



Montessori Academy

Discover the Nature of Learning

QWMA 2023/2024 Academic Year Parent Handbook

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WHAT IS MONTESSORI?

Montessori education is student-led and self-paced but guided, assessed, and enriched by knowledgeable and caring teachers, the leadership of their peers, and a nurturing environment. Within the community of a multi-age classroom—designed to create natural opportunities for independence, citizenship, and accountability—children embrace multi-sensory learning and passionate inquiry. Individual students follow their own curiosity at their own pace, taking the time they need to fully understand each concept and meet individualized learning goals.

Given the freedom and support to question, probe deeply, and make connections, Montessori students grow up to be confident, enthusiastic, and self-directed learners and citizens, accountable to both them and their community. They think critically, work collaboratively, and act boldly and with integrity.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At QWMA we believe that each child is an individual and that they learn in their own individual way, at their own individual pace. Montessori pedagogy and the materials used have been developed with this philosophy at the core. At QWMA thoughtful observation of each child to ensure we are aware of how they learn is a priority. Our job, as educators is to engage the children and spark a lifelong interest in learning. We support the physical, social, and cognitive development of all children at their own pace. Our classroom environments are multi-age and multi-ethnic which provides a rich environment for the children to learn from their peers. Children have freedom within limits which allows them to develop skills such as making responsible choices, self-discipline, self-respect, and respect of others.

CCEYA – HOW DOES LEARNING HAPPEN?

The “How Does Learning Happen? Pedagogy for the Early Years” as outlined by the CCEYA states there are 4 foundations for optimal learning. They are Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression. These apply to all children regardless of age, ability, culture, language or setting.

Belonging: The goal is for all children to have a sense of belonging and connection to others and contribute to the environment around them. QWMA considers our school to be an extension of a child’s family and encourages the children to treat everyone with gentleness, honesty, and respect. The children are challenged to see the world through caring eyes, respect and appreciate others with differing cultures, thoughts, and practices. As role models we strive to maintain an atmosphere where the children feel safe, comfortable, cared for and confident. We use constructive guidance and support children in their goals (within reasonable limits). We foster independence and the prepare the environment, so each child feels both part of the group and an integral part in the functioning of the classroom. Some examples of how QWMA supports belonging include a peace table in each classroom, cultural celebrations throughout the academic year, a child sized environment, mentoring from mixed-age peer environment, and care of environment through classroom helpers and work materials.

Well Being: QWMA believes it is important that every child in our care has a feeling of happiness and we strive to ensure they feel comfortable and content in our school. A prepared environment, good nutrition, proper care, and consistent routine provides a foundation for children to grow, develop and flourish. At QWMA we provide nutritious food, a consistent daily routine and the Montessori method is practiced and maintained.

Engagement: Dr. Maria Montessori believed in providing the child “the world,” at QWMA we strive to do this through various areas and materials in the classroom. From mathematics to language, practical life to sensorial, botany to geography and our nature rich outdoor areas we provide each child an enriched environment that allows the mind to travel to places only the imagination can go. Our caring and observant educators encourage the child to ask “why”, “where” and “how.” They then support the children’s questions and curiosity by providing them the tools to answer these questions themselves and to explore their environment in a manner conducive to learning. Examples of how this is done at QWMA include using materials that are engaging and “real”, individually based curriculum, encouraging questions, investigations, and discovery.

Expressions: Communication, no matter age, or ability is important and as educators we encourage all children to communicate in various forms. We use various materials and activities that allow each child to express themselves, their feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Some examples include circle time, group nomenclature cards, “chatting” with peers and educators, sharing time (with sharing box), thought and provoke questions, allowing time for child to express themselves. Through communication and self-expression, a child can become self-confident, share thoughts, ideas and foster a questioning individual.

By utilizing the methods of Dr. Maria Montessori and the 4 Foundation of Learning, QWMA provides each child an environment that is warm, nurturing, safe and enriched. Our program is designed to foster independence, allow for creativity, nourish self-image, and show children the importance of being a life-long learner. QWMA educators strive to nurture each child and provide each child with the tools and support needed to reach their fullest potential. We believe in working together with parents, guardians, grandparents, siblings, and the community as a whole to foster competent, responsible, adaptive, and caring global citizens with a lifelong love of learning.

QWMA PHILOSOPHY

QWMA believes in providing each child with an education that concentrates on their individual needs and stage of development according to the pedagogy developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. We will provide each child with a strong foundation, rich curriculum, knowledge of environment, respect for humankind and awareness of their place in the world around them. We will ensure Dr. Maria Montessori’s beliefs, teachings, philosophy, and respect for the child are implemented and at the core of QWMA. We believe strongly in parents, guardians, educators, and the community working together as a cohesive group to ensure each child receives the richest education possible. We will provide educators that are Montessori trained and accredited and/or a RECE undergoing Montessori training with support from a Directress. We will do our best to provide a ratio of 1:8 in the Casa Classroom, while our Pre-Casa (Toddler) classroom always maintains a 1:5 ratio.

PROGRAMS

Pre-CASA/Toddler (18 months – 3 years)

Our toddler program seeks to offer our youngest children a natural extension of their home, starting with our toddler classroom full of natural light and generous outdoor green area that includes real grass and multiple mature trees and bushes. The ratio for our toddler program is 1:5 and our educators foster the children’s natural ability to learn with a consistent routine and a prepared environment that accessible, secure, and orderly. As part of the daily routine, the children will have two nutritious snacks and a hot lunch, circle times with songs, games, stories and physical activity, ample outdoor time, an afternoon nap, arts, and crafts both

structured and process driven. The children will also have access and support with Montessori material and activities that foster the development of their cognitive, motor, language, social and practical life skills. Toilet training is also a part of our toddler program and one of the ways we support the children and their families with preparation for the transition to our CASA classrooms.

CASA (3 – 6 years)

Our CASA program is a miniature society in which the children live and work cooperatively and with ease. QWMA is set up to encourage and facilitate this growth, one of the ways in which this is done is through our mixed age classrooms where the children range in age from 3 – 6 years. This fosters an environment where the children learn from each other through observation, mentoring and group work. From this, the classroom develops its own unique community all under the careful observation of our educators. Through working with others, the aim is to support the children in developing respect for the rights of others while also respecting their own individuality. This mini society allows the children to grow and prepare for the society that exists in the outside world. Our educators will assist the children in developing a strong character and a lifelong love of learning.

On a daily basis the children will enter the prepared environment of our CASA classrooms where they are permitted to choose and work from any of the 5 main areas in a Montessori environment (Practical Life, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language Arts and Culture. Here they will work freely with self-correcting materials that appeal to them, all under the careful observation of our educators. Their day also includes circle time, ample outdoor time, two snacks and a hot lunch, arts and crafts, music, French and an afternoon nap (if required).

Practical Life Activities: These activities relate to the awareness of movement, care of self and the environment, manners, grace, and courtesy. The exercises will help develop gross and fine motor skills, foster independence, concentration, order, and coordination.

Sensorial: Thorough the use of sensorial material children will learn to separate, classify forms, colors, textures, sounds and smells. The exercises refine the sense and develop skills in thinking, judging, concentrating, comparing, and sequencing. This will aid the child in forming abstract concepts and relationships with the world around them.

Mathematics: 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 an introduction to the decimal system.

Culture: To support children's natural interest to learn about the world around them on a local and global scale. These activities and materials will provide children with information on botany, science, geography, history, and art.

Fine Arts & French Language

At QWMA fine arts and French language are integrated in the classroom. Children will learn about rhythm, tempo, and melodies. Work with different art mediums and modalities (painting, drawing, dancing, sculpting), play games and sing songs in French. Music and the fine arts will be explored through various classical, modern and culture works. We aim to expose the children and assist development of individual creativity.

Toilet Training

At 3 years of age and prior to entering our CASA program children are expected to attend school in underwear/training pants. QWMA educators use routine and child directed toileting methods to support our toddler children in achieving this milestone. Children will be assisted in developing the ability to undress and dress themselves to use the washroom. Parents can support this process by dressing children in clothing that supports this (i.e., no buttons, tight drawstrings and/or overalls). The children will be taught using our child size toilets and sinks to wipe, flush and wash hands. Educators will discuss and maintain regular communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to commencing this process and throughout. Through communication parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed on progress and how they can support this process at home. Since every child is unique their toileting benchmarks may be different, and the process will be tailored to suit their needs. All questions are welcome, so please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

Summer Camp (18 months – 6 years)

Our summer camp program runs during the months of July & August to support families who need and/or desire care outside of the Academic year. During summer camp, we step away from some the traditional Montessori daily routines and allow the children to spend most the day outdoors (weather permitting), engaged in age-appropriate games, activities, sports, arts, and crafts. Dates, fees, and enrollment information will be made available annually in the Spring, please contact administration for more information.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Hours of Operation

Program Hours	Monday to Friday	8:30 am – 4:00pm
Office Administration Hours	Monday to Friday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Before & After School Program

Before Care	Monday to Friday	7:30 am – 8:30 am
After Care	Monday to Friday	4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

QWMA offers before and after care on a first come first serve basis, you must contact the school and request before or after school care in advance. We have limited spots available due to child/teacher ratios. If our before & after care spaces are full your child/children will be added to a waitlist. The cost of before and after care is not included in monthly tuition.

Before and after care begins and ends at the times indicated, if you come before 7:30 am we ask that you kindly wait in your vehicle even if staff is onsite. We also ask that you do your utmost to ensure you pick up no later than 5:00 pm sharp. If for some unforeseen circumstance, you are going to be late please contact the school via BrightWheel ASAP. **Please be aware the cost for arriving past 5:00 pm is \$2.00/minute** as of Fall 2023, this fee may change at any time and the parent handbook will be updated to reflect this change.

Please reach out to administration for more information on current before and aftercare fees and/or refer to the before and after care fee schedule all enrolled students must complete on BrightWheel.

Admission Policy

Prospective families must complete the online admissions application form on BrightWheel for each child. Once there is a space available an offer of enrolment will be made by phone and email. Families then have 2 business days to accept the offer verbally and 5 business days to issue payment of the first month tuition (all students) and a one-time admission fee (first time students). For cost, please see the fee schedule for the academic year of enrolment. After enrolment is confirmed there will be additional mandatory forms sent to families on BrightWheel that are required prior to attending our program, this includes but is not limited to emergency contact form, immunization records and/or a Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief Immunization of School Pupils Form (copies in both English and French can be found on the school website).

- Any family who wishes to attend QWMA must complete our admission application form found on our school website and/or call and speak with the school principal.
- Once the form is completed the system automatically lists applications in the order received.
- When a place becomes available families are contacted, in sequence and offered ANY space available (even if it differs from what was listed on the application form).
- Anyone not available by phone will receive a voicemail (if this is possible) and will also be emailed. The same information will be left in both messages. Families then have 2 business days to reply, if no response is received the next applicant on the list will be contacted and offered the place.
- This process is completed in a fair, respectful, and unbiased manner.
- QWMA will work with parent(s)/guardian(s) to arrange entrance dates that work for them, however, QWMA will not hold a space open without payments for the period on hold (less the cost of catering fees).
- There is one **exception** to the admissions sequence list and that is siblings; if a sibling of a current student applies for enrollments they are placed at the top of the list for the next available place.
- To confirm acceptance of our program a non-refundable admission fee (see fee schedule) and first month's tuition (see fee schedule) is to be paid by all new students, all returning students must pay the first month's tuition fee. Failure to provide this payment may result in the loss of your child/children's place in our program.

Waitlist Policy

The policy at QWMA with regards to children on our waitlist is one that is fair and impartial. Place on the list is based on first come first serve. If you pass on a place offered and/or fail to contact us within 5 business days of our offer you will be placed at the bottom of the list. There is one exception to this and that is siblings; if a sibling of a current student applies for enrollments they are placed at the top of the list for the next available place.

Payment Policy & Procedure

Payments are accepted by e-transfer to quietwatersadmin@icloud.com, **please include your child/children's name in the memo section**. Fees are as stipulated in the Fee Schedule for the current academic year, this is a separate document that must be reviewed and agreed to on BrightWheel at the time of acceptance.

Fees are due the first of the month. A late payment fee of \$40.00 will be applied to any invoice not paid by the first. From there a 5% interest charge will be applied every 30 days that the account remains unpaid. If you need a payment plan or accommodations, please contact administration in advance to make payment arrangements.

Failure to pay fees or make/uphold payment arrangements on an account will result in your child/children being removed from the program. Once the account is in good standing, we will offer the opportunity for the child/children to return if a space remains available and 2 months tuition will be required upfront.

There are no fee reductions or refunds for absences due to illness, vacation or otherwise. Including if QWMA is required to close due to inclement weather, utility failure, communicable illness outbreak or other uncontrollable circumstances (i.e., public teachers strike).

Important Dates

The academic year runs from September to June with our summer camp operating in July and August. School starts on the first Wednesday after the Labor Day holiday and is closed on the following holidays. Winter and Spring break coincide with the Simcoe County Public School Board. We offer no allowance for the closure dated listed below, sick or vacation leave.

- Thanksgiving
- Winter Break
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Spring Break
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Summer Break

Discharge Policy

Written notice of intent to withdraw must be provided one month in advance, if provided past the first of the month prior to withdrawal you are responsible for the following months fees (E.g., if you intend to withdraw starting January 1st, notice must be provided by November 30th to avoid being responsible for January fees). If you chose to pay for the academic year in advance and/or installments (to receive a discount) all fees received are non-refundable, should you choose to withdraw, and the one-month prior notice also applies with regards to applicable fees.

QWMA and our educators strive to welcome and support all children in our program, however, there may be situations where we are not able to meet all needs and/or expectations. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be kept informed of all concerns and efforts made in both formal and informal discussions, meetings, and documentation. QWMA reserves the right to withdraw services for any of, but not limited to the following reasons.

- Failure to pay tuition and account charges.
- Conduct that is injurious to the physical, emotional, or intellectual well-being of others in the school
- Conduct or behaviour that creates a potential safety hazard to the staff, students and/or other families.
- Verbal or physical abuse, harassment or threats made to staff, students and/or families.
- Inability of our program to meet the individual needs of the child/children and/or families.

Pick-Up & Drop-Off Parking Lot Procedures

QWMA utilizes a “Kiss and Ride” program, please pull forward into the circle in order of arrival and remove/install your child/children from the vehicle yourself. Once outside the vehicle please wait beside your vehicle (while holding onto your child/children at all times) until a staff member comes to greet you and takes the hand(s) of the child/children. Please turn your vehicle off while waiting. To foster a sense of independence,

parents are asked to make only brief goodbyes with their children. If you feel accommodations are needed, please contact administration to make prior arrangements.

Your child/children's teacher will provide a brief synopsis of how the day went at pick-up, however, if more in-depth conversation is needed or desired a time must be booked through QWMA administration (either over phone or in person). We need to be mindful of the line of cars and any potential backup onto the main road. You are also encouraged to reach out via BrightWheel but please understand responses are only provided during regular program hours. If you have an urgent concern after hours, please reach out to administration on BrightWheel and they will do their best to get back to you asap.

Reminder: Please drive slowly and with attention when on school property to ensure the safety of everyone. If you are parking during the main drop-off or pick-up time, please wait for a staff member to direct you as you exit your parking spot.

Please note children are NOT permitted to leave with anyone other than their parent(s)/guardian(s) unless administration has been notified in advance and an authorization has been completed on BrightWheel.

Before/After Care & Late Arrival Procedure

Please pull into a parking spot and bring your child to the red door and ring the doorbell.

Absence & Lateness

For reasons of child safety and security we ask that you please contact us via BrightWheel prior to 8:30 am if your child/children will be absent or arriving late. If your child/children will be absent, please indicate if it is due to illness and specify the nature of the illness and/or symptoms. This will assist QWMA in tracking incidences of illness throughout the school providing a healthier and safer environment for all.

Uniforms

At QWMA we have a uniform policy, and all CASA students are expected to attend in uniform unless otherwise noted on the school calendar of events. Uniforms consist of solid dark grey or navy blue tops and navy blue bottoms. Graphic designs and patterns are not permitted along with prominent company logos. Uniforms help to eliminate classroom distraction, create a sense of belonging and assist with developing routine and independence in children when getting ready for school in the morning. While only required in our CASA classroom our Pre-Casa (toddler) children are more than welcome to dress in uniform.

Personal Items Required

All children are required to have the following, with the exception of bedding and diapering supplies which apply only on an as needed basis.

Clothing: A complete change of labelled clothes in a clear labeled Ziploc bag is required (please keep in mind changes in the season and swap out these change bags as needed).

Shoes: Each child requires a labelled set of indoor and outdoor shoes (indoor shoes to be left at school).

Bedding: If your child is napping a fitted crib sheet, blanket, and pacifier and/or one comfort item will also be required, please label all nap items as they will be returned on a weekly basis for mandatory washing.

Diapers & Wipes: Children who require diapers must provide their own along with wipes and diaper cream as applicable, please label all items.

Outdoor Gear: Please send your child with seasonally appropriate outdoor apparel such as a hat, jacket or winter coat and snow pants, splash suit/pants, at least two pairs of gloves and socks. Also consider dressing them in layers during our fall, winter, and spring season as this allows staff to ensure your child/children are comfortable during times of fluctuating temperatures.

Misc. Items: Sunscreen, bug spray, cheek balm etc. please label and provide as needed and seasonally appropriate. Please ensure you have completed a blanket authorization form on BrightWheel, or staff will be unable to assist children with the application of these items.

Attention Reminders about appropriate seasonal attire will be sent via BrightWheel during times of seasonal shift. Staff will also speak with families individually (with a follow-up reminder on BrightWheel) to notify if the child was dropped off with inappropriate outdoor attire. After the second conversation in a short time period if child/children still arrive dressed in inappropriate outdoor attire QWMA reserves the right to decline admittance to the school until appropriate attire is provided. No refunds or compensation will be offered in this instance. Please understand that when we have to keep your child inside due to inappropriate attire 4 – 7 other students must also remain inside to maintain ratio.

Lost & Found

Please make sure all items are clearly labelled (i.e., clothes, coats, mitts, hats, bedding, shoes, water bottle, pacifiers, diapers, wipes, diaper cream etc.). There are many children attending the school, with many duplicate items. We do our best to ensure all items are returned to the correct child, but clear and consistent labelling goes a long way to assist with this. QWMA takes no responsibility for lost or stolen items. Please do not send your child to school with items of high value (i.e., jewellery).

Activities Off Premises

QWMA does not participate in off premises activities. The only instances where the children would be removed from the school grounds by staff would be in the case of a medical emergency via ambulance and/or a fire/evacuation emergency that required us to move further from the building to our muster point located next door at Spring Tree Farms, 2475 Innisfil Beach Rd, Innisfil, ON L9S 4C1. In both instances parents would be notified via BrightWheel along with a written incident report and conversation with administration to address questions in an appropriate and timely manner.

Open House

In September an open house event will be held to welcome all attending families and allow them the opportunity to meet other QWMA families, have a look around and ask our staff general questions about the program. This is not a time for parent/teacher conference which occurs at a later date after progress reports have been sent home.

Progress Reports & Parent/Teacher Conferences

At the commencement of the Winter term (after winter break), a progress report will be sent home. Following this you will have an opportunity to schedule a parent/teacher conference with your child/children's educator. This meeting will provide an opportunity to discover how your child has adapted to their classroom environment and the progress they have made during the Fall term. Notification will be sent via BrightWheel

and QWMA administration will work with parents to schedule their individual sessions. There will be a second progress report sent home at the end of May for the, along with another opportunity for a parent/teacher conference.

Birthday Celebrations

QWMA celebrates each child's birthday with a sun ceremony, which will occur on or as close to their date of birth as possible. Once a month the children also work together to bake cupcakes or cake in celebration of those who have a birthday that month. We ask that you do not send food, treats or other items in honor of your child's birthday. If you wish to invite children from the class to an outside birthday celebration, please contact QWMA administration and they will pass along the invitation to the intended families.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Sleep Supervision Policy

At QWMA, children are provided the opportunity to sleep or engage in quiet activities based on their individual needs. They will be provided with the time to sleep for a period of not more than 2 hours each day and will be assigned a cot. Families are required to complete the nap/rest questionnaire upon admission to our school. This allows our staff to be aware of any special requests/needs of each child. Bedding must be provided by families and will be sent home weekly to be laundered. Direct visual checks are conducted on each sleeping child in 30 minute intervals and document on a paper hard copy and BrightWheel (for families to view). Children who do not sleep but engage in quiet activities will always be supervised.

Illness

QWMA 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 or any communicable illness are absent.

If your child becomes ill during school hours, we will contact you and/or an emergency contact to please collect your child. We request that at all times one parent/guardian and/or emergency contact be able to collect an ill child within 45 of contact by QWMA administration. If we are unable to contact anyone QWMA will take appropriate steps to make sure your child is cared for including but not limited to calling an ambulance and attending them to the hospital for further medical treatment if needed.

All medical release forms (including allergy and medical needs forms) must be complete on BrightWheel prior to a child attending our program. If these forms are incomplete your child/children will not be permitted entry to the school.

Administration of Medication

Any medicine(s) to be administered to a child must be in its original container with the child's name clearly marked and pharmacy label intact (as applicable). All medicines must be accompanied with a completed medication administration form with an original signature from a parent/guardian. Medication administration forms are available from QWMA administration and/or on our school website.

All medications are to be given to the school principal for storage and administration. It is the parent's responsibility to pick-up the medication at the end of the day. All parent(s)/guardian(s) MUST adhere to the policies and sign the Medication Authorization Form before any medication will be given to the child.

Nutrition & Dietary Accommodations

All students at QWMA are offered in accordance with CCEYA the ability to take part in a hot lunch program, along with two daily snacks. The hot lunch program is required for all students as per the CCEYA. **Healthy Kids Catering** provides both the hot lunch and snacks at QWMA. It is the policy of QWMA that no outside food is allowed during regular program hours, this includes lunches, snacks, and celebratory treats. This is to ensure the health and safety of all students, especially those with food allergies and intolerances. QWMA will work with families and our caterer is to accommodate for most religious or dietary restrictions (within reason).

Exceptions to this policy may be made in situations of a food intolerance or allergy that our caterer is unable to accommodate. In this situation parents must provide a written label with the child's name and a list of all ingredients (including spices, seasonings etc.) for any and all food provided for consumption at the school, this food is to be consumed only by their individual child. The food is to be provided to a staff member at the time of drop off for proper and safe food handling and storage. **QWMA IS A NUT FREE FACILITY.**

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Policy

It is the policy of QWMA to have a strategy in place to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens and anaphylactic agents. Our policy requires that we have a communication plan to inform staff, volunteers, caterers and families of allergies and life-threatening anaphylactic response(s). All parents of children with Allergies must complete an Allergy Information Form prior to attending, this is provided to parents on BrightWheel. From there an individual plan of action is established jointly with the parents, family doctor and/or specialist and QWMA administration and staff. All employees and volunteers are required to review these policies and procedures prior to commencing work with the students and annually thereafter. All staff must review the individual Allergy and Anaphylactic forms biannually or if there is a change to the plan. A properly and individually labeled Epi-pen will be kept in proximity to the student at all times, in its own individually labelled fanny pack. All staff working with the child's classroom will be given training on how to administer the epi-pen correctly and a randomized drill will be completed at the discretion of QWMA administration to ensure all staff have practice in how to handle an anaphylactic emergency. If a student has an anaphylactic food allergy QWMA will request that the allergenic food(s) be removed from the menu for the classroom as an added layer of protection.

Dairy & Dairy Alternatives

All children are offered full fat milk with lunch, this is included in the daily nutrition plan. If a parent would prefer the child have water or a dairy alternative, please indicate this on the Dairy Alternative Form located on BrightWheel. Please be advised if requesting a dairy alternative parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to provide this to the school, please label the container. Also, please be advised almond milk and/or other nut milks are not permitted as we are a nut free facility.

Risky Play

Risky play is exactly that—play that involves risk—usually the risk of physical injury. It is exciting and exhilarating and thrilling and, well, risky. It does, however, provide children with much needed opportunities to challenge themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally. Risky play allows children to test the limits of their abilities, develop an awareness of risk, and feel in control of their actions. Plus, it's FUN! Researched and developed by Norwegian professor Ellen Sandseter, risky play encompasses eight categories of risk, as perceived by a child ¹.

- Great Heights—climbing, jumping, balancing, etc. with a risk of falling.

- High Speed—uncontrolled speed and pace while running, biking, sledding, etc. with a risk of collision or injury.
- Dangerous Tools—knife, axe, saw, etc. with a risk of injury.
- Dangerous Elements—fire pits, cliffs, open bodies of water, etc. with a risk of falling or injury.
- Rough & Tumble—wrestling with other children, roughhousing, fencing with sticks, snowball fights, etc. with a risk of injury.
- Unsupervised play—exploring alone with a risk of getting lost.
- Impact—crashing into things for fun with a risk of injury.
- Vicarious—the thrill of watching other (often older) children take risks.

The staff at QWMA support developmentally appropriate risky play by providing attentive supervision of the children in both our indoor and outdoor classrooms. All staff provide attentive observation and maintain Ministry mandated ratios, conduct daily playground checks with repairs/remedies completed as needed. Thoughtful communication with children who are actively engaging in risky play is used to support decision making and manage risk, and if needed, staff will intervene directly and redirect the child/children.

The following link from Child and Nature Alliance Canada provides examples of language and communication that supports risky play.

https://childnature.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/When-You-Want-To-Say-Be-Careful_EN.pdf

Inclement Weather

Please read the following for information on our policies regarding outdoor time and inclement weather.

Winter Weather: During the Winter months when the temperature reaches -10°C, we reduce the amount of time the children spend outside. When the temperature reaches -15°C or below, children will be kept indoors.

Summer Weather: During the Summer months we reduce the time spent outdoors when the temperature reached 30°C or higher with humidity. Anything 35°C or above, along with heat advisories and the children are kept indoors.

School Closures

Due to adverse weather conditions, especially in winter there may be times when the school may have to close. This decision is not taken lightly and is made after reviewing the local conditions and the response of the local school board. Notification will be sent to families on BrightWheel no later than 6:00 am if the weather pattern occurs overnight and asap if a dangerous storm occurs during the day. If weather is too dangerous to travel during the day QWMA keeps emergency food and water onsite to assist in the care of the children until such a time as travel can resume. There is no refund or discounts provided if QWMA is forced to close due to inclement weather.

There are no fee reductions or refunds for closures due to inclement weather, utility failure, communicable illness outbreak or other uncontrollable circumstances (I.e., public teachers strike).

Security

All exterior doors remain locked during operational hours and the centre is monitored by a security system. Entry to the school is permitted and accompanied by school administration and all visitors and contractors

must document their visit on our sign in sheet. Children are checked in and out by staff this is documented both on a paper hard copy and on BrightWheel where a notification is sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s). If a lockdown order is issued by local police and emergency services school administration will keep families informed and updated via BrightWheel.

Safety

When a child receives a minor injury at QWMA first aid policies and procedures will be followed, an accident/incident report completed and uploaded to BrightWheel to inform parent(s)/guardian(s). Staff will review the occurrence at pick-up and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) can discuss the matter on the phone. When a child has any injury to the head, even mild parent(s)/guardian(s) are immediately notified.

If a serious injury or occurrence happens, staff will follow our emergency first aid policies and procedures, 911 will be called and parent(s)/guardian(s) notified at the earliest possible moment. If emergency services, determine your child must be taken via ambulance for further medical care a staff member will accompany them until such a time as a parent/guardian and/or emergency contact is able to arrive.

Evacuation

An evacuation plan is in place and practiced with the children on a regular basis in the form of a fire drill where children exit the building in a controlled and designated manner and line up outside in the rear yard. In the advent of an evacuation that requires a greater distance from the school buildings arrangements have been made use our neighbour Spring Tree Farm as a muster point. The address is [2475 Innisfil Beach Rd, Innisfil, ON L9S 4C1](#). In the advent of real emergency and evacuation parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified asap and instructions given on where, when, and how to pick-up will be provided.

Smoke & Vape Free Environment

As per the Ministry of Social Services all schools are smoke free environments. As such, QWMA is a smoke free and vape free environment. For the health and safety of all staff and students smoking and vaping is prohibited everywhere on the grounds, including but not limited to the inside automobiles.

Volunteer & Student Supervision Policy

All students who attend QWMA will be supervised at all times by those who are employees of the school. All employees have both a VSC (redone every 3 years) and Standard First Aid and CPR Level C Training. Volunteers and placement students and any adult that works directly with any children are also required to provide a VSC, however, they do not count towards ratio and will not be permitted unsupervised access to any children at QWMA.

Prohibited Practices

In accordance with the CCEYA, QWMA does not permit the following:

1. The corporal punishment of a child by any employee and/or volunteer.
2. The physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a stroller and/or device for discipline in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for preventing a child from hurting themselves or another person and only used as a last resort and until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
3. Deprivation of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, clothing, bedding, sleep and/or toileting.
4. Locking the exits for the purpose of confining the child/children in an area without adult supervision.
5. Inflicting bodily harm on a child including making them eat and/or drink against their will.

Any and all staff, placement students and/or volunteers that do not adhere to this policy will be immediately terminated and escorted off the premises.

PARENT/GUARDIAN QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

Policy

Here at QWMA we are always open and mindful of any questions or concerns that may arise from parent(s)/guardian(s). 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 address within 10 business days.
- The concern will be brought to, first and foremost to the school principal, and then to the teacher(s) involved with the concern. If necessary, at the discretion of the principal the concern will be brought to the Director as well.
- Once this has transpired all staff will be notified of the concern.
- It will be documented 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 in how to handle the concern the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified via email and/or over the phone.
- The result and the way the concern will be addressed will be then provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing and kept in the child's file for reference.
- All files remain on premises indefinitely.
- All of this will be completed in a timely fashion.
- If parent(s)/guardian(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of this procedure they can contact the school Director.

How to Contact Administration

Principal Ficher can be reached via BrightWheel messaging (admin), phone (705)436-5117 during office hours or by email at quietwatersmontessoriacademy@hotmail.com.

To contact the school Director about a concern and/or Accounts payable please email quietwatersadmin@icloud.com.

CWELCC

At this time, QWMA has decided to opt-out of the Canada-Wide Early Learning & Childcare (CWELCC) system until the end of the 2024 academic year. We will continue to independently invest heavily in our school, our program, our students, and their families.