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### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Please be punctual when bringing and collecting your child. This is very important for the child's feeling of security and for the smooth running of the school.

#### *Drop – off (8:30am – 8:45am)*

The Head Teacher and the Assistant Teacher need time in the morning to prepare the classroom and organize your child's day before they arrive. In view of this we ask you to observe the school drop off time and not drop off your child before 8:30am. The school gate will not be opened before this time.

One of the Teachers will be at the second gate to collect your child. Parents and caregivers are not allowed into the classroom or school grounds in the morning. This is important to allow your child to "separate" easily and start the school day confidently.

#### *Pick – Up (12noon/1pm/3pm)*

The **morning session** ends at 12 noon and 1pm for the children who stay for lunch.

The **afternoon session** ends at 3pm and all children on the Extended Day Program must be picked up at 3pm.

Parents and caregivers will be allowed through the school gate into the garden to pick up their child.

SCHOOL CLOSSES EARLY ON FRIDAYS AT 12:30PM. PLEASE MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD ON TIME AS THE WEEKLY STAFF MEETING IS HELD AT 1PM. THANK YOU.

### LATE PICK-UP

It is important for the smooth running of the School that your child is picked up at the allotted time. If there is an emergency, please call the school to advise. There is a fee of N500 per half-hour for all late pick-ups.

### AT THE DOOR

"Separation" can sometimes be difficult for both parent and child. Please observe a few helpful procedures. Before starting school, be sure that your child understands clearly that you will leave and return at home time. Say your goodbyes before the door opens and don't be tempted to wait for extra farewells which can become quite painful for both of you. Above all, should your child rush in confidently to school, forgetting to say goodbye to you, do NOT call him or her back! We will be on hand to help with clothing and to soothe the occasional tears.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to spend much time in conversation with you at this busy and delicate moment, so if you have a message for us, please hand us a note or phone us.

Should someone other than the persons named on your form collect your child from school, we shall need a note signed by you to authorise this. If an emergency arises during the day and you are unable to provide a note, please phone us with your verbal authority, otherwise we cannot hand over your child. Should you yourself be delayed through some emergency in coming to collect your child, please phone us so that we can explain the circumstances and reassure him/her. You may leave a message on our voicemail, which we check regularly during the day.

### COMMUNICATION

While we may make brief contact on a daily basis, we shall arrange to meet you individually at least twice a year. For questions, or

problems that arise from day to day, please feel free to phone us. We also organize parent meetings regularly both of a social nature and on topics of interest.

### **HEALTH AND EMERGENCY POLICIES**

A detailed medical form must be submitted for each child at the beginning of the term together with emergency contact information.

If your child is ill or out of school for more than three days, he or she may be re-admitted only with a note from your doctor advising us that your child is well enough to return to school. Please notify us at once if your child is diagnosed as having a contagious disease. Children who are ill may not be in school. If a child becomes ill in school, we will call the parent and have the child taken home. We expect parents to act promptly when we call; it is unfair to a sick child and to the child's classmates and if a sick child is forced to remain in school.

We regret that it is against school policy to administer medication. If your child is bruised or hurt while not in the care of the school, please give us a signed note explaining how and when the injury occurred.

The School keeps an accident/incident report book to record any incidents (e.g. child hits another child in the classroom) or accidents (e.g. child falls down and grazes knee while running in the playground). It is kept alongside the first aid equipment and is readily available for teachers to make the report. The parent or caregiver who collects the child at the end of the day must sign the book to indicate that the occurrence of the incident or accident has been reported to the home. In the case of minor accidents, there is a certified First Aid Assistant on the school premises. If your child incurs serious injury, we will contact you immediately and/ or the child's doctor as listed on the emergency contact.

### **SCHOOL FEES**

School fees are paid annually in advance on June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. If you wish to pay your child's fees termly, please submit a written request to the School Office. Termly fees attract a 10% surcharge payment and a deposit equal to one term's fees. The 10% surcharge is an administration charge. We kindly ask that all parents pay their child's fees on time as late fees have an adverse effect on the school's cash flow and in many instances results in late purchase orders of much needed classroom supplies.

### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS**

95% of the school supplies including Montessori Materials, school stationery; and other classroom materials are sourced from England or the USA. This results in heavy air-freight annual charges for the school. The school has tried to source for some materials locally but have found them to be either expensive or of inferior quality. The school places orders for the academic year in June/July every year which is one of the reasons why the school has an annual billing policy.

### **MIXED AGE GROUP**

The Montessori environment is unique in the sense that the children learn in a mixed age group. In the Children's House (the term used to describe the very first Montessori school - *Casa dei Bambini*) this mixed age group is usually ages 2½ - 6 years. Parents are initially suspect as to how this environment helps the child's development, but the merits of this mixed age environment are truly strong:

1. Academic skills develop at a faster rate when there are varied levels of skills in the environment. The younger ones learn from the older ones (sometimes by simply watching and absorbing with their absorbent mind) and the older ones consolidate and strengthen their understanding of a topic when they instruct the younger ones or seek to render an

explanation. The latter requires the older child to understand what he knows even better. The older children naturally seek to help the younger ones and the younger ones naturally seek help and assistance from the older children. What develops is the younger child's admiration for the older child; and the older child's respect for the younger child coupled with a desire to protect those smaller or younger or weaker than him. The class gets to be a group cemented by affection.

2. A classroom of same age children will require identical material for each child, materials designed to meet the **average** needs of each class. In the Children's House, the mixed age groups necessitate a wide and complete range of materials within each classroom, which are used to meet the **individual** needs of each child. This helps children to develop at their own pace without the pressure of "keeping up."
3. Envy, hatred, humiliation and competition are commonplace in a same age classroom. Envy and hatred towards the intelligent ones in the class who are always called upon by the teacher for all the answers; humiliation or feelings of inferiority within those who are less intelligent or perceived to be less intelligent; and competition amongst peers as they strive to complete workbooks faster or to come top of the class. The mixed age class fosters more positive human values like mutual aid and co-operation. The younger child does not feel humiliated or inferior to the older or more competent child for he knows that when he gets older, he too will be as accomplished. Even amongst peers there is no competition as each child is working on different materials at the same time. Two children cannot compete to build the pink tower at the same time, as there is only one. Instead what you see is one child helping another child to

complete a task, if needed. The more capable child is always ready to render help or explanation to those less capable. Here we have a caring community of learners and situation where children know that one day they may be a teacher to one of their friends.

4. Children in a mixed age class typically remain with the same teacher from about age 3 years when they enter the Children's House to about age 6 when they leave the Children's House. This means that over the course of three years the Directress has every opportunity to intimately understand developmental levels, learning styles and family support systems. With this intimate knowledge of the child the Directress is better able to meet the child's need at every stage of his development
5. We want children to develop well as social human beings. As society reflects a mixed age the classroom should also reflect this. The Montessori environment of children of mixed age groups creates a true social community where children can truly develop socially. We are preparing children for the greater community they will be a part of when they are adults.

### FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE

In the Montessori setting when we talk about discipline we talk about internal discipline and not external discipline. Discipline is not the imposing of restraints, for any form of discipline that is gained by placing restrictions is not real discipline. Instead discipline is, as Dr Maria Montessori said, related to qualities of internal construction and of the organizations of the personality.

In order for the child to develop self-discipline, i.e. the ability to restrain himself, he must be given certain freedoms so that he is able to exercise self-discipline. The freedoms that your child will

## THE MONTESSORI SCHOOLHOUSE

enjoy at The Montessori Schoolhouse or in any true Montessori environment are:

1. Snack Table (freedom to eat and drink)
2. Rest (freedom to rest)
3. Speak (freedom to talk to friends)
4. Movement (freedom to move)
5. Choice (freedom to choose his work activity)
6. Work (freedom to work or not to work)
7. Refuse Invitation (freedom to decide whether or not he wants to work with another person or the Class Teacher)
8. Watch/Observe (freedom to watch and observe)
9. Toilet (freedom to go to the toilet when needed)
10. Help (freedom to seek help when needed)
11. Presentation (freedom to ask for a presentation)

By giving a child freedoms, they have the opportunity to choose, the opportunity to make real decisions, the opportunity to develop a strong will which will lead to physical and mental independence and self – discipline. The environment at The Montessori Schoolhouse is specially prepared so that they can exercise and develop a strong will. However, each of these freedoms has limits. Within these freedoms, the child has to exercise self-control or self –discipline so that the freedoms given to them are not taken away. The child who has the freedom to work on any activity that has been presented to him must exercise his choice as to which activity but at the same time he must exercise self discipline not to misuse the material or else his freedom to work with the activity will be taken away from him. The child who has the freedom to eat and drink at the snack table will lose this freedom if he misuses the use of the snack table either by eating and drinking too much with no awareness of the needs of the other children in the class. In essence we cannot have freedom without discipline or discipline without freedom. Freedom and discipline are a harmonious combination. Freedom is always

## Parent Handbook

threatened by the rise of indiscipline and your freedom is protected with the rise of discipline.

Other limits in The Montessori Schoolhouse or in any true Montessori environment include:

- No running
- No hitting, spitting or biting
- No stepping on floor mats (children learn how to walk around a mat in grace and courtesy presentations)
- No misuse of materials or furniture
- Carry one thing at a time
- Do not disturb others who are working
- Put things back in their original place after use
- Every activity chosen by the child must be completed.

There is a general atmosphere of respect for every living thing in the environment with the unspoken rule not to do harm to anyone or to anything in The Montessori Schoolhouse.

### DRESS CODE

Please send your child to school dressed in the colours of navy and white in any combination. Buff khaki skirts or trousers may also be worn and are beautifully coordinated with the school T-Shirt. **Children may not wear T-Shirts to school except for the School T-Shirt. Each child must have at least 2 school T-Shirts. These may be purchased from the School Office.**

A dress code makes children feel good about themselves it also distracts children from what seems to us to be their preoccupation with labels, styles, how many little dresses each little girl owns. A dress code also makes life a little bit easy for parents.

*Children may dress as they like on Fridays which is ‘dress down’ Friday” and on their birthdays.*

### **SCHOOL T-SHIRTS**

The School T-Shirts are available in navy or white at the price of N1500. The T-Shirts are of high quality cotton (Fruit of the Loom) and imported from the United States.

### **MORNING SNACK**

There is a snack table in the classroom where the children can sit down together and share some fruit and a glass of water, providing an opportunity to learn certain social skills. Fruits which we will have out on the snack table will be apples, bananas, oranges, melons and raisins. From time to time we will share exotic fruits especially when a parent has travelled overseas and has brought back cherries, starfruit or the like.

Snacks are provided by parents on a rotating basis.

### **LUNCH**

As part of their social development, children will eat lunch everyday together. Please send your child to school with a healthy packed lunch. No sweets please.

Please also try to avoid those sugary fruit drinks. There is a water dispenser unit in the classroom so that children are encouraged to drink lots of water everyday.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

In the classroom the children are given activities that encourage co-ordination and control of movement, such as walking on the line to music and the silence game. Outdoors, the School garden has a good selection of activities designed for gross motor development:- the climbing frame, monkey bridge, tricycles, balancing beam, balls and the parachute games.

### **TOYS**

Toys, books, tapes, jewellery etc, should not be brought from home as they are easily lost and set up competition among the children. If a very young child needs a favourite object for security while first settling into school, and exception can be made. Also, if a child has a favourite book that he wants to share with the other children in school, he may do so with the permission of the Head Teacher.

### **PERSONAL SUPPLIES**

Each child must keep in school clearly labelled with child's name:

- a complete change of clothing (one shirt/blouse; one skirt/trouser; one pair of underpants; one pair of socks)\*
- in-door slippers or bedroom slippers
- a drinking mug or cup
- box of diapers (toddlers only)

*\*in case of spills, toileting accidents, etc, the child's clothing will be changed and the soiled clothing sent home for laundering. All clothing must be clearly labelled.*

### **BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

All birthday parties held in school will be scheduled during lunchtime. These should be kept very simple and low keyed and we ask parents to bring:

- either a birthday cake or individual cupcakes (enough for each child in the class),
- birthday napkins
- birthday candles
- matches or a lighter
- cake knife
- a storybook that the birthday child has chosen for his birthday story time.

Birthday party procedure is as follows:

- children all sit in a circle
- birthday cake is shared amongst all children on a napkin or cupcakes given
- Special Montessori Birthday presentation is given by the Head Teacher
- The children sing Happy Birthday or observe one minute silence (the Birthday child is given the choice)
- Parent or Head Teacher reads birthday story.

Please ask the School Office for the name of a suitable caterer if you need one for the baking of birthday cakes or cupcakes.

### **SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS**

We are delighted to share in the celebration of festivals and special days in various cultures throughout the year and we ask parents to enlighten us of any of their cultural celebrations including coming in and sharing these with the children.

### **SWIMMING**

Subject to a suitable venue, the school arranges social swimming on Fridays from 12:30pm – 1:30pm. If any parents can be of assistance in lending a venue, please contact the School Office.

### **SOCCER**

The school arranges soccer as an extra curriculum activity for boys ages 4yrs and above. The soccer sessions are organized by the Lagos Preparatory School and enrolment is through them.

### **BALLET**

The school arranges ballet as an extra-curriculum activity for girls ages 3yrs and above. The ballet sessions are organized by the Lagos Preparatory School and enrolment is through them

### **NEWSLETTER**

The School publishes a monthly newsletter with School news. It is delivered on a Friday in pouches given to the children as they leave at the end of the School day.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

You will be provided with a list of holiday dates at the beginning of each academic year or when your child starts attending. There are three terms in the year and the School Year is approximately 34 weeks long. The School is closed for the month of July and August

### **FUND-RAISING**

The school has tried to raise money through its annual Fun Day but this has not been entirely successful with many parents not entirely sure why and for what purpose monies are been raised. The school's fee schedule is heavily subsidised and fees have been kept below international levels even though we have had many costs to bear that our sister schools abroad do not have to bear (e.g annual rent; air freight charges; fuel/generator charges). Funds raised through fund-raising help the school supplement its income and keep fees at reasonable levels. If the school is unable to maintain healthy fund-raising levels, this may necessitate an increase in fees to enable the school maintain international standards in the quality of education and educational materials we provide for your child. It is extremely expensive running a true Montessori School in Nigeria. We ask parents to be understanding of this.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Though we are a small school we still consider it important to get parents involved in their child's school. Parents of the school plays a key role in organising social events for the children during school holidays (e.g Easter egg hunt; swimming parties); fund-raising events and social evenings for parents.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

When a problem arises concerning your child, resolution should follow these steps:

1. Discuss the problem with your child's Teacher first and not with other parents, especially with those who are not parents of The Montessori Schoolhouse.
2. If your child's Teacher is unable to resolve the problem, please address the problem with the Director of School.

We desire to do the very best for your child. When we handle areas of concern quickly and with care, we achieve our goals for your child without disruption.

### **OBSERVATIONS AND RECORD KEEPING**

We take daily observations and record keeping of your child's day in the classroom. Detailed summaries of our observations are discussed at each of your Parent-Teacher Conference.

### **PARENT OBSERVATIONS/ PARENT VISITS/ PARENT MORNINGS/ PARENT TEACHER-CONFERENCES.**

#### *Parent Observations*

Parents can observe their child at least twice a year. Kindly advise the Head Teacher when you would like to observe. Observations take place Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8.30am-9:30am.

#### *Parent Lunch*

Parents and Grandparents may join their child/grand-child for lunch on Fridays at lunch in the classroom. The Head Teacher will contact you to let you know which Friday is your lunch day.

#### *Parent Teacher Conferences*

30-minute sessions are scheduled with each parent at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> term to discuss his or her child's development. If a

parent wishes to discuss his child development prior to the scheduled parent-teacher conference, we urge that parents do not try to engage the Head Teacher in conversation about individual children, at the School Gate. Instead, we would prefer it if you would leave a note in school letter box which we will receive at the end of the day and get back to you.

#### *Parent Coffee Mornings*

There will be 2 parent coffee mornings in each academic year when the Head Teacher will give individual presentation on the main curriculum areas in a Montessori environment. During these parent coffee mornings, parents have the opportunity to learn more about Montessori Philosophy and Practice.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT**

*“Parents are the child's first and most important educators. Montessori schools emphasize the importance of the family in the child's development and seek to create a partnership with parents. Such a partnership is a two-way, interactive process. The child's fullest development demands involvement of both the family and the school. The parents and school engage in an ongoing dialogue centred on the needs of the child. Parents grow and learn along with their child – and the school grows through the collaboration with parents. Parent partnerships goes beyond parent education. Parents cannot just be passive recipients of teaching by the school but must evolve into active teachers and contributors in turn. Together, staff, parents, and children become a community of learners, able and willing to receive and to give back.” (David Kahn – North American Montessori Teacher's Association)*

Each parent is expected to volunteer some services or their time to help in the running of their child's school. A form will be circulated at the beginning of each school term detailing the list of specific tasks the School will need help with.

**TRANSFERRING TO THE NEXT SCHOOL**

The Director of School will be very happy to meet with parents to discuss the transfer of their child on to the next stage of their education. Children have transferred successfully from the Schoolhouse to schools in London and on Lagos Island. Please arrange an appointment to discuss your ideas and plans for your child, should you wish.

**STAFF MEETINGS**

The School's staff meetings are held weekly on a Friday morning at 8am. A wide variety of topics and issues pertaining to the positive development of the school are discussed. The School's teaching staff also meet separately on Thursdays at 8am to discuss (i) the children's individual progress for the week; and (ii) whole class progress and group activities for the week. This time is also used for professional development and class material making sessions.

**TEACHING STAFF**

The school is committed to recruiting experienced and hardworking Montessori teachers who love children. Teachers are with us initially on a 10 month contract for the first academic year, subject to review, appraisal and renewal of contract after that time.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The School is committed to the professional development of its staff. In addition to in-house professional development seminars, staff are encouraged to take Montessori refresher courses in the UK and the US over the summer school holiday, including courses that are held locally.

**INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANTS**

The Maria Montessori Institute in London acts as the School's consultants giving the Director of School professional advice on the

growth and development of the school as a Montessori school. The Director of School has 2-3 consultation visits a year in London. A representative from the Institute, as part of the consultation process, arranges to visit and observe the School during the course of the School year.

**PROFESSIONAL VISITING DAYS**

You should be aware that The Montessori Schoolhouse plays host to outside professional visitors from around the world throughout the course of the year. These will include alumni of The Maria Montessori Institute in London and Montessori consultants from the Association Montessori Internationale.

**WEDNESDAYS**

Ms Toyin will spend Wednesday mornings (and afternoons) at the Lekki Site until further notice.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Address:* 2 Thurnbull Road (off Alexander Ave.), Ikoyi. Lagos.

*Telephone:* +234 (0)854 1841

*Voicemail/GSM:* +234 (0)803 721 6002

*Email:* [hello@montessorinigeria.com](mailto:hello@montessorinigeria.com)

**The School Office is open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 8am – 2pm.**

During the Phone Hours you can call the School and speak to someone. Outside these times, you will only be able to leave a voicemail.

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*THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND COOPERATION  
AND MAKING YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL WORK!*

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in any form or by any means without written permission of  
THE MONTESSORI SCHOOLHOUSE.*

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