and assess each child and provide direction ensuring that all learning areas are covered over each three year cycles.

The primary child has some liberty to make work choices, but work they must. The primary child maintains their own work plan for each day and each week. They have regular conferences with their teacher to discuss progress and to check that work is being completed and done properly. This helps the child to learn time management skills from early on.

Lessons may be given individually but more often are given in small groups according to a child's ability or interest, rather than age.

Students are continuously assessed and observed to ensure that they are progressing intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Assessment occurs in many ways:

- Daily observations and record-keeping
- Control of error built into materials
- Regular conferences with students to review work
- Instructions in self-assessment of work
- Portfolios involving students choosing 'best work'
- Project work culminating in presentations
- Bi-annual and as-needed parent teacher conferences
- Occasional tests for the purpose of assessing skills competency

Formal examinations and tests are not part of the Montessori method however we do prepare children for external testing including the government's National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Examination technique is an essential life skill that needs to be presented and mastered just as other life skills are taught in the Montessori classroom.

## **Homework.**

Homework is not assigned to students. We offer suggestions to parents of activities that can be done at home which may contribute to a child's success at school.

# EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT CONDUCT

## **Self-discipline.**

Montessori education is unique in its approach to student behaviour. The methodology provides the children with tools to self-monitor their behaviour in a carefully prepared environment offering freedom and limits. Ultimately, our goal is for children to manage their behaviour in the group setting by effectively practicing self-discipline.

## **Supporting self-discipline.**

Teachers support a child's development towards self-discipline by providing certain liberties within set limits. Children learn appropriate behaviours through grace and courtesy lessons and through exposure to the virtue we celebrate each fortnight. Class procedures and policies may also be created by the children to help foster self-discipline and positive behaviour. Guidance is given when appropriate and children learn that their behaviour has consequences.

## **Consequences for minor misbehaviour.**

From time to time, children may need specific guidance or actions in response to misbehaviour. As a first in responding to

inappropriate behaviour, a child will be guided by a teacher or other students towards more appropriate conduct. If the child does not respond to this guidance, the teacher may need to assign to the child a natural consequence to the misbehaviour. Consequences may include diverting a child to work in a different area, or temporarily keeping a child out of an activity that was difficult for the child to manage.

## **Consequences for serious misbehaviour.**

It is rare that we would need to manage serious misbehaviour. In the event a child is involved in serious misbehaviour, such as willful defiance, property destruction or injury to others, we will follow a set procedure, which may include one or more of the following:

- Immediate staff intervention
- Meeting with the Principal
- Written notification to parents
- Meeting with the parents
- Seek professional guidance or assessment
- Develop a behaviour management plan
- Suspension from school for a set period of time
- Expulsion from school in the most severe case



# EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT CONDUCT

## **Procedural fairness.**

Procedural fairness is the basic right of all when dealing with authorities. Montessori East adheres to a procedure that is sometimes referred to as the 'hearing rule' and the 'right to an unbiased decision,' where the offending behaviour is of such a nature that it may result in suspension, exclusion or expulsion.

## **Anti-bullying policy.**

Montessori East endeavours to provide a safe and caring environment for all members of the community – an environment where learning, working, personal growth and the development of positive self-esteem can be maximised. Harassment, which can include bullying in any form or combination of physical, verbal, visual, social or psychological, interferes with this environment and will not be tolerated.



# **UNDER 3 PROGRAM**



# 0 - 3 YEARS

MONTESSORI EAST | 17



**Montessori East offers group sessions, early parenting consultations and workshops for families with children under 3 years. The programs are run from the KIN Parent and Child Centre on the Montessori East campus.**

**Session times:**

**Crawlers (6-12 months)**

Tuesdays: 9-10.30am & 11-12.30pm

**Beginners Montessori (13 months and up)**

Mondays: 9-10.30am & 11-12.30pm

**Toddlers (18-36 months)**

Wednesdays: 9.15-11.15am

Thursdays: 9.15-11.15am

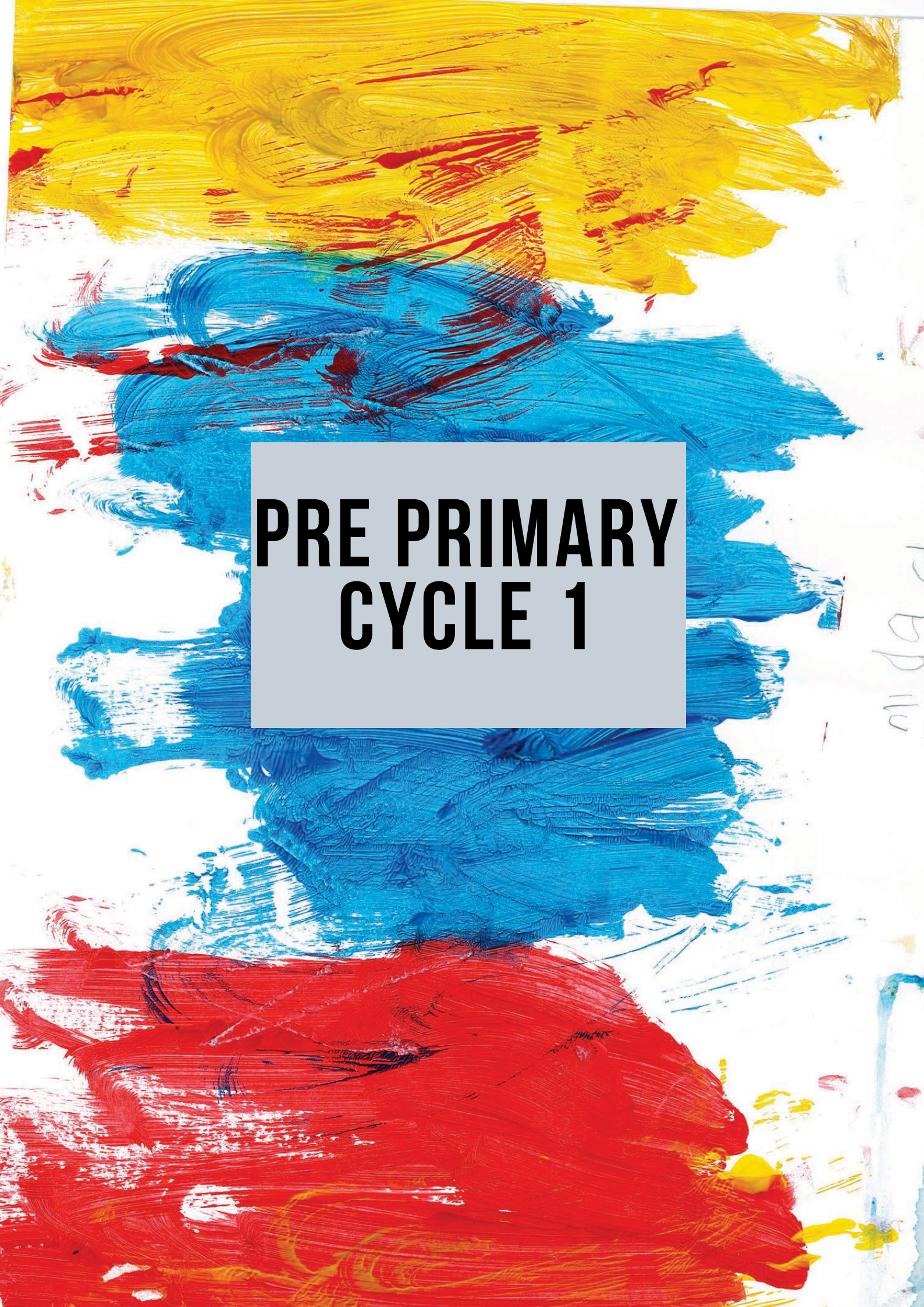
Fridays: 8.45-10.45am

Saturdays: 9.15-11.15am

Sundays: 9.15-11.15am

**Parents and carers are required to accompany the child throughout each session.**



The background is an abstract composition of thick, expressive brushstrokes. The top half is dominated by bright yellow, with some red streaks interspersed. Below the yellow is a large, textured area of blue, also with some red highlights. The bottom half of the image is a solid, vibrant red, with some yellow and blue accents. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and primary colors.

# **PRE PRIMARY CYCLE 1**



# 3 - 6 YEARS

MONTESSORI EAST | 19



## There are two Cycle 1 classrooms.

**COOINDA** *the indigenous word for happy meeting place*

**ELOUERA** *the indigenous word for a pleasant place*

*Cycle 1 is a 5-day a week program.*

## School hours.

Drop off: **8.30 - 9am**

Pick up: **2pm** on **Wednesdays** and **3.15pm** every other day.

**Initially children will be picked up at 12pm.**

Teachers will discuss with parents the most appropriate time for their child to be picked up in consultation with the family's circumstances.

## After school care.

After school care is available for children from 3.5 years and runs from pick-up time to 6pm.

For more information about this service and bookings visit [extend.com.au](https://www.extend.com.au) or contact the school office.

# CYCLE 1 ROUTINES

## Signing in/out.

There is a sign-in form outside the classroom gate, which must be completed when you drop off and pick up. This form is not just so we know who's here but is also a requirement by law to monitor attendance.

## Greetings.

A teacher is always present at the gate to greet the children and to say goodbye during drop off and pick up times. It is customary for the child to shake hands with the teacher. If you are late, please wait at the gate until a staff member comes to greet you and collect your child.

## Fruit.

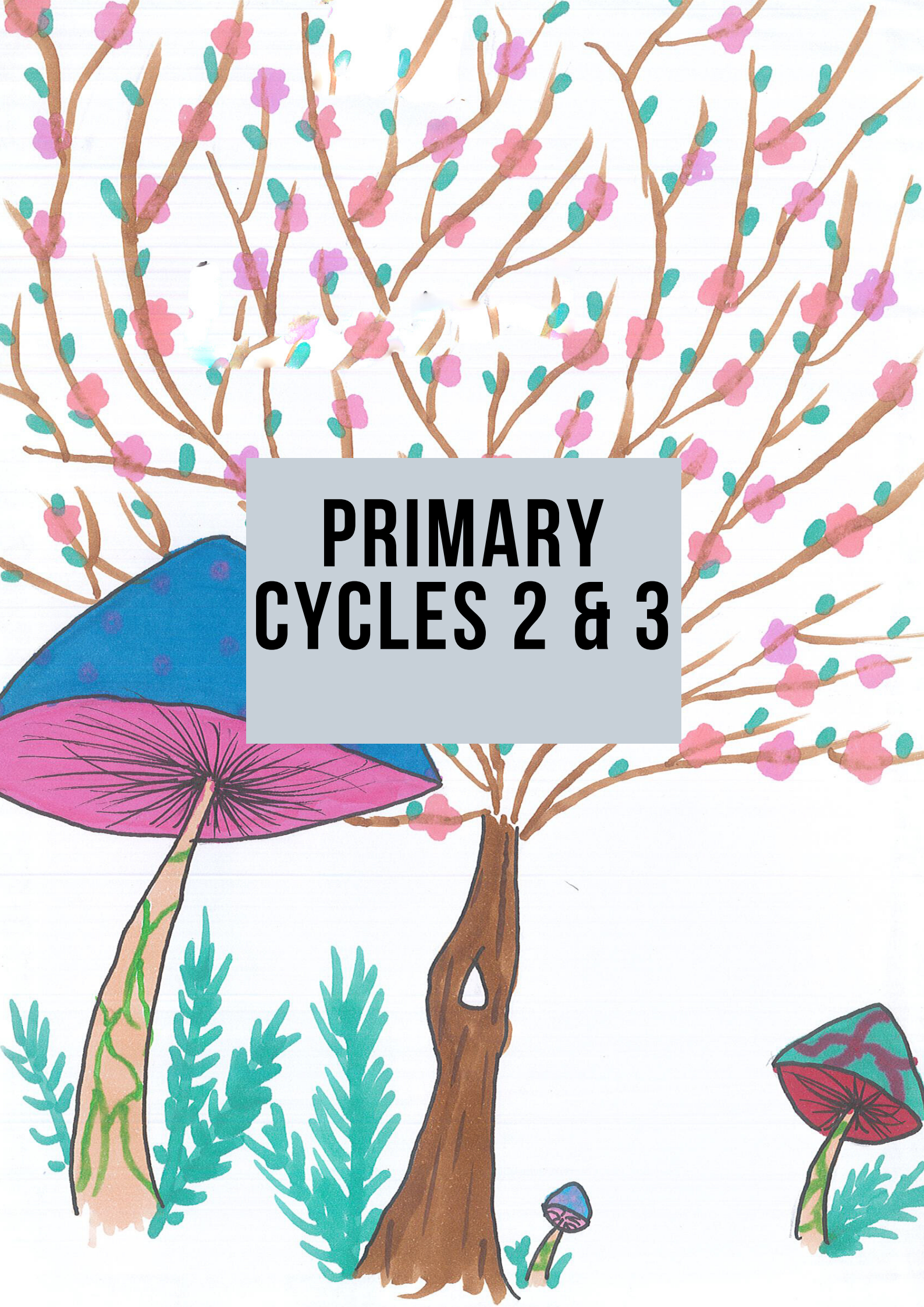
Children should bring a piece of fruit to share every morning. Place the fruit in the basket at the entry to the classroom.

## Classroom groceries.

Once or twice a year you will be asked by the teachers to purchase grocery items for the classroom, including flowers, rice cakes and butter for example.







# PRIMARY CYCLES 2 & 3



# TRANSITIONING - THE NEXT STAGE



## **Transitioning to Cycle 2 from Cycle 1.**

A child's journey through a Montessori program typically involves moving from one prepared environment to another according to the individual child's readiness and development. Each cycle (class) is set up for an age range and the developmental needs inherent with children of those ages, so there is a point in time to move on and embrace a brand new environment.

Transitioning isn't an event, rather a process in which the child visits, tries out, embraces a new environment, and then says goodbye to their old classroom. The transition from Cycle 1 to 2 and 2 to 3 are big steps and symbolic of the child embarking on their second plane of development.

# TRANSITIONING - THE PROCESS



## The process between cycle 1 & 2.

The Montessori East Cycle 2 program is well established with two classrooms: **Waragal** and **Wangaree** (both Aboriginal names for fish).

This is an exciting time as the children embark into a world of big school learning. Parents are informed in writing a term prior to the transition with an explanation of the process. Parents are also invited to observe their child's new classroom and to meet with the new primary school teacher.

## When does my child transition?

Generally around the child's sixth birthday, the child visits the new classroom for up to a term. It is a gentle process so children acclimatise to the new rhythm and environment, and the child will indicate to the teachers when they are ready to start full time.





## **How does the school determine if my child is ready to transition?**

We look to see signs of readiness in the child that cover academic and social-emotional skills or characteristics.

A certain level of language and mathematics should be in place and a demonstration of emotional maturity with their work and classmates. It's also important to understand the value of the 5 year old having ample opportunity to not only solidify skills but to also experience being one of the oldest in the class, being a role model and assisting in teaching the younger children.

## **What if we still aren't sure whether our child will transition to Cycle 2?**

If you have any doubts about the primary program we strongly urge you to observe in the primary classrooms and to arrange to speak with the Principal.

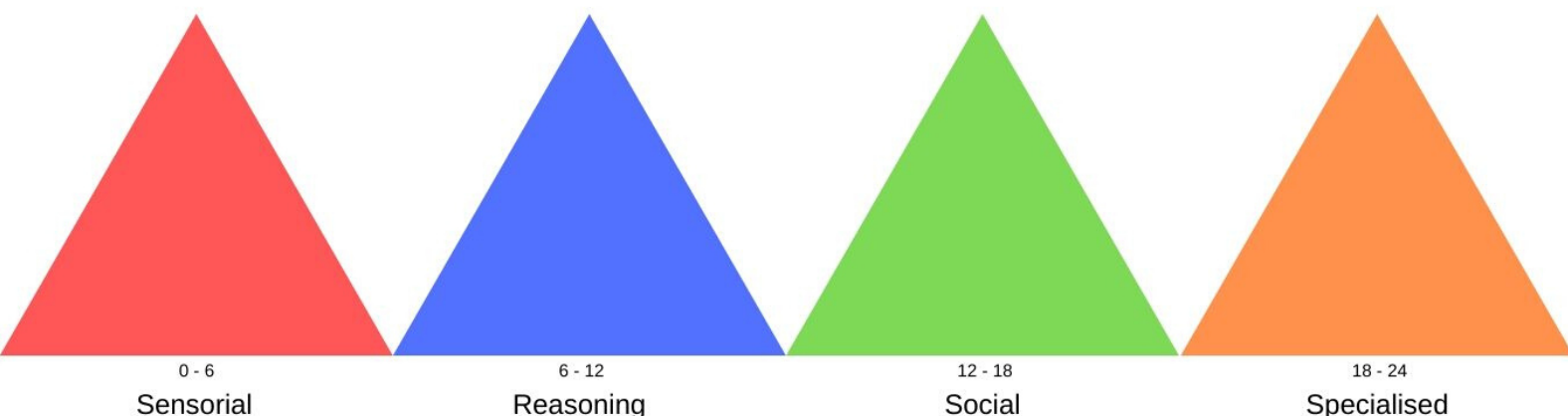
# WHY 3 CYCLES

In a Montessori school, children stay in a prepared environment for three years, where they benefit from a period of discovery to a period in a final year where they become leaders in their classroom community.

The three years correlate to the scientifically proven four unique planes of development from birth to adulthood and the Montessori curriculum is designed for the child's needs at each stage. Within the four planes, unique characteristics are present:

- The first plane, 0 - 6 years of age, sees the child absorbing their physical world using all their senses
- The second plane, 6 - 12 years of age, the reasoning mind emerges.
- The third plane, 12 - 18 years of age, is where the adolescent's desire to connect with the world he has learned so much about becomes an exciting new adventure as one prepares for the fourth plane, adulthood.

## The Four Planes of Development



# CYCLES 2 & 3 CLASSROOMS

MONTESSORI EAST | 26



When you first visit a **Cycle 2** classroom from **Cycle 1**, the biggest difference you are likely to notice is the noise level. The primary aged children are much more social beings. They enjoy working collaboratively and sharing their discoveries with each other. Working on research projects with a partner, for example, is a common activity and a rich learning experience.

The primary children continue to use Montessori materials to develop their academic skills and knowledge. The materials now help them to move from concrete concepts towards the abstract. By **Cycle 3**, they are working more abstractly yet Montessori materials are still present to support or reinforce their learning, particularly in areas of Maths, Geometry and English.



# TRANSITIONING TO CYCLE 3

MONTESSORI EAST | 27



There are some significant changes in the routines between Cycle 2 and 3.

**Cycle 3** children have a greater expectation of independence and will be expected to have well established skills in organising their work for the day and completing work.

Cycle 3 children seek and enjoy more social responsibility. We provide them with opportunities to further develop leadership skills and initiative through the Peer Groups, the annual camp, the Journey of Service trip, fundraising and organising the end of year graduation celebration.

# TRANSITIONING TO HIGH SCHOOL

MONTESSORI EAST | 28



## **Our most common question is how well to Montessori East children transition into High School?**

Children transition very well to other schools, both emotionally and academically. We survey families and invite graduates back to our annual Graduates Return Event (see our website for next event) to share their high school experience with current families and invariably they find their experience positive.

By the time a Montessori East student reaches year 7, s/he will have covered the curriculum set by the NSW Board of Studies, the same as every other school. Their advantage will be the love of learning, which has been encouraged and nurtured through an acceptance of error and absence of academic competition.

Regardless of whether they go to a private or public school, Montessori students take with them a positive attitude to learning. They exhibit high self-esteem, developed organisational and social skills, and the ability to work with others. They are inquisitive and know how to ask pertinent questions.



# SCHOOL RULES

## School hours.

Punctuality encourages good timekeeping in your child and assists with the smooth operation of the classroom. The schedules are arranged to give your child the full benefits of the work cycles, so please be on time.

Drop off: **8.30 - 9am (Cycle 1) 8-8.30am (Cycles 2 & 3)**

Pick up: **2pm** on Wednesdays and **3.15pm every other day.** (This may differ for Cycle 1).

## Late or absent.

If your child is late to school or absent, you must contact the school and/or fill in a form available from the office.

**Cycle 2 & 3 students arriving after 8.45am are marked as tardy on the permanent attendance register.**

## Grooming and presentation.

As a sign of respect children should be well presented. Your child's clothing should be comfortable, practical and allow for freedom of movement. Clothing should be modest and cover the shoulders and midriff. Children should refrain from wearing clothes or accessories that may distract other children,

eg. jewellery, and nail polish. Shoes must be supportive and closed, thongs and crocs are not permitted and long hair must be tied back.

For Cycle 1, we do not allow costumes or dress-up clothes. Please also include a bag of spare clothes in case of accidents.

## Lunch and Snack.

Please provide your child with a nutritious lunch and snack. We ask that children not bring fruit juice, sweet treats or packaged food such as chips. We encourage children to drink water, so please pack a water bottle, which they can also fill up at school. Cycle 1 children only staying half a day, do not require to bring a packed lunch, nor water bottle. Children have their own glass labelled with their name in the classroom.

## Lunch Etiquette.

Children are expected to be seated while eating and refrain from playing games and reading books. Children are asked not to share their food due to food allergies.



# SCHOOL RULES

## Allergies - NO nuts.

A number of children have different allergies and each classroom may have a list of specific items that are prohibited. In general, there is a no nuts policy and please do not pack lunches with nuts or traces of nuts. Seeds are accepted.

## Sunscreen and hats.

Sunscreen is provided at school, but you can choose to provide your own. Please label it with your child's name. A no hat, no play rule applies. Please ensure your child's hat is clearly labelled.

## Birthdays.

As your child's birthday approaches, please speak to the teacher regarding the celebration. Typically parents are asked to bring a plate of fruit for the children to share. Cakes/sweets and nuts are not permitted. It is also customary for the birthday child to give a present, such as a book for the library or a plant for the classroom. Teachers can guide you on an appropriate choice.

## Toys.

Toys are not permitted in the classroom, unless at the request of the teacher for Show & Tell. Toys are a distraction to the other children. Any toys will be put away in the child's bag to take home. Specimens for the nature table, fresh flowers or photos are always welcome.

## Cleaning rosters.

Once or twice a year you will see your family name on the Cleaning Roster provided by your teacher. When you take home the class laundry we request you to bring flowers for decorating the tables in the classroom. The laundry should be returned with a few days.

# AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS & CARE

## **After School Clubs.**

Every term we offer after school activities that stimulate and expand your child's learning interests. Clubs are offered during the term. Clubs include yoga, floorball, drama/musical drama, gymnastics, cooking and mandarin. Bookings are through your parent portal  
Engage. <https://engage.montessori.nsw.edu.au>

## **After School Care.**

We offer an after school care service on campus with Extend [extend.com.au](https://extend.com.au) This is a child subsidised service with Centrelink and bookings are made directly through Extend. Children are given fun activities from cooking, crafting to sport. The service is offered to children from 3.5 years and from the end of the school day up until 6pm.

## **Child care rebate.**

Child care rebates no longer apply to pre schools. However rebates are available for our after school program with external provider, Extend.

# SCHOOL CONTACTS

MONTESSORI EAST | 32



## TELEPHONE

**+61 (0) 2 9130 8313**

## ADDRESS

**8 Wellington Street  
Bondi NSW 2026**

## EMAIL

**[admin@montessori.nsw.edu.au](mailto:admin@montessori.nsw.edu.au)**

## OFFICE OPENING HOURS

**Mon - Fri**

**8.00am - 4.00pm**