



Family Handbook

Preschool / Kindergarten

2970 Jutland Road

Victoria, B.C. V8T 5K2

Phone: 250-384-3414

Fax: 250-384-3420

E-mail: AdminAssist@selkirkmontessori.ca

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The School



*"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*

Our Vision Statement

Our vision is to cultivate a life-long love of learning in our children and inspire them to realize their full potential while enjoying life's journey and positively contributing to the world around them.

Our Mission Statement

Guided by the Montessori philosophy, our mission is to provide a caring school community that nurtures every child's natural curiosity for learning and supports full development of academic, social, artistic, physical and life skills.

Selkirk R.O.C.K.S.

Being a member of the Selkirk Montessori community ROCKS! Our interactions, behaviours, and problem-solving centres around the following:

R – Respect: Seek to understand each other, take care of our environment, and work to create a positive community

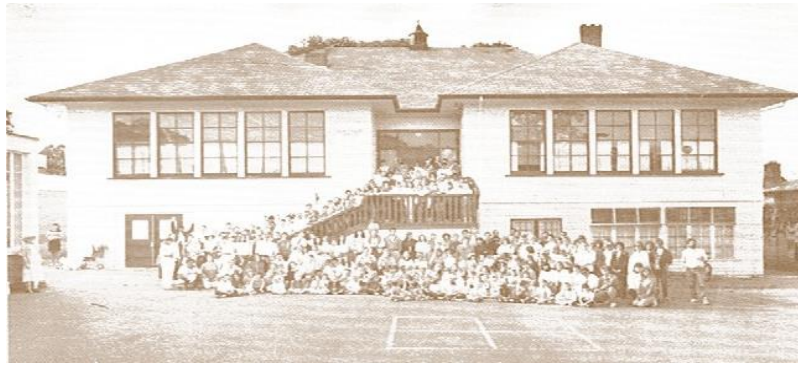
O – Open Mindedness: Celebrate diversity, try new things, be flexible thinkers, approach collaboration with curiosity

C - Communication: Listen actively, speak thoughtfully, honour and express our own feeling and ideas, acknowledge, and consider the feelings and ideas of others

K – Kindness: Help and inspire others, include everyone, use compassion, solve problems, take great care with our community

S – Success: Challenge ourselves and persevere when obstacles arise, make a difference in our community, work together to accomplish big things, participate in service work, live in truth and integrity

A Short History of Selkirk Montessori School



In the fall of 1979, three local parents decided they would like to see a Montessori school that continued to the elementary level. Community interest in Montessori, as an educational alternative, had been growing and the growing waitlists for preschools (Montessori and others), indicated a true need for more schools.

Out of these initial discussions, ideas grew, meetings were planned, and work began. Countless hours were spent in work parties making equipment and starting negotiations for finding a building, licencing the preschool, hiring teachers and filling enrollment requirements. Classes began at the Montessori Centre of Victoria in September of 1980, in an old wooden-framed building on the grounds of Oaklands Elementary School.

The main objectives for the school were:

- To provide a strong base of students for an elementary program
- To fulfil provincial requirements concerning staffing and curriculum
- To acquire independent school status, in addition to maintaining a Montessori focus

Students entering the elementary program filtered in from the school's own preschool programs, other Montessori schools, and from other community-based programs. One of the many requirements of independent school status in British Columbia was to have been in operation for three years before applying to the Ministry of Education. We achieved independent school status in 1984. The grants have since been used to reduce the operating costs, and thus the tuition fees, of the school.

A Short History of Selkirk Montessori School cont'd.

Our school community has faced setbacks and challenges over the years, each time displaying the resilience and strength of our community. In May of 1985, the school experienced a devastating fire which caused serious damage to our Lionel Street building. Compelled to close the school for a week, we were able to re-establish in portable classrooms generously loaned to us by Camosun College.

The Pacific Montessori Society met its next great challenge in February 1998, when we broke ground on the site of our new and current home at the Selkirk Waterfront development on Jutland. Classes began at the beautiful new Selkirk Montessori School in September of that year. In January 2015, we completed construction of a two-storey addition to expand our middle school program. We also added two new play spaces to the school facility.

Among the specific requirements for maintaining independent school status, we continue to meet provincial curriculum guidelines, staff the school with BC certified teachers, maintain accurate attendance records, and follow the ministry's established reporting procedures.

Similarly, our preschool programs meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Child Care, which dictates student/teacher ratios, physical setting, staff qualifications, age range for children, and programs.

The Montessori philosophy and method has continued to be of paramount importance to the school and involves continuous planning by administration and staff.



Karen Colussi - Our Founding Principal

One of the original three founding parents was Karen Colussi. Karen was the first principal of the Montessori Centre of Victoria, a position she held for 18 years. All four of her children graduated from the school.

Karen's enormous efforts and strong vision culminated in the building of Selkirk Montessori School. One month after attending the ground-breaking ceremony for the new school in February 1998, Karen lost her life to breast cancer. The new school building is dedicated to her memory. Inscribed on the Selkirk Montessori School cornerstone is the following dedication:



Karen Lorna Colussi
1948-1998

This building is dedicated to Karen Colussi, co-founder, and administrator of the Pacific Montessori Society, 1980 to 1998.

Her physical presence within this cornerstone provides continuity between the roots she established at the initial home of the school, and the promise of continued growth in the new home she worked towards so tirelessly.

Her academic presence lives within the school and is manifest through the continued strength of the program she believed so strongly in and in turn within each individual student who attends this institution.

Her spiritual presence reaches all of us who are brought together to use this facility, from various communities and backgrounds and for various purposes.

Community and Volunteering

One of the strongest values at Selkirk Montessori School is our sense of community. Families in the school share a common respect for each other and the Montessori philosophy of education. The dedication of the entire staff, to the children and to the school, is felt by everyone. There is a palpable sense of people working together, across grade levels, interest levels and a wide range of capabilities.

Another incredible asset the school community possesses is a rich and diverse cultural landscape. The Montessori method is based on the universal stages of child development which celebrates all cultures. A Montessori school is not a training ground for any specific set of beliefs, but a safe place for the child to foster a sense of independence and enjoyment as they learn and grow. The more cultural diversity, the better.

The overall wellbeing of our school community depends on volunteers. When families actively participate in a child's education, the child will benefit from understanding, in a tangible way, our investment in their happiness and well-being. Seeing caregivers participate in school events is a very positive lesson for children. There are many opportunities for you to contribute to the community alongside your child. Volunteering together can initiate new conversations about the types of values you want to foster as a family.

Each family is required to perform a **minimum of 20 hours** of volunteer service for the school, each academic year. There are several ways to contribute these hours:

- Participating in the SPG
- In your child's class, helping with a project or demonstrating a skill
- At a school event, such as the Halloween Bash or the Farewell on the Green
- Helping with a fundraising activity, such as Hot Lunches
- Driving for field trips
- Running an after-school club
- Providing baking or donating food

School Structure

Selkirk Montessori School is governed by the Pacific Montessori Society. The Karen L. Colussi Foundation is responsible for furthering the aims of the Pacific Montessori Society. The Selkirk Parent Group (SPG) is an independent committee of the Pacific Montessori Society.

The Pacific Montessori Society

The Pacific Montessori Society is a non-profit society officially registered with the provincial government and registered with the federal government as a charitable organization. A copy of the Society's constitution and bylaws is filed with the Registrar of Companies. The Society was founded in 1980. All parents in good standing are members of the Pacific Montessori Society.

In accordance with the Societies Act, the Board of Directors of the Society is elected at the annual general meeting and serves without any remuneration. Terms are for three years. Members of the Pacific Montessori Society are eligible to run for office.

Formal **board meetings** take place monthly at the school – other meetings may be called as required. The purpose of these meetings is to make operational decisions about the school. Dates and times are posted on the website and highlighted in our monthly newsletters.

Society members may attend the regular portion of board meetings by emailing the secretary of the board through the office, by the first of the month. Members may place items on the agenda by writing to the secretary of the board, through the office, by the first of the month. Members may address their items at the beginning of the board meeting. Regular minutes of each board meeting are available to members through the office. The board incorporates any confidential items into an in-camera session, which is not open to members.

Annual General Meetings are used to elect board members and report officially on the status of the Pacific Montessori Society. They take place at the school in November of each year.

Current members are listed on our website.

The Karen L. Colussi Foundation

www.karenlcolussifoundation.ca

In 1980, Karen and David Colussi, together with two other committed families, formed the non-profit Montessori Society and began a Montessori school in Victoria, initially renting space from the Victoria School District, at the former shingle annex of Oaklands Elementary School. The new school was unique in that it offered Montessori classes at the elementary level. The school was appropriately named the Montessori Centre of Victoria, and its principal for the next 18 years was Karen L. Colussi.

The Karen L. Colussi Foundation (formerly the Pacific Montessori Foundation) is an officially registered non-profit charitable organization and a copy of its constitution and bylaws is filed with the Registrar of Companies. It was incorporated in 1993 to support the Pacific Montessori Society school.

The Foundation was established to hold the school's capital funds and maintain the title to the school's building, ensuring that it will always be retained for the use of Selkirk Montessori School.

It also provides a means for gifts, donations, trusts, and contributions. Its aim is also to sponsor and support events and programs which promote the aims and objectives of the Pacific Montessori Society.

The Foundation is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers, all of whom have had a long association with the school and continue to support the society in its endeavors. Its members are selected at the Annual General Meeting and serve a renewable five-year term.

Selkirk Parent Group (SPG)

The Selkirk Parent Group (SPG) is an independent committee of the Pacific Montessori Society. It adheres to the constitution and bylaws of the society. The SPG has its own guidelines.

The role of the SPG is to contribute to the effectiveness of the school by promoting the involvement of parents, including facilitating communication within the parent community, and liaising with the Board. In addition, the SPG raises funds to directly support student activities and undertakes activities and events to support community building.

Examples of SPG activities:

- School lunch program
- *Welcome Back to School / Goodbye on the Green* Events
- Acting as a class representative
- Purdy's Chocolate Fundraiser

Membership in the SPG includes any parent/guardian who is a member of the Pacific Montessori Society and remains in good standing. Administrators, Staff, and Board members can serve as non-voting members of the SPG.

Meetings are held throughout the academic school year. Notice of SPG meetings will be announced in our monthly newsletters and on our website.

General School Policies

The Board of Directors is responsible for the development, approval, and implementation of school policies. The process includes input from administration, staff, parents, and students. All policies currently in place posted on our website. Existing policies are being revised and new ones developed on an on-going basis.

www.selkirkmontessori.ca



Kindness-rocks for *Selkirk Rocks* week

The Teaching Staff

Our staff is highly qualified. Each of our teachers brings a wealth of education, experience, knowledge, and dedication to our school, enriching the learning environment for children and families.

In addition to all teachers being BC certified, classroom teachers have been trained in the Montessori philosophy and method through internationally recognized programs, such as those offered by the American Montessori Society, Association Montessori Internationale, and/or the Association of Progressive Montessorians.

Our preschool/kindergarten teachers must also have their Early Childhood Education (ECE) certification.



*"The training of the teacher is something far more than learning ideas. It includes training of character. It is a preparation of the spirit."
— Maria Montessori*

Day to Day



"The work of the child consists of creating the human being that it has to become. The adult works to improve the environment while the child works to improve themselves."
Maria Montessori

Office Information

School phone number: 250-384-3414
School fax number: 250-384-3420
School website: www.selkirkmontessori.ca
Email: reception@selkirkmontessori.ca

Office Staff

Reception – Laura Bondar

Laura is in the office Monday to Friday between the hours of 8am and 4pm. Alternatively, when no one is available to take your call at reception, or before and after school, you may leave a message through our voicemail inbox, or send a message directly to classrooms.

Email: reception@selkirkmontessori.ca

Accounting – Sara McCormick

For tuition payment enquiries or tax receipts please contact our Accounting Administrator, Sara McCormick, at local x136.

Email: accounting@selkirkmontessori.ca

Facilities – Ricky de Souza

For all enquiries regarding facilities please contact our Facilities Administrator, Ricky de Souza, at local x112.

Email: ricky@selkirkmontessori.ca

Administrative Assistant – Erin Andrews

Contact Erin Andrews with regards to all matters concerning student health, student records and admissions.

Email: adminassist@selkirkmontessori.ca

Our Administrators

Executive Director - Penny Barner

Email: penny@selkirkmontessori.ca

Head of School - Erin Hayes

Email: erin@selkirkmontessori.ca

The Executive Director and Head of School are available before, during and after school hours by appointment.

School Hours

The school doors are opened at 8:35am. Extended day student access is through the yellow side doors (by the school library) from 7:45am.

If your child has an appointment during the day, please email the classroom teachers in advance or call the office so that the teacher can be informed before pickup occurs.

- Kindergarten/Preschool Half Day

School is in session:

Morning Program 8:50am to 11:30am

Afternoon Program 12:20pm to 3:00pm

- Kindergarten/Preschool Full Day

School is in session:

8:50am to 3:00pm

Lunch for students: 11:30am to 12:30pm

- Elementary and Middle School

School is in session:

8:45am to 3:15pm

First Recess

Grade 1,2,7,8 11:30am to 12:00pm

Grade 3,4,5,6 12pm to 12:30pm

Second Recess:

Grades 1 – 3 1:45pm to 2:00pm

Grades 4 – 8 2:00pm to 2:15pm

Lunch for students

Grade 1, 2 12:00pm to 12:30pm

Grade 3 11:30am to 12:00pm

Grade 4, 5, 6 11:30am to 12:00pm

Grade 7, 8 12:00pm to 12.30pm

- Extended Day

Kindergarten/Preschool:

Morning: 7:45am to 8:50am

Afternoon: 3:00pm to 4:15/5:15pm

Elementary and Middle School

Morning: 7:45am to 8:45am

Afternoon: 3:15pm to 4:15/5:15pm

Admissions

Selkirk Montessori School follows the routines and procedures outlined below. Any situation not answered by the material below will be covered through parent, teacher and administrator meetings. It is the responsibility of each family to take note of and follow the guidelines as presented in the newsletter and registration forms.

The school follows regulations provided by the Child Care Facilities Licensing Board for determining student/teacher ratios and age range in each preschool level class. The school will follow the essential Montessori principles of balancing age and gender in any given class, where such opportunities occur.

All new children are enrolled for a probationary period of six to eight weeks. This time period provides the school and parents with the opportunity to ensure that each child will engage and thrive in this particular setting and program. Under certain conditions, the trial period may be extended.

Preschool/Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

The following are indicators of general readiness for participation in a larger preschool environment.

- Initiates and maintains independent play (for example, plays alone in the sandbox, or role-plays independently)
- Enjoys doing things on her own sometimes, such as looking at a book or doing crafts
- Is able to separate from you for a few hours, such as an afternoon at a friend's house or an evening with a babysitter
- Appears interested in going to school, learning new things, and/or meeting new friends
- Enjoys participating in group activities
- Beginning to express emotions, needs and requests
- Responds well to consistent routines, such as quiet time or an activity following lunch
- Is completely toilet trained and able to manage all aspects of toileting with minimal assistance (see toileting guidelines)
- Is able to independently dress themselves and can put on shoes and jackets with minimal assistance
- Is able to feed himself and generally stays seated while eating meals or snacks

Toileting Guidelines

At Selkirk Montessori School, we expect all students coming to the school are completely toilet trained. This means the child must be able to identify when they need

Toileting Guidelines cont'd.

to go, be able to use the bathroom effectively (manage clothes, wiping, washing etc.) and return to the class independently or with reasonable support.

We recognize that 3-year-olds and new children will require some extra support as they transition into this new environment. For this reason, we adjust to accommodate individual needs in the first weeks of school.

Teachers are not permitted to assist with wiping; however, the teacher will verbally prompt the child on how to wipe themselves and facilitate any changing of clothes. If the child cannot adequately clean themselves, the parents/guardians will be called. Parents will be called to come to clean and change their child if they have a bowel movement in their clothes.

If a pattern is identified (1-2 accidents a week), then a meeting with the family will be arranged to find a workable solution. In some cases, a schedule change may be required (i.e., a shortened day, or in some circumstances a delayed enrolment). Diapers and Pull Ups are not permitted.

Provincial Government Affordable Child Care Benefit

On September 1, 2018, the Child Care Subsidy was replaced by the Affordable Child Care Benefit. The new funding will help families with the cost of childcare, depending on factors like family size, type of care and household income. Please follow this link for more information and to see if you qualify:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

Child Care Fee Reduction

Selkirk Montessori School is enrolled in the provincial government's Childcare Fee Reduction Program. We are required to share the following information, in writing and within 30 days of approval for the CCFRI, with the parents of children enrolled in the facility:

- The amount of fee reduction funding the provider receives, per enrollment (for the care type(s) relevant to each parent), and
- The amount of and timing of any fee increase(s) we are approved to implement over the contract term (where relevant to each parent).

Gradual Entry

Prior to the start of each new school year, the teachers will be in touch with parents to offer a meeting, either with or without their child/ren present, depending on the grade level and/or individual circumstances.

During the first week of school, a gradual entry schedule is followed. This gives all students a chance to acclimatize gently to the start of the new school year and allows new students at the school the opportunity to get to know their peers, teachers, and classroom without being too overwhelmed.

For the preschool/kindergarten classes, the Tuesday will be for new children only, and they will attend for one hour. Wednesday will also be for new children only, and the school day will last for 1.5 hours. On Thursday, school is for 2 hours and both new and returning children will attend. Friday will consist of the full 2-hour and 40-minute school session with all students in attendance.

Please join us for our Welcome Back BBQ that first Wednesday at 11:30am. Everyone is welcome!

Placement

Any placement occurs through consultation with the administration. Once the school year has begun, intake is done in consultation with the administration, teachers, and parents.

Placement in classes (Preschool/Kindergarten and Elementary) is not based solely upon age: specific academic skills, social and emotional readiness, and physical maturity are also contributing factors. Our philosophy and physical organization provide the school with a great deal of flexibility; we are therefore able to place children according to their readiness and needs.

Children are not typically placed in the school after February of each school year. This is the mid-point of the school year, and placements after this are not beneficial to the new child, the children already in the class, or the teaching staff.

Re-enrollment process

Each January, we invite our existing families to re-enroll their child(ren) for the next school year. A non-refundable deposit of \$500 per child is required, which is applied to next year's tuition. During the January re-enrollment process, we also accept registration forms and deposits to enroll siblings for the upcoming school year. Re-enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis, so it is important that all forms and fees are returned as early as possible during the process.

Supplies

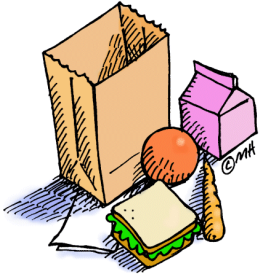
The staff and administration are responsible for preparing the school environment and providing the Montessori materials and collective supplies necessary for each level of your child's education. However, there are some notable exceptions, as outlined below.

Please label all items clearly with your child's name.

- ❖ Indoor shoes — something appropriately sturdy, should we have to evacuate the building (e.g., for fire or earthquake drills). Velcro fasteners are an asset. For safety reasons please avoid furry slippers or ballet-type shoes.
- ❖ A complete change of clothing — underwear and outer wear. Please let the child choose the clothing, they will be happier to wear it when needed.
- ❖ Plastic Ziplock bag (large) - for soiled clothing
- ✓ Preschool / Kindergarten carry-all bags are provided by the office



Snacks and Lunches



Students who stay all day bring their own lunch. A healthy lunch is essential to afternoon self-regulation and self-regulation is a key component to success in a Montessori classroom. Please, no chips, candy, cake, pop, or any other junk food.

Packing: Please keep things as easy to open as possible. Twist ties, pull tabs and vacuum-sealed containers are often a source of frustration as children need to wait for a teacher to help them. Also, being mindful to generate as little garbage as possible is a plus! Placemats: Please send a cloth placemat in your child's lunch kit daily. Dishcloths are ideal for younger children. We discourage the sharing of food, due to allergies. Leftover food will be sent home. This will give you a good idea of your child's eating habits. **An extra snack** for students staying for the afternoon extended day is helpful.

Reminder: **Because several students in the school have life-threatening allergies, peanut products must not be sent to school!**

Our Selkirk Parent Group (SPG) offers a term based, "Hot Lunch" program as a mutual benefit fundraiser. Offerings in recent years have included pizza, salads, smoothies, quesadillas, sandwiches, and sushi. Information is sent out to all families in the fall.



Clothing Guidelines

There is no denying that today's child has an environment that is rich and stimulating. The Montessori classroom is a prepared environment that has been carefully and thoughtfully set up to enable the children to develop their cognitive, social and emotional skills.

Although our school does not have uniforms, we have a few suggestions to help minimize distractions in the classroom. We strive to strike a balance between your child's need for self-expression with your child's opportunities to get the most from the classroom's prepared environment.

Here are some clothing guidelines:

Is your child's clothing clean and properly fitting?

Is the clothing easy to manage independently, especially during bathroom trips?

Will your child's clothing be distracting, especially during circle time?



These items may be distracting:

- Hoodies with masks
- Sequin designs that change patterns
- Costume jewelry and accessories (note: necklaces are a hazard when children play on the equipment)
- Capes
- Headbands with animal ears
- Light-up shoes
- Glitter lipstick (let teacher know about lip balm for chapped lips)
- Tutus

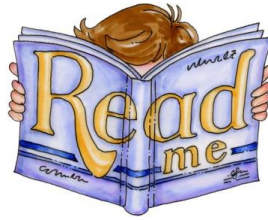
Circle time is an important part of our routine. We gather as a group, share news and stories, learn effective listening skills as well as practise taking turns and paying attention. We would like to set up your child for a successful time at circle and it is most helpful when we do not have to compete with distracting clothing and accessories.

There will be many opportunities for your child to show who they are, what their interests are, what they are feeling and what they are learning.

Help your child make clothing choices that are sensible and not distracting, and clothing that allow them to move freely, comfortably, independently, and safely.

THANK YOU for your understanding!

Library



Our school library is known as *The Bear's Den*.

Bears are a symbol of curiosity, resourcefulness, knowledge, introspection, healing, and transformation. The library is often a space for peace, rest, and quiet time for our students.

Every student in the school has a library card which is stored in the library. Our Librarian is available to assist with locating books of interest and for book check-out. The Bear's Den has a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books including picture books, leveled readers, novels, sports, cultural arts, and reference books. There is also a section on child development and information on Montessori in our parent and teacher section. Parents are welcome to check out a book using their child's library card. Books may be taken out for 1 week and can be renewed as required.

Students and parents are welcome to browse and check out books before and after school. Kindergarten through Grade 3 students attend weekly visits to the library for story time and to check out a book. Grade 4-8 students may visit the library before and after school, and with the permission of their classroom teacher.

Library Hours

Open at 7:45 am

Close at 4:00 pm (Bear's Den closes at 3:25 on Staff Meeting days)

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are always needed and appreciated! Our bi-annual book fairs are a great way to get involved. Contact Bree if you have a knack for processing books, book repairs and have a general appreciation for books!

We look forward to seeing you in the Bear's Den!



Holidays and Celebrations

Holidays

The provincial government requires that all children from kindergarten age upwards attend school for a specific number of days/hours per school year.

If you plan a family holiday during the school year, your child's teacher may prepare a homework program for completion on your trip. The homework will be evaluated, and a note put in the child's file to confirm completion.

In addition, you may be asked to provide a letter for the file to confirm the details of your trip for our auditor, as too many days missed may affect your eligibility for provincial funding. Parents are responsible for any shortfall the school might experience.

Please inform your child's teachers if you are going to keep children home to observe family religious or cultural celebrations not already planned in the school calendar.

Celebrations



Thanks to our vibrant community, we celebrate many religious and cultural events each year.

If you would like your child to share their cultural experiences with their class, please speak to the teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Each year, individual classroom teachers decide if they will celebrate events such as International Children's Day, Historical Halloween, or Valentine's Day.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays are special events and are celebrated as such in each class. Summer birthdays are celebrated in June.

When home parties are planned, please use email to pass on invitations. This approach helps reduce potential hurt feelings when the whole class is not involved.



Parking, Drop-off, and Pick-up

Parents are encouraged to park responsibly. Local transit, carpooling, walking/biking to school are options many of our parents enjoy. Bike racks at the back of the school are available for parents and students.

Street parking along Jutland:

One hour parking is available on Jutland Road, but these spaces fill up quickly. Please do not invent your own parking space or double park when there are no other spots available. Even if you stay in your vehicle, other cars will cross the center line to go around you, putting our children at an increased risk.

U-TURNS are illegal (there is signage) on Jutland Road and result in a hefty traffic fine. Be aware that there is a fire hydrant in front of our school near the crosswalk and a 5-minute school drop off zone. Please do not block access to the hydrant or park within the boundaries of our crosswalk.

Kiss and Go Zone:



This area is for elementary and middle school children. It is located along the back of the school on Jackladder Lane. Pull in, kiss your child goodbye, watch them enter through the back door, then go. Please stay in your vehicle. If you need to get out of your vehicle, please don't use the Kiss and Go. Drop-off hours are between 8:30-9:00 am. After school pick-up operates similarly. Classrooms will be dismissed outside of the back doors between 3:15-3:25 pm. Please remain in your car, along the blue painted curb. If your child is not ready, you may be asked by staff to circle around the school to make space for another parent whose child is waiting, to keep traffic flowing. Please be mindful: Jackladder Lane is a two-way street! If you park near the cardboard and garbage disposal bins you will be blocking the entire lane and your car will be towed.

Legion Parking:

To make parking easier, we are fortunate to have the support of the Pro Patria Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. Located at the corner of Jutland and Gorge, this spacious parking lot is the place to park if you need to accompany your child to the school at drop-off or pick-up times. **Please do not park in the spots marked "Reserved".**

We ask that all students in the senior class be dropped off here unless they have a younger sibling. Be sure to get a special parking pass from the school office and remember there is a 15-minute limit for these spaces. These spaces are not to be used for class parties or other school functions as the Legion requires the spaces for their use throughout the day and evenings.



Communications About Your Child



"The things he sees are not just remembered; they form a part of his soul."
Maria Montessori

Levels of Communication



There are several different types of communication that might take place between school and home, on a day-to-day basis, or because of special individual circumstances. Communication might be initiated by the teachers, by the school's administrative team, or by you, the parent. It might also come from the SPG, either over email, or through your child's class rep. There are three levels of school communications: personal communications regarding your child, class wide and school wide.

1. **Personal:** Communication concerning your child/ren may be as simple as calling the school to report an absence or sending a note to school in your child's planner. If you have a specific query or concern you'd like to discuss with your child's teachers, don't hesitate to set up a meeting. The most direct way to contact classroom teachers is through classroom email accounts. Similarly, the teachers may reach out to you to organize a time to meet if they have something they wish to discuss with you.

If your child is going to be absent or late, please call the school. If your child needs to leave school early or for part of the day (e.g., for a dentist's appointment), please write the details in a brief email to the teacher ahead of time.

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform the administration as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We will accept your judgment as to the kinds of changes that may affect your child's behaviour, security, and general well-being.

Common causes of distress or distraction may include:

- Either or both parents being away from home for any reason or for an extended period
- A new person living in the home
- Illness of either a parent or sibling
- Any hospitalization, accident, or death in the family
- A new caretaker
- Moving
- Death of a pet

The teacher and/or administration will also keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment that may affect your child.

- | <div> <div>Hummingbird Morning Class (Amabel and Lia)</div> <div> <div>September 2021</div> <div> <div>Themed: All About Me • My School • Terry Fox</div> <div>  </div> </div> </div> </div> | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | 1
Family Meetings
Travels with a city, Montreal | 2
Family Meetings | 3 |
| 4
Labour Day | 5
First Day of School
Newcomer Settlement
Group 2
Group 2 | 6
Group 1 and 2 | 7
All Children
Travels with a city, Montreal | 8
All Children
B.d.g. - 10:30 a.m.
11:30 - 3:30 p.m. | 9
All Children | 10 |
| | 11
Last Day of Fall in paper dolls | 12
Parent Orientation
Meet with a Parent
International Day of Music | 13
Terry Fox can lead us and others
B.d.g. - 10:30 a.m.
11:30 - 3:30 p.m. | 14
B.d.g. - 10:30 a.m.
11:30 - 3:30 p.m. | 15
B.d.g. - 10:30 a.m.
11:30 - 3:30 p.m. | 16 |
| 17
New Instructional Document | 18 | 19
Happy 10th day, Montreal | 20
National Day of Truth and Reconciliation
B.d.g. - 10:30 a.m.
11:30 - 3:30 p.m. | 21
B.d.g. - 10:30 a.m.
11:30 - 3:30 p.m. | 22
B.d.g. - 10:30 a.m.
11:30 - 3:30 p.m. | 23 |

The **school office** is often the first point of contact to check in concerning absences, changes to pick-ups or to ask a question about an event or program. Office hours, phone numbers and administrative staff information can be found on page 14. The office staff can also transfer you to classroom/specialist voicemail boxes, which are checked by teachers at the end of the day.

Facebook – We often post photos and event reminders on our Selkirk Montessori School page. Please ask to join!



Communication channels cont'd

The school **directory** is emailed to families in October, and contains contact details of the parent community, as well as class lists and an internal staff listing. We do our best to ensure that all information is correct. We ask that you notify the office of any changes to your personal information in a timely fashion. To opt out of the directory, or to modify which information you share in it, please mark your preferences in Transparent Classroom.

Transparent Classroom is a student information system used by Montessori schools around the world. Selkirk Montessori uses the system to track and communicate student progress. One advantage of this system is the ability for parents to see exactly what their child has practiced and accomplished. We are also able to share a few pictures of special learning moments on a child's profile. This is an American company and all data is stored in the United States; there is no Canadian equivalent. If you have any questions, please discuss them with Erin Hayes (Head of School) in preparation to set up your family profile. A link will be emailed to you to set up your family account before school starts in September.

Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices

For all elementary students, grade 6 and under, devices should remain turned off and stored in backpacks/lockers between 8:45am and 3:15 pm, unless approved for a specific educational purpose. Our Senior students, grades 7/8, are asked to hand over any devices at the beginning of the day and pick them up again once class is dismissed.

The school is not to be held responsible for lost, stolen or damaged devices. Any students found using an electronic device without approval from the teacher will have the device taken away and stored until the end of the day.

Participating in Your Child's Montessori Experience



"Montessori is an education for independence, preparing not just for school, but for life."
Maria Montessori

The Montessori Experience for You and Your Child

"It is necessary for the teacher [or parent] to guide the child without letting them feel their presence too much, so that they may always be ready to supply the desired help but may never be the obstacle between the child and their experience."

Maria Montessori

There are a variety of meaningful opportunities to see your child at work, and to understand how the Montessori method is shaping him or her for the future!

Parent Orientation/Meet the Teacher

The first formal meeting of the school year is the new parent orientation meeting, held in September. Parents are invited to meet the administration, teaching staff and attend a brief introduction session in their child's classroom. This is a great time to learn more about the Montessori philosophy and ask questions about the day-to-day operations of the school and classroom.

Following parent orientation/meet the teacher, we invite you to be a part of your child's educational experience through the following events:

Child-Hosted Visits

In October, these visits give families an opportunity to explore classrooms with the child as tour-guide.

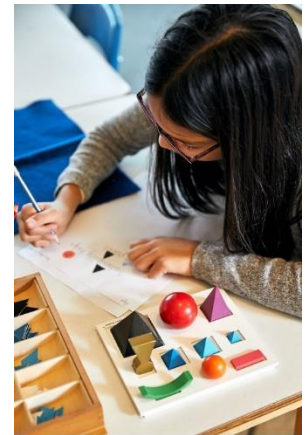
Formal Observation

Classroom observations take place in November, after the children have had an opportunity to settle into routines.

Open House/Transition Night

Our annual Open House is held in January and includes transition meetings. We encourage you to attend enjoy the experience of exploring your child's classroom work on display, and to attend presentations that highlight the opportunities for growth in the years to come!

Parents of children in kindergarten and preschool are welcome to attend the transition meeting in the grade one/two classes, meet the teachers and learn more about the primary program. Specialists will also be on hand to answer your questions. We are pleased to offer child minding in the library or multi-purpose room for the



Open House/Transition Night cont'd.

duration of the presentation. This will be supervised by staff and leadership students, and is free for enrolled students. Please take advantage of this opportunity so that you can relax and enjoy the presentation!



Parent Education Nights

These nights are organized and sponsored by the SPG and are typically free of charge. Parents and staff work together to identify topics of interest within the community and arrange for speakers within their fields to present at the school. They often have a Montessori, child development or a parenting theme.

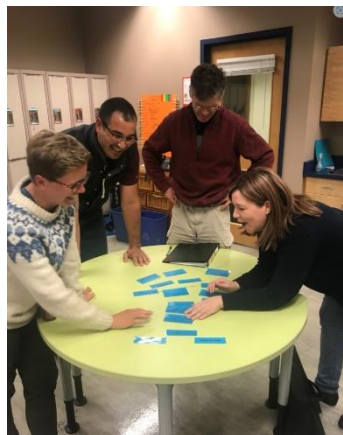
Reporting

Scheduled parent/teacher meetings take place in late November or early December for all children.

Preschool children receive a written progress report at the end of the school year. In addition to this report, there are two meetings with the teachers throughout the year to chart your child's progress.

Children in **Kindergarten** to grade 8 receive three written reports throughout the school year.

We are a team! If at any time you are concerned about some aspect of your child's progress, you are encouraged to contact the teacher or the administration and plan either a school meeting or a telephone conference.



Healthy Conflict

*"The quality of our lives depends not on whether or not we have conflicts,
but on how we respond to them."
- Tom Crum*

Strong, healthy relationships are rooted in trust and respect. Students here grow to truly care for each other through genuine shared experiences, getting to know each other, and developing relationships that last well beyond graduation. Students develop friendships regardless of similarities or differences, common interests, or uncommon perspectives. These relationships develop over time, through common experiences, and are not without conflict.

A few key aspects to working through the inevitable conflicts of human differences, in a positive and healthy way, are cornerstones to our school.

- Grace and courtesy is developed in early age, allowing students to prepare for inevitable conflict with just that - grace and courtesy
- The Montessori approach encourages interdependence between the students. Students rely on and value each other, academically, socially, emotionally. Relationships are built over time and, with guidance, students learn to respond to and move past conflicts in a healthy way
- The low student to teacher ratio allows teachers to get to know students - truly get to know them. It allows students and teachers to build relationships and work together
- The low ratio also allows teachers to respond to issues in real time, as they arise, supporting older children in doing the same
- Kindness matters – kindness is encouraged, modeled and practiced
- Second Step (KP to grade 2) and URSTRONG programs to help students build a repertoire of language and skills to use when managing conflict

As kids grow from preschooler to preteen and beyond, the strength of their established relationships sees them through the inevitable conflicts. Because the students truly value each other, when conflicts do arise, students are motivated to resolve them in a healthy way. Conflicts are resolved with kindness, and relationships are eventually further strengthened through the resolution.

An interesting example of this would be the approach the Leadership students took to Anti-Bullying Day one year. After discussing their options for highlighting this important day, the students decided to create a very special kindness tree. For an entire week this heart-warming tree graced our entranceway. Students, parents, and staff were encouraged to commend others for kindnesses, big and small. These senior students recognized that the only way to truly combat bullying was to identify the behaviors and interactions we want to see in the world. They understood that celebrating and expecting kindness leads to positive healthy relationships - relationships that can withstand the inevitable conflict, and work through it in a healthy way.

Second Step

*"Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war." -
Maria Montessori*

We have been using the *Second Step* program for several years now. The goal of the program is to teach social skills and to reduce impulsive behaviour (acting suddenly, without thinking of what the outcome might be) and aggressive behaviour (pushy, hostile, angry behaviour).

All classes in the school are using the variation of the *Second Step* program that fits their age range. Each program varies in length (one has 28 sessions spaced over 28 weeks, i.e., a major portion of the year). The aim of each program is still to help the child help her/himself and to grow and learn responsive, responsible behaviour.

Students who learn and use the skills presented in the Second Step program are more likely to do better in school and get along with other people. We feel this program builds a foundation for skills that are an important part of the life of the child, adolescent and adult.

We want you to know about *Second Step* so that you can reinforce these concepts at home. Thank you for your help. Together we are a great team!

The Second Step program is divided into three units:

EMPATHY In the Classroom

Unit 1: Empathy Training

The Empathy Training unit of *Second Step* helps children to understand their effect on others by recognizing, predicting and identifying with other people's feelings. Understanding and caring about their effect on others helps children to think before they act and become better problem solvers.

The unit works on enabling children to:

- identify their own and others' feelings through facial expressions and body clues
- identify conflicting feelings
- recognize cause and effect
- predict feelings
- recognize the difference between accidental actions and those done on purpose
- communicate feelings
- listen to others
- accept difference in others



Unit 2: Impulse Control

The Impulse Control unit of *Second Step* combines two successful ways of cutting down on impulsive and aggressive behaviour. The children learn and role play our problem-solving steps to use in situations involving people. They also practice social skills, such as “dealing with distractions”, “joining in an activity”, and “asking permission.” In this unit, students learn how to solve problems by using five steps.

Each step is a question:

- What is the problem?
- What are some solutions to the problem?
- What are the consequences of each possible solution?
- Is it safe?
- How will it make people feel?
- Is it fair?
- Will it work?
- Which is the best solution to choose?
- Is the solution I chose working? If not, what can I do now?

Unit 3: Anger Management

The Anger Management unit of *Second Step* introduces skills to manage anger to solve problems more effectively. Students learn to channel their feelings in better directions. In addition, they practice social skills, such as “keeping out of a fight”, “dealing with an accusation”, and “accepting a no answer.”



The children learn to:

- Recognize triggers—what makes them angry.
- Watch for warning signs—bodily feelings that tell them they’re angry
- Make self-statements—self-talk that helps them calm down
- Use reducers—other ways that help them calm down, such as deep breathing, counting to ten backwards, or a “time out”
- Think about it later—asking themselves questions such as “Did I do a good job?” or “What made me angry?” or “What can I do better or differently next time?”

Health and Safety



Medical Concerns and Allergies

We all have some knowledge of or direct experience with medical concerns and allergies. Every year there are children in the school for whom they are life-threatening. This is most often a peanut allergy.



For this reason, we ask all families not to use any peanut products or derivatives in any part of a child's food. Please check that commercially prepared foods do not contain peanut oil.

Teachers will inform you of any additional medical concerns or allergies in the school or classroom that you will need to be aware of. Thank you for your understanding and concern about the welfare of all children in your child's program.

First Aid

We have a basic first aid area at the school. Any minor cuts and scrapes are cleaned with soap and water and bandaged. For more serious injuries, the student is assessed, first aid is applied, and an ambulance may be called if deemed necessary. Parents will be called.

If students are in class and feeling unwell, parents will be called and asked to come and pick them up.

Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications



For any medications which are to be given to a student or supervised by staff at school, parents must have the physician complete a "Request for Administration of Medication at School" form **BEFORE** bringing the medication to school. These forms are available from the office.

Medication must be provided in the original bottle with a prescription label provided by the pharmacist. If you have any questions about medications or medical concerns, please contact Erin Andrews in the office.

Immunization Forms

As required by childcare licensing, immunization forms must be submitted with your registration paperwork. To obtain a copy of your immunization records please contact your local health unit.

School Closure

Due to Weather

It is our sincere hope that any snow that falls will do so on a Saturday and disappear before school on Monday! If our hopes are not fulfilled, please note the following:

- ❖ If District 61 closes, so will Selkirk Montessori School - automatically. In other words, if the district closes because of bad weather conditions, we will too. Occasionally when SD61 is open we may have to remain closed due to travel conditions. The administration will use its best judgment on Weather closures.
- ❖ Selkirk Montessori School will close if we cannot arrange for a suitable number of teachers to be present.
- ❖ Closure will be announced over local radio stations and/or on the school website. www.selkirkmontessori.ca



Professional Development

Selkirk Montessori School is closed for several staff professional development days throughout the year. These and other special closures will be listed on the annual calendar, in the newsletter and on the monthly calendar for each class.

Emergency Preparedness

The Selkirk Montessori School building complies with building codes and regulations. The steel frame construction provides outstanding protection against earthquake damage.



Earthquake and fire drills take place on a regular basis throughout the 10 months of the school year. Lockdown drills are implemented once in the fall and once in the spring, and both have the attendance of the police department. A comprehensive emergency preparedness plan is in place, with individual emergency kits and supplies on hand. Staff are first aid trained.

Earthquake Drills

An announcement is made at the beginning of the earthquake drill for the students and staff to Drop, Cover and Hold under desks or tables. Students face away from windows and are on their knees with their hands clasped behind their neck. Students then count to 60 (earthquakes can last more than 1 minute. This is used as a guideline and as a calming tool). After the counting is completed, further instruction is provided over the PA system, ending the drill.

Fire Drills

When the alarm is sounded, the students line up in a single file at their classroom door and follow the teachers' instructions. All students meet in designated areas on the Green behind the school. The students are all accounted for by the teachers, and they wait for further instructions.

Lockdown Drills

Lockdown drills are conducted once in the fall and once in the spring. The police department is always in attendance for our lockdown drills. An announcement is made over the PA system to begin the lockdown drill. Teachers look in the hallways and take all individuals quickly into their classrooms; shut the already locked door; turn off the lights; ensure that all blinds are down and move everyone into the designated lockdown area. The police will then go through each of the floors to ensure all is secure.

A second announcement will be made over the PA system to conclude the drill.

If parents are in the building during any of the drills, they are asked to participate in the drill as if it were a real event. This sets a good example for the students and is good practice for you as well.

Suggested Montessori Readings for Parents

These readings are listed in a specific order, starting with books that are of a more introductory nature.

Introductory books

Montessori: A Modern Approach by Paula Polk Lillard

The Essential Montessori by Elizabeth Hainstock

The Discovery of the Child by Maria Montessori

The Secret of Childhood by Maria Montessori

The Absorbent Mind by Maria Montessori

Biographies

Montessori by Rita Kramer

Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work by E.M. Standing (not strictly a biography)

Parent-oriented books

How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way by Tim Seldin
(This publication is available for sale in the school office).

Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius by Angeline Stoll Lillard

All these books can be found in the school library!

Our School Song

We Can Make a Difference

Here we are at the dawning of a new day
Soon all of the future will be ours
And we can do our part to make a better world
If we always keep on reaching for the stars!
If we try, you and I can make a difference
If we try, we can make our dreams come true.
And one day, we can live to see a world
Of peace and harmony
Yes, we can make a difference
If we try.

Side by side, we can learn to work together
Hand in hand, we can build a better day
For what the future brings
Is up to you and me
So let's do our very best along the way.
If we try, you and I can make a difference
If we try, we can make our dreams come true.

And one day, we can live to see a world
of peace and harmony
Yes, we can make a difference
If we try
Yes, we can make a difference,
You and I.