

INFORMATION BOOKLET

For Parents & Guardians



Montessori Life
Primary

Metamorphosis of Life

Inspire

Learn

Teach





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MONTESSORI LIFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Welcome!

The Governing Council, Principal and Staff extend a warm welcome to all new parents and pupils.

We are happy to have you and your child as part of the Montessori family, and look forward to getting to know your family. The school was founded in 2010 due to the need for a Primary phased Montessori centred learning institution. We are situated on a beautiful property on the outskirts of Mbabane, Thembelihle, Eswatini. We are a non-profit, independent school. We offer a stimulating environment for children from Grade 1 to Grade 7, based on the Montessori philosophy and principles. With our beautiful facilities, dedicated staff, and an academic and extracurricular programme that continues to grow and advance, Montessori Life Primary prides itself on the excellent, well-rounded education it provides.

The success of any school is dependent on the quality of its teachers. Teachers at Montessori Life Primary are qualified, dedicated, committed, and empathetic and have the best interest of each pupil at heart. We empower children to be independent, knowledgeable and responsible contributors to the global community.

We trust that your child will find his/her schooling experience a happy and rewarding one. We celebrate the support and co-operation of parents, in the task of educating each child, and encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school.

We place great importance on communication and hope that this Information Book will answer the many questions you may have regarding the day-to-day routine, as well as the overall operation of Montessori Life Primary. There will always be further questions and a personal approach is the best way of answering these. We have an open-door policy. Communication is a two-way process, should questions or problems arise it is vital that we get together as soon as possible to resolve them.

Thank you for choosing to become part of the Montessori family. We are confident that your child/children will greatly benefit from the Montessori programme.

Best wishes

Principal

MONTESSORI LIFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

MONTESSORI LIFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

For more than a century, Montessori has been thriving around the globe, and research validates the effectiveness of the Montessori Method. Several key elements of the approach meet the educational goals today's parents have for their children, including growing into capable people who will have a strong sense of self, the ability to connect with others, and the potential to be productive throughout their lives.

THE MONTESSORI APPROACH

The remarkable woman responsible for the Montessori approach was the Italian born Maria Montessori. She was born in 1870 and later became the first female doctor in her country. Her work led to her interest in children and she therefore devised a system of education for handicapped and deprived children. As a result of the success her methods had on these children, the principles were extended to provide stimulus to all children. Doctor Montessori created a structured environment that, together with her specially designed didactic materials, would motivate and encourage children to learn. The Montessori way offers a sensible, structured system that allows the child to develop at his / her own pace. She saw the role of the teacher as one of a director and a guide aiding the child to learn from the environment. Gradually through her method, the child would build a strong sense of independence and self-confidence.



The philosophy of our school is founded on Montessori principles. We offer a child structured environment with materials that will help your child to move from concrete operations to abstract understanding.

Much of the work done by our lower elementary / primary children will involve using didactic Montessori materials, thus the children's workbooks are not always a true reflection of all the work being accomplished. As their experience increases, their work becomes more abstract, especially in the upper elementary classes.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AT MONTESSORI LIFE PRIMARY

At Montessori Life Primary we treat each child with respect and endeavour to instil in our children a sense of inner discipline and responsibility for their own behavior. We recognize that education is not just something that happens at school. Every experience a child has, good or bad, is a learning experience.

The success of Montessori Life Primary's philosophy, therefore, depends very much on compatibility between school and home life.

Montessori Life Primary recognizes that the parent / guardian is the most important person in the child's life, and the school aims to create a partnership in which parents are involved in their child's education, guided of course, by Montessori principles. Parents are invited to assist with a variety of daily activities within the classroom - for example, cooking, craft and accompanying children on excursions. Assisting within the classroom has many benefits - parents gain valuable insight into their child's day at Montessori, teachers develop a closer relationship with parents, and most importantly, our children benefit both directly from activities and from the joy of having their parents participate in the classroom.

Montessori is a close-knit community and as such is unable to operate successfully without the full support of all families within the school community. Parents are expected to be fully supportive of the school's philosophy and practice. Commitment is a life skill our children need to learn. They learn most effectively by following our example, so please attend any functions and events organized by the school if possible.

Parents' Meeting Days are held twice a year. These give parents the chance to meet with the teachers and discuss their child's schooling life. Further, each child's progress is recorded and shared with parents on request, and in termly reports. Parents are always welcome to bring any area of concern to the attention of the staff - open communication being the key to harmony.

Finally, we all have special skills that can benefit our school – please don't wait to be asked, your offers of help are always appreciated!

CURRICULUM

Here at Montessori Life, we cover a wide syllabus to cover all aspects of education. Even though we follow an International Montessori Curriculum, we have incorporated the curriculum required by traditional schools. In the curriculum we cover areas such as Language, Math and cultural subjects that include Geography, Science, History, Botany, Biology and Zoology. The curriculum also includes Art, Drama, Music, Computers, Chess, Robotics and Physical Education.

We offer French and Siswati as additional languages. Our upper elementary students writes the IEB examinations each year.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school grounds open at 7:10am and classes start at 7:45am. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and unfair to your child. Please make every effort to arrive at school on time. Pick-up for students in the Lower Elementary is at 1:00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and at 2:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Pick-up for students in the Upper Elementary is at 2:00pm on Mondays through to Thursdays, and at 1:00pm on Fridays. It is important to both your child and our staff that you are on time to pick up your child. A grace period of 20 minutes is allowed for collection. A fee will be charged for late collection due to staff overtime. The school will be closed on public holidays and school holidays (term schedules will be sent out). We close early, at 12H00, on mid-term breaks and at 11:00am on the last day of each term.

OFFICE HOURS

Term Time

Monday - Thursday 7:15am - 3:30pm

Friday - 7:15am - 2:30pm

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The office is open for the first and last week of the school holiday only. Closed on mid-term breaks.

Monday - Friday 8:00am - 1:00pm

WORK CYCLE

A year planner is sent out at the beginning of each year for each class. This planner will show the extra-curricular activities for your child. Extra paid activities and term dates will be sent out at the beginning of the year.

FEES

Fees are to be paid yearly, per term or monthly. Please see the fee structure for further details.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

Parents are welcome to visit our classrooms but are reminded that the school belongs to the children. Parents are to refrain from demonstrating any material in the classroom to the children. If any parents wish to observe, they need to make arrangements with the school office beforehand.

SCHOOL DIARY

The school has its own diary, designed to meet the needs of the children. Parents are required to purchase one from the school office.

HOMEWORK

Reading books are sent home on a daily basis and parents are encouraged to assist their children where needed. In Lower Elementary, most of our homework focus is on reading and you will find little else sent home. Please listen to your child read daily, and sign this off in the homework diary. Upper Elementary students will be given other assignments in addition to readings. We ask that they attempt to do these on their own.

NUTRITION

We encourage parents to pack a healthy and nutritious lunch and to include a fruit and water for snack time. We ask that no sweets, chips or fizzy drinks be sent to school with your child. If your child is allergic to any food item, please inform us immediately.

SAFETY AND HYGIENE

All equipment is checked on a daily basis to ensure that there is nothing potentially hazardous to your child. Children are supervised at all times. The gates will be locked during school hours. If anyone other than the assigned collection person is to fetch your child, please inform us telephonically or in writing. Children that are not involved in afternoon activities must be fetched on time as there is no supervision for students not involved in activities after the end of the official class hours.

We encourage good health habits such as washing hands after using the toilet and before eating meals. Children will also not be wearing outdoor shoes inside in order to keep the environment clean.

ILLNESS AND INJURIES

Please inform us if your child is ill or cannot attend school for any other reason. If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you so that you can make arrangements to fetch your child. No oral medication will be given to your child without consent. We try to use only homeopathic medicine and ointment at school. If your child for some reason has any medication, please ensure that this is clearly marked, and that instructions and medication are left with the class teacher. Medication is not left in school bags.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

If your child has a fever, diarrhea or any infectious disease, (including nits and lice) he / she should not come to school. The infectious disease should be reported to the school in case of an outbreak.

CLOTHING

We have a school uniform; this can be purchased at Competitive Sports in Mbabane. Please mark all clothing and dress your child according to the temperature with the ability to alter it in temperature change. A list of uniform is available in the office.

SPORTS

Exposing children to a variety of sports will enable them to find a physical activity they enjoy and can improve their skill in.

*Please take note of the sport calendars that will be sent out. Afternoon sports and activities will take place from the second week of each term. There will be no afternoon sports or activities the last two weeks of the school year.

White T-shirt, shorts, caps, should be purchased for PE and Sport; the School Tracksuit for cold weather. A modest bathing costume is to be sent for PE during summer months as we take students to a nearby pool during PE lessons. We again ask that you clearly mark all items.



CELEBRATIONS

As we have children from various cultural backgrounds and beliefs, we would like to respect each individual. As part of religious and moral education, we will be looking into our various cultures to create peaceful understanding of each other.

Therefore, we will not be holding any religious celebrations at school as it would not be fair on our part to celebrate some and ignore others. We, however, encourage you to send us information on celebrations which you and your families commemorate so that we can share this at group time.

ITEMS REQUIRED

To keep the inside of the classrooms clean, children will be required to bring a pair of house slippers or socks to wear indoors as outdoor shoes are not permitted in class. These slippers are to be left at school. A nutritious lunch pack is to be sent along with your child every day. The school caps are to be left at school and will be mandatory for all children to wear in summer months. Please mark all items. A water bottle that is clearly marked is also recommended.

ELECTRONIC MUSIC, GAME DEVICES, LAPTOPS AND MOBILE PHONES

Some of the older children bring electronic devices to school. Children who bring these items will be required to turn them off and leave them with the teacher on arrival at school. The security of these items is the responsibility of the student and the school takes no responsibility for loss or damage. Parents and learners will be required to sign a “Electronic Devices” contract, before bringing devices into school. The school reserves the right to confiscate devices if they are not being used responsibly, as per the contract. They will be returned to learners at the end of day or week depending on the offence.

DISCIPLINARY CODE

All students must at all times show respect for themselves, adults, fellow students and the environment. A meeting will be held with the parents of a child who repeatedly shows a disregard for others. Prompt steps will be taken to correct the matter. As soon as we are aware of any misconduct or improper speech, it will be dealt with immediately. Please see the Code of Conduct Policy for more details.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

Classroom management of activities. A first port of call for parents is always the class teachers. Failing a satisfactory result with class teachers, the school Principal or Deputy Principal should be approached.

Email Contacts for Administration:

Principal:	Thea Rudd-Vila Pouca Principal@montessorilife.net 7636 2636
Pastoral / Deputy:	Zulmira Craigie Deputy.principal@montessorilife.net 7605 3430
Bursar:	Dudu Maziya montessori.life.bursar@gmail.com 7631 7645
Administrator:	Alicia Thring montessorilifeadmin@swazi.net 7657 4566

POLICIES:

Upon enrolment at the school, you will receive a Parent Contract, Code of Conduct and Payment Agreement Contact. There are a number of other School Policies available in the School Office; should you wish to see any, please make a request in the School Office.

GRIEVANCES

All care is taken to avoid any situation which may give rise to a grievance. However, it is recognized that under some circumstances this is unavoidable, and certain steps should be followed in order for the grievance to be heard, and the issue to be resolved.

Any concerns of an educational nature, which include any incidents in the classroom or playground, should first be brought to the attention of the teacher. If the matter is not resolved with the class teacher, the grievances should be addressed with the Principal. Any concerns pertaining to the administration of the school should at first be addressed to the Principal.

The school has a Grievance Report Form, available from the office and online, which outlines the steps to be followed if the discussion with the Administrator does not resolve the matter.

The school also has a suggestion / grievance box at the front gate. Suggestions / grievances can be placed anonymously in the box and will be addressed by the Principal or the School Board if the suggestions / grievance concerns the strategic direction of the school.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Activities will take place in the afternoons during term time. There are school terms sports and extra paid activities. Please see under Sport for more information on sports. Please see the office for extra paid activity options. Extra paid activities are to be paid for separately and in addition to school fees, as these activities are offered by private individuals and companies.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

A School Bus Service runs between Malkerns and the school. All interested in this option, please contact the school for further details.

COMMUNICATION

Communications will be sent out primarily through emails and in your child's diary. Please also see our Facebook page for the latest pictures and events. We have class WhatsApp groups that all parents are added to. These groups provide parents with instant communication and are strictly for administration purposes only. They are used exclusively by school members.

CONSTITUTION

Our fundamental values and beliefs as a school.

THE SCHOOL BOARD STRUCTURE

The School Board is made up of parents, community members and staff. We welcome new members, so anyone interested in joining the School Board is encouraged to notify the office of their interest.

'The School Board' is responsible for the long-term viability of the School and its strategic direction. It does not concern itself with the day to day running of the school which is the responsibility of the Principal and his/her team.

MISSION STATEMENT

Montessori Life Primary is passionately committed to enriching the lives of children and their parents; to provide them with a safe, courteous, respectful environment in which to grow intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. Our goal is to make a significant and lasting impact in the lives of anyone coming into contact with Montessori Life Primary. We aim to achieve this by:



- Cultivating within our students the passion for excellence in everything they do both in and outside of our school;
- Nurturing the curiosity, creativity and imagination born within us all;
- The development of a strongly held set of universal values which includes self-respect, respect for others, honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, compassion, kindness, peacefulness, a sense of concern for others, warmth and a love of community;
- Celebrating diversity in our community and the global community;
- Acknowledging the unique contribution of all individuals who enrich and inspire our personal growth;
- A commitment to give something back through service to others who are in need.

OUR VISION

Our vision for all our students is for them to be open minded and compassionate, to gain a sense of themselves and others, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of the human spirit. As a school we, Montessori Life Primary, would like our students to be well trained in the basic academic disciplines to fulfil their creative potential and to gain satisfaction in their overall development. We want students to love learning and value knowledge.

1. We believe that every member of our community has a fundamental right to be treated with respect regardless of age, gender or race.
2. We believe that intelligence is not rare, and each person can be guided to reach his/her full potential.
3. We believe that wisdom can be cultivated. True wisdom is the ability to listen to your heart and know how best to put your intelligence to work.
4. We believe that self-esteem is the crucial ingredient for the full expression of a person's potential, thus we set our expectations high yet do not ask individuals to do more than they are capable of.



5. We believe that the development of a whole healthy being requires the nurturing of our many dimensions. These dimensions include the spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional aspects of the individual.
6. We follow the different developmental stages, from active to passive learning.
7. We provide a broad preparation for life, balancing academic excellence with development of personal practical life skills.
8. We strive for balance between freedom, order and responsibility.
9. Strengthening our connection with nature and the environment is an integral part of Montessori Life Primary. Thus, programmes in outdoor education and field biology take place at every age level in the school.
10. We embrace the building of a diverse community rounded in the knowledge that leads to understanding and acceptance of all people.

CONCLUSION

We are looking forward to working together with you and your child. Each child will have a school diary that will be sent home on a daily basis. Please check daily as this is our means of communicating with you regularly. Feel free to add any comments; we welcome this.

It is our hope that our students will be responsible, caring members of society, and that they will recognize that they have the power and resources to effect change, as well as the self-esteem and confidence to pursue their goals.

We feel privileged to be able to share with you and your family the growing stages of your child and to be able to watch and cherish each child's metamorphosis of life!







Montessori Life Primary

Contact Details:

MLP Montessori Life Primary Design and Printed by:

Tel: +268 2404 9155

Cell: +268 7910 6450/7657 4566

Email : principal@montessorilife.net

: admin@montessorilife.net

www.montessorilifeprimary.com



Montessori Life Primary School

P.O. Box D177, The Gables, H126, Swaziland

Mkhwakhwa Street, Thembelihle, Mbabane



Design and Printed by:

