

## **Montessori School of Kleinburg Ministry Program Statement**

The Montessori School in Kleinburg's (MSK) interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)" It is important to note that Montessori pedagogy often describes children's activities as 'work' where HDLH describes children's activity as 'play,' but the activities, as experienced by the child, are one and the same.

This Ministry program statement will be reviewed with MSK Teaching Staff and volunteers, annually or whenever an amendment is made. MSK holds the view that all children are competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. This Ministry statement describes our goals for children at MSK and the approaches that we implement to meet those goals.

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### **a) Health, Safety & Well-Being:**

We promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of the children in our care by diligently meeting all the requirements of Ontario Regulation 137/15. We promote the health, safety, and well-being of the children by:

1. Encouraging nutritious eating at snack and mealtimes.
2. Teaching the importance of personal hygiene, eg: when hand washing, blowing nose, sneezing, covering a cough.
3. Enforcing public health guidelines around quarantines for various illnesses.
4. Each child is recorded on the daily attendance, being signed in and out each day.
5. Sensible, solution-based rules and guidelines regarding outdoor play.
6. All staff are CPR and First Aid and Epi Pen trained.
7. Each afternoon, those children who still nap are offered a nap time, and those who are pre-school and not napping are offered a quiet work cycle in the afternoon

### **b) Positive Interaction:**

Children are redirected in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to their actions and their ages in order to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety; respect the rights of others and maintain equipment. Methods of discipline are discussed at staff meetings, and consistent disciplinary measures are agreed upon. The Montessori School in Kleinburg does not permit spanking or other forms of corporal punishment. The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at MSK.

Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Children choose work that they are capable of doing and are free to use it as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline that might arise in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group gives the younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behaviour of the older children.

### **c) Self Regulation:**

We encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and we support their ability to self-regulate by:

1. Having mixed-age Montessori communities where children remain with the same adults for three years, which provides many opportunities for interactions with children older and younger than themselves, and with adults.
2. Maintaining the three-year age range allows to create and sustain positive classroom cultures.
3. Offering positive, non-punitive direction to every child to support the classroom communities. This allows the development of harmonious environments throughout the school, which allows children to develop their self-regulation and executive functions.

### **d) Fostering Exploration, Play & Inquiry:**

We foster the children's exploration, work, and inquiry by having fully equipped Montessori environments in which activities are present for the full range of ages in each room.

There are activities that assist children to become independent or able to assist others in care of the self, care of the environment and care of others (Grace and Courtesy); activities to explore and refine all the senses, as well as to discover sequencing and order; activities to increase vocabulary, encourage discussion, explore sounds, and begin to develop the process of writing and reading activities to develop number sense, numeracy, understanding of large quantities, the mathematical operations, geometry, and even rudimentary algebra concepts and lots of activities to introduce all the wonderful things in our world. In addition, there are activities for cutting, colouring, painting, exploring colour, shape and texture, pasting, and other artistic endeavours. Children understand where everything is kept and they are able to choose and return things independently and with their friends.

### **e) Experiences:**

We provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences. All Montessori materials are introduced to the children by an adult or by another child, and the Montessori Teachers are always observing children to see what support each child might need. They are very sensitive to allowing children their own initiative as this most often results in children being deeply engaged and peaceful in what they are doing. Adults are always observing to find exactly the right moment to introduce a child to something new so that they have enough time to master the material, but also are always being gently challenged.

### **f) Positive Learning Environments:**

Choice, respect and responsibility are foundations on which all of our classrooms are built. We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development is supported by using the Montessori curriculum and materials that have been proven through research to be effective with children from all socio-economic and cultural groups.

We plan for and create positive learning environments by following the Montessori Method of child development. Montessori programs have been shown to develop executive function, gentle play by connecting to the social, emotional and cognitive developmental needs of the child. Each class is comprised of a three-year mixed age group which, reflective of society as a whole, creates a community where children are free to progress at their own pace, learning from each other, under the guidance of a trained adult.

Additionally, students of MSK are also provided enrichment subjects in the areas of Foreign Languages (French & Italian), Formal Art theory and appreciation, Music appreciation and Physical Education class with health & well being discussions.

**g) Indoor & Outdoor Environments:**

We incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children by allowing them to manage a great deal of their day. Children can choose to move about the class carrying and constructing with the materials. They may choose to do their work on a mat on the floor, or at a table.

The children have outdoor time in the school yard throughout their day at MSK. The Toddler and Casa children have two fenced in natural play areas. Children can choose to have a snack or a drink when they are hungry or thirsty; they do not have to wait for the whole group. We incorporate indoor play and active play by allowing the children the opportunity to explore the Montessori materials with purpose and towards self-development. Outdoor play is encouraged during recess and afterschool. Free play takes place in a natural setting, which includes large grassy areas, trees, gardens, play structure and patio areas.

**h) Ongoing Communication:**

We foster the engagement of an ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children. During the school year, parent teacher conferences are arranged with the child's teacher. However, at the parent's request, the teacher will gladly set up a time to meet with them whenever there is a need. Progress reports are created and distributed twice during the school year (January & June).

**Administration communication responsibilities:**

1. Social Media
2. Direct email
3. Dynamic content web posts
4. Monthly calendar notifications
5. Update and maintain policy and procedure manual
6. Update and maintain staff and parent handbook
7. Tours and observations for prospective parents
8. Annual orientation for new parents

### Staff communication responsibilities:

1. Reports
2. Parent Teacher Interviews
3. Email communication
4. Parent Education nights (with admin)
5. Winter & Spring Concerts
6. Watch Me Work events

### **i) Community Involvement:**

We also get involved in local community activities with the children through:

1. Ongoing support with the Olive Branch for Children & The V School
2. Guest Speakers
3. Concerts
4. Fire Safety and Community Police visits (Stranger Danger and Bicycle Safety)
5. Field Trips to Conservation areas, Farms, Theatre and Nature Walks etc...
6. Recycling Programs
7. Food Drives
8. Annual Terry Fox Run, MS Read A Thon & Jump Rope for Heart initiatives

### **i) Continuous Professional Learning:**

We represent the Montessori community and take support from local professional organizations like CCMA, NAMTA, TMI & AMS. MSK Staff support and connect with the Montessori community through ongoing professional development and sharing of resources. For children who need support (speech, OT, developmental etc...) we connect with the CCAC services offered through York Region.

We support our staff and others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning by offering the staff opportunities to attend conferences or visit other Montessori or non-Montessori environments for observations. We also return to school one week prior to the children, at which time all staff review and complete all necessary documentation required by CCEYA. At the beginning of each year, our staff also set goals for themselves in discussion with administration and together plan for how to support them in the achievement of those goals. Self-evaluation tools have been put into place to ensure Staff are able to self-reflect throughout the school year. Staff are supported and have access to funds dedicated for Professional Development, depending on their particular needs. We have Professional Development days set aside each year. We also meet regularly to discuss ongoing issues or topics of particular interest. Each staff member is provided an opportunity throughout the school year to observe in other class environments.

We support the staff who interact with the children by offering mentorship, respect, trust and support. The professional community we have developed takes pride in being a benchmark Montessori school in Canada. We use Montessori principles as a frame for our staff community. Principles that nurture excellence, support, and character in our staff.

We will continue our initiatives in having local and professional consultants provide support and guidance for our students to ensure our students have the ability to thrive in the Montessori learning environment.

**j) Review & Documentation:**

We document in several ways. Logs, records, weekly memos and monthly newsletters, photos, and videos. We track all lessons given, all work engaged in and observe and communicate anecdotal information on each unique child and on the class as a whole. We observe and discuss concerns regarding social, emotional, developmental or academic challenges and are determined to support these challenges acutely and in a timely fashion. We have regular staff meetings to encourage strong communication amongst staff members.

Each year we examine our program statement to ensure it remains true to our vision. At each staff meeting we examine aspects of the program statement to ensure that we are following through on our vision. This is logged in minutes from the meetings.

MSK intensely believes that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Montessori pedagogy places the child at the centre of the learning environment with staff and materials as a means of opportunity for the child to engage in the process of natural development. We have freedom of choice – within limits. The child is given a lesson and then offered the opportunity to come to a deeper understanding through their own efforts and engagement.

MSK supports the CCEYA initiatives in creating evidence-based, developmentally rich learning environments for the children of Ontario.