



PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to Wee Wisdom Montessori. We are pleased that you have enrolled your child in our Montessori programme and look forward to working together in the development of your child.

This Handbook is a guide to acquaint you with our preschool's expectations. Please feel free to contact us at any time with your questions or concerns, as we are here to help you.

OWNERS

Wee Wisdom Montessori is owned by Anna and Colin Chan. The Licensee of Wee Wisdom is Anna Chan. Anna has a Bachelor of Metaphysics, a Diploma in Early Childhood Education (Montessori) and a Bachelor of Education (Steiner)

STAFF

We aim to employ trained Montessori staff at Wee Wisdom who have an ECE qualification or are studying towards one. We support ongoing professional development and encourage teachers to attend the MANZ Conference and in-service workshops.

In our schools the children use the endearing Māori term "**whaea**" (female, pronounced "fire") or "**matua**" (male, pronounced "ma too ah") to address their teachers. This term represents the respect and importance the teacher has in the young child's learning and growth. It is the same respect that would be offered to a knowledgeable female family member such as an Aunt or an Uncle. *"The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim, therefore, is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorise, but to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inner core."*

We do not want complacent pupils but eager ones; we seek to sow life in the child rather than theories, to help him in his growth, mental and emotional as well as physical".
Dr. Maria Montessori

Please refer staff profile in our inquiry pack.

STUDENTS AND VISITORS

From time to time you will see new faces at our school. Rest assured that they are screened before entering our premise and must adhere to our Montessori philosophy whilst at our school. Student teachers on their practicum will always be supervised by staff and management.

Parent Handbook Drury

MONTESSORI AOTEAROA OF NEW ZELAND (MANZ)

Wee Wisdom is a school member of MANZ. MANZ does a large amount of work at government level on behalf of all Montessori schools. Our membership helps to support this effort. Yearly membership is compulsory and included in your account. Each family holds their own membership so if you have more than one child attending you only pay one annual fee. You will receive very informative "Montessori Voices" magazines throughout the year as well as discounts towards attendance at workshops and the Montessori Annual Conference.

WEE WISDOM MONTESSORI - Drury

Wee Wisdom Montessori is licensed to have children between 0 - 6 years of age.

The Montessori Method emphasises individual development and personal attention through encouragement of the child's inner discipline, allowing for an orderly, calm and peaceful approach to life. Through this method of teaching, the child gains confidence, develops logical thinking and a practical awareness of his or her surroundings resulting in independence and self-esteem.

"There are many who hold, as I do, that the most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence – the totality of his psychic powers".
Dr. Maria Montessori

Our Montessori programme is complemented by the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum called "Te Whaariki", which means the interweaving of the family, the community and the whole child. This curriculum acknowledges that the relationships and environments which children experience have a direct impact on their learning and development.

SCHOOL HOURS

Open hours: 7.30 am - 5.30 pm

Minimum attendance: 3 days

Wee Wisdom is open all year except statutory holidays.

DROPPING OFF AND COLLECTING OF CHILDREN

Please bring your child on time for their scheduled starting time. The time before class is vital for teacher preparation for a smooth and productive day.

It is important for all children that they **arrive on time** each day. Children who arrive late or are collected late can feel awkward and uncomfortable and

often become distressed. Lateness is also disruptive to teachers and the other children working. A child who arrives late has trouble settling and choosing his first work of the day, interrupts other children who are well settled and can feel out of place.

SCHOOL FEES (Refer fee schedule)

Fees are payable 2 weeks in advance and apply to sickness and holidays even if your child is unable to attend. Fees during any emergency closure will be reviewed, assessed and guided by the Ministry of Education guideline and at management discretion. Fees not paid on the due date will incur a late fee penalty equivalent to 10% after 7 days from the specified date on the invoice.

For children aged 3-6 we offer the 20 Hours ECE funding (included in the fees). Additional fees apply to additional hours and outings and trips may incur extra costs associated with it.

Wee Wisdom only accepts the following payment methods: automatic payments or direct debit through internet banking.

INCOME SUPPORT

We are able to offer subsidies through WINZ. Application forms are available in the office. If a subsidy is applied for, full fees are payable until the subsidy is approved, at which time your account will be credited.

PHONE CALLS

Our administrator is in the office each day from 8.30am to 12.30pm and welcomes any calls during these hours. Messages can be left on the phone and we will check these during the session whenever possible.

Nido/Teina: 022 658 4036

Tuakana/ Office: 022 043 0310

PRESCHOOL GATES

The entrance gates MUST be shut upon entering and leaving at all times. If other caregivers are dropping off or picking up your child, please ensure they know these rules.

PARENT & CHILD ORIENTATIONS AND VISITS

We require parent/s to attend a parent orientation with the Head Teacher of the room. These orientations offer parents and Head Teacher the opportunity to discuss routine and expectations of the classroom. We also request a child orientation (usually an hour with/without parent/s) to help the child settle into his/her learning environment. The Head Teacher will discuss if your child needs further visits after the child orientation. We also offer home visits if needed, to establish and strengthen triadic

relationships between the parents, child and teaching team to complement the settling period.

SETTLING IN NEW CHILDREN

On your child's first day of preschool, try to make your farewell as brief as possible. A child that is upset is more easily settled after a quick departure than after a long drawn out goodbye. You are welcome to telephone during the session to check that your child has settled. We will phone you or make further arrangements if your child has trouble settling.

If you have any special concerns about your child starting preschool, please talk with the staff and we will do all we can to make your child's transition from home into the classroom a happy one.

Children starting pre-school in the 0-3 classrooms may need extra visits and these will be arranged specifically to suit each child and their family.

ATTENDANCE

A daily sign in sheet will be provided for you to sign upon arriving and leaving every day. The Ministry of Education requires that early childhood centres provide written records of each child's actual time of attendance.

ABSENCES

Government regulations require that we be informed if your child will not be attending preschool or is unwell. If your child is **away for 3 consecutive weeks**, an email must be given to the preschool. If your child is absent for longer than 21 consecutive days, his or her WINZ and government funding is cut and you will be required to cover this cost yourself.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Our school policy on the collection of children has been made for the safety and protection of your children. Only those people listed on the enrolment form may take your child from the preschool. Names may be added to the enrolment form at any time, or a written note signed by a parent/guardian is acceptable. Unless we have specific instructions, your child will not be allowed to leave the school with an unknown person.

Siblings are very welcome for quick visits while dropping off and picking up your child but parents are asked to ensure they do not use the Montessori equipment and are supervised at all times.

BELONGINGS

Please name all of your child's belongings, i.e. shoes, school bag, lunch box, coat, hat, spare clothing etc. We have a lost property basket located in the front entrance so please check this regularly for lost items.

TOYS AT SCHOOL

Please keep all toys at home as they distract other children and create unfocused behaviour. We take no responsibility for any toys that do come to preschool.

Relevant or special books are welcome but must be named and given to a staff member for safekeeping. All other books are not encouraged as it is difficult to keep track of who owns them and they may become damaged through use. The books in our library have been chosen carefully for their durability and content.

MAGPIES

Occasionally children take home pieces of equipment from school. Please return these, as many of our materials can't be used if pieces are missing.

YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

Parent/teacher meetings are arranged thrice a year where parents are invited to talk with staff about the progress and activities of their child. The dates and times of these meetings will be advised via newsletters, Educa and Facebook. If at any time, you wish to discuss your child's learning and well-being with a teacher, please talk to them and arrange a suitable time for an informal discussion.

PARENT INFORMATION EVENINGS

We plan to have Parent Information evenings at least twice a year. These evenings are organised so parents can gather and share experiences. It is also a wonderful opportunity to gain valuable information from the teachers and a chance to ask all those burning questions.

CURRICULUM AREAS

The Montessori classroom is divided into 5 main areas – Practical Life, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language and Cultural Studies.

Practical Life provides the child with opportunities to use purposeful activities that allow him to develop physical and social skills. These satisfy his need for intelligent activity that leads to greater independence and coordination of movement.

Language is introduced using the phonetic system. The phonetic sound of each letter is linked to its corresponding symbol through the use of specially prepared tactile materials. As a child begins to link the sounds and symbols together, they soon learn that letters make words & words make sentences, enabling them to begin their journey into reading & writing.

Through the senses of sight, touch, sound, taste and smell, the child's impression of his world is formed. The Sensorial materials provide the means for the child to order and classify length, texture, height, size, weight, density, colour, loudness, pitch and geometric forms. Precise language is introduced which extends his understanding and vocabulary.

The Montessori approach to Mathematics is unique. Through the use of specially designed materials the child is able to visualise the whole structure of the number system. The mathematics equipment progresses from simple to complex and concrete to abstract so that the journey of mathematical discovery always occurs in the correct ordered sequence and success is assured.

Dr Montessori emphasised the importance of offering the child the whole view of the world. Therefore, the Cultural materials all relate in some way to science, history, geography, music and the arts.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL DAILY

CLOTHING

It is really important that your child is dressed appropriately for school in clothes that can get dirty. Clothes need to be functional and comfortable for working on the floor and playing outside. Please ensure your child has a complete change of clothes at school, especially underpants. Accidents do happen and the child often gets wet from water play in the summer or mud in the winter.

We use paints that wash out in most fabrics but stained clothing must be soaked in cold water. We haven't yet found a paint that is totally washable!

HATS

We have adopted the Ministry of Education's "No hat, No play" slogan so hats are compulsory for outdoor play all year round. Please provide a clearly named, wide brimmed hat in summer and a warm winter hat in winter.

SUNSCREEN

School will be providing sunblock between September and April and any other day that staff feel it is necessary.

Please supply your own if your child has skin allergies and requires special sunscreen.

FOOT WEAR

In order to help your child dress himself please ensure that he is able to put on his shoes himself and that the catches are appropriate for his age. For example many children cannot do up laces or buckles – velcro or slip on shoes are recommended. During the winter please make sure your child brings gumboots for outside play and slippers for indoor work.

SCHOOL BAG

Please supply a fairly large school bag to hold a lunchbox, spare clothes, gumboots and enough space for artwork your child may do.

FOOD

At Wee Wisdom Montessori we follow *the Reducing food-related choking for babies and young children at early learning services* guideline published by Ministry of Health in December 2020 (effective from 25th January 2021).

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/reducing-food-related-choking-babies-young-children-early-learning-services-apr21.pdf>

Any food supplied by the service will adhere to the Ministry of Education guidelines and will not provide any food from the high-risk foods list as follows and alter any foods that are from the High-risk foods to alter list, according to individual children's capabilities and healthy eating, as necessary.

We ask that parents prepare food in recommended sizes to avoid choking hazard and/or according to individual children's capabilities. We also promote healthy eating and do not allow soft drinks, chocolate, sweets or junk food. Any uneaten lunch will be sent home so that you can monitor your child's food intake. No child will be forced to eat morning tea or his lunch but is encouraged to do so.

Please bring one piece of fruit per day for a shared morning and afternoon tea.

Birthdays or leaving parties are exceptions where we welcome birthday cakes and treat foods for celebrations.

Nuts and any food with nuts are strictly forbidden, as many young children are allergic to nuts whether they eat them or come into contact in any way. Thank you for your understanding.

When a new child starts that indicates they have a **food allergy**, the allergy procedure will be reviewed

by staff and all parents notified of food that cannot be present at school.

SPECIAL EVENTS

During the school year guests and special programmes are brought to the school for additional enrichment of the children.

ILLNESS

It is your responsibility to keep your child at home if they are unwell or at risk of infecting other children or staff. **Staff will send children home if they feel they are at risk to other children.** Please keep all colds and runny noses at home as they spread quickly in a school environment. If your child requires medication during school hours, you must fill out the necessary form, which is available from school and state clearly the dosage and schedule.

Please note:

If your child has suffered from any illness deemed contagious a doctors' letter must be provided before your child can return to school stating, they are no longer infectious to others around them.

If there has been an incidence of an infectious disease at school, we will inform all parents so that you can keep a close watch on your own child. This will be done anonymously.

The following is a reminder list about infectious diseases and the days needed at home to recover.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalisation.

Most common symptoms:

Fever
Dry cough
Tiredness

Less common symptoms:

Aches and pains
Sore throat
Diarrhoea
Conjunctivitis
Headache
Loss of taste or smell
A rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes

Serious symptoms:

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
Chest pain or pressure
Loss of speech or movement

Seek immediate medical attention if you have serious symptoms. Always call before visiting your doctor or health facility.

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should manage their symptoms at home. On average it takes 5–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days.

Cold Sores

Stay home until the skin completely heals. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Strep Throat

Must stay at home if feverish and for 24 hours after a course of antibiotics has started and until well. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Common Cold

Usually 2-4 days. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Measles

Minimum 7 days incubation. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

German measles (Rubella)

3-5 days incubation. Stay home 7 days after the appearance of the rash. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Chicken Pox

Contagious before the rash appears and during 5 days of new lesions. Stay home until all blisters have dried. Requires a medical clearance/ doctors' letter to return to school.

Mumps

Until swelling disappears, usually 7-10 days. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Whooping Cough

Stay home 21 days from onset of coughing or after 5 full days of a course of antibiotics. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Infectious Hepatitis

See doctor. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Lice/Nits

Treat all the family. Stay home 24 hours after treatment & as long as there are live lice present.

Scabies

Spreads from skin contact. Stay home for 24 hours after treatment has started. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Impetigo (school sores)

Children must stay home 24 hrs after treatment has started as advised by their GP and until all sores are dry. Return to school with doctor's clearance.

Vomiting or Upset stomach

(including diarrhea)

We ask that children stay home for 48 hours after the last episode.

High Temperature

A normal temperature is between 36°C and 37°C. Any child with a temperature of 37.4°C and higher must stay at home until the temperature returns to normal (without administering of medication).

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

There is a comprehensive complaints procedure which is listed on our school notice board. There is also a copy located in the Parent Handbook located by the sign in sheet/ entrance area. Alternatively you can ask for a copy from the school office.

WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD

Wee Wisdom Montessori requires **2 weeks written notice** of your intention to withdraw your child from our school. Notice given under this time will mean that you are liable for all fees up to the date of termination of your child's enrolment.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME

Parents often ask how they can assist with their child's learning and how they can complement the Montessori school environment at home. Here are some suggestions:

- Read to your child as much as possible, at least once a day. Enjoy a variety of stories, poems and songs.
- Use phonetics with your child - that is the 'sound' not the 'name' of the letters of the alphabet. This reinforces his language work at school. Refer to the list to check what 'sounds' are correct.
- Give opportunities to your child to count objects around him, e.g. steps, chairs, fruit, books, toys, etc.
- Try to ensure you give him time and encouragement to complete tasks for himself, i.e. dressing himself, preparing his own snacks etc. "Help me to do it myself".
- Try to find appropriate ways to allow your child to contribute to the life of your household, i.e. food preparation, cleaning, gardening, making his own bed, carrying his schoolbag etc.
- Never interrupt a concentrating child. Respect that she/he is learning something we may not even see or understand.
- Turn off the TV and limit the computer. This is so important as children have a wonderful ability to play and amuse themselves but it needs to be practiced - we rely on this skill in a Montessori environment.

PHONETIC SOUNDS OF THE ALPHABET

a Ants on the apple....a a a.... a is the sound of A
b Bouncing ball....b b b....b is the sound of B
c Cute car....c c c....c is the sound of C
d Dancing dog....d d d....d is the sound of D
e Egg in an eggshell....e e e....e is the sound of E
f Funny fish....f f f....f is the sound of F
g Giggling girl....g g g....g is the sound of G
h Happy horse....h h h....h is the sound of H
i Indian ink....i i i....i is the sound of I
j Jumbo jigsaw....j j j....j is the sound of J
k Kings key.....k k k.....k is the sound of K
l Leaping lion....l l l....l is the sound of L
m Morning moon....m m m....m is the sound of M
n Nuts in a nutshell....n n n....n is the sound of N
o Orange orange....o o o....o is the sound of O
p Prickly pineapple....p p p....p is the sound of P
q Quiet queen....q q q....q is the sound of Q
r Round ring....r r r....r is the sound of R
s Stinky socks....s s s....s is the sound of S
t Tiger on tiptoes....t t t....t is the sound of T
u Up umbrella....u u u....u is the sound of U
v Vintage violin....v v v....v is the sound of V
w Wally's watch.....w w w....w is the sound of W
x Fox in a box....x x x.....x is the sound of X
y Yellow yacht....y y y....y is the sound of Y
z Zig zag zebra....z z z.....z is the sound of Z

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Wee Wisdom fully supports and encourages parent involvement and a community feeling with families attending the preschool. If you would like to be involved with organising parent activities please contact one of the teachers.

Parents are encouraged to borrow magazines, books and videos from the Parent Library to help with their familiarity and approach to Montessori education. Parents are invited to join the children on school trips.

CONTACT DETAILS

Wee Wisdom Montessori Drury

159 Great South Road

Drury

Auckland 2110

Ph: 09 294 7978

Mobile: 0220 430 310

Email: managerdrury@weewisdommontessori.co.nz
admindrury@weewisdommontessori.co.nz

Website: www.weewisdommontessori.co.nz