



# FAMILY HANDBOOK

2018-2019

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Dear Families,

Welcome to Montessori Borealis Preschool. Montessori Borealis is a one-classroom community and family oriented preschool located in Whitehorse, Yukon. We are pleased to offer a Montessori program for children from three to six years of age.

Our staff includes teachers trained as Montessori teachers by the Association Montessori International (AMI). AMI was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori to maintain the integrity of her life's work, and to ensure that it would be perpetuated after her death. Our school is supported and operated by the Whitehorse Montessori Society, a not-for-profit society incorporated under the Societies Act of Yukon.

At Montessori Borealis, we strive to meet the goals of a Montessori education, and to ensure a positive educational experience for our students. This Family Handbook contains information about our program and our policies and procedures regarding enrolment, tuition, and other practical matters relating to the operation of our school. Please take the time to review this handbook, and make yourself familiar with our policies and procedures.

For those families seeking to enroll their child in Montessori Borealis for the first time, we look forward to welcoming your child to our school. And for those families who are already a part of our Montessori community, we thank you for your continued interest in our program.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (867) 456-7100, or at [school@montessoriborealis.com](mailto:school@montessoriborealis.com).

Yours in Montessori,

Laurie Parker  
Head Teacher  
Montessori Borealis Preschool

Ian Parker  
President  
Whitehorse Montessori Society

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# **1. THE MONTESSORI BOREALIS PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

The Montessori Borealis Preschool program has been established by our teaching staff, and is fully supported by the Board of Directors.

## **a. Our Students**

Our Montessori Borealis Preschool follows a program known as Casa dei Bambini. Ideally, our students begin our program at three years of age, and can remain with us until age six (i.e. until the end of their kindergarten year). Children must be toilet-trained when they start school.

## **b. Our Enrolment Options**

Montessori Borealis offers a full-time program five days a week. While class officially begins at 8:30 a.m., we are open at 8 a.m. for the convenience of working parents.

Full-time students attend from 8:30am to 3:30pm each day, Monday to Friday

We also offer an After School Program from 3:30pm to 5:00pm each day. The number of after school spots is limited.

## **c. The Daily Schedule in Our Classroom**

8:00-8:30	Arrival and Welcoming
8:30-11:30	Three-hour work cycle as per Montessori guidelines. Children use the materials purposefully according to their own interests and with lessons from the adults. Snack, French, and Circle Time are all incorporated into this time.
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-1:15	Outdoor Play
1:15-3:15	Work time as per the morning. Naps for younger children.
3:30	Coats and Dismissal
3:30-5:00	After School Program

## **d. Our Montessori Curriculum**

At Montessori Borealis Preschool, we strive to expose our students to learning situations that include the major areas of Montessori curriculum:

- **Practical Life Exercises** - These instill care for themselves, for others, and for the environment. The activities include many of the tasks children see as part of the daily life in their home such as pouring, doing the dishes, arranging flowers, etc. Elements of human conviviality are introduced with the exercises of grace and courtesy. Through these and other activities, children develop hand-eye coordination, enabling controlled movement, fine motor control, focus and concentration. They learn to work at a task from beginning to end, and develop their will (defined by Dr. Montessori as the intelligent direction of movement), their self-discipline and their capacity for total concentration;
- **Sensorial Materials** - These are tools for development. Children build cognitive efficacy, and learn to order and classify impressions. They do this by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting, listening, and exploring the physical properties of their environment through the exploration of specially-designed materials;
- **Language** - Language is vital to human existence. The Montessori environment provides rich and precise language. Enrichment of vocabulary is the first step. Next, a phonetic approach to letters and sounds provides the child with the tools to “write” using our movable alphabet. Reading is a natural progression from this, as is writing with a pencil, and beginning grammar work. Celebration of the cultural significance of language takes place through exploration of poetry, word play, story-telling, fables, etc.;
- **Mathematics Materials** - These activities help the child learn and understand mathematical concepts by working with concrete materials. This work provides the child with solid underpinnings for traditional mathematical principles, providing a structured scope for abstract reasoning; and
- **Cultural Extensions** - Geography, History, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Art and Music are presented as extensions of the sensorial and language activities. Children learn about other cultures past and present, and this allows their innate respect and love for their environment to flourish, creating a sense of solidarity with the global human family and its habitat.

We build on this basic Montessori academic curriculum by enriching our students’ school experiences with the addition of Art, Music, and Outdoor Experiences. As well, our students have the opportunity to begin to learn French as a second language.

## **2. APPLICATION AND ENROLMENT**

The application and enrolment policies at Montessori Borealis, have been established by the Board of Directors, in consultation with the staff of the school.

PLEASE NOTE: Inquiries regarding application for enrolment, enrolment and tuition fees should be directed to the school at [school@montessoriborealis.com](mailto:school@montessoriborealis.com) or [admin@Montessoriborealis.com](mailto:admin@Montessoriborealis.com).

### **a. Applying for Enrolment**

Families may submit an application form at any time during the year, and in advance of their child reaching three years of age.

Application forms are available at the school or on our website at [www.montessoriborealis.com](http://www.montessoriborealis.com). Application forms must be submitted to the school in person, by mail, or by email. Completed application forms will be marked by the Head Teacher with the date that they are received at the school.

### **b. Enrolment in the After School Program**

At Montessori Borealis, our school day ends at 3:30pm. We recognize, however, that not all families are in a position to end their workday at 3:30pm. We therefore offer an after school program, which is a non-Montessori option, that is offered five days per week from 3:30pm to 5:00pm for current students of Montessori Borealis Preschool.

Enrolment in the after school program is limited. Families should request registration in the after school program (five days a week) when submitting their child's application for enrolment with Montessori Borealis Preschool.

Please note that the after school program is not offered on a drop-in or per-day basis: only those children who have been enrolled may attend.

### **c. Confirming Enrolment**

Montessori principles regarding the ideal balance in the classroom will inform and guide offers of enrolment. These principles include the balancing of ages and gender in the classroom.

Other priorities that may be considered by Montessori Borealis Preschool when offering a spot in our program include the following:

- Current students;
- Previous students;

- Siblings of current students;
- Siblings of previous students;
- The date that a completed application was received at the school.

Families who have applied for a spot for their child in our program will be contacted by email as soon as a spot is available. At this time the school will provide the family with an enrolment package. The child's enrolment as a student in our program will be confirmed after the school receives the completed enrolment package.

Once all forms and the required tuition payment have been received by the school, you will receive a written confirmation of your child's enrolment in our program. Your child's attendance at Montessori Borealis Preschool cannot begin until confirmation of enrolment has been provided.

**A child's enrolment will not be confirmed until the school has received the enrolment package, including the required tuition fees.**

Please note: Montessori Borealis Preschool maintains a waiting list of prospective students whose families have submitted completed application forms to the school. Should a spot in our program become available during the school year, families with children on our waiting list will be contacted if a spot is available for their child.

#### **d. Withdrawals**

From time to time, and for various reasons, families may withdraw their child from our program. We request that, where possible, families provide notice of their intention to withdraw their child, so that the teachers are aware and can prepare for any impact on the child and the class as a result of the child's pending departure. Notice will also allow the school time to offer the spot to another child on our waiting list.

Please also see the section of this Handbook relating to tuition for information relating to notice of withdrawal and its impact on the tuition payable.

The Board of Directors of the Whitehorse Montessori Society reserves the right to refuse an application for enrolment, as well as to ask that a child withdraw from Montessori Borealis Preschool if the program is not responding to the child's needs. Any such decisions by the Board of Directors will be made in consultation with the Head Teacher.

### 3. TUITION FEES AND RELATED FINANCIAL POLICIES

The Montessori Borealis Preschool tuition and financial policies have been established by the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Head Teacher.

#### a. Tuition Fees

The annual tuition fees for 2018-2019 have been set as follows:

- Full time enrolment \$9,530.00
- Full time enrolment plus after school \$11,350.00

Tuition fees may be paid in full on or before August 1, 2018, or by way of our installment plan.

#### b. Tuition Installment Plan

We are pleased to offer an installment plan for the payment of tuition fees.

The annual tuition fees may be paid in ten equal amounts by cheques payable to “Whitehorse Montessori Society” and post-dated for the first of each month starting with August 1, 2018 and ending with May 1, 2019:

- Full time enrolment \$953
- Full time plus after school \$1135

Where a child is enrolled in our program after August 1, 2018, the tuition costs will be prorated, and the first cheque must be received, upon confirmation of enrolment, for the child’s first month attending school. Post-dated cheques dated the first of the month, for the remainder of the year (until June 1, 2019), are due on the child’s first day of school.

Please note: Tuition fees once paid are not refundable.

#### c. Other Fees

- Whitehorse Montessori Society annual membership fee of \$5.00;
- Annual activity fee \$45;
- Annual snack fee \$200 (paid in full or as additional \$20/month)

#### **d. Child Care Subsidies**

Families who have been approved to receive a subsidy from Child Care Services must ensure that the school is immediately provided with a copy of the subsidy approval letter, which sets out the amount of subsidy approved. Until the school has received a copy of the approval letter, families are responsible for the full amount of their child's tuition fees.

Once the school has received a copy of the approval letter, the school, in accordance with the amounts in the letter, will recalculate the applicable child's tuition fee amounts, the family will be notified of the recalculation, and post-dated cheques in those amounts must be immediately provided to the school.

Monthly Eligibility Forms are available at school and must be completed by families on a monthly basis so that the school can submit the subsidy billings to Child Care Services in a timely manner. Failure to provide completed Eligibility Forms to the school on a monthly basis may result in families being invoiced by the school for the full amount of their child's tuition fees.

#### **e. Returned Cheques and Late Payment**

In the event that the bank returns a cheque, the school will charge the family a fee of \$40.00, payable immediately. And where the bank returns a cheque for tuition fees and the applicable monthly payment has not been made in full by the family by the 15th day of that month, the Board of Directors reserves the right to cancel the child's enrolment in Montessori Borealis Preschool.

#### **f. Changes in Enrolment**

We understand that at any point in a given school year a family might wish to change their child's enrolment from full time to full time plus after school or full time plus after school to full time. Changes from full time to full time plus after school are subject to the limit on our full time plus after school spots and one month's written notice is requested, in the same manner as set out in our Withdrawal Policy. Consideration will be given to mid-month requests on a case-by-case basis.

### **g. Withdrawal Policy**

We require one month's written notice of withdrawal of a student from Montessori Borealis Preschool. Notice of withdrawal must be provided by the first day of the month prior to the month that the child will no longer be attending our program.

If notice is provided after the first day of the month prior, the tuition due on the first day of the month that the child will no longer attending our program will be forfeited. For example, if a family provides notice on November 5 that they will be withdrawing their child from our program effective December 1, the December tuition payment will be due and owing and the post-dated cheque for that day will be deposited. However, if a family provides notice on November 1 of withdrawal effective December 1, the December tuition payment will not be due and owing.

Our Withdrawal Policy also applies to our after school program fees, whether or not a child is being withdrawn from the school or simply from the after school program.

## **4. PROGRAM-RELATED POLICIES**

The Montessori Borealis Preschool program-related policies have been established by our teaching staff, in consultation with the Board of Directors as required and appropriate.

### **a. Starting School**

During the first weeks of school, the children will start school at different times: this is called a “progressive start” and it is meant to allow for a comfortable transition. New students will begin during the first three days and will be joined by returning students thereafter.

### **b. Child Arrival and Departure**

We ask that families adhere to the following arrival and departure times, in order for the students to benefit fully from our Montessori classroom experience, and to minimize disruptions for all students:

- Full time students: Arrive between 8:00am and 8:30am, Depart at 3:30pm
- After School Program: Depart by 5:00pm

Please note: a fee of \$1 per minute may be applied if your child arrives prior to their applicable arrival time, or if he or she is picked up after their applicable departure time.

We also ask that during arrival and departure times at the school, families remain in the hallway or outside the school building, rather than coming into the classroom. This helps a child understand that the school is his or her space for learning independently from his or her family. It also prevents the disruption caused by too many adults in the children’s space.

Only parents or guardians listed in your child’s Enrolment Package will be allowed to pick up your child. No child will be allowed to leave with a person other than a parent, not even a relative, babysitter, or older sibling, unless we have written permission from a parent, or if that person is listed as the child’s emergency contact in our files.

Parking is limited. Angle parking is available directly in front of the building, ‘kiss and ride’ parallel parking along Ogilvie Street to the north of the school, and longer term parking in the lot at Shipyards Park. Bicycles may be locked at front of the building.

### **c. Attendance**

We ask that parents or guardians contact the school if your child will not be attending school on any given day. If your child will be not be attending due to a communicable illness, please inform us immediately.

If, during the school day, your child does not feel well or has a fever, we will phone you immediately to arrange to pick up your child. If you are not available, we will phone your emergency contact to arrange to pick up your child.

## **d. Your Child's Progress**

### **i. Progress Interviews**

Parents will be invited to attend an interview with the Head Teacher twice during the year to discuss your child's progress in school. Dates and times for interview will be posted at the school ahead of time; each interview will be 15 minutes long. If you feel you will require more time with the head teacher, arrangements can be made upon request. You are also welcome to request a meeting anytime during the year.

### **ii. Progress Reports**

Written progress reports will go home during the school year for all of our students.

### **iii. Classroom Observation**

We encourage families to come and observe the classroom after Thanksgiving of each school year. Please do not hesitate to call or email at any time to let us know that you would like to observe.

## **e. What to Bring to School**

### **i. Lunches**

We ask that families send along a nutritious lunch for their child, preferably in reusable packaging. A nutritious lunch must include foods from the four food groups, as set out in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating.

Note: At the beginning of the school year, and from time to time, the teaching staff will advise families of any severe allergies that may be experienced by one or more students at Montessori Borealis Preschool. Please avoid sending any foods containing any indicated allergens to the school.

**We will provide nutritious snacks**, once in the mid-morning, and once in the mid-afternoon. Snacks will include foods from at least two food groups, and will be prepared by our students and teachers. Often our snacks will include baked items made together by our students and teachers in the classroom.

## **ii. Clothing**

Please send your child to school in comfortable, easy to manage, washable clothing.

Clothing that is easily managed encourages independence. Many toilet accidents are prevented if children can unbutton or unbuckle pants without a struggle.

Please ensure that your child has a good pair of inside shoes to be kept at school for everyday use in the classroom. We ask that you do not provide shoes that have black soles, as they will leave marks on the classroom floor.

We also ask that parents ensure that your child has one change of clothing at school, clearly marked with his or her name. Soiled clothing will be sent home and a new change of clothing should be returned to school the following day.

We will be going outside daily and ask that you please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather every day in all seasons. This includes providing a helmet during the winter, for any activities where helmets could prevent injury, such as tobogganing.

All items of clothing and equipment should be clearly marked with your child's name.

## **iii. Toys from Home**

We ask that parents explain to your child that their toys are to stay in your vehicle or in your home. Children will not be allowed to bring toys into the school. However, books or other educational material, that may be of interest to all of our students, are welcome in the school. Be certain that your child's name is clearly marked on all such items. We will not be responsible for items lost at school.

## **f. Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time for your child. We will celebrate the life of your child with a special birthday ceremony.

To assist with our celebration, we ask that you and your child bring in pictures of your child developing over the years: one as a newborn and then one picture per year. One significant change this year – FAMILIES WILL **NOT** BRING IN A BIRTHDAY SNACK ON YOUR CHILD'S BIRTHDAY. Instead, your child will help us to make a special birthday snack at school. Your child can enjoy the benefits of one-on-one baking time with a staff member and the joy of creating a snack that he/she has chosen for the class.

If you will be having a birthday party for your child, please feel free to leave party invitations with our teachers for distribution. If your child's friend is celebrating a birthday, please save gift giving for celebrations outside of school. Gift giving in school tends to be disruptive, and we would like to foster the feeling that being with friends and sharing within a group is a gift in itself for a birthday child.

## **g. Guidance and Discipline Strategies**

At Montessori Borealis Preschool, we employ two main strategies when it comes to guidance and discipline for our students, Prevention and Intervention:

### **i. Prevention**

1. Clear, consistent, and simple limits are set within the classroom environment.
2. Straightforward explanations are offered for these limits.
3. Limits are stated in a positive and constructive way.
4. When there is only one choice, statements are made.
5. Children are allowed time to respond to expectations.
6. Appropriate behaviour is reinforced with words and gestures.
7. Children are encouraged to come to teachers for help.
8. Teachers constantly observe the classroom to gain total awareness of what is happening, and to foresee troubles.

### **ii. Intervention**

1. The child's attention is gained in a respectful way.
2. Proximity and touch are used when a child may be losing focus or self-control.
3. Reminders are used to clarify and reinforce limits.
4. The child's feelings are acknowledged before limits are set.

5. Distraction and diversion are used when needed.
6. Teachers model problem-solving skills for a discouraged or frustrated child.
7. Appropriate choices are offered when reinforcing limits.
8. Natural and logical consequences are expressed and used.
9. Redirection is used when a child is unable to resolve a problem using other strategies.
10. In the event of misuse of materials, a child's use of those materials may be limited, if deemed necessary, or
11. A child may be asked to stay by a teacher's side or to sit briefly on the sidelines in order to become calm and ready to join the others. There is no "time-out chair" in the classroom.
12. In the unlikely event that a child loses all control and the ability to reason, a teacher will physically remove the child from the situation and work with the child to resolve the situation. The teacher will remain calm and controlled, offering support and comfort to the child.

## **5. THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

### **a. Open Houses and Classroom Visits**

Open houses will be held at the school from time to time during the school year. Families who are interested in applying for enrolment for their child are invited to visit the classroom during any one or all of our open houses. Families may also make an appointment with the Head Teacher for an observation, a tour of the school and/or an informal interview.

### **b. Parent/School Communication**

We endeavour to keep our school website and Facebook page up to date so that information about the school, including key dates, is easily accessed by families.

School newsletters are issued on a monthly basis throughout the school year and distributed by email and are posted outside the classroom. These newsletters typically contain information about the classroom, upcoming events, and the Montessori philosophy.

Parents and guardians are always welcome to contact the school with any questions, concerns or updates regarding your child or your child's experience. Please feel free to contact us by phone during operational hours or by email at any time.

### **c. Family Involvement**

As a small community, from time to time throughout the year, parents and guardians may be asked to volunteer in various capacities, such as sitting on the Board of Directors, fundraising activities, chaperoning field trips, developing material needed for the classroom (simple sewing or carpentry projects), and helping teachers in organizing monthly special activities.

### **d. Fundraising**

Various fundraising initiatives may occur throughout the year. Our goal is to keep the quantity of fundraising projects low while achieving the maximum financial return.

### **e. Special Events**

It is our intention to organize several activities during the school year, both within the school during school hours, and outside of school during evenings or weekends, as a way to build community among our teaching staff and families.

Details regarding these events will be provided in advance, via postings at the school,

emails to parents and guardians, and through updates to our school website at [www.montessoriborealis.com](http://www.montessoriborealis.com).

## **6. STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **a. Illness Policy**

To maintain a healthy environment for our students and teaching staff, we ask that any child showing symptoms of illness be kept at home until symptoms are gone.

If a child comes down with any of the following symptoms (fever, severe coughing, severe sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, or pink eye/conjunctivitis) at school or is not well enough to take part in the school program, parents or guardians will be immediately notified and asked to pick him/her up.

The children will play outside daily and must be well enough to do so. The policy of admitting healthy children only is in the best interests of all families and will be strictly enforced. Alternative childcare arrangements should be made for days when your child is sick.

Please inform the school if your child has contracted a communicable illness, such as influenza, whooping cough, measles, and so on.

Please keep us informed of any health-related concerns you may have regarding your child.

### **b. Prescription Medication**

If your child needs to take prescription medication during school hours, a medical consent form must be completed by a parent or guardian, and the medication handed directly to the Head Teacher. All medication must be provided in its original box or bottle, and be clearly identified with your child's name and dosage required. The Head Teacher will administer the dosage that is indicated on the prescription label. Please note that the first dose must have been administered at home, to ensure that there is no allergic reaction.

### **c. Emergencies**

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU KEEP YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION UP TO DATE. The child's individual emergency instructions on file at school will be consulted immediately and the parents notified by telephone. If the parents or guardians are not available, the next person on the emergency contact will be called.

In case of an evacuation, we will take our students to the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre (1171 Front Street). Parents and guardians will be asked to pick up their child

at this location, if need be.

#### **d. Cold Weather Policy**

At Montessori Borealis we are committed to spending time outdoors every day. We therefore require that children have appropriate cold weather clothing – warm jacket, snowpants, winter boots, hat, waterproof mittens, and buff or neck warmer. On frigid days we will simply walk down the street and back, but the exercise and fresh air will benefit the children. On rare occasions, when the temperature falls below -30 before windchill, we may make the decision to remain indoors.

#### **e. Child Welfare**

At Montessori Borealis, we will ensure that no child enrolled in our school is, while under the care and supervision of our staff:

- Subjected to shoving, hitting, shaking, spanking, or any other form of corporal punishment;
- Subjected to harsh, belittling, or degrading treatment, whether verbal, emotional, or physical, which would humiliate the child or undermine his or her integrity;
- As a form of punishment, confined, physically restrained, or kept without adult supervision, apart from other children; or
- As a form of punishment, deprived of meals, rest, or necessary use of a toilet.

We are required by law to report suspected or disclosed abuse. Failure to do so on our part can result in prosecution under the Family and Child Services Act. We are not permitted to contact the parents or guardians, unless specifically directed to do so by the Department of Health and Social Services or by police.

These mandated reporting procedures are designed to protect the child.

## 7. OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR STUDENTS

Our goal is to provide a safe and nurturing Montessori environment where our students are free to grow and experiment at their own individual pace by channeling their own natural curiosity.

We are committed to providing an environment where our students:

- Develop a positive attitude towards learning;
- Develop the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning;
- Develop a strong and positive sense of self;
- Develop respect for themselves, for others, and for their environment;
- Develop effective communication skills (for stating their own needs and for resolving conflict);
- Develop appropriate social skills;
- Develop their own creative interests and imagination; and
- Foster inner discipline and build an inner sense of order.

### Montessori Links for Families

Montessori Society of Canada      <http://www.montessorisocietycanada.org/index.html>

Association Montessori Internationale      <http://www.montessori-ami.org>

Maria Montessori .com      <http://mariamontessori.com/mm/>

Montessori Quality Assurance      <http://montessoriqualityassurance.ca>

*“And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher’s task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.”*

Maria Montessori  
The Absorbent Mind  
(translated by Claude A. Claremont)

## 8. SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR 2018-2019

The Montessori Borealis school calendar was set by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Board of Directors:

### Classes Start

For new students: Monday, August 27, 2018  
For returning students: Thursday, August 30, 2018

Last day of school – Thursday, June 20, 2019 (Friday, June 21 is a statutory holiday)

Our school day runs from 8:30 am until 3:30pm, with an after school program from 3:30pm to 5:00pm.

### **a. School Closures**

Montessori Borealis will be closed on the following days:

- Labour Day Monday, September 3, 2018
- Thanksgiving Day Monday, October 8, 2018
- Remembrance Day Monday, November 12, 2018
- Winter Break Monday, Dec 24, 2018 – Friday, January 4, 2019 (inclusive)
- Heritage Day Friday, February 22, 2019
- Spring Break March 11-15, 2019
- Good Friday Friday, April 18, 2019
- Easter Monday Monday, April 22, 2019
- Victoria Day Monday, May 20, 2019

### **b. Professional Development Days**

The school will be closed for the following three Professional Development days during the school year so our staff can engage in collaborative learning and/or planning:

- Friday, October 5, 2018
- Thursday, February 21, 2019
- Friday, May 17, 2019