

PARENT HANDBOOK



“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.” MARIA MONTESSORI



W: www.brookhillsmontessorischool.com
 E: info@brookhillsmontessorischool.com
 FB: www.facebook.com/BrookhillsMSchool
 T: 267 3969978
 C: 267 7286 9302, 267 7559 2690

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General Operations:

- Brookhills Montessori School (BMS) provides early childhood education for children aged 1-6years, Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- After School Care for Children 6-12yrs, Monday to Friday from 1-5pm
- Fun and enriching programs during the holidays of 1st Term and 2nd Term only. No Holiday program in 3rd Term.

Our Values

- Providing excellence in child care and education.
- Building Character through personal empowerment, integrity and accountability.
- Authenticity of the Montessori program, philosophy and method.
- Providing a respectable environment for one's self, others and the environment.
- Ensuring a diverse, dynamic learning community and service.

Our Mission

Brookhills Montessori School values and encourages the development of the child's sense of independence, self-discipline and confidence in a safe, supportive, culturally and academically diverse environment as guided by the Montessori philosophy.

BMS is a child-centered, parent-inclusive school that provides a stimulating environment that is very unique. Our school accepts children from as young as 1 year of age regardless of race, national origin or religious beliefs. A racial and ethnic mixture is considered important to the health of the school and to the full social development of the child.

Enrollment:

The Following are required to be on File to complete a child's

1. Enrollment form signed and dated
2. Medical form/letter from a Doctor certifying that the child is free from any contagious disease.

3. Copy of immunization card for age appropriate immunizations or a signed affidavit against such immunizations.
4. The last page of this Parent Handbook signed by a parent or legal guardian
5. P250 Registration Fee
6. P150 Annual Montessori Fee
7. A small mattress purchased from Game or any other store
8. School Fees payment
9. Authorization to obtain emergency medical care for the child when the parent is not available,
10. Authorization for persons other than the parents to pick up or drop off their child, including the names of such persons, their relationship to the child and I.D/passport numbers.
11. Permission to photograph (to use photographs on School's Facebook page, website, School parties DVD etc.)
12. Permission to administer medication/first Aid.
 - *BMS reserves the right to change or amend any rules, regulations, policies or procedures in this Parent Handbook at its discretion and will inform Parents and/or Guardians of any such changes.*

Termination of Enrollment:

➤ By Parent:

At least, a full term's notice is required should your child be leaving BMS. You will be charged for the subsequent term's fees should a full term's notice not be given to the school in writing.

➤ By School:

The School reserves the right, at any time, to terminate a child's enrollment for academic or disciplinary reasons or, when in the judgment of the School, it is in the child's or the School's best interest to do so. The School also reserves the right not

to continue enrollment or not to re-enroll the child if the School reasonably concludes that the actions of the Parents and/or Guardians make a positive and constructive working relationship with the School impossible or seriously interfere with the School's accomplishment of its educational purposes. The decision of the School in these regards shall be final.

School Fees:

Fees are payable in three options:

1. Once off payment of P5400
2. 3 installments of P1800/month payable 2 months in advance of every term
3. 4 installments of p1350/month payable 3 months in advance of every term

Please note the following for options 2 and 3 above:

- *All installments are payable on or before the 5th of every month.*
- *A minimum charge of P250 for late payment will apply after the 6th of every month.*
- *No postdated cheques will be accepted.*

Deposit for Next Term:

A minimum deposit of P3600 towards next term's fees is required to secure your child's space for next term.

- *Regrets: your child's space cannot be guaranteed without this deposit.*

What to bring to School:

Parents and/or Guardians are responsible to provide

1. A full spare set of clothes (socks, shoes, underwear and weather appropriate clothes) that will remain in the child's bag daily.
2. A healthy packed am/pm snack for the child daily. We provide pm snacks of fruits/veggies but parents/guardians are welcome to pack more if they choose.
3. A small blanket and a single flat or fitted sheet or 2 single sheets to be kept at school. Sheets and blankets will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and returned on Monday.

Dress Code:

Students are expected to wear clothing that is neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate for school. Learning within the Montessori philosophy requires participating in activities that will get your child's clothes dirty. Please do not dress your children in clothes that you want kept clean. Comfortable play clothes are strongly encouraged. Children should dress in clothing that they can put on and fasten for themselves: pullover shirts, elastic waistbands, Velcro sneakers, etc. Independence is crucial to the development of self-confidence. It is very frustrating for young children to try and manage the straps of overalls, clothing that fastens in the back or belts when they are hurrying to the bathroom. When needed, your child will be given cheerful encouragement or assistance with dressing and undressing tasks until self-mastery is accomplished.

- School shirts are available at the front office. Should you wish to purchase please ask Rennie or Karabo

All items must be clearly labeled with child's name

What Not To Wear:

- Flip-flops or cowboy/cowgirl boots – they are a hazard during gross motor development
- Dress shoes or party shoes
- Dress-up clothes or costumes
- Jewelry, genuine or pretend
- Clothing that is too tight or too loose
- Super hero logos or other characters that portray aggression

Our Curriculum

- Montessori Philosophy – Objectives and Overview

The objective of this program is to help each child achieve his/her fullest potential and mental ability by carefully preparing a learning environment to meet the child's needs. The child uses materials designed to assist growth in practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language arts, music, art, science, geography, and culture.

The program is based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, a noted Italian educator and physician (1870-1952), who revolutionized early childhood education by advocating that children be allowed the freedom to explore and develop their own creative potential through a wealth of self-teaching educational materials. Maria Montessori developed much of the educational equipment found today in the Montessori classroom nearly 100 years ago. They include hands-on mathematical materials and activities to develop the child's sensory perceptions and refine his sense of awareness. Many exercises are designed to allow young children to practice skills they will need for daily living and self-help. Materials illustrating principles of geography, zoology, botany, and archaeology nurture the child's avid interest. All of these areas are explored with concrete objects, tactile experiments, collection, classification, and identification. The children readily take up this reality-based purposeful "work" designed to develop mental and manual dexterity. Children also develop the tools for a lifetime of creative learning.

➤ What makes Montessori Education unique?

Activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, and physical coordination as well as cognitive preparation. The holistic curriculum allows the child to experience the joy of learning and to develop self-esteem and independence. In order for self-directed learning to take place, the whole learning environment – room, materials, and social climate – must be supportive of the learner, called the "Prepared Environment." The teacher known and addressed primarily in a Montessori environment as a "Directress or guide" provides necessary resources, including opportunities for children to function in a safe and positive climate. Practical Life lessons which form the foundation for Montessori education are designed to help children learn social skills. They learn how to care for themselves, the environment and others. For example children learn how to pour and scoop, use kitchen utensils, food preparation, dish washing, sweeping activities, wash their hands, and other self-care practices. While participating in these activities the children are learning movement, concentration, muscular control, independence, and hand to eye coordination.

➤ International Preschool Curriculum – Objectives and Overview

The IPC was founded to strengthen and harmonize early childhood education standards. As an IPC school, students will be taught from a curriculum containing 56 themes which encompass six trans-disciplinary content learning areas to language arts, socio-emotional skills, numeracy, creative and visual arts, sciences and fine and gross motor skills. There are also five underlying themes and objectives of the IPC which are designed to cultivate critical thinking, raise self-awareness, promote an understanding of other cultures and encourage internationalism and multilingualism.

The IPC takes the prevailing view that the first few years of a child's life provide a vital opportunity for development. The IPC involves family and parents wherever possible in understanding and facilitating the objectives of the organization.

The IPC believes that due to the progressive nature of education, the best forms of education continue to evolve. Thus throughout the Curriculum these elements are incorporated with the key characteristics of the IPC being:

- Objective Based – The curriculum has clearly defined objectives which are designed to facilitate assessment and highlight areas of student progress or concern;
- Inquiry Based – Limited aspects of inquiry based education designed to spark and maintain interest levels;
- Play Based – By making learning fun, children are exposed to a learning environment that is second nature.

➤ Foreign Language Class

Our foreign language program provides an introduction to the sounds of other languages. Through songs, stories, and educational activities, children learn vocabulary for colors, shapes, numbers, days, months, and simple phrases. Daily exposure generates useful lifelong knowledge and skills, and encourages a respect for diversity. We teach French, Sign language, Setswana and Chinese

➤ Crumb Stash “a tasty delight”

The class involves weighing, measuring, carefully following directions and observing materials change from one state to another. It also encourages eye-hand

coordination, sensory integration, patience and self-reliance. Your child will also learn basic nutrition, kitchen safety, table setting, manners, basic math and some geography. They will not only prepare foods like pies, pizza, lemonade etc., but also discover new tastes with our Chef and the exciting world of food!

➤ Crazy Lab

Think of it as a kind of laboratory science! Like crumb stash, it exposes the child to all kinds of learning skills to foster love for learning as well as how things evolve in the world around us. Children make things like snow out of diapers, clay out of bread, volcanic eruptions and lots more.

➤ Click dot com

Our Computer software designed exclusively for Montessori schools by our friends at MECS USA brings the Montessori materials to the computer and continues to support the learning children experience in the classroom. Children learn early computer skills which aids in hand eye coordination. Abcmouse is also used when the internet network permits.

➤ Co-curricular activities

These are not paid for and include swimming, modeling, dance, drama etc. Swimming, Languages, Cooking, Computers are free

Lunch:

BMS will provide healthy lunch daily for all children. Our daily menu is available at the Classroom, front office or Kitchen.

- *Please make sure you notify the school and your child's directress as to special dietary restrictions/food allergies your child may have.*

Am & Pm Snacks:

Please ensure that all morning snack items are packaged/stored in such a way that the children are able to open them without any assistance from the directress (foil wrap has proven to be easy, fun and recyclable!) Please try to prepare appropriate servings for your child, as providing too much food does not encourage your child to eat more, but rather ends up creating more waste.

We ask that you choose fresh, natural foods. Whole grain, sandwiches, yoghurt, juice, fruits choices will serve you child's mind and body.

DO NOT send candy, sugary desserts, soft drinks or foods high in artificial coloring or additives.

- *As parents, we understand that you want to make lunchtime special for your child. A quick and loving note or a smiley face on your child's napkin will be a good way.*

Morning Drop-off:

Morning drop-off is from 6:30-7:55 a.m. Class lessons/activities begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. Please make your best effort to be consistently on time. Each child's day begins by receiving an individual greeting from the directress. If they are late they miss this intimate and special start to their day. Also, it is very distracting when a child arrives late to a classroom.

Picture a classroom in which the children are engaged and focused at work and then a friend arrives late. Many children jump up to greet their friend, and their focus on their activity is completely lost.

- *Initially, it can be difficult for parents and young children to separate at the beginning of the school year. We have found that a short and positive good-bye is easiest for the child. We strongly recommend you set up a routine from the first day. A prolonged good-bye often makes the separation more difficult.*

Pick up:

- Half-day pick-up is at 12:00 p.m. before lunch
- 1:00pm after lunch,
- 2:45-3:00pm after nap
- Full-day pick-up is from 4 to 5pm.

There will be fifteen-minute grace period for full day pick up only and thereafter a late fee will be charged for every 15 minutes that a parent is late to pick up their child.

Car Seats:

All Children under eight (8) are required to be in a car seat or booster seat appropriate for their height and weight. Children are to ride in the rear seat unless there are no rear seats or if other children occupy the rear seats.

Early dismissal:

Naturally, there will be occasions when you will need to take your child out of class early for a doctor's appointment or similar obligation. To ensure that your child will be ready, please send a note/email to the directress to let them know what time you will be picking him/her up. We will do our best to have your child ready and waiting by the entrance, but if you do end up needing to come into the classroom during work time, please do so in a quiet, unobtrusive way so as to not interrupt the other children at work.

Attendance:

All students (even our youngest) are expected to attend school on a daily basis at the start of the school day. Consistent attendance and prompt arrival is essential. Please contact us with notification of any planned absence.

Although our program is individualized, it still depends upon consistency and continuous progress. Every time a child misses a day or two of school here and there, the more detrimental it becomes to his/her educational development.

2015 Calendar:

TERM 1: Wednesday, 14 January 2015 to Friday, 17 April 2015	
Friday, 27 February	Mid-term
Monday, 02 March	Mid-term
Friday, 03 April	Easter
Monday, 06 April	Easter
TERM 2: Tuesday, 19 May 2015 to Friday, 07 August 2015	
Wednesday, 01 July	SSK Day
Thursday, 02 July	Public Holiday
Friday, 03 July	School Holiday
Monday, 20 July	President's Day

Tuesday, 21 July	President's Day Holiday
TERM 3: Tuesday, 08 September 2015 to Friday 04, December 2015	
Wednesday, 30 September	Botswana Day
Thursday, 01 October	Public Holiday
Friday, 02 October	School Holiday
Monday, 02 November	Mid-term Break
Tuesday, 03 November	Mid-term Break

Parent Participation Opportunities:

All parents are asked to participate in at least few hours per school year, helping to enrich their child's school environment.

It is the parent-directress team that helps to make a school great! Being involved in your child's school and helping facilitate its growth and betterment can be rewarding and fun.

Parent/Directress Conferences:

Parents/Guardians will be advised on their child's academic, emotional and social progress two times a year during Parent/Directress conferences (1st & 3rd Terms only). The Head Directress is available to set up conferences at any time during the year if a special concern arises that is specific to your child.

- *At the last Friday of every month we will have different activities planned and communication will come through to you informing you of the event.*

Communication with Second Families:

Whenever parents are separated, divorced, or for some other reason not residing at the same address, we want to keep both parents informed of their child's progress and school matters. We will email correspondence to any parent with whom the child does not reside.

When parent/directress conferences are scheduled, we need to make every effort to avoid separate conferences. It is very important to be able to communicate the same information to both parents at the same time.

- *If one parent is restricted by court order to pick up your child from school, please turn in a copy of the court order mandating this action.*

Birthday Celebrations:

Children love to celebrate birthdays with their friends and Families. Parents are welcome to come celebrate with the children please discuss with your child's directress for a suitable time.

Mini burgers, hotdogs, samosa, pies, spring rolls, fruits, veggies, juice and other finger foods are allowed.

- *Due to allergies, no cakes, pizza, nuts, eggs.*

Toys:

Toys are not advisable to be brought to school. Children are saddened if their toy is broken or lost at school. You can help to avoid toy separation by leaving the toys at home, as we cannot be held liable for any loss or damage.

Freedom to Make Mistakes:

In the Montessori classroom, it is the teacher's job to create an environment that gives the child the freedom to make mistakes. Children often act out when they make a mistake because they are feeling embarrassed. If we as adults role model that it is okay to make mistakes and show the child how we humbly take responsibility, or have a sense of humor with ourselves when we make mistakes, then the child learns the valuable lesson of learning from his/her own mistakes.

Freedom and self-discipline does not occur overnight, but through the use of consistent and clear expectations for courteous and safe behavior, the use of logical consequences, the participation in role-playing lessons of Grace and Courtesy, and with an accepting attitude toward making mistakes. The children will eventually enjoy a harmonious and industrious school environment.

When Your Child is Ill:

Whenever your child is ill and will not be coming to school please notify us by phone call, e-mail, text or a message before class has started for the day.

Students with infectious diseases, such as chicken pox must stay out of school until the contagious stage has passed. For the sake of the other children's health, it is vital that you inform us of the diagnosis as soon as possible. Please be assured that your child will remain anonymous.

Your child shall not be accepted nor allowed to remain at the School if the child has the equivalent of thirty eight degrees Celsius (38°C) or higher oral temperature and any other contagious symptom, such as, but not limited to a rash or diarrhea or a sore throat.

Your child should remain home if any of the following symptoms are evident:

- Fever
- Eye infection
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Head lice
- Constant runny nose
- Undiagnosed skin rash

Panado/Calpol will bring a child's fever down temporarily, but does not "cure" the illness.

Please keep your child at home for at least 24 hours after the fever has broken. Parents will be notified via email or flyer when there is an outbreak of any communicable illness in our school.

When Your Child Gets Sick at School:

We will contact you by phone if your child exhibits any of the above-mentioned symptoms. Your child will be separated from the rest of the students as much as possible and made comfortable until they are picked up. We understand how difficult it can be for working parents to break free during the day, but all children get sick from time to time.

- *Please do your best to make arrangements for emergency care with a friend or relative in advance, if you feel you would be unable to suddenly leave work. Everyone wants to be at home in his or her own bed when they do not feel well; your child is no different.*

During class time we do give lessons on how to be mindful of germ transmission by washing our hands often and “smothering” a cough. If weather permits, students go out to play every day. Please dress your child appropriately. If you feel that your child may be too sick to go out and play, he/she is probably too sick to be at school.

- *BMS is required to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation to the Department of Social Services.*
- *We have a health directress that has training in **First Aid and CPR***

Medication:

Unless absolutely necessary, we prefer not to be responsible for administering any medication to your child. If your child is under a physician’s care or on medication while attending school, you must notify your child’s directress in **writing giving permission to dispense medications.**

Please include a copy of the prescription in case of emergencies. Directress will notify the parent or guardian by phone if any adverse reactions are observed due to the medication.

Green Environment:

We will be doing our part to protect the earth and your child by providing a safe and beautiful environment. We will limit the use of plastic and paper throughout the classroom environment and we participate in recycling.

- *Should you wish to do your part saving the environment, please inform us below if you would prefer communication from school to you by email instead of flyers or letter when possible*

Open Door Policy:

At BMS, we adhere to an open door policy. Any time you need to speak with your child’s directress, please feel free to call to set up an appointment.

As permitted by law, the custodial parent(s) of the child shall at any time be permitted access to all childcare areas, while the child is at school. Parents must make their presence known prior to removing the child from the center.

Thank you for choosing our school and we look forward to this amazing journey.

BMS – Explore Absorb Excel

School Head (E: sandra@brookhillsmontessorischool.com)

- *Please sign and return the tear off slip to admin.*
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Handbook Return Slip

I _____ Mother/Father/Guardian
of _____ in Class _____

Acknowledge that I have read through the Brookhills Montessori School Handbook and agree/disagree to the Contents therein and would prefer or not prefer (tick or circle) email communication when possible to (Email Mother): _____ and

Email (Father): _____

(Sign) _____ (Date) _____

Comment(s) _____

