Tau Montessori School
Parent Handbook 2021

Tau Montessori School
145 Malan Street
Riviera
0084
Phone: 071 493 3171
Email: school@taumontessori.co.za
Website: www.taumontessori.co.za

SAMA
South African Montessori Association
Member School

Tau Montessori School

I. Montessori Education

The Montessori Philosophy of Education

Maria Montessori was Italy's first woman doctor. She developed her method of education after many years of dedicated observations and assessing the developmental patterns that children display.

One of the main premises of the Montessori Philosophy is that we 'follow the child'. This means that we acknowledge each child as an individual and give each child a special kind of 'work' that he or she needs to develop to their fullest potential.

Children are placed in environments that have been specifically prepared for them. These environments are there to meet all their developmental needs, and to offer the most in terms of physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual opportunities. In each classroom environment you will find specialised didactic Montessori materials which have been designed to attract the children to work with them.

A Montessori Directress is trained to observe the children in her care and to treat each child with respect and dignity. Her role in the environment is unobtrusive. The dynamic aspect is observed in the interaction between the vertically grouped children and the didactic Montessori materials.

Differences Between Montessori Teaching and Traditional Education

MONTESSORI	TRADITIONAL
▪ Teacher has an unobtrusive role in the classroom	▪ Teacher is the center of the classroom as a controller
▪ Environment and method encourage self-discipline	▪ Teacher acts as the primary enforcer of discipline
▪ Mixed age grouping (vertical grouping)	▪ Same age grouping
▪ Grouping encourages children to teach and help each other	▪ Most of the teaching is done by the teacher
▪ Children choose their own order of work	▪ Children are allotted a specific time and order for the subjects
▪ Children set their own learning pace	▪ Instruction pace is usually set by the group norm
▪ Children work in a three year cycle	▪ Children work in a one year cycle
▪ Children discover concepts through self-directed (didactic) materials and activities - usually on their own	▪ Children are taught concepts by the teacher - usually in a group
▪ Children spot their own errors from feedback from the materials (didactic material)	▪ The teacher points out errors
▪ Children reinforce their own learning by repetition of work and internal feelings of success	▪ Learning is reinforced externally by rewards
▪ Multi-sensory materials are available for physical exploration	▪ Fewer materials available for sensory development
▪ Children can work where they choose and move around without disturbing others	▪ Children are usually assigned their own chair/desk

- **Group participation is encouraged but never forced**
- **Physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs are of equal importance**
- **All children are treated equally and have the same privileges**

- **Group participation is often compulsory**
- **Emphasis falls on social and intellectual development**
- **Some children are placed above others and have more privileges (e.g. prefects)**

II. Tau Montessori Overview

Mission Statement and Objective

Our objective at Tau Montessori School is to provide your child with a learning environment that is safe, loving, stimulating and exciting. In this prepared environment we aim to foster a life-long love of learning in your child so that their inner needs for growth and creativity can be met and satisfied through self-fulfillment, rather than external pressure.

Code of Ethics

Confidentiality:
All personal information regarding children, their families and school-related matters are held in the strictest confidence.

Respect for the Child:
This includes a positive, optimistic attitude towards the child, a cooperative spirit, a nurturing of independence, recognition of the child's unique individuality, trust in the child's great work to create an individual self, providing the right activity, listening to and observing the child in order to ascertain his needs. We avoid pride, anger, touching a child unless invited, speaking ill of a child, sarcasm, teasing, overreaction to bad behavior and implied punishment or rewards.

Preparation of the Environment:
The Montessori Directress is committed to preparing her environment on a daily basis so that it is "as beautiful as the flowers that beckon the butterflies" (Maria Montessori - The Secret of Childhood).

The Directress' preparation is taken from her observations of each child's individual needs. She keeps records of each child's progress and readiness for new materials. She is committed to maintaining the materials and the order **in the classroom.**

Goals

- To develop a positive attitude towards learning within your child.
- To help the child move towards independence - "Help me to do it for myself!"
- To build self-esteem and confidence.
- To identify the unique needs of each child at all levels of development - "Follow the child."
- To develop inner discipline through an ordered environment.
- To establish concentration patterns within the child that will be of benefit in all future studies.
- To initiate the beginnings of perseverance and the ability to see something through to the end which is reinforced through the cycle of activity.
- To further develop the spontaneity and creativity that all children possess.
- To help all parents better understand the needs of their children.
- To liaise with the educational authorities in order to ensure that we are meeting the outcomes set by the South African Department of Education.

The Staff

All staff undergoes in-house training. The Directresses and are all qualified child care practitioners. Traditionally trained staff have all received Montessori training in various modules of the curriculum. Our traditionally trained staff ensures that our Montessori curriculum is at all times in line with the RNCS (Revised National Curriculum Statement).

Staff evaluation is done on a continuous basis and includes self-evaluation and goal setting. Staff will welcome any feedback in order to improve the quality of their work.

The Curriculum

In line with what the RNCS requires, Tau Montessori School's curriculum is in line with but not limited to the outcomes as set out by the CAPS curriculum. Subjects are presented in conjunction with each other as we believe in the cosmic approach to education. An example of this approach is when studying Geography (South Africa), we would include South African history, fauna (zoology), flora (botany), Literacy, Numeracy, music and art.

Montessori's Cosmic Education follows the principle of presenting the big picture to the child first, and then breaking it up into smaller parts – e.g. we would first look at our earth being made of land, air and water (the 'big picture') and then break this down into parts according to the level at which the child is working in reference to land and water forms, continents, countries, flags from the different countries and famous landmarks.

Although Literacy and Numeracy are of utmost importance and are dealt with on a daily basis, we pride ourselves on our cultural program which includes the following subject areas: Geography and History (Social Sciences), Botany, Zoology (Natural Sciences), Art, Music and Science.

Subjects Covered and assessed:
Activities of Everyday Living, Sensorial, Literacy, Numeracy, Knowledge and Understanding of the World (Geography, History, Botany, Zoology and Science), Art, Music and Physical Education.

Academic Assessment and Reports

Assessments:
Children are assessed by the staff on a continuous basis and a daily record is kept of work done and outcomes achieved.

Reports:
Formal written reports are issued twice a year at the end of the second and the fourth term.

School Schedule 2021

Tau Montessori School follows public school terms.

Terms for 2021:

- Please note that Tau Montessori School will be starting on the **13th of January 2021!** The rest of the terms will be in line with the DBE.

basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Read to Lead
A Reading Nation is a Leading Nation

2030 NDP

STAY HOME
SAVE SOUTH AFRICA

January 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2021

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28						

March 2021

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April 2021

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May 2021

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June 2021

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July 2021

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August 2021

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September 2021

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October 2021

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November 2021

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December 2021

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26	27	28	29	30	31	

	Weekends
	Days for administration
	School days
	Public holidays
	Special school holidays
	School holidays

Public and School Holidays 2021	
01 January	New Year's Day
21 March	Human Rights Day
22 March	Public holiday
02 April	Good Friday
05 April	Family Day
26 April	School holiday
27 April	Freedom Day
01 May	Workers' Day
16 June	Youth Day
09 August	National Women's Day
24 Septem-ber	Heritage Day
16 December	Day of Reconciliation
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Day of Goodwill

Duration	No. of weeks	No. of days	No. of public holidays	Actual no. of school days
(25) 27 January-31 March	10	46 (48)	1	45 (47)
13 April – 25 June	11	54	2+1	51
13 July – 23 September	11	53	1	52
05 October – 08 (10) December	10	47 (49)	0	47 (49)
Total	**42**	**200 (204)**	4+1	**195 (199)**

Holiday School

A holiday school will be arranged depending on the interest shown. The holiday school will run from the first day of the school holiday until the last day of the school holiday. An extra fee of R90 a day per child is payable to the school in advance if your child attends the holiday school. If your little one has siblings in other school's they are more than welcome to join the holiday school as well. The holiday school starts at 07:30 and ends at 17:00. No food will be provided by the school during the holiday school and it will be the responsibility of the parents to provide food for the day.

School Fees

A school term's (3 month's) WRITTEN NOTICE is required when leaving Tau Montessori School. Upon enrolment you will be asked to sign a contract with the school which will be kept in your child's personal file.

Payment per month (x 12 months):

It is up to you to decide if you would like to settle the school fees in less than 12 months. Please do note however that school fees are payable from January until December.

Environment	Option 1 Half day (07:00 until 13:30) – breakfast and lunch provided by the school	Option 2 Full day (07:00 until 17:30) – breakfast, lunch and aftercare provided by school
Toddler community (10 months – 3 years)	**R2760**	**R3130**
Once-off non-refundable registration fee	**R2200**	**R2200**

Preschool community 3-6 years	R3060	R3430
Once-off non-refundable registration fee	R2200	R2200

Once-off Non-refundable Registration Fee:
The **registration fee** of R2200 is paid upon enrolment. It is used for administrative purposes as well as general maintenance of the learning and outside material and equipment during the year.

Good Faith Deposit Fee:
The **Good Faith Deposit** Fee is a fee equal to one month's school fees. This deposit is kept by the school and refunded to you after leaving the school.This fee is to ensure that all fees payable to the school are up to date upon your departure. If any fees are owed to the school upon your departure, the school will then deduct it from your Good Faith Deposit and the balance will be paid to you after the necessary deductions are made.

Material fund: A **material fund** of **R860** is payable to the school at the start of every second new year and year/s following that year by all existing clients instead of a re-registration fee. This is used for the upkeep of our Montessori materials and outdoor equipment. Upon newly enrolling your child, only the registration fee is payable.

Payment Methods:
The preferred methods of payment are by **stop order** and **electronic funds transfer**. If a cash deposit is made through the bank, you will be held liable for the bank charges. **Please use your child's name as a reference for your payment.**

Please note...

School fees are payable on or before the 1st of every month. Late payments will be charged a penalty fee of R50 a week. Thereafter it will be referred to our debt collecting agency. We have this service in place to alleviate the school from the time-consuming task of collecting late fees and giving us more time to spend on your child's education. You will be liable for any collection fees from this agency. Should there be any reason that you are going to make a late payment we would appreciate an explanation in writing in order to avoid the penalty fee.

School's Banking Details:

Bank: First National Bank
Account name: LM Gersbach
Type: Cheque account
Acc Nr: 6239 818 5275
Branch Code: 250655

III. Daily Routine

School Times

Half Day Attendance	**07:00 – 13:30**
Aftercare	**13:35 – 17:30**

Children may be left at school from 07h00, at which time a staff member is on duty. Please ensure your child is placed safely in the care of an adult and signed in when you drop them off. We also ask that you please sign them out as soon as you fetch them.

Children are to be collected at the end of the school day. All children not collected after school closes, will be sent to aftercare and an extra fee for aftercare will be added to your school fees at the end of the month.

In case of an emergency please contact the school on 071 493 3171 to make arrangements.

Aftercare

Aftercare is provided daily until 17h30. No extra costs are added for After Care if you have enrolled your child for a full day. However please note that if your child is fetched after 17:30, **an extra fee of R90** will be payable at the end of the month **for every 10 minutes that you are late** picking up your little one.

Extra Mural Activities

There are a few extra mural service providers who visit the school weekly. They offer music lessons, ballet lessons and swimming lessons. These lessons will be charged extra by the specific service provider to your personal account. The Moot Swimming Academy provides extra mural swimming lessons to the children during break time. The swimming school fetches the children from school and drops them off at school after their lesson. All costs regarding extra-curricular activities are the responsibility of the parents.

Communication Between You and Your Child's Teacher

Most correspondence goes out on Whatsapp, and you are more than welcome to communicate through that channel as well.

If There is a Concern

Parents who have any concerns that they feel have not been adequately addressed by the class teacher are welcome to make an appointment at the office to see the Principal. Please make every effort to schedule appointments as soon as you feel the need and please don't leave concerns lingering. We rely on your feedback and input for the well-being of the children and the school. You are welcome to contact the Principal on **071 493 3171** or email at school@taumontessori.co.za.

Tuck Shop

There will be Tuck Shop every Friday and we ask that you please send R10 to school with your little one in order for them to enjoy the event with us.

Safety and Security

At Tau Montessori School, the safety and security of your children is of major concern to us. Staff are on duty to receive children in the mornings, registers are taken daily, there is a sign in and sign out register upon entering and exiting the school and all children not collected at the end of the school day are handed over to the Aftercare supervisor and checked in. We ask for your assistance in leaving a message for the teacher if your child is going home with someone else or is leaving school early. Children will not be allowed to go home with anyone lacking the express permission of their parent or guardian. If your child is fetched by someone other than yourself we ask that you please send the person's photo on your child's whatsapp group along with his/her name for verification.

Our staff is trained in primary first aid and a fully equipped first aid box is kept in the classroom environment for emergencies. Emergency plans are posted in each classroom and evacuation drills are practiced regularly.

If a child is absent due to illness we ask that you please send a doctor's letter or Covid19 test result to the school on your child's whatsapp group which clears him/her of Covid19 before returning to school. A child without a letter or negative Covid19 test result will not be allowed to return until the letter or results are received and noted by the school.

Parent Involvement and Education

Parent involvement with their children's education is important to us at Tau Montessori School, as we believe that the home and school environments should reinforce each other in as many positive ways as possible. For this reason, the school is committed to building strong relationships between parents and the school, to maximising parental understanding of the Montessori approach to education and to keeping parents well-informed as to their child's development.

Therefore, we ask that you please stay in contact with us throughout your child's learning journey and that you let us know where we can assist.

Parents and Visitors to the School

Parents and visitors are always welcome in our school however, we ask that you to please make an appointment in advance. When visiting please keep the following courtesies in mind when in the children's environments:

- A Montessori environment is a place created and prepared specially for our children. They become proud of their area and learn to take responsibility for it. Parents are encouraged to respect this space as the children's. Discuss any visits that you would like to make with your child. This will build a mutual attitude of respect between you and your child. Your child will appreciate your respect and reciprocate by following your example.

- We ask that you refrain from showing your child what to do with the Montessori equipment at all times. There are very special ways for the materials to be presented, as well as special times of readiness for each child. Rather ask your child to show you how they work with their favourite piece of equipment. Allow them to work in silence and always affirm what they have done.

Admissions Procedure

At Tau Montessori School, we encourage and celebrate a rich cultural diversity. Our school does not discriminate in any manner with regard to disability, race, religion, gender or national origin. Class size is determined by several factors with an adult to child ratio of 1:10 as a benchmark. In applying the Montessori Method effectively, we try to balance the ages, genders, skill levels, talents and personalities in our classrooms. We encourage families to follow the admissions procedure below when considering enrolment at Tau Montessori School.

Visit:
Families are welcome to visit our school after making an appointment with the school. School tours are done between 09:30 and 13:00 during the week.

Apply:
After careful consideration of our program, parents may fill out the application form for their child/ren. If all classes are full, the child's name will be entered onto a waiting list.

Enroll:
When students are offered and accept places at Tau Montessori School, registration forms, registration fees and all other enrolment forms (School contract etc.) will be due.

Registration fees are payable on or before the first day of the learner's attendance at school. If payment is affected by way of electronic funds transfer, parents are to submit the proof of payment together with all enrolment forms to the Principal with their child's name as reference.

IV. POLICIES

Please take time to read through the policies that govern our school. While our teaching philosophy strives to create independence and self-discipline within each child, these policies are in place to ensure the smooth running of the school and to create an environment that has clearly defined boundaries to protect each child.

1. ABSENCE

Absence from School:
Parents should please inform the school by 08h00 in the event that their child will not be at school that day. A doctor's letter should also accompany your child upon return where necessary.

Absence from Physical Education or any Other Class/Activity:
Children who are not allowed to do any physical activities or may not attend any other class/activity (e.g. for religious reasons) should be provided with a letter from their parents.

2. ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Any staff member who has seen or is aware of an abusive situation concerning a child or another staff member must notify the Principal of the relevant section immediately.

An internal investigation will be conducted, and if necessary, social workers or relevant authorities will be contacted.

ANY CONCERNS REGARDING SUCH ISSUES ARE TO BE DISCUSSED WITH THE PRINCIPAL ONLY.

3. ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Children should please be at school between 07:00 - 07h45.

Children attending half days should please be collected before or at 13:30.

Children attending aftercare should be collected by 17h30.

4. TOYS

Children may not bring toys to school as they often get damaged or lost and the school cannot be held liable for any loss or damage to your little one's toys.

5. ILLNESS

Please refer to the SAMA and Tau Montessori Protocols booklet that you will receive upon enrolment for rules regarding Covid19.

Children may only attend school if they have been without a fever for 24 hours or more. A fever is a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or more. If a little one presents with fever at school we will be in contact with his/her parents or guardians to make sure that s/he is fetched

from school as soon as is possible. The little one in question will also be placed in isolation in order to contain the germs to one area of the school.

6. CLOTHING

It is of great importance that each piece of clothing and shoes are clearly marked with your little one/s name/s. Comfortable clothing should be worn and should be easy enough to unzip and unbutton especially for the little ones who are potty-training.

7. EATING AND DRINKING IN CLASS

Children are allowed to drink water during class time and are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to school.

Eating in class will be at the discretion of the teacher but **no chewing gum** is allowed.

8. EMERGENCY PLANS

Emergency plans will be adhered to in terms of the instructions posted in each classroom. These plans include fire emergency, hostage situations and explosives scares.

9. FIELD TRIPS

Outings are organised in accordance with the children's field of study at any given time. Depending on the nature of the outing, parental involvement is sometimes required.

10. HEALTH STATUS

Parents are not obliged to reveal any child's HIV status, but we do encourage parents to share this information voluntarily. Confidentiality will always be maintained. A first aid box is kept for all environments, and at least one staff member per environment is required to have a level 1 First Aid Certificate.

11. HEALTHY FOOD and NO NUTS

Tau Montessori School has a healthy food and NO NUTS policy through which we encourage learners to begin a lifelong habit of making informed choices about the food they eat. We ask that parents support our healthy food initiative by providing their children with only wholesome foods in their lunch boxes. It is important to note that there is a definite and direct link between your child's food intake and their concentration levels and learning capabilities.

Please liaise with your child's teacher regarding birthday and other celebrations as they can advise you regarding appropriate refreshments for such occasions. No party packs are allowed to be handed out. We only allow a small cupcake per child or a cake large cake that we can cut into equal pieces for the children to enjoy ☺

12. LOST PROPERTY

Lost property will be kept in designated areas for 1 term after which time it will be donated to charity.

13. RECORD KEEPING AND ASSESSMENTS

Records of the children's work will be updated on a weekly basis. Assessments are done on a term basis and are to be discussed with the Principal at term meetings.

14. REPORTS – WRITTEN AND CONFERENCES

Tau Montessori School issues reports at preschool level twice a year in June and December.

Parent teacher conferences for parents can be scheduled at any time when either the school or parents feel the need to discuss important information regarding their child/ren's development.

Updated 21 October 2020