



# Montessori Academy

*Discover the Nature of Learning*

**Parent Handbook 2022/2023**

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## WELCOME TO QUIET WATERS MONTESSORI ACADEMY

### **What is Montessori?**

The Montessori Method, founded by Dr. Maria Montessori, is a philosophy that respects the unique individuality of each child. It is based on the belief that the child should be free to succeed and learn without restriction or criticism. The Montessori Method helps the child to learn in their own way and at their own pace. Each child has an individual program that is specified to their own needs and wants.

Maria Montessori believed that the child had the ability to absorb an extraordinary amount of information from the environment around them; this is what she termed as “the absorbent mind”. The child (from 2.5 to 6 years of age) learns and explores through their senses and is driven by his/her intense need to learn. Montessori is a tactile education with emphasis on the five senses, kinetic movement, fine and gross motor skills, and a concrete knowledge that develops into a later abstract way of thinking. The goal of Montessori is to give the child a stimulating environment that allows the child to use all their five senses with freedom and without interruption.

The Montessori teacher is known as a “Directress” and as the name dictates it is he/she that directs the child in their daily activities. The child has “freedom within limits”. Maria Montessori stated that, “Freedom without organization is useless. The organization of the work, therefore, is the cornerstone of this new structure. But even that organization would be in vain without the liberty to make use of it.”

The classroom provides an environment that is conducive to learning, it is the child’s environment aptly named “The Children’s House”. The child moves freely in the environment, absorbing the information from the self-correcting materials and gains a sense of pride and confidence. According to Maria Montessori, once the child’s classroom is presented to them the “Directress” may simply step back and watch the child learn guiding them gently into a realm of endless knowledge and opportunity. This is the environment provided by Quiet Waters Montessori Academy. The child becomes independent, comfortable, has freedom within limits and therefore becomes confident and eager to learn.

“Help me to do it alone.”

### **Quiet Waters Montessori Program Statement**

At Quiet Waters Montessori Academy, we believe that each child is an individual and that they learn in their own individual way and at their own individual pace. The Montessori Approach is a mode of education that is based on this philosophy and the materials, that are part of the curriculum, have been developed with this philosophy at the core.

We make it a priority to monitor each child and to ensure that we are aware of how your child learns and that our job, as educators, is to engage your child in learning and spark an interest in education. We offer each child the opportunity to develop physically, socially, and cognitively at their own pace. Our environment is a multi-age and multi-ethnic space that allows the child to have freedom within

limits, allows the child to make responsible choices, have self-discipline, self-respect, and respect of others.

The “How Does Learning Happen? Pedagogy for the Early Years” as outlined by the CCEYA states that there are four foundations that are optimal for a child to learn. These are Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression. Regardless of a child’s ability, age, culture, language or setting these four foundations apply to each and every child.

**Belonging:** The goal for the child is that they have a sense of belonging and connection to others around them and contribute to the world. At Quiet Waters Montessori we consider our school to be an extension of the child’s family. We encourage children to treat others with gentleness, honesty, and respect. In the classroom the children are encouraged to challenge themselves and to see the world through caring eyes and respect others with differing thoughts and culture. We, as role models, believe that we must maintain an atmosphere that the children feel comfortable, cared for, safe and confident in. We use constructive guidance and always encourage the children to try to achieve their goals, with reasonable limits of course. We foster independence and prepare the environment so as each child feels as if they are not only part of the group but an integral cog in the wheel of the classroom.

- Peace table in each classroom
- Cultural celebrations part of our yearly curriculum
- Child sized environment
- Mentoring is inevitable due to mixed ages
- Classroom helpers and environment helpers

**Well Being:** It is important that every child in our care has a feeling of happiness and that we strive to ensure that they feel content and comfortable in our school. When the child can grow and develop with the proper care and routine they will flourish and have consistency throughout their day. In this way, the child can develop a sense of self and strive throughout his/her time with us to reach their fullest potential. The environment is the key to a child and their ability to learn, be active, have proper nutrition, rest, and grow. Quiet Waters provides this environment.

- Nutrition based meals
- Strict daily routine
- Montessori Method practiced and maintained

**Engagement:** Montessori believed in providing the child “the world” and that through the different areas in the classroom the Directress would be able to show the child the beauty and the diversity of the world around them. From mathematics to language, from practical life to sensorial, from botany to geography.....our environment provides each child an enriched environment that allows that mind to travel to places only the imagination can go to. We encourage the child to ask “why”, “where”, and “how”. It is our job as educators to provide the child the tools to answer these questions themselves, to help them explore and to always create an environment that is conducive to learning. Every child should be in an environment that allow them to reach their fullest potential. To learn in a safe,

nurturing environment that allows the child to explore the world around them and we, as educators, must support the child in his quest for learning.

- Materials are engaging and “real”
- Individually based curriculum
- Provide the child “the world” and encourage questions

**Expressions:** Communication, no matter what age or ability of the child, is important and as educators we must always encourage a child to do so in all forms. We have many materials that allow each individual child to express themselves, their feeling, their thoughts, their ideas etc. From circle time to group nomenclature cards or from simple “chatting” with peers or teachers each child has a voice and should be heard. Through communication and expression, a child can become more self-confident, share their thoughts and ideas, and foster a questioning individual who is not afraid to share.

- Sharing time and sharing box
- Creative art program
- Materials foster thought and provoke questions
- Allow child time to always express themselves

Through the methods of Maria Montessori and the four foundations of learning our school provides each individual child with an environment that is warm, nurturing, safe, and enriched. Our program is designed to foster independence, to allow for creativeness, to nourish self-image and to show the child the importance of being a lifelong learner. As educators, it is our place to nurture each child and to provide each child with the tools to reach their fullest potential with guidance and with understanding. The saying “it takes a village to raise a child” is a quote that we take to heart at Quiet Waters Montessori Academy. We believe in working together with parents, grandparents, siblings, and the community to foster a competent, responsible, adaptive, and caring citizen that embraces learning and follows the journey of life with happiness and contribution.

### **Quiet Waters Montessori Academy Philosophy**

- We believe in providing each child with an education that concentrates on their own individual needs at each stage of development according to the beliefs of Maria Montessori.
- We will provide each child with a strong foundation, rich curriculum, knowledge of environment, respect of humankind and awareness of their place in the world around them.
- We will ensure that Maria Montessori’s beliefs, teachings, philosophy, and respect for the child is implemented daily within the realm of Quiet Waters Montessori Academy.
- We strongly believe in parents, teachers, staff, and community working together as a cohesive group to ensure that each child receives the richest education possible.

- We will maintain a low child/teacher ratio (8:1 in the Casa Classroom and 5:1 in the toddler classroom).
- We provide teachers that are Montessori trained and accredited. They embody the very essence of Maria Montessori and her philosophies.
- Finally, we can assure you that each child shall always find support and a nurturing environment while a student of Quiet Waters Montessori Academy.

## **PROGRAMS OFFERED AT QUIET WATERS MONTESSORI ACADEMY**

### **Language & Fine Arts**

Music – The music program is designed to develop a response to rhythm, tempo, and melody through activities within the classroom. There is an emphasis on cultural exploration of music.

Art – The art program is integrated in the classroom. The children will be introduced to different mediums, classical works, crafts, and cultures.

French – The French program is provided daily in the classroom. French is introduced through song, games and activities which brings the child an awareness of a new language.

### **Toddler Program (18 months – 3 years)**

Our toddler program offers children a natural extension of their home, focusing on the needs of each individual child. The natural ability of the child to learn is cultivated with a consistent routine within a secure, orderly environment. The toddlers will enjoy developing their ability to communicate and explore their prepared environment as they master new challenges.

Singing, exercising, and playing games in our bright and homey toddler room, along with outdoor activities in our generous greenspace are part of the children's daily routine.

Toddlers are introduced to practical life activities such as sweeping, dusting, buttoning, spooning, pouring etc., and sensorial activities; pink tower, colour tablets etc. The children are also introduced to cultural activities, language, and mathematics. Toilet training and socialization are also part of our toddler program.

The children are provided with preliminary exercises to prepare them for the Casa Classroom, the next step in the Montessori Academy.

### **Casa Program (3 – 6 years)**

Our Casa program is a miniature society in which the children live and work cooperatively and with ease. Our school is set up in such a way as to encourage and facilitate this growth. Since the children

in the class span across 3 years the children learn from each other, and a community evolves within the children's world.

The aim of our school is to create an environment in which the children will work with others, respect the rights of others, while respecting their own individuality. This mini society allows the children to grow and prepares them for the society that exists in the outside world. We, as a school, will assist the child to develop a strong character and a natural love of learning that will last throughout his or her life.

All of this will take place in a carefully 'prepared environment' and under the observation of a qualified Montessori Directress. The children are permitted to choose and work freely with self-correcting materials that appeal to them. The Montessori Method of teaching helps the children to develop a sense of self-esteem.

### **Materials and Activities**

The materials and activities in the Casa Prepared Environment generally fall into five main categories.

Practical Life Activities – These activities relate to the awareness of movement, care of self and the environment. The exercises help develop gross and fine motor skills, increase independence, concentration, order, and coordination.

Sensorial Materials – Through the use of sensorial materials, the child will learn to separate, classify forms, colors, textures, sounds and smells. The exercises refine the senses and develop skills in thinking, judging, concentrating, comparing, and sequencing. These will aid the child in forming abstract concepts and relationships in the world around them.

Mathematic Materials – Manipulative materials and exercises in this area will help the child to grasp the concepts of numeration, place value, base ten, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and introduction to the decimal system.

Language Arts – All subject areas are integrated into the total development of language, from listening to stories, expressing experiences and creative writing. The children learn to read by working with the Montessori phonetic language material.

Cultural Materials – Children are extremely interested to learn about the world around them, on both a global and local scale. The Montessori Classroom provides the children with information encompassing the subjects of botany, science, geography, history, and art.

### **Admission, Discharge & Waitlist Policies Admission**

Parents must fill out a registration package. Once there is a space available and parents accept it, a firm commitment needs to be made. Parents will have to provide all additional documents as listed in the registration package, birth cert, immunization record, photo etc. and post-dated cheques for the beginning of the month or EFT option, through to June 1 of the school year entering the school.

The academic school year begins the 1st Tuesday after Labour Day. Quiet Waters Montessori Academy recognizes the following statutory holidays and will be closed for operations, Thanksgiving Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Victoria Day. We are closed an additional 3/4 PA days to allow for reporting and teacher development. Quiet Waters Montessori Academy also closes for two weeks at Christmas and a week for March Break. Both breaks coincide with the Simcoe County Public School Board. We offer no allowance for sick or vacation leave.

## **Discharge**

Four Weeks written notice is required to withdraw your child from Quiet Waters Montessori Academy. You are responsible for the fees for this period. The school will make every effort to meet the individual needs of each child enrolled in the program. There may be situations, however, where we may not be able to meet these needs. The parents/guardian will be kept informed of all efforts and areas of concern through formal and informal documented meetings. We reserve the right to withdraw services for any of, but not limited to the following reasons:

- Lack of payment of tuition
- Conduct that is injurious to the physical, emotional, or intellectual well-being of others in the school
- Behaviour that creates a potential safety hazard to children or staff
- Verbal abuse, harassment or threatening of staff/children
- Inability of the school's Montessori Methods to meet the child's individual needs

In the event the school asks a child to leave, there will be no further payment required past the date they are asked to leave. The balance of the monthly tuition as well as any uncashed cheques will be returned.

## **Wait List**

The policy at Quiet Waters Montessori, with regards to our wait list of children wishing to attend the school, is one that is fair and impartial. Our wait list is based on a first come first serve basis.

## **Procedure**

- Any family who wishes to attend Quiet Waters must fill out in full our registration package. This allows us to have contact information if a space becomes available.
- As the registration is brought in it is placed in sequence in our Wait List binder and the date received is written on the top of the registration
- The parents are emailed, acknowledging the receipt of the registration and informed where they are in the line and that they will be contacted when a space becomes available. The parent will be informed and provided knowledge of where their child stands on the list.
- When a space is available the parents are contacted, in sequence and offered ANY space that is available (even if it not the space that they indicated on their registration)

- Any one not available by phone has a message left if answering machine answers and they are emailed; the same information is left on both messages. The parent is given 24 hours to reply if no response we move down the wait list.
- This is done in a fair, respectful, and unbiased manner.
- We will work with parents to make entrance dates work for them; however, we will not hold a space open without payment for the space.

The only exception to this way to accept children at our school is siblings, if a sibling of a current student brings in their registration, they are given 1<sup>st</sup> choice when a space becomes available.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**School Operating Hours**

School Open	Monday – Friday	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
Program Hours	Monday – Friday	9:00 am – 3: 30 pm

The additional ½ hour at the start and end of the day allows for a less hectic and stressful transition for the children.

**Before and After School Program**

We offer before and after care on a first come first serve basis. We have limited spots available as we need to stay in child/ teacher ratio. If we have no space left, you will be added to the waitlist for before and after care. Please contact administration for more details.

**Important Dates**

The academic school year begins after the Labour Day statutory holiday. Quiet Waters Montessori Academy is closed for all statutory holidays, in addition we are closed for Easter Monday. QWMA is also closed an additional 3-4 PD (professional development) days to allow for reporting and teacher development. QWMA also closes for a two-week winter break around the end of December and a one week Spring break in March, these breaks coincide with the Simcoe County Public School Board. All closures are included in the cost of program fees, no discounts or refunds are provided for these days.

**Absence and Lateness**

For your child’s safety, please contact the school before 8:30 am if they will be absent from and/or arriving late to school. If the absence is due to illness, please specify the nature of the illness. This allows the school the ability to track the incidence of illness through the school.

**Activities off the Premises**



We do not offer any trips off school property; preferring to invite individuals offering educational presentations into our school.

### **Illness**

Quiet Waters Montessori Academy follows the guidelines set out by the Simcoe Muskoka Health Department. As stated in this guideline all children are to refrain from attending school until all symptoms of any communicable illness are absent.

If a child becomes ill during school hours, we will contact you and/or an emergency contact to please collect your child. If we are unable to contact anyone, we will take the appropriate steps to make sure that your child is cared for.

All medical release forms must be completed and returned to the school no later than the first day of school.

### **Administration of Medicine**

Any medicine(s) to be administered to a child must be in its original container with the child's name clearly marked. All medicines must be accompanied with a medication administration form that is completed and signed by a parent and/or guardian. Medication administration forms are available from the school administration and/or on the school website.

All medications are to be given to the Directress for proper storage. It is the parent's responsibility to pick up the medication at the end of the day. All parents MUST adhere to the policies and sign the Medicine Authorization Form before any medications will be given to the child.

### **Drop Off & Pick Up**

Quiet Waters Montessori Academy utilizes a "Kiss and Ride" program. Please pull forward into the circle in order of arrival and assist your child/children with exiting the vehicle, then wait beside your vehicle for a teacher to come and retrieve the child/children. During pick-up, please pull forward in order of arrival and wait for staff to bring your child/children out to you. We ask that you do not leave you engines running if possible.

In order to allow the children a sense of independence, parents are asked to make only brief goodbyes with the children. We ask that, if possible, pick up and drop off times be consistent as routine is extremely important to the "Montessori Child".

Please note that children are NOT permitted to leave with anyone other than their parent/guardian unless the office has been notified and an authorization form has been filled out and school administration notified of a change in routine person.

### **Personal Space**

Each child will be provided with his/her own personal space to store their belongings. We request that your

child have a complete labeled set of clothing (seasonally appropriate) that can be left at school. These items are placed in sealed plastic bags. Each child MUST have a pair of indoor shoes to change into.

Note: Toddlers must bring their own toiletries/diapers/soothers/bedding/pillows and all items MUST be clearly labeled.

### **Lost and Found**

Please make sure all items are clearly labelled. There are many children in the school and lots of duplicate mitts, shoes, etc. Please know that if items are not marked the teachers have no way of knowing what belongs to who. Items with clear labels will eventually turn up even if they've gone home in the wrong backpack.

### **Progress Reports**

At the end of the first term, you will have the opportunity to discuss your child's progress with the child's teacher during a scheduled Parent/Teacher interview. These interviews are a chance for you to find out how your child has adapted to their environment and the progress that they have made. A notice of these interviews will be sent home and you will be notified of your time slot for the interview. If you would like to discuss your child's progress before that please set up an appointment with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will give you a brief synopsis of how their day went at pick-up, however, please be mindful of the line of cars. If it is something you do need to discuss that day, we ask that you please pull over into a parking spot and your child's teacher will come and speak with you briefly when they have time.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

All full day students are offered in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, the ability to partake in the hot lunch program. All children in the full day program MUST partake in the hot lunch program. It is the policy of QWMA not to allow children to bring in outside food. **Only exception:** Food allergies/ sensitivities: parents must label food brought to our school, for their child's consumption only, with the child's full name and the date the food arrived at the school, and parents must advise us of all ingredients in writing. Parents should give the food/drink to the child's educator or management, who will then bring the food/drink to the kitchen upstairs, out of reach of children. The food will then be stored properly either in the fridge or cupboard. Food brought in must be peanut free.

### **Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Anaphylactic Allergens**

The following strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents must be followed at all times by employees, students and volunteers at QWMA.

- Do not serve foods where its ingredients are not known.
- Do not serve items with 'may contain' warnings on the label in a room where there is a child who has an individualized plan and emergency procedures specifying those allergens.

- Ask the caterer or cook to provide the known ingredients for all food provided. The ingredients will be reviewed before food is served to children to verify that causative agents are not served to children with anaphylactic allergies.
- In cases where a child has food allergies and the meals and snacks provided by QWMA cannot meet the child's needs, ask the child's parent to supply snacks/meals for their child. All written instructions for diet provided by a parent will be implemented.
- Where food is provided from home for children, ensure that appropriate supervision of children is maintained so that food is not shared or exchanged.
- Encourage parents who serve foods containing allergens at home to ensure their child has been rid of the allergens prior to attending QWMA (e.g. by thoroughly washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Do not use craft/sensory materials and toys that have known allergens on the labels.
- Share information about anaphylaxis, strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens and treatment with all families enrolled in at Quiet Waters Montessori Academy.
- Make sure each child's individual plan and emergency procedure are kept-up-to-date and that all staff, students, and volunteers are trained on the plans.
- Refer to the allergy list and ensure that it is up to date and implemented.
- Update staff, students, and volunteers when changes to a child's allergies, signs and symptoms, and treatment occur and review all updates to individualized plans and emergency procedures.
- Update families when changes to allergies occur while maintaining the confidentiality of children.
- Update or revise and implement the strategies in this policy depending on the allergies of children enrolled at QWMA.

**Please note that our school is a nut free school.**

### **Milk alternatives**

If a parent provides an alternative milk drink, they must label it with their child's first and last name and sign a substitute form. E.g., I will provide Oat Milk for my child. If there is any substitution to the alternative milk the parent is responsible to notify the school first.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

QWMA will celebrate each child's birthday with a sun ceremony. At the end of each month, the children

will participate in baking a cake for all the children with the same birthday month. Please refrain from bringing in any food. If you would like to send a loot bag, we will distribute them at the end of the day to the families. Please speak to the management to give the go ahead of the goody bags to ensure age appropriate.

### **Open House**

During the fall term we will provide an opportunity for parents to visit the school and learn about our Montessori program. This is also an opportunity for the parents to meet the teachers and see their child's home away from home.

### **Inclement Weather**

If the Regional School Board determines that the schools must close and/or close early due to severe weather conditions, QWMA will also remain closed and/or close early. Notification will be sent via the Brightwheel application. Fees will not be refunded for centre closures resulting from circumstances beyond our control.

### **Security – Safety – Evacuation**

All doors leading into the school are locked and, on an alarm, to ensure your child's safety. Entry into the school is gained by ringing the bell at each door.

When a child receives minor injuries at the school an accident/incident report is filled out and a copy is uploaded on Brightwheel for you to review. Please do not hesitate to call the school to ask questions or discuss any concerns. If at any time the injury is to the head the parent/guardian is always contacted by phone. If the school feels the injury is serious enough parents will be notified, doctors called, and in the most serious of matters 911 will be called.

An evacuation plan is in place and practiced with the children on a regular basis. If at any time there is a need to evacuate the property, we have made arrangements for all staff and children to congregate at Spring Tree Farm, located just west of the school. You will be notified to pick up your child at this designated area.

### **Smoke Free Environments**

Within guidelines set out by the Ministry of Social Services ALL schools are smoke free environments. Therefore, Quiet Waters Montessori Academy property is a smoke free environment.

### **Volunteer and Student Supervision Policy**

All students who attend Quiet Waters Montessori Academy will be supervised at all times by those who are employees of the school. All employees have both their VSC and their Standard First Aid and CPR Level C Training. Volunteers and placement students will not be counted in ratio and will not be permitted to have unsupervised access to any children who attend QWMA

### **Prohibited Practices**

In accordance with the CCEYA, Quiet Waters Montessori Academy does not permit:

1. The corporal punishment of a child by any employee and/or volunteer.
2. Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a stroller or other device for discipline in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for preventing a child from hurting him/herself or someone else and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
3. Use of harsh and/or degrading measures, threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child/children that would humiliate and/or undermine self-respect, shame, or frighten said child/children.
4. Deprivation of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, clothing, bedding, sleep, and toileting.
5. Locking the exits for the purpose of confining the child/children in an area without adult supervision.
6. Inflicting bodily harm on child/children including making them eat and/or drink against their will.

Any staff who do not abide by these prohibited practices will be terminated immediately.

### **PARENTAL QUESTIONS & CONCERNS: POLICY & PROCEDURES**

#### **Policy**

Here at Quiet Waters Montessori Academy, we are always open and mindful of any questions or concerns that may arise from a parent/guardian. We pride ourselves in our communication between home and school and take each concern seriously.

#### **Procedure**

If a parent/guardian has a question or concern the concern will be handled promptly following the steps below:

- The Parent/Guardian will be asked to provide the concern in writing to the school
- The response, to the initial concern, will be addressed within 10 business days
- The concern will be brought to, first and foremost the administration, and then to the teacher(s) involved with the concern
- Once this has transpired, all employees will be notified of the concern
- It will be noted in the school's communication book for further reference
- Depending on the severity of the concern a meeting with all staff members may occur
- Once a decision has been made on how to handle the concern the parent will be notified via email and/or telephone call
- The result and the way the concern will be addressed will be then given to the parent in writing and kept in the child's file for reference
- All files remain on the premises indefinitely

- All of this will be done in a timely fashion

## **FEE SCHEDULE**

### **Toddler Program (18 Months – 3 years)**

5 Days – 10 payments of \$1,265

3 Days - 10 payments of \$855

2 Days – 10 payments of \$620

### **Casa Program (3 - 6 years)**

5 days – 10 payments of \$1,185

3 days – 10 payments of \$810

2 days – 10 payments of \$595

### **Before / After Care**

- \$7/day for before care      \$7/day for aftercare      \$12/day for both

### **Monthly Before & After Care**

- \$ 120 for before care      \$120 for aftercare      \$200 for both

### **Late Pick Up Fees**

After 5pm – lates pick-up fees are charged in 15 min increments at \$1/minute. Please note: if we cannot reach you or your emergency contact by 6 pm, we will be obligated to contact the Children’s Aid Society

**If you have any questions, concerns or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the school at 705-436-5117**