

# Elonera Montessori School



## Parent Handbook 2019

If you require any additional information or clarification of matters covered within this handbook, please contact the school office, Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 3:15pm on (02) 4225 1000 or by email [admin@eloneramontessori.com.au](mailto:admin@eloneramontessori.com.au).

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# Office Hours

8:00 am to 3:15 pm  
(Telephone answered by OOSH until 5:30)

Phone (02) 4225 1000  
Email: admin@eloneramontessori.com.au

## Welcome

On behalf of the School Community, I would like to warmly welcome you to Elonera Montessori School. Elonera Montessori has set high standards with respect to active, independent learning. We provide high quality schooling, beginning with children from 18 months old in our Nido, Montessori Long Day Care, through to preschool and up to Year 12. Our Montessori environment and practice results in great outcomes. We offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBDP) or Course Program in our Senior Years. We also provide Out of School Hours Care; before and after school, as well as a School Holiday Program. Our venture into the world of Robotics has only strengthened with the First Lego League branching into a Vacation Care program and the First Robotics Club with the older Middle School aged students.

Our classes are small, with a solid student to staff ratio, which allows us to provide quality, individualised and group teaching. Classrooms are open, bright, and ordered, and equipped with attractive and engaging hands-on Montessori materials. We provide a stimulating curriculum that is responsive to the student's interests and which puts student wellbeing at its centre. The Students are allowed time to complete their work cycle and develop personal interests. Students demonstrate happy attachments with their teachers as they feel safe and respected. With these factors and a strong general knowledge, students are more able to initiate, understand and participate in conversation.

I am delighted that you have chosen Elonera Montessori School, for your child's education. We look forward to our partnership in nurturing the growth of your child.

Alex Ioannou  
Acting Head of School

## Philosophy

The philosophical foundation of the Montessori approach is based on the premise that education should be an aid to life. In order to develop their physical, intellectual and spiritual powers to the fullest, children must have freedom to develop - a freedom to be achieved through order and self-discipline. Dr. Montessori realised that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child.

Respect for the child's personality and trust in the inner potentialities is prerequisite to the foundation of an adequate educational alliance between parent and teacher, parent and child and between teacher and student.

Our aim is to assist in the development of each child's innate potential, by creating a school environment in which the child can do and think for him/herself. Patterns of concentration, focus and thoroughness, established in early childhood, produce a confident, competent learner in later years. Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, to judge, and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand in hand.

Maria Montessori's imaginative and innovative solutions to the problem of harnessing the child's innate curiosity and delight in discovery are no less relevant today than they were in her own time.

## **Aims**

Our aim is to develop the total child. We believe that the child's intelligence is a fertile field in which seeds may be sown to awaken the inner desire to learn.

Our aim is to recruit quality teachers and child care workers who have a "developmental view of man" and who have prepared themselves for the Montessori Method of education, to ensure the success of the process, which is based on the relationship between liberty and order.

Our aim is to produce a rich learning environment for the children to learn through their own developing mastery of experiences.

## **Objectives**

Our specific objectives for the children, throughout the stages are that they:

- Develop a positive attitude toward school and learning
- Develop a positive sense of high self - esteem
- Build habits of concentration for lifelong study skills
- Develop and foster an abiding curiosity
- Develop habits of initiative and persistence
- Foster inner discipline and a sense of order
- Develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate and judge
- Develop socially
- Acquire the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning
- Help develop each child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations

## **History of the School**

Elonera was founded in 1973 as an alternative school but changed its philosophy to become a Montessori Primary School in 1987 to cater for the children from the Illawarra Montessori Preschool. This was under the guidance of our founding teacher, Josy Ludwig and a team of dedicated parents, including Elizabeth Goor who went on to become our Head of School for over 20 years. Elonera is currently is a not-for-profit organisation that dedicates itself to providing

education in the Montessori tradition for children eighteen months to eighteen years of age. This includes our Parent Toddler Program (PTP) for children 18 months to three years, Nido Long Day Care Program for two-year olds, Preschool, Kindergarten to Year 10, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma or Course Program in Years 11 and 12.

The school has grown from 14 students and one teacher, to an enrolment of over 180 students with Montessori Teachers, Assistants, Out of School Hours Care (OOSH) staff, and Child Care Workers, who are supported by the Head of School, Deputy Head of School, Bursar, Senior Office Clerk, Enrolments and Clerical Officers, and part-time maintenance staff. We also have part-time teachers for Literacy and Numeracy, and Languages. The Montessori Primary School extended with a Children's House pre-primary class (Stage 1) in 1990, Junior High (Stage 4) in 1999, and Year 10 in 2002. The International Baccalaureate Program (Year 11 and 12) was introduced in 2011 and a Long Day Care service (Nido) for two-year olds in 2016. We also provide a Parent Toddler Programme for children and their parents from 18 months to three years. We have offered Out of School Hours care since 1989.

In 2004 the school adopted the "Elonera Montessori School Blueprint of Fundamental Values and Beliefs". This document is a guide to preserving the school's educational program for future generations, by being true to the philosophical vision of our founding members i.e. to remain a Montessori School.

## **Governance**

Elonera Limited is a corporation approved by the minister to be the proprietor of a non-government school under the Directorship of an elected School Board. The School Board is made of up to eleven Directors of Elonera that includes the Head of School, Company Secretary, Teachers, Parents, and a corporate or non-corporate member. The role of the School Board is primarily concerned with the governance of the school including such matters as long-term financial planning, administrative policies and accountability. The School Board is required to demonstrate accountability in terms similar to those applying to members of other public or corporate bodies. The teachers that are on the School Board volunteer to be on the Board. They are responsible for advising the School Board regarding Montessori philosophy and matters that are in the best interest of the students and the school as a whole.

The Annual General Meeting is held at the end of March each year, and School Board meetings are held monthly. All Directors of the School Board must undergo a Child Protection review, which includes providing character references and a curriculum vitae, as soon as they apply to be on the School Board. They must consistently show that they are a "responsible person" and are a fit and proper person.

### **Administration**

The Head of School is delegated by the School Board as the "School Authority" to manage the day to day functioning and routine operations of the school, as well as the registered "Teacher Accreditation Authority" for accreditation of teachers at the point of employment under the Teacher Accreditation Act, 2004.

### **Meeting Calendar**

The calendar of events is updated in the weekly newsletter and distributed to all families and staff.

MEETINGS	TIME
<b>School Board/ Compliance</b> Meeting	Generally, the first Tuesday of the month
<b>Senior Advisory Committee</b> Meeting	Thursdays fortnightly
<b>Whole School</b> Meeting – Long Day Care, Preschool, Primary, High School ( <i>focuses on Safe and Supportive Environment</i> )	First day of each term, and last day of the year
<b>Teachers’</b> Meeting ( <i>focuses on Curriculum, Safe and Supportive Environment, Discipline and Attendance</i> )	Wednesdays weekly
<b>IB Teachers’</b> Meeting	Fortnightly and varied days
<b>High School Teachers’</b> Meeting	Fortnightly and varied days
<b>Primary Teachers’</b> Meeting	Fortnightly, Wednesdays
<b>Early Childhood</b> Meeting	Fortnightly Mondays
<b>Administration</b> Meeting	Monthly Tuesdays
<b>Children’s House staff</b> Meeting	Fortnightly
<b>OOSH/School Holiday Care</b> Meeting	Quarterly Meeting
<b>Capital Works</b> Committee	As required
<b>Finance</b> Committee	Once per term
<b>Parent/Teacher Interviews</b>	-During Term 2 in the afternoon/evening -By appointment. Bookings through Trybooking. Schedules are posted and noted in Elmonti (weekly newsletter). -Upon request at other times.

*N.B. If a proposed meeting falls during the school holidays, it is deferred to the next available time.*

## Accreditations, Affiliations and Memberships

Association of Independent Schools (AIS): membership

Montessori Australia Foundation (MAF): membership

International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO): Authorised School

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI): Individual membership of staff

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA): Registered and Accredited to Years K-10. Registered to Year 12.

Early Childhood Education Directorate (NSW): Licensed Preschool

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): Long Day Care & OOSH

## Non-Discrimination

The Elonera Montessori School admits students of any culture, gender, religion, or sexuality to all rights, privileges, programmes, and activities available to students at the school in line with Montessori learning and philosophy. Montessori Staff respect and value each child as unique thereby minimising bias, prejudice, and discrimination. We are proud to have such a diverse mix of people in our school community. All potential enrolments are considered individually, based

upon a commitment to the total Montessori education i.e. from the age of 2 to 18 years; the Montessori classroom environment, the existing number of children, staffing, and timeliness of intake. Admission criteria which supports the value systems of the school includes, but is not limited to, such attributes as the students' work ethic, level of cooperation, and independence.

## Charter of Respect

In order to be a member of Elonera Montessori School, staff, students and parents sign the Charter of Respect document. This was developed by parents of the school and endorsed by the School Board (see APPENDIX 11).

## Characteristics of Elonera Montessori School

### The Montessori Learning Environment

*A Child-centred Environment:* The focus on activity in the Montessori setting is on the children's learning rather than on teachers' teaching. Students work individually or in small self-selected groups. There are also a few whole group lessons.

*A Responsive Prepared Environment:* The environment is designed to meet the needs, interests, abilities and development of the children in the class. The teachers design and adapt the environment with this community of children in mind, rapidly modifying the selection of educational materials available, the physical layout, and the tone of the class to best fit the ever-changing needs of the children.

*A Focus on Individual Progress and Development:* Within our Montessori program children progress at their own pace, moving on to the next step in each area of learning as they are ready. While the child lives within a larger community of children, each student is viewed as a universe of one.

### Montessori Learning Activities

*Hands-On Learning:* At Elonera students rarely learn from textbooks or worksheets, although more of this may happen in the High School environment. In all cases, direct personal hands-on contact with either real things under study or with concrete models that bring abstract concepts to life, allow children to learn with a deeper understanding.

*Spontaneous Activity:* It is natural for children to wiggle, touch things and explore the world around them. Any true Montessori environment encourages children to move about freely, within reasonable limits of appropriate behaviour. Much of the time, students select work that captures their interest and attention although teachers also strive to draw their attention and capture their interest in new challenges and areas of inquiry. Even within this atmosphere of spontaneous activity, students do eventually have to master the basic skills of their culture even if they would prefer to avoid them.

*Active Learning:* In our classrooms, children not only select their own work most of the time, but also continue to work with tasks, often returning to refine and extend their work over many weeks or months until finally the work is "so easy for them" that they can teach it to younger children. This is one of the many ways that Montessori educators use to confirm that students have reached mastery of each skill.

*Self-directed Activity:* One of Montessori's key concepts is the idea that children are driven by their desire to become independent and competent beings in the world that will learn new things and master new skills. For this reason, outside rewards to create external motivation are both unnecessary and potentially can lead to passive adults who are dependent on others for everything from their self-image to permission to follow their dreams. In the process of making independent choices and exploring concepts largely on their own, Montessori children construct their own sense of individual identity and boundaries of right and wrong.

*Freedom within limits:* Montessori children enjoy considerable freedom of movement and choice, however their freedom always exists within carefully defined limits on the range of their behaviour. They are free to do anything appropriate to the ground rules of the community but are redirected promptly and firmly if they cross over the line.

*Intrinsic motivation to learn:* In Montessori programs, children do not work for grades or external rewards, nor are they encouraged to simply complete assignments given by the teachers. Elonera is built upon the children will learn because they are interested in things and because all children share a desire to become competent and independent human beings.

### **Montessori Communities of Learners**

*Mixed age groups:* Montessori classrooms gather together children of three or more age levels into a learning group. Children remain together for several years, with only the oldest students moving on to the next class at the year's end.

*A Community setting:* Montessori classrooms are communities of children. As children grow older and more capable, they assume a greater role in helping to care for the environment and meet the needs of younger children in the class. The focus is less on the teachers and more on the entire community of children and their families.

*Cooperation and Collaboration, rather than Competition:* Montessori children are encouraged to treat one another with kindness and respect. Insults and shunning behaviour are addressed by the teacher, in private. We normally find children who have a great fondness for one another are free from needless interpersonal competition for attention and prestige. Children learn at their own pace and teachers refrain from comparing students against one another.

### **We Awaken and Nurture the Human Spirit**

*The Child as a Spiritual Being:* Maria Montessori saw children as far more than simply scholars. In her view, each child is a full and complete human being, the mother or father of the adult man or woman she will become. Even when very young, the child shares with the rest of humanity hopes, dreams, and fears, emotions and longing. From Montessori's perspective, this goes beyond mental health to the very core of one's inner spiritual life. Our school consciously designs social communities and educational experiences that cultivate the child's sense of independence, self-respect, love of peace, passion for self-chosen work done well, and ability to respect and celebrate the individual spirit within people of all ages and the value of all life.

*Universal Values:* We deliberately teach children not only appropriate patterns of polite behaviour, but seek to instill basic universal values within the core of the child's personality. These values include self-respect, acceptance of the uniqueness and dignity of each person we meet, kindness, peacefulness, compassion, empathy, honour, individual responsibility and courage to speak from our hearts.

*Global Understanding:* We are multicultural. We attract a diverse staff and student body that represents many ethnic backgrounds, religions, and international backgrounds as well as actively celebrating our diversity. The curriculum is international in its heritage and focus, and consciously seeks to promote a global perspective.

*Service to Others:* Montessori's spiritual perspective leads our school to consciously organise programs of community service ranging from daily contributions to others within the class or school setting, to community outreach programs that allow children and adults to make a difference in the lives of others. The fundamental idea is one of encouraging a purposeful co-existence and stewardship.

### **The Characteristics of a Montessori Teacher**

*Authoritative:* The teacher is firm at the edges and empathetic at the centre, the kind of adult who responds empathetically to children's feelings, while setting clear and consistent limits.

*Observer:* The Montessori teacher constantly observes children's learning and behaviour. These careful observations are recorded and used to infer where each student is in terms of his/her development and leads the teacher to know when to intervene in the child's learning with a new lesson, a fresh challenge or a reinforcement of basic ground rules.

*An Educational Resource:* Montessori teachers facilitate the learning process by serving as a resource to whom the children can turn as they pull together information, impressions and experience.

*Role Model:* Like all great teachers, the Montessori educator deliberately models the behaviours and attitudes that he/she is working to instill in his/her students. Because of Montessori's emphasis on character development, the Montessori teacher normally is exceptionally calm, kind, warm, and polite to each child.

### **What Montessori Teachers Do**

*Respectfully Engage with the Learner:* The Montessori teacher recognises that his/her role is not so much to teach as to inspire, mentor, and facilitate the learning process. The real work of learning belongs to the individual child. Because of this, the Montessori educator remains conscious of his/her role in helping each child to fulfil his/her potential as a human being and of creating an environment for learning within which children will feel safe, cherished and empowered.

*Facilitate the match between the Learner and Knowledge:* Montessori teachers are trained to identify the best response to the changing interests and needs of each child as a unique individual. Montessori educators understand that they must "follow the child", adjusting their strategies and timetable to fit the development of each of their pupils because they truly accept that children learn in many different ways and at their own pace.

*Environmental engineer:* Montessori teachers organise appropriate social settings and academic programs for children at their own level of development. They do this to a large degree through the design of the classroom, selection and organisation of learning activities and structure of the day.

# Curricula and Programs

To be *registered* by the Minister, our primary and secondary school are required to provide a curriculum, including curriculum outcomes, that meets the minimum curriculum requirements of Part 3 of the Education Act.

To be *accredited* by the NSW Education Standards Authority, the secondary school must provide a curriculum that meets the requirements of the Act and its regulations for Stages 4-5 relating to courses of study to be undertaken by candidates for the award of a Record of School Achievement (ROSA).

The NSW Education Standards Authority needs to be satisfied that these requirements are being met. This means:

- ◆ For a primary school where the school implements Board syllabuses in each key learning area (or subject), describing how the school's curriculum meets syllabus and assessment requirements
- ◆ For a primary school (and any secondary school seeking registration only), mapping the school's curriculum against the curriculum guidelines
- ◆ For an accredited secondary school, providing curriculum and assessment information that demonstrates how all the requirements in the syllabuses and the (Assessment Certification Examination (ACE) Manual are being met in each subject.

*The six key learning areas for primary are:*

English; Mathematics; HSIE (History and Geography); Science and Technology; Creative Arts (Music and Visual Arts); Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. The school also offers a key learning area not required in Primary, which is a Language other than English (Italian).

*The eight key learning areas for secondary are:*

English, Mathematics, HSIE (Human Society and its Environment: History and Geography); Science, Technology, Creative Arts (Visual Arts, Music), Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Language other than English (Italian). The Stage 5 students are able to take elective courses such as Commerce, Italian, Music, Philosophy, Photography and Digital Media, Visual Arts and Woodwork.

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) reviews our documentation when it inspects for registration and accreditation, including:

- Timetables
- Teachers' qualifications and experience
- The Scope and Sequence of study in relation to outcomes
- Resources and equipment
- Assessment of student's performance
- The reporting process on student achievement
- Teaching programs that are linked to the Scope and Sequence
- Samples of students' work

Elonera Montessori School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority for years K-6, registered and accredited for years 7-10, registered for Years 11 and 12 and authorized as an IB school for Year 11 and 12. The Preschool is licensed by the Early Childhood Education Directorate and the Long Day Care Service and Out of School Hours Care are accredited by ACECQA.

## **Staff**

Our primary and secondary teachers satisfy the requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), a body that has been established by the State Government to set and administer teaching standards for NSW. Being an accredited teacher means you have met the NESA Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The preschool staff satisfies the requirements of Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education. In addition to this all classroom teachers in the Nido Long Day Care Program, Preschool and Primary at Elonera Montessori have or are working towards Montessori Qualifications. There is limited opportunity for training for Montessori High School Teachers. The High School staff has completed Montessori Adolescent Workshops and attend Montessori Adolescent Forums annually. The school is committed to supporting staff to continue to pursue Montessori training through Montessori workshops, forums and peer discussions.

Elonera Montessori provides professional development throughout the year at staff meetings, on pupil free days, as well as through external providers such as the Association of Independent Schools, Montessori courses, workshops and conferences as well as through visits to and observations of other Montessori schools. EMS have piloted the AIS Inclusion Project as well as the EMS Be Prepared to Think Program. Staff new to the school commit to a Staff Induction Program.

## **Montessori Equipment**

The Montessori Environment aims to provide the child with objects, materials and activities that are especially suited to his/her needs of development. The specialised Montessori equipment is very concrete in nature, based on the senses rather than abstract ideas, which develop later after the materials are repeatedly sensorially explored. Progression is from concrete to the abstract, through the sequence of material. Our equipment and materials are either imported from the Netherlands or the United States, or made by the teachers, or parents. The materials and equipment are extremely valuable, and the children are taught how to handle them correctly. If children wilfully damage the equipment, the parents will be asked to replace it.

The Montessori Equipment is extremely expensive and has been purchased over the years by the fundraising efforts of our families, as well as through grants that we have been successful in receiving. One little piece that is inadvertently taken by a child can ruin the functionality of the equipment.

## **Values, Attitudes and Behaviour**

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Teachers have a right to teach and children have a right to learn.

### **Rights**

- ◆ I have a right to feel safe
- ◆ I have the right to be spoken to and treated with respect
- ◆ I have the right to be touched only in a respectful way
- ◆ I have the right to my personal space
- ◆ I have the right to expect others to hear and respect my feelings
- ◆ I have the right for my gender, culture, and differences to be accepted
- ◆ I have the right to co-operative participation in school activities
- ◆ I have the right to a safe and clean environment
- ◆ I have the right to have my property treated with care

### **Responsibilities**

- ◆ I have the responsibility to allow others to feel safe
- ◆ I have the responsibility to speak and treat others with respect
- ◆ I have the responsibility to touch others only in a respectful way
- ◆ I have the responsibility to accept the personal space of others
- ◆ I have the responsibility to hear and respect the feelings of others
- ◆ I have the responsibility to accept the gender, culture and differences of others
- ◆ I have the responsibility to participate co-operatively in school activities
- ◆ I have the responsibility to help maintain a safe and clean environment
- ◆ I have the responsibility to treat my, and other people's property with care

### **Consequences**

The following procedure will be used as a guideline to follow, according to the nature of the incident, where rights and responsibilities may be compromised:

- ◆ The teacher will, in the first instance, respond to the incident(s) by working with the student(s) in a remedial, therapeutic or disciplinary manner, depending on the individual or the behaviour, which may include a warning
- ◆ If the behaviour continues the class teacher will also speak to the parents, to inform them of the concerns and establish ways of working together
- ◆ When an interview occurs with parents, another member of staff may be present to discuss appropriate courses of action regarding behaviour. Professional help may be called upon.
- ◆ A warning is given
- ◆ If the undesirable pattern persists, an interview or discussion with parents to explore options for the child takes place
- ◆ Severe infringement of school policies may result in time-out at home
- ◆ Following time-out, an interview with student, parent and teacher will set out conditions for the student returning to school. This may include reinstating the trial enrolment period.
- ◆ Ongoing non-compliance after the trial period will result in the withdrawal of the child from Elonera Montessori School.

## **Enrolling at Elonera Montessori School**

Harmony, Stability, Education in Life, is provided when you commit to a continued Montessori education for your child/ren from the Parent Toddler/Nido Long Day Care program through to High School.

Most Preschools are independently operated and don't lead into a particular primary school. Elonera Montessori School, Children's House - Stage 1 (3 to 6 years) provides fundamental early childhood learning directly preparing the child to transition into a Primary Montessori

education i.e. Stages 2 and 3, then High School Montessori education Stages 4 to 6, including the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program.

It is extremely disruptive to our school culture and to families that are seeking placement for a long-term relationship with our school when others use us simply for Preschool purposes. We suggest other quality preschools that are independently operated if you are planning only for Montessori preschool.

## **Tours**

Tours are held every Wednesday and Thursday morning. Parents, grandparents and relatives interested in the Montessori Method are invited to make an appointment. The school office is contactable on (02) 4225 1000.

## **Observations**

Observations before enrolling are most beneficial and are by appointment only. Parents are encouraged to also observe at other Montessori schools.

## **Suggested Reading**

It is highly recommended that parents and prospective parents make themselves familiar with the Montessori Method of education. Books are available for hire at the Wollongong Public Library and a list of recommended reading is located on our website.

## **Waiting List**

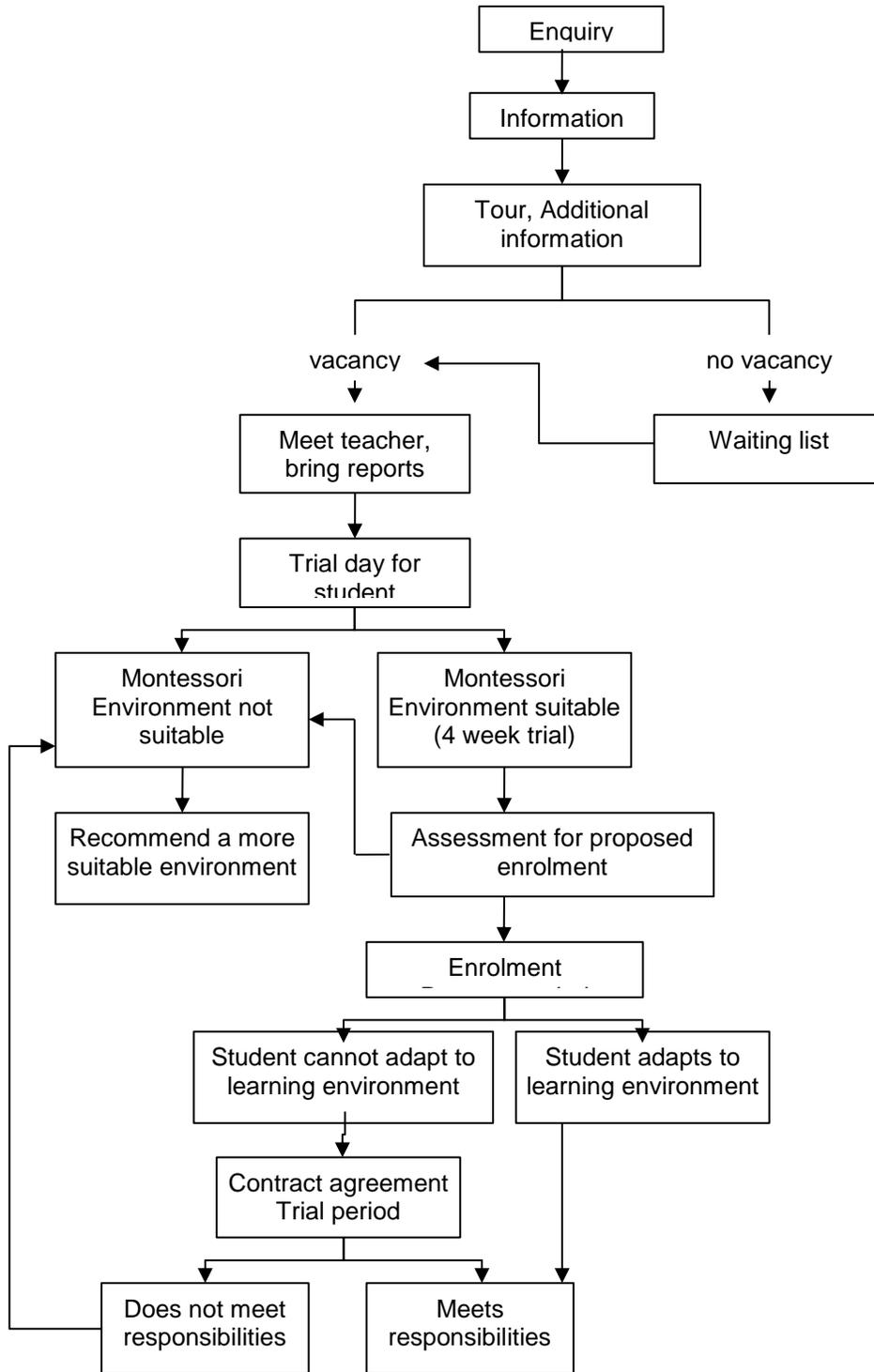
A commitment to a total Montessori education i.e. from the age of two to the age of eighteen is sought from the parents prior to embarking on a Montessori education. Children are placed on a waiting list when they apply to the school. The list is reviewed when a vacancy occurs in the required stage at the school.

## **Feeder Pre-Schools**

Illawarra Montessori Pre-School (IMPS), located in Bristol Street in Berkeley, is independently owned and operated. It provides an authentic Montessori Pre-School program under a Long Day Care structure from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the year. An additional feeder school, Growing Stars Montessori, is located in Flinders and was established in 2018.

The Children's House on the Elonera grounds was established in 1990 and operates for 41 weeks of the year.

# Enrolment Flow Chart



## Enrolment Fee Requirements

On acceptance of a placement at the School the Enrolment Fee shall be paid and held by the School. The Enrolment Fee will be \$200.00 per child and is considered a non-refundable administration fee.

After the four-week mutual trial period, if the teacher has not extended the trial period, the child will be deemed to be enrolled for that year.

Once a pupil is enrolled at the School, **10 school weeks' notice of withdrawal must be given in writing to the Office. In default of such notice the subsequent full term's fees will be charged.**

## Withdrawal from the School

Notification of withdrawal must be put in writing to the office, **10 school weeks** before the child is withdrawn. If the **full amount of notice is not given, a full term's fees is charged** (eg If the withdrawal of enrolment is planned for the start of Term 1 of 2020, notice of withdrawal must be given by the first day of Term 4, 2019)

Parents are reminded that withdrawals affect not only their own child, but the whole group.

A commitment to a total Montessori education i.e.: from the age of two to the age of eighteen is sought from the parents prior to embarking on a Montessori education.

During the enrolment period, if it be determined by the teachers that the child does not appear to be compatible with the Montessori Method of learning the parents may either choose to withdraw their child or apply for an extension to the trial period. The teachers may grant the extension, at their discretion. Otherwise, the matter may be directed to the Head of School, for further consideration if deemed appropriate by the teachers. (See APPENDIX 2 - *Grace and Courtesy Policy*).

## Exit Interviews

The school welcomes all your feedback as they provide an opportunity to develop and refine our processes. An exit interview can be scheduled by contacting the enrolments officer and will be conducted with the Head of School or the Deputy. Exit surveys are sent to the families of all children who leave the school and EMS welcomes feedback through these surveys.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Accounts/Fees

School fees accounts are issued in advance before each term commences. The amount due per term is encouraged to be paid with a \$25 discount per child if it is paid before the start of the corresponding term. Payment can also be in instalments directly into the School's Commonwealth Bank Account. **Please ensure your name appears with your payment.** The contribution to the Building Fund is tax deductible and should be made as a separate payment to the Elonera Building Fund – cheques need to be written out to the Elonera Building Fund or direct deposits paid into the Building Fund Account in order to be tax deductible.

'Out Of School Hours' (OOSH) accounts and Parent Toddler Program accounts will be sent out each term. The Nido Long Day Care Program is billed on a 4-week cycle. Schedule of fees are available from the school office and are on our website at [www.eloneramontessori.com.au](http://www.eloneramontessori.com.au).

Families can apply for Child Care Benefit (CCB) by contacting the Centrelink Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50. Please contact the School Office if you require assistance.

Elonera Montessori School is approved for Long Day Care, Before/After School Care, and Vacation Care and is registered for during school care for Children's House. To claim your Child Care Benefit you will need to provide the school with your Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN).

Additional Fees: There will be additional charges for excursions, camps, and sport.

**Nido/OOSH Late Fees: Please refer to the Delivery and Collection Procedure (APPENDIX 7).**

Absence from school during the whole or any part of a term will not in itself be any foundation for claim about remission of fees, in whole or part. Only under very exceptional circumstances will the School consider on its merit any special case that may be placed before it. The expense of carrying on the School is the same whether a particular pupil is absent for part of the term or not.

Fees are payable in advance or when the account is rendered. A payment schedule can also be arranged with the Accounts Department. Fees must still be paid when a child is being withdrawn for a short period of time, for travel purposes, or holidays in order to hold your child's place.

**If you are using After School Care you may book in by calling the Office, although this is not mandatory practice.**

## Address and Contact Information

We currently use the Kidsoft Program as our information centre to store address and other contact information but are moving to a more suitable system in Xplor. This data is entered on enrolment and updated each term. Please notify the Enrolments Officer of any changes to your address, telephone numbers, both at home and at work as well as your email address. This is used for School Administration purposes only. If a parent requires contact details for other

parents, Elonera is unable to provide these details as we will never share this private information, not even with others within the school community.

## Allergies

### Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a medical condition, where a student is at risk of experiencing a life-threatening reaction. It can be due to allergens contributed by foods, the environment, or even bee stings for some children. If your child has any allergic/medical conditions, you are required to notify the office so that we can place the information on our emergency information file. Children with anaphylaxis require a letter from their medical practitioner. A letter and form for the parent to take to the medical practitioner is available from the office. Parents are asked to contact the Head of School to develop an emergency response plan for their child.

The School Board has developed a number of strategies to minimise risk, which include the following:

- A policy of banning nuts or foods with nut products
- Students are not to share or swap food
- All children from Nido to Primary eat lunch at their desk
- Staff and relevant volunteers are provided with a list of students, and their allergies
- The emergency response plan is kept in the classroom office space and in after school care
- The school does not use craft items that can cause risk i.e. peanut butter jars, milk containers, egg cartons etc
- Parents can send in a suitable cupcake for their child that can be frozen so they may be replaced for a Birthday cake when we celebrate children's birthdays

## Asthma

If your child has asthma, you should provide the school office with an annual updated Asthma Emergency Plan. Please discuss the Asthma Emergency Plan with the teachers and before/after school care staff.

## Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance at school is legally required of children each day that instruction is provided. If your child is absent or late, parents/caregivers are required to notify the school via phone or email **preferably before the start of the school day**. Please note that if you phone, EMS also requires a written explanation sent to the teacher both to ensure your child's wellbeing and to satisfy government requirements. Absentee forms are available at the office. If an extended absence is anticipated, you should inform the teacher by telephoning the office or sending an email.

***We would ask all parents to be thorough and prompt in providing written explanation for a student's absence and to be mindful that regular commitment to school attendance and punctuality is important to students' own commitment to and achievement in learning.***

Arriving on time in the morning helps your child feel that he/she belongs to the group. His/her day has to start with the others. Arriving late severely disrupts his/her routine and it will negatively affect his/her ability to make choices. Your child could also feel lost and left out of the group and may find it extremely difficult to get started. A late arriving child also causes disruption to the class presentation.

Collecting time is equally crucial. Children should be collected at 3:00pm unless they are staying for After School Care. The teachers require time after 3:00pm to prepare for the next day, as well as meet with staff or attend meetings. If parents wish to talk to the teacher about their child, you should request an appointment with the teacher via the teacher or the office so that a suitable time can be organised.

Attendance at 'Sport' is compulsory and part of the school curriculum. If a child is unable to attend sport due to illness or injury, parents are required to make arrangements to pick up their child prior to the commencement of sport.

It is a disservice to your child to allow days off, as it contributes to gaps in knowledge and understanding.

## **Building Fund**

The School Building fund is used solely for providing money to acquire, construct or maintain the school buildings for the purposes of using that building as a school.

## **Bullying Behaviour**

The school aims to minimise the risk of bullying and harassment by providing a safe and supportive learning environment for our children. Our policy and practice is documented in the appendices. The Teachers take all necessary steps to ensure that classrooms and playgrounds are free from all forms of harassment and discrimination. Students are encouraged to raise any concerns that they have about bullying or harassment with the teacher, **at the time of the incident**, so that the matter can be dealt with immediately. The teachers monitor strategies that have been put in place, at the staff meetings, to ensure consistency with all people working with the children.

*Please refer to our Bullying and Harassment Policy ([APPENDIX 3](#)) at the back of this Handbook.*

## **Book Club**

One of the best gifts a parent can give a child is a love of good books, and the benefits of reading. Elonera Montessori is a member of Ashton Scholastic.

A Book Fair is organised by parent volunteers as part of their contribution to the school, in collaboration with Ashton Scholastic. Elonera Montessori receives a percentage of sales, in

books. The prices are very reasonable. The school's classrooms generally receive over one hundred dollars' worth of books from each fair.

## **Book Donation**

Any new books that are donated to the school can be claimed as a tax deduction, if it is listed as a donation to the library.

## **Camps/overnight Excursions**

Whenever possible, Stages 3, 4 and 5 participate in an overnight camp each year, which involves two or three nights for the older students. The camp costs are not included in school fees. Fundraising is organised by the students, which generally contributes to the transportation costs, and towards reducing the daily cost. Camps for the High School are planned by the students and overseen by staff.

## **Canteen**

Elonera does not currently run a canteen but has done so in the past on one day a week. Any parents or family members willing to participate are encouraged to contact the office.

## **Celebrations**

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are very special days and we love to celebrate them. This is the child's OWN day when the earth has gone around the sun in a full rotation. Parents and Grandparents are welcome to share in the celebration and are asked to discuss with the teacher the best time to attend. In the early years of the school, from Nido to Primary, we talk about every year, remembering the child with photos and stories. A cake, muffins or a fruit platter brought from home, can be shared by the class and is a very exciting part of the celebration. Please ask the teacher if there are any students with allergies.

### **School Concert**

The School Concert is held during Term 4 and is a much-anticipated event by the children . The children determine the content of the concert. Parents generally assist the teacher with costuming. A rehearsal is held beforehand during school time.

### **Graduation Ceremonies**

Graduation ceremonies are special occasions of celebration with our Montessori community for students progressing from one plane of development to another. In Montessori terms, that is from the Children's House to Primary, Primary to High School, and at the end of Year 10 and Year 12. The Year 12 students attend a celebratory High Tea and a Graduation Dinner at the conclusion of the exam period. Other students are acknowledged at a Graduation held in school hours in the last weeks of term 4.

## Child Protection

The school's policy on Child protection acknowledges the rationale and requirement of current legislation on the issue of Child Protection and combines this with the processes of childcare and responsibility for welfare established in the school already. In particular it is the policy of the school that:

- ◆ All members of staff should be conversant with current legislation and recognise the responsibility we each carry to report cases of suspected neglect or abuse towards children
- ◆ While there is a single member of staff with responsibility of communicating reports to Family and Community Services (FACS), such reports will be shared in utmost confidence with the Head of School
- ◆ All paid workers who have primary contact with the children at school, as defined by the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, have a Working with children check clearance from the Office of the Children's Guardian
- ◆ Elonera Montessori School must notify the Ombudsman of any allegation of reportable conduct or conviction related to reportable conduct against an employee. The school must investigate the allegation or conviction and report the findings of such an investigation to the Ombudsman.
- ◆ The school does not permit corporal punishment of students
- ◆ The school does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school
- ◆ Teachers from time to time discuss child protection with the students as part of their program. They discuss inappropriate behaviour as well as the importance of students discussing matters with the teacher or an adult if they are worried about anything.

*Please refer to our Child Protection Policy in the back of this Handbook (see APPENDIX 8).*

## Communication

The school provides both formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate communication between those with an interest in the student's education and well-being. Communication is a two-way process and should be the responsibility of all members of the school. A good communication flow with your child's teacher is essential and should be the principle vehicle for questions that may arise. Parent Teacher Interviews are scheduled mid-year for this purpose and are also available on request at the end of the school year.

There are a number of parent information/showcase sessions or coffee mornings scheduled throughout the year and parents are invited to attend.

The school emails an electronic newsletter "Elmonti Matters" each Monday of the school Term. We have a static Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Elonera-Montessori-School-1666317020302043/>) that also highlights upcoming events and Stage reports.

Communication pockets/files/pigeonholes for each family (Nido to Stage 6) hold all school notices, excursion permission forms, and other correspondence are placed and should be regularly cleared out. Notices placed here should have executive approval before being distributed.

If you have any concerns that you need to discuss, appointments can be made with your teacher before or after school and are encouraged so as to not impact on any class time. Appointments can be arranged via the office or by emailing the class teacher.

Parents who wish to suggest excursions, guest speakers and provide other links to our local community are asked to discuss their ideas with the teacher.

## **Custody of Children**

The school must be advised in writing at the time of enrolment of any custody arrangements concerning children, or if any change occurs after that time. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

## **Early Pick-Up**

Parents wishing to take children from school early must notify the teacher, in advance, of the estimated pick-up time. Your child will meet you in Reception for collection where you are required to sign them out. Where a person other than the parent or usual collector has been asked to pick up a child, notification by the parent or written authorisation and proof of identity must be presented when the child is collected. Parents in the Nido and preschool, as well as after school care must sign out their children indicating the time collected.

## **Emergency Information**

This information is retained in our Data Management System and inputted by our Enrolments Officer, for use in case of emergency. Parents are legally required to update the information annually at the commencement of the new school year, and to notify the office of any relevant change in such information throughout the year.

## **EMS Membership**

Upon commencement, you are automatically an EMS Associate Member. After 12 months of commencing at Elonera Montessori School, whether as a staff or parent, you are eligible to apply for EMS Ordinary Membership with a \$5 Annual Ordinary Membership Fee.

## **Excursions**

Excursions are arranged from time to time, by all Stages. Permission notes will be placed in the information pockets or be sent home with students or electronically. They should ideally be circulated no later than 7 school days in advance of the excursion date, except in extenuating circumstances. The permission note will include:

- location of excursion;
- description and aims of the excursion;
- teacher in charge;
- excursion itinerary/information sheet;
- proposed travel arrangements; and
- other relevant information

Permission notes are to be labelled with money included or ideally, direct debit details, and sent to the front office. Parents who choose to pick their children up from the excursion site rather than the school, are asked to pre-arrange this with the teachers.

### CODE OF CONDUCT (see APPENDIX 1)

All parents are requested to remind their children of the student's responsibilities, before each excursion. If a child disrupts an excursion or breaks the safety rules, they will not be allowed to attend the next two excursions.

## **External Lessons**

External lessons may be organised throughout the year, which require specialist teachers. This will involve an extra fee, dependent upon what the school is charged. These lessons could involve coaches in swimming, basketball, tennis, gymnastics, bowling, dance, or athletics to name a few.

## **Fundraising**

Fundraising is an important part of Elonera. Not only does it supplement the purchase of needed items for the classroom, but also it is a wonderful way to work together as students and parents. The proceeds are used at times for camps, to donate to other charities, and to purchase resources for the classroom.

## **Grace and Courtesy**

The Grace and Courtesy policy is operational for the whole school community, which includes OOSH and the parent community. This policy is used to address any disciplinary issues that may arise, including harassment (both face-to-face and online) by staff, students and parents. Staff can recommend that a student be placed upon a four-week trial period if the student uses repetitive forms of harassment towards other students or to staff members. Parents can also be asked to remove their children from the school if the parent is found to have harassed other students or staff, either personally or online. *Please refer to our Grace and Courtesy Policy at the back of this handbook (APPENDIX 2).*

## **Grievance Procedure**

Parents and other members of the school community may from time to time wish to submit a complaint about a school matter. The vast majority of concerns that arise need never take the form of a formal complaint. The teachers and the executive are available to discuss these concerns in more informal ways. Complainants should have in mind an outcome for their complaint.

### **Receiving an Informal Complaint**

- talk to a teacher/staff member first about your complaint outlining the issue(s)
- if appropriate, suggest an outcome you feel may be used to resolve the issue(s)
- work with the teacher/staff member to implement the resolution
- have a follow-up discussion between the parent and the teacher/staff member

- if a resolution cannot be reached between the parent and teacher, raise your concern with the Head of School

The following procedures are set out for resolving complaints in those few instances where a resolution has not been reached by informal means and the person with a grievance wishes to make a formal complaint.

### **Receiving a Formal Complaint**

A formal complaint must be made in writing. It must be signed by the complainant and addressed to the Head of School.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Head of School is to:

- meet with the complainant as soon as possible
- discuss the complaint with the complainant to identify the key issues and desired outcomes
- inform the Chairperson of the School Board
- provide notification of complaint to the person if they are the subject of the complaint, and request a response within one week
- work towards conciliation within four weeks

### **Decision**

Where the complaint has not been resolved through conciliation, the School Board Executive must make a decision after considering:

- the Blueprint of Fundamental Values and Beliefs of Elonera Montessori School
- the substance of the complaint i.e. does it have wider implications that need to be considered by a more representative group
- all relevant information, and
- any relevant policy

A copy of the decision and reasons must be provided to the complainant and the relevant staff or Board members.

## **Homework**

**Nido and Children's House** has no homework. It is preferred that students are provided life skills at home.

**Stage 2 and 3** students are encouraged to read at home, to support our reading program.

**Stages 4 to 5** students have varying homework that depends upon the subject area. They are expected to develop time management skills and to continue at home what is not completed at school. The amount of time spent on homework will increase with age, with the objective to develop a good routine and practices in preparation for Senior School.

**Stage 6** will obviously involve significantly more homework than in previous Stages. Students will be enrolled in either the International Baccalaureate Diploma or Course Programme.

All students at Elonera Montessori School are expected to develop life skills at home that are part of their community responsibility. Activities such as setting the table, clearing the table, meal

preparation and helping with dishes should be their shared responsibility. These are supported by the school's practical life activities and Occupations program (High School).

## **Immunisation**

From 1 January 2018, only children who are fully immunised for their age OR have a medical reason not to be immunised OR are on a catch-up schedule can be enrolled in childcare. Children who have not been immunised due to their parent's vaccine conscientious objection cannot be enrolled in childcare.

All parents need to provide childcare staff with appropriate immunisation documentation to enrol their child. This includes long day care, family day care, occasional care and pre-school.

A child's immunisation status is linked to the Child Care Benefit. The most effective way to show that your child is immunised is to provide the Family Assistance Office with your child's Medicare number. The Family Assistance Office will use this number to check their immunisation status on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. Parents are responsible for providing the school office with details of their child's immunisation, so that it can be included in their file. It is a requirement for schools under the Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992 to keep accurate immunisation records of all students enrolled. Without this information and depending on the outbreak, your child may need to be excluded from school according to the Department of Health Guidelines.

## **Insurance**

The school has Student Accident Protection Plan Insurance that it purchases yearly for its students. If you require more than this level of coverage, you are encouraged to take out greater protection through a private insurance company.

## **Lost Property**

Articles of lost property are kept in the front office, the classrooms or the OOSH room. Parents are welcome to look there for lost items. You are requested to label all removable clothing and personal items, with your child's name. Periodically, unclaimed items will be donated to a charity.

## **Lunch, Snacks and Nutrition**

### **Nido and Stage 1**

Please give meals that are easy to manage by your child so that he/she can learn to become independent. The children eat celery, cucumbers, carrots, and fruit throughout morning session, when working in the Practical Life area. Lunch should be wholesome and healthy. For afternoon tea, a self-serve snack of fruit is the best.

*Please bring in a piece of fruit, vegetable or crackers for the snack basket.*

### **All Other Stages**

Please give a wholesome and healthy lunch, with a snack for morning tea. Nutritionists advise:

Foods better left out of lunchboxes:	Appropriate foods for lunchboxes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ muesli bars</li> <li>▪ dried fruit bars</li> <li>▪ fruit straps</li> <li>▪ fruit flavoured lollies</li> <li>▪ corn chips</li> <li>▪ potato chips/crisps</li> <li>▪ oven baked biscuits</li> <li>▪ two minute noodles</li> <li>▪ sweet biscuits</li> <li>▪ chocolate, gum and lollies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ fresh tinned or dried fruit</li> <li>▪ sandwiches/rolls</li> <li>▪ fruit buns</li> <li>▪ scones</li> <li>▪ pikelets</li> <li>▪ fruit muffins</li> <li>▪ plain cakes</li> <li>▪ cheese and biscuits</li> <li>▪ rice cakes</li> <li>▪ corn thins</li> <li>▪ tinned fish</li> <li>▪ fruit flavoured yoghurt</li> </ul>

## Medication

Arrangements can be made for the administration of medication at school. Parents must provide written instructions and approval before the staff can administer medication. Such medication should be sufficient only for the day, and should be labelled with the child's name, and time to be taken, details of whether it should be refrigerated, as well as dosage - this includes eye drops, all medications and natural remedies.

All medication taken is documented by staff on a medication register. Parents must liaise with the teacher, if they feel that there are special circumstances where the child in the Primary or High School needs to self-medicate and this, too needs to be recorded on the medication register.

Please notify teachers if your child carries an asthma puffer in their bag.  
Please instruct your children to never take another child's medication.

## Meetings

School Board meetings are held each month, and minutes are held on the EMS Server. Members of the school are welcome to review the minutes. Please liaise with the front office if you would like to review these documents.

## Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are to be switched off or to silent during class. This includes staff as well as students. Students in Years 7-10 are asked to hand in their phones to High School staff at the start of the school day to be picked up at 2.45pm. Exceptions will be permitted in exceptional circumstances should the parent/guardian specifically request it. Requests will be handled on a case by case basis.

Inappropriate conduct includes:

- Students caught using a mobile phone in exams or assessments, will face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Head of School
- Students who use derogatory or obscene language when using a mobile phone will face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Head of School
- Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person or post private information about another person using SMS messages, through Social Media, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls; this includes bullying and harassment of staff

Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face having their mobile phone confiscated and returned to their parents and further action taken if applicable.

*(It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if previous action is deemed ineffective, as with all incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.)*

## Name Change

Occasionally, parents request that their child/children be known by another name. In such cases the request must be made in writing to the Head of School. The only time a child's surname may be changed from that which appears on their Birth Certificate is if one of the following conditions is satisfied:

1. There is a court order directing that the child's name be changed.
2. Where the school obtains the written consent of both parents.
3. Where the parent with custody provides a Statutory Declaration which declares that:
  - a) The current whereabouts of the other parent is unknown; and
  - b) There has been no contact between the other parent and the child for a period of approximately four (4) years and the child support has not been paid; or
  - c) The other parent is deceased.
4. Another Birth Certificate has been issued for the child.

## Newsletter - *Elmonti*

The school has a weekly newsletter "Elmonti Matters" that includes reminders of school activities, rotating Stage reports, and other matters of interest. Information to be included must be in to the office before 9:00am Monday morning of each week.

## Out of School Hours Care (OOSH)

Before school hours care is available for the convenience of parents and to support the teachers by allowing them to prepare the classroom environment. Before school care commences at 8.00am. Children are **not to be dropped off before this time.**

After School hours care is offered from 3.10pm to 5.30pm from Monday to Friday, during school terms. The children are offered a programme of activities, as well as an afternoon snack. Parents are requested to pick their children up by 5:30 pm otherwise a late fee applies. Please contact the school office for schedule of OOSH/BOOSH fees.

## Parent Education

Parent Education courses are held during the year and cover various aspects of the Montessori philosophy. The Parent Toddler Program is the first entry into the school and is an opportunity for parents to ask the Directress questions surrounding Montessori philosophy. All new parents (Nido and Children's House) are given a Montessori book (*Understanding Montessori* by Maren Schmidt) upon enrolment.

## Parent Involvement

Provision of many opportunities for parents to support teachers in the education of their children exists at Elonera. All families are strongly encouraged to participate in activities in the school. This can be done by assisting in the following areas:

School Board; Canteen; Fundraising; Drama Club; First Lego League Robotics Club; Working bees; attending the coffee mornings for parents; making new parents feel welcome; helping to organise a celebration, camp or picnic for families; providing a lecture/visit for the children (upon request by the teachers); reading about Montessori; assisting with the newsletter (i.e. articles, illustrations); contributing baked goods for school functions; assisting with transport/supervision on excursions (parent transporters need to provide their current licence and insurance information).

## Parent and Family Support

To assist us in providing your child with a Montessori Education, we ask for your acknowledgement and support of these expectations to which EMS is committed:

- ◆ Please ensure punctuality
- ◆ Ensure that the children have enough sleep and come to school rested – no late nights on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday
- ◆ Ensure that children eat a healthy diet
- ◆ Restrict and monitor access to electronic technology –TV, Social media, videos and computer games
- ◆ No violent movies, videos or computer games
- ◆ Please support the request that students do not swear at school
- ◆ If problems occur, please be in contact with the school
- ◆ Follow through with agreements made with teachers
- ◆ Please support the children's home duties and homework
- ◆ Please discuss the school's behaviour code with your child

Our School has remedial support, however we do not provide counselling and other private services. We ask parents to access outside help for their children if needed and we would ask you to please liaise with the teachers if you would require assistance regarding available or appropriate services in the community, as we have contact numbers for a variety of children and family services.

# Parent/Teacher Interviews

Parent/Teacher Interviews are held in Term 2 and upon request at the end of the year. Meetings can also be held on request by the parent or the teacher, throughout the year.

## Photographs

School photographs are taken annually by a professional photographer. The packages are very reasonable in price and are a lovely memento for the children. Permission is sought from parents at enrolment to photograph students for either internal or external purposes.

## Privacy

Elonera Montessori School observes the National Privacy Principles in the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000.

- ◆ Parents are asked to notify the school if they wish to have their name, and phone numbers taken off the parent telephone list, which is used for internal school distribution only.
- ◆ When personal information is collected regarding a student, a collection statement will be given to the parents (for example, for purposes of literacy and numeracy support, as well as classroom support).
- ◆ Children are not to be photographed unless parents provide consent
- ◆ Use and disclosure of sensitive information about a person is considered a breach
- ◆ The school cannot directly advertise private businesses in their newsletter, as the primary purpose is to provide internal news and information to the school community.
- ◆ Records on students must be secure, and therefore access to the School Office and data collection systems is limited to staff only.

## Pupil Free Days

The first day of each Term is a Pupil-free day, as well as the last two days of Term 4. The staff attend in-service Professional Development, do whole-school planning, and prepare the classroom environment on these days. There is no Out of School Hours care on pupil-free days.

## Religion

Elonera Montessori is a non-denominational school. We believe that our students should be familiar with the traditions and basic beliefs of the world's major religions as part of our cultural program. We do not teach religion, nor advocate any particular belief system. We do not collect information on member's religious beliefs or affiliations.

## Reporting Student Progress

Parent conferences are held for all parents/ guardians of all children during the second term. We use the Trybooking online registration platform for booking conferences. The parent conference times and booking details are advertised in the school newsletter.

A school report will be given mid-year and at the end of the year, reporting on your child's progress over the two-term period. Years 7-10 also receive a progress report at the end of Term 1. The report includes objective assessment of progress and achievements. The reports reflect assessment against specific learning standards. The school does not believe that ranking the student's achievement relative to the peer group is in their best interest. It is against our Montessori philosophy, as it can affect students' self-esteem and focuses on their grading rather than the process of learning. We aim to avoid creating a culture where students start to value learning for marks rather than for the love of learning.

Parents may request comparative information from the teacher. As a Montessori school we provide information regarding academic achievements and skill development but equally value information on the student's values, attitudes and social skills development.

## Safety

### Accidents and Incidents

All accidents and incidents, other than minor ones, are to be reported on an Incident Report form. Details include date, time, the person that was injured, type of accident, circumstances that led to the accident/incident. They are discussed at the weekly staff meeting, and preventative action documented. The school has Ambulance cover as well as student accident insurance. Parents are notified by telephone regarding any serious accident/incident and need to ensure that all contact details are up to date, in case of an emergency.

### Clothing and Hats

Safe, appropriate and sun-safe clothing is a requirement. Sun block is available to all students in each classroom for sport, outdoor play, and on excursions. Children using play equipment should wear their shoes, to avoid injury. Children with sandals are not allowed on the play equipment. Thongs are NOT an acceptable form of footwear. High school students attending Occupations, Science or Technology or Visual Arts classes are asked to wear protective close-toed shoes.

Parents must encourage students to wear helmets when on bicycles and skate boards.

### Fire/Lockdown Procedures

We have an Evacuation/Lockdown policy that is documented and kept on the School Server. Evacuation plans are located in every building. Fire Equipment is checked annually on a planned maintenance schedule.

### Parking and Traffic Management

In the interest of your child's safety, the Roads and Maritime Services and Wollongong City Council have requested that parents do not park on Mt Ousley Road or in driveways when dropping off or picking up children. **Children should not run across the service road.**

40KM school zones are enforced by Police.

As designated by the Roads and Maritime Services, parents are not to park, or leave their car unattended in the 'Kiss and Drop Zone' i.e. the **no parking zone** at the front of the school. There

is a 2-hour parking zone on Mt Ousley slip-road that is monitored by the Wollongong City Council. Parents are not to collect their children (with the exception of Nido) via Aristo Crescent as requested by Wollongong City Council.

## **School Student Accident Prevention**

The school has an Accident Protection Plan through AON Insurances for all students. Please ask at the office if you would like to see the summary of the benefits covered.

## **Smoking on School Premises**

Smoking is not allowed on the school premises.

## **Visitors to the School**

During school hours, all visitors (including parents) entering the school premises are to notify the office and sign the Visitors book. Note: This excludes Nido and Children's House (Stage1) parents collecting children who do not attend extended day, as they are required to sign in on the ipads located at the entrance to their classroom.

# **School Hours**

The official school hours for Stage 1 to Stage 5 are from 8.45am to 3.00pm, with a drop off/ pick up time of ten minutes. Nido hours are from 8.00am to 4.00pm and Stage 6 school hours are from 8.45am to 3.15pm. Before school care is offered from 8:00am to 8:45am and After school care is offered from 3:10pm to 5:30pm both at an additional fee. Parents are requested to collect their children promptly.

# **Sickness**

Parents will be informed if their child is feeling ill. Children feeling sick in the morning, or previous evening should be kept at home, and the front office notified via phone or email before the start of the school day, as per our Attendance policy.

Note: It is a NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirement that all absences require a written explanation. Absentee forms are available from the school office.

# **Special Needs**

Parents are asked to document their child's special needs on their enrolment form and provide the school with ongoing documentation from any external professional such as a Family Physician, Paediatrician, Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Audiologist, Educational Psychologist.

# **Sun Protection**

Parents are asked to ensure that their children have appropriate headwear at playtime. We have a rule of "No hat No play" between the hours of 10 am and 3 pm. Students without a hat will be limited to play in the shaded area of the playground. Students are provided with access to sun screen lotions at school. If you do not want your child to wear sun screen lotions, you must

inform the School Office with a suggestion of alternative protection. If your child is particularly sensitive to the sun, please notify the school so that the teachers can document it on the student's school file.

## **Teacher Professional Learning**

EMS is committed to the ongoing professional development of their staff.

At times, pupil-free days may be scheduled during the year, when the support staff, OOSH workers and teachers are asked to attend a workshop for staff development. Parents will be given notice of this in order to make alternative arrangements regarding childcare.

## **Telephone**

Please restrict phone calls or messages to the teachers to noon or before or after school hours. As per Children's Services regulation, clause 66, no primary contact staff "is to perform other duties while supervising children". Information can be exchanged about the child at mutually convenient times. Parents of the Nido and Stage 1 children can contact their child at any time during the hours the child is at school.

Mobile phones are to be kept in the students' school bag and turned off or on silent during class time. If children misuse the mobile phone, it will be held through the day, and returned when the child goes home. Please see section on Mobile Phones.

## **Testing**

NAPLAN testing is required by the Commonwealth Government, as schools are required to make a commitment that all students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 will achieve national benchmarks in reading, writing, spelling, and numeracy.

Parents may withdraw their child from comparative assessment or reporting where they consider the assessment to be inappropriate for their child.

Elonera also makes available to students the option to participate in UNSW Global ICAS assessments. In 2019, the program will be expected to move into an Online format.

## **Toys**

Parents are asked to keep toys for home, as conflicts can develop if another child misuses the toy. It can also provide a distraction to learning for children. This may include magazines. Some items have been allowed in OOSH from time to time, however if it causes conflict, the policy will be reviewed.

## **Transition**

Parents and staff play a significant role in supporting children in the transition from one stage to the next. It is important that each child's individual needs, skills and interests are considered carefully to ensure that the transition process is as positive and effective as possible. Parents are encouraged to attend sessions that are held by the teachers of the next stage so that they

will be aware of the classroom routine. A transition policy has been created that assists in this process.

## Transport

Student Opal cards can be applied for by filling in a form in the office. Some children are eligible for a transport subsidy, if there is no public transport system that can get them to school. If you believe that you fulfil the criteria you may obtain a form from the office to apply.

Parents often car-pool to school. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that they pick the children up on time or the child's parents will be charged for OOSH.

Parents are reminded that Aristo Crescent **is not to be used** to collect students from OOSH. The Wollongong City Council made this requirement a part of the School's Development Consent.

## Uniforms

There are no school uniforms for Elonera Montessori, however if children wish to wear a school uniform, they are welcome to make that choice. Children are required, regardless, to dress comfortably and modestly as for a work day.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### Code of Conduct on Excursions

A Code of Conduct for Excursion Behaviour provides clearly defined rules and principles for all students, parents and staff of Elonera Montessori School to:

1. Ensure the safety and well-being of our school community
2. Promote acceptable behaviour
3. Modify unacceptable behaviour
4. Formalise parent responsibility while assisting on excursions
5. Promote a positive image of Elonera Montessori School within the community

#### Student's Responsibilities

Whilst walking to, from, or during an excursion, the students are expected to:

- Listen to and obey the requests of the supervising adult/s at all times
- Speak politely and quietly
- Be courteous
- Allow others to enjoy their excursion undisturbed
- Care for all equipment used on the excursion
- Leave an excursion area neat and tidy
- Remain with, or return to their supervisory adult when requested
- Wear sun protection (hat and sunscreen)
- Carry their personal equipment/ bags themselves

#### Supervisory Adults Responsibilities

The school, teachers, and supervisory adult must ensure that:

- All children going on the excursion must have permission notes
- Children are reminded about the rules, before each excursion
- Children are reminded to take their hat and apply sunscreen, if required
- Incidents while on excursion need to be documented (includes misbehaviour)
- At least one supervisory adult must have current first aid qualifications and carry a First aid kit.

#### Misbehaviour on Excursions

If a child disrupts an excursion or breaks the safety rules, they will not be allowed to attend the next two excursions.

## Grace and Courtesy Policy

In accepting our responsibility for the optimum educational development of every student at Elonera, we recognise the need to create the best possible learning environment and social climate.

The school recognises that there may, at times, be the need for a series of sanctions based on Montessori principles that endeavour to specify behavioural approaches in a variety of situations. This must be done in order to provide mutual understanding between the parents, staff and students regarding any corrective action the school may be required to take.

### INNER DISCIPLINE

The development of inner discipline in a child is the goal in a Montessori education. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organised in an orderly, logical manner. Children choose work, which they are capable of doing and are free to do without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline, which may be present in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group allows the younger children to emulate the older children's more mature behaviour.

### POSITIVE APPROACHES TO DISCOURTEOUSNESS

The positive model of grace and courtesy within a Montessori setting is self-discipline (where concentration, focus and independent learning happen without contention or interruption). Children are respected and discourtesies are handled with positive responses, including:

- The actions of a child are discussed, not the personality.
- Opportunities are provided for the child to express and define his/her feelings.
- The teacher sets the tone for bringing the child into harmony by avoiding harsh words and sudden reprimands.

### DEFINING DISCOURTESY AND CONSEQUENCES

#### **Minor Discourtesy**

Behaviour or general classroom disruption (such as silliness, minor hitting, taking others' work, repetitive noise, copying behaviour, making a fuss and the like), that interferes with the orderly educational process.

The teacher manages this kind of behaviour by gentle direction - parents will be contacted if it is considered to be a repetitive form leading to other problems.

**Serious Discourtesy** is behaviour that results in property destruction, wilful defiance, or endangering others. Such behaviour may be divided into two categories - NON-CONTACT and CONTACT

**Serious Discourtesy (Non-Contact)** is seen as refusal to do work, constantly interfering verbally with another's work, bad language and the like.

The Procedure the Teacher follows:

- Firstly, the child is reminded that the behaviour is unacceptable.
- If the offence is repeated the child is given "time-out", in a temporary chair near the teacher, to consider their behaviour.

If it is repeated, action is taken by the teacher and the parents will be informed. **Parents will then be invited to attend consultation, at this stage, with the teachers** with a view to solving the behavioural problem in a mutually supportive way.

If the child does not modify behaviour and continues to be disruptive, parents will be asked to a second consultation with the teacher. In this instance, and where appropriate, the child should also attend the first part of the consultation and be informed of the seriousness of the behaviour.

In the event of inappropriate language, depending on the seriousness of the language used, parents may be asked to pick up their child immediately.

*Action taken may be the withdrawal of the child from the school for a "cooling-off" period where the child is told that he/she is being given time to consider his/her behaviour away from the school environment.* If this does not work, the parents and the teachers may then choose to look at assistance outside the school, if necessary.

This process will be monitored and further action may be necessary if there is no change in the child's behaviour. *There may be a need to reconsider the child's ability to fit into the Montessori system.* Action at this stage will be determined by the teacher, in consultation with the Head of School, following the above-mentioned process.

**Serious Discourtesy (Contact) - is seen as out-of-control behaviour, hitting and kicking, temper tantrums, throwing objects, damaging students' work or school property or harmful hitting and the like**

The Procedure the Teacher follows:

Firstly, the child will be removed from the immediate problem and told that his/her parents are being informed. Parents will then be asked to attend an interview with the teacher to try and solve the behavioural problem in a constructive way. There should be regular contact between the parents and teacher during the following period to monitor improvement in the student.

If the child does not modify behaviour and continues to be disruptive, parents will be asked to a second consultation with the teacher. In this instance, the child should also attend the first part of the consultation and be informed of the seriousness of the behaviour. *Action taken may be the withdrawal of the child from the school for a "cooling-off" period where the child is told that he/she is being given time to consider his/her behaviour away from the school environment.* If this does not work, the parents and the teachers may then choose to look at assistance outside the school, if necessary.

A third occurrence constitutes serious disruption to the welfare of the school and indicates an involvement by the Head of School. *At this stage, there exists a real need to consider the child's ability to fit into the Montessori system.* Action will be determined by the teachers, in consultation with the Head of School. Following the above-mentioned process, action may be necessary to terminate the child's enrolment at the school.

Any damage to school property will become the responsibility of the offending child's parents and they will be expected to meet the cost of the damage.

All misbehaviour will be documented by the teachers and details will be available to parents, upon request.

### REPORTS OF OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR BY THE CHILD

Offending behaviour should be reported to the teachers in the first instance.

If a child reports to their parents that they have been hurt by another child during school time, parents are requested to contact the teacher. The teacher is in the best position to document and deal with such occurrences.

Parents are requested **not to take action** by directly contacting parents of the "other" child. There may be a situation where there is a disagreement between two children that escapes the attention of the teacher. Parents should contact the teacher and rely on the teacher's judgement in assessing the nature of the incident and work with the teacher in evaluating the situation.

### PROCEDURE FOR ASSESSING BEHAVIOUR DURING THE ENROLMENT PERIOD

All new students enrolling at Elonera are placed on a mutually agreed four-week trial period. This period enables **both the parents and the school** to gauge the compatibility between the child and the school. This period also allows the child to make an individual judgement about staying at the school.

During this period, **the teacher** will assess the child's "settling-in" process. After the first two weeks, the parents will be asked to attend a consultation with the teacher to discuss their child and any problems he/she may be experiencing. After the third week, another meeting may be requested to further assess the child's progress.

In the event of any problems, both the parents and the teachers have time to assess whatever action may be necessary to help the child settle into the school environment. The teachers may grant an extension of the trial period.

Should it be determined by the teachers that the child does not appear to be compatible with the school then the child will not be offered a place.

All members of Elonera's community are asked to sign the "Charter of Respect" document upon enrolment of the child. Parents do so upon enrolment and staff and students do so at the start of each school year. This signed document is then displayed in each classroom for the remainder of the year.

## Bullying and Harassment Policy

### Statement:

The school will minimise risk of bullying and harassment to provide a safe and supportive learning environment. Teachers must take all necessary steps to ensure that classrooms and playgrounds are free from all forms of harassment and discrimination. They must help students to develop ethical and safe behaviours when using digital technologies.

**Background:** Bullying is more than physical violence. Teasing, exclusion, put-downs and sarcasm are also forms of bullying. Research confirms that bullying not only brings problems for the victim, whose self-esteem is undermined, but for bullies who continue to misuse their power and become 35 to 40% more likely to have criminal convictions as adults. Bullying takes on a different form for girls in that isolation is its most frequent form. Boys are much more likely to be physical or aggressive in their bullying.

*Myth:* victim is at fault and must learn to deal with situation, bystanders have no role and bullies are an easily recognisable type.

*Students more likely to be marginalised:* disability issues; non-English speaking background issues; same sex attraction issues; rural and remote issues; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

**Relevant Legislation:** Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000; Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000; Anti-Discrimination Act (NSW); Disability Act

**Key Resources:** Child and Youth Health: [www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com); <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters>.

### Procedures:

To minimise risk of bullying and harassment the school should:

- **Define bullying:**
  1. a **repetitive** attack causing distress not only at the time of the attack, but also by the threat of future attacks
  2. involving and **imbalance of power**
  3. its nature may be:
    - **verbal** – name-calling, put-downs, threatening
    - **physical** – hitting, tripping, poking, punching, kicking, throwing objects, stealing
    - **social** – ignoring, hiding, ostracising
    - **psychological** – stalking, dirty looks, spreading rumours, hiding and /or damaging possessions.
    - **communication when using digital technology**– use of text messages, internet, telephone
- **Not tolerate bullying or harassment**
- **Teachers and parents should not perpetuate stigma or verbal bullying via the use of sarcasm, intimidation or public humiliation**
- **Teachers and parents should not ignore racist remarks, homophobic or gender-based put-downs**
- **A climate of social justice should prevail** so that children feel that it is OK to tell
- **Anti-bullying practices need a broad base of support**
- **Classroom discussions** about bullying can reinforce skills, values and strategies needed for students to deal effectively with instances of harassment or bullying.

- **Enhance School Culture**
  - Build caring relationships
  - Set high and achievable expectations
  - Provide opportunities for participation and contribution
  
- **Classroom climate – teacher advice**
  - Teacher as a role-model and guardian
  - Climate orientated versus task orientated
  - Protect and model respect for rights and responsibilities of class members
  - Develop rapport
  - Know you can engage common sense
  - Don't be a doormat - Practice effective discipline
  - Resist labelling your students
  - Encourage parents to approach you with any concerns
  - Understand your student's technology profile, digital literacy, on-line behaviour, personal and peer safety and your pivotal role to help students to minimise risks.
  - Discuss with students ethical and safe behaviours when using digital technology
  
- **Home climate – parent advice**
  - Parent as a role-model and guardian
  - Protect and model respect for rights and responsibilities of peers
  - Enforce no put-downs rule, promote inclusion and participation
  - Be helpful, firm and consistent
  - Support rules that protect students' rights to learn
  - Resist labelling your children
  - Discuss any concerns with the teacher, and together take informed and concerted action to support those involved
  - Parents may be key informants of negative relationships involving their child and others
  - Understand your child's technology profile, digital literacy, on-line behaviour, personal and peer safety and your legal obligations to minimise risks.
  - Discuss ethical and safe behaviours when using digital technology
  
- **Practice to be outlined** in staff handbook, parent handbook, and the classroom rules and responsibilities.
  
- **Practice to be reinforced** in class meetings, members (parents and teachers) meetings and newsletters.
  
- **Monitor and evaluate effectiveness** at staff meetings, discussion at parent /teacher meetings
  
- **Strategies link with other practices**
  - **Playground** - design, layout, supervision, activities available
  - **Curriculum** - integrated; themes, resources
  - **Staff** - training and skills for early identification; strategies; support
  - **Pastoral Care** – staff, peers, mediators, administrator support
  - **Social Skills** – identification; consistent sanctions; support; anger management
  - **Peer support** – trained peer support leaders, and mediators

- **Internet use** – monitoring appropriate usage in class

## Medical Conditions Policy

**Statement:** The school will minimise risk by providing a safe and supportive environment for all children and families. Staff will be trained and supported to respond to and manage medical conditions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, staff and visitors.

**Background:** We will support children and families with acute, existing or emerging medical conditions and needs in a safe, secure and confidential environment. Some of the medical conditions might include but are not limited to asthma, diabetes, allergies, anaphylaxis, etc.

**Relevant Legislation:** Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998(NSW); Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (NSW); Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW); Disability Discrimination Act 1992; *Privacy Act 1988*

**Key resources:** *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services, 2013*

### National Quality Standards

<b>QA2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
	<b>2.2</b>	Each child is protected.

### National Regulations

<b>90</b>	Medical conditions policy
<b>91</b>	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
<b>92</b>	Medication record
<b>93</b>	Administration of medication
<b>94</b>	Exception of authorised requirements – anaphylaxis or asthma emergency
<b>95</b>	Procedure for administration of medication
<b>96</b>	Self-administration of medication

### EYLF

<b>LO3</b>	<b>Children are happy, healthy, safe and connected to others</b>
	Educators promote continuity of children's personal health and hygiene by sharing ownership of routines and schedules with children, families and the community
	Educators discuss health and safety issues with children and involve them in developing guidelines to keep the environment safe for all.

### Before Enrolment

1. Families are asked to provide medical information about their child to ensure that the school is aware of any existing medical conditions, including anaphylaxis, asthma, allergies, food intolerances, etc.
2. The enrolment officer will input this information into the student database and update our *Allergies and Special Needs List*. This is updated each term and distributed to all staff.
3. If a child has anaphylaxis or asthma, their doctor must provide the school with their management plan.
4. If a child has another medical condition (other than asthma or anaphylaxis) a Medical Management and Minimisation Plan must be filled out with the Teacher during the orientation interview with the family, before the child starts. This form must be updated as the needs change, or reviewed yearly. This form is discussed by the whole team that works with the child.

5. All management plans (asthma, anaphylaxis and Medical Management and Minimisation Plan) must be displayed in the classroom environment for all staff (including casual staff).
6. Families are to be directed to the School Website where they can find a copy of this policy.

### **On going**

1. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure all medication (asthma puffers, anaphylaxis EpiPen's, anti-histamines; to be in transparent, sealed container or bag, clearly labelled with the child's name and up to date).
2. It is the responsibility of the Teacher to ensure that the medication is kept in an accessible location, known to casual staff and out of reach of children.
3. Teacher's check the use by date of any medication (asthma inhaler, epi-pen, etc) at the beginning of each term.
4. Parents will be reminded by the school to provide updated medical information at the beginning of each school year.
5. If an educator becomes aware of an emerging medical condition, or if a current condition changes, the Teacher/Directress member should meet with the family to develop a Medical Management and Minimisation Plan.
6. All staff are to maintain their First Aid Certificate (every 3 years) including anaphylaxis and asthma training.

### **Excursions**

1. There is a checklist for all excursions, some items include:
  - Roll with columns for allergies, anaphylaxis and other medical conditions highlighted
  - All asthma and anaphylaxis management plans.
  - All Medical Management and Minimisation plans.
2. All medication is to be collected on the camp/ excursion by the teacher and kept in a clear plastic container. The medication is to be clearly labelled with the child's name and dosage as per the Medication Authority Form.
3. The only exception to the above is for asthma puffers and EpiPen's which the student are required to have on their persons at all times if the student is of suitable age and maturity.

### **Administration of Medication**

1. Only teachers and Early Childhood educators are to administer medication according to the administration of Medication Authority Form.
2. If a student has been given verbal permission to take a medication that has not been provided on the Medication Authority Form (i.e. from the anaphylaxis or asthma action plan, or due to a medical emergency), this is to be recorded on the Medication Register. Parents must be contacted at once.
3. Parents may give verbal permission for children to be administered Panadol, this must be recorded on the Medication Register.
4. No child is allowed to self-administer medication, all children must take the medication in the presence of a teacher.
5. The only exception to the above is where the student is of suitable age and maturity (for example high school children).

## Sun Protection Policy

<p><b>Policy:</b> Elonera Montessori School will endeavour to protect children from the dangerous and adverse effects of sun exposure.</p> <p><b>Background:</b> Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world and sun exposure during childhood significantly increases the risk of developing skin cancer and melanoma. Sand, concrete and water can reflect up to 85% of sunlight and intensify exposure to ultraviolet radiation.</p> <p>Early Childhood Services and Schools play a vital role in the long-term prevention of skin cancer and in teaching healthy sun habits to young children and are responsible for preventing and reducing the risks from excess sun exposure while children are in their care.</p> <p><b>Relevant Legislation:</b> Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998; Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010; Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011; Work Health and Safety Act 2011.</p> <p><b>Key Resources:</b> Sunsmart Program Cancer Council NSW <a href="http://www.cancer.org.au">www.cancer.org.au</a></p>
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### National Quality Standards

QA2	2.1	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
	2.2	Each child is protected.
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
QA3	3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.

### National Regulations

100	Risk assessment for excursions
113	Outdoor space-natural environment Regulation
114	Outdoor space-shade Regulation
168	Policies and procedures (2)(a)(ii) – Sun protection

### Procedures:

#### Scheduling outdoor Activities

- Where possible, we schedule outdoor activities (assemblies, sport etc) outside peak UV times:
  - April to September 10am – 2pm
  - October to March 11am – 3pm (daylight saving time)
  - June and July when index is below 3 there is no limit on outdoor timing.
- We consider all sun protection measures when planning outdoor activities and excursions.

#### Shade

- The school community is committed to providing shade (trees, built and portable shade structures etc) in areas where students gather – such as eating, outdoor teaching and popular play areas.
- We consult with the school community about future plans for shade.
- Students are encouraged to use the shade available when outside.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning all outdoor activities and excursions.

- Activities are set up in the shaded areas and are moved from time to time during the day to maximise the shade opportunities.

### **Hats**

- Students are encouraged to wear sun-safe hats that protect the face, neck and ears when outside. Recommended sun-safe hats include legionnaire, broad-brimmed and bucket hats. Baseball caps are not recommended.
- Students who do not have a sun-safe hat are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.
- Hats are required for all school excursions.
- We discuss the merits of hats and sun-protection with the children.
- Sun-safe hats are required when UV is 3 or above.

### **Clothing**

- Staff and children are asked to wear sun-safe clothing.
- Sun-safe clothing includes encouraging shirts with collars or covered necklines, sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts, and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.
- Children that do not have sun-safe clothing will be encouraged to play in the shaded areas.
- We discuss the merits of sun-safe clothing with the children.
- Sun-safe clothing are required when UV is 3 or above.

### **Sunscreen**

- For School aged children SPF 30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen is available for staff and students.
- Children in the Pre-school must wear sunscreen when outside.
- We encourage the use of sunscreen for all staff and children.
- Where possible, we apply sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outdoors.
- Students and teachers are encouraged to reapply sunscreen every 2 hours when outdoors for extended periods.
- We discuss the merits of sunscreen and sun-protection with the children.
- Sunscreen is stored in a cool dry place and the use by date is monitored at the start of each term, along with the first aid kit check.

### **Role modelling of staff**

Staff are asked to role model good sun protection behaviours when outside. This includes:

- Wearing sun-safe hats, clothing and sunglasses.
- Applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum water-resistant sunscreen.
- Where possible, seeking shade.
- Having positive conversations with the children about sun protection.

### **Curriculum**

- Teachers include sun protection principles in teaching programs for all year levels.

### **Informing the school community**

- Sun protection information is regularly promoted to the school community through newsletters, noticeboards, online, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies and on student enrolment.

### **Review**

- School parent body and staff will regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the Sun Protection Policy.
- The school's Sun Protection Policy will be updated and submitted to Cancer Council NSW once every three years to maintain SunSmart status.

## Infectious Diseases

**Policy:** Elonera Montessori school will meet the requirements of NSW Health regarding the management of infectious diseases, immunisation and processes for managing potential outbreaks.

**Background:** Elonera Montessori will aim to minimise the spread of potentially infectious diseases between children, and centre staff, by excluding children who may have an infectious disease or are too ill to attend the centre and reporting any infectious disease outbreak to the local Public Health Unit.

**Relevant Legislation:** National Regulations 77 Health, hygiene and safe food practices 85 Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures 86 Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness 87 Incident, injury, trauma and illness record 88 Infectious diseases 90 Medical conditions policy 162 Health information to be kept in enrolment record

**Key Resources:** [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au); *Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*, published by the National Health and Medical Research Council ([www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)) and publications by organisations such as the Cancer Council ([www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)), KidSafe ([www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)), Red Nose ([www.rednose.com.au](http://www.rednose.com.au)), *Staying Healthy in ChildCare*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition ([www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf)).

### Procedures:

#### Prevention:

- Spot and routine cleaning by educators
- Effective hand washing practices
- Identifying and excluding sick children and educators
- Effective handling, storage and disposal or washing of soiled items
- Ensure all staff and persons working at the centre conform to all infectious disease policies.

#### Immunisations

- Immunisation status is asked for upon enrolment across the school.
- All new enrolments to Nido and Stage 1 must be fully vaccinated, and proof provided to the school, approved medical exemptions may apply.
- The administration staff are responsible for maintaining updated immunisation records.
- Educators are encouraged to have up to date vaccinations for the following:
  - Hepatitis A
  - Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
  - Varicella, if they have not previously been infected with chickenpox.
  - Pertussis. An adult booster dose is especially important for those educators caring for the youngest children who are not fully vaccinated.
  - Although the risk is low, educators who care for children with intellectual disabilities should seek advice about Hepatitis B immunisation if the children are unimmunised.
- Elonera will provide educators and staff with information about diseases that can be prevented by immunisation through in-service training sessions, fact sheets and the *Staying Healthy in Childcare* publications.

### **To reduce the spread of infectious diseases, Elonera will:**

- exclude from care and notify the local Public Health Unit and provide details of any known or suspected persons with any of the following vaccine preventable diseases:
  - Diphtheria
  - Poliomyelitis
  - German Measles
  - Tetanus
  - Measles
  - Mumps
  - Whooping Cough
- exclude a child or staff member with any of the following symptoms which might indicate they have a potentially serious illness:
  - vomiting,
  - rash, especially if purplish or haemorrhaging spots (possibly meningococcal) or blistering (possibly staphylococcal),
  - severe headache,
  - stiffness of the neck,
  - aversion to light (photophobia),
  - drowsiness or any unusual state of consciousness or behaviour,
  - convulsion or epileptic seizure.
  - severe pain anywhere (including toothache),
  - swelling of the lips, mouth, tongue, throat, neck or airways,
  - hives,
  - asthma, wheezing, or any difficulty breathing,
- exclude a child or staff member with any of the following symptoms which might indicate they have an infectious illness:
  - diarrhoea,
  - generalised rash,
  - enlarged or tender lymph glands,
  - severe cough with fever,
  - head lice, nits, scabies, ringworm, impetigo, or mouth ulcers not yet treated,
  - mouth ulcers due to herpes simplex virus or coxsackie virus,
  - infection or yellow or green discharge of the eyes or ears,
  - excessive yellow or green discharge of the nose,
  - if any other infectious disease is suspected.
- exclude children, staff, volunteers or visitors who have infectious diseases other than listed above in accordance with the NHMRC recommended Minimum periods of exclusion, please see *table 1.1 in Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 5th edition*.
- exclude students who are not adequately immunised for the various infectious diseases according to the protocols that are set out by NSW Health.

### **Steps if infection has been identified:**

1. Isolate the child from other children. Make sure the child is comfortable and is supervised by a staff member.
2. Contact the child's parents or, if they are unable, the contact person for emergencies as listed on the enrolment form. Inform the parents or contact person of the child's condition, or suspected condition, and ask that the child be picked up from the centre as soon as possible.

3. Ensure all bedding, towels, clothing, etc., which has been used by the child is disinfected – these articles should be washed separately and, if possible, aired in the sun to dry.
4. Ensure all contact toys are separated and disinfected.
5. Ensure all eating utensils are separated and sterilised.
6. Provide information in relevant community languages when required.
7. Inform all families of the presence of an infectious disease in the centre.

**Families:**

- The centre will ensure confidentiality of any personal or health related information obtained by centre staff in relation to any children, children's parents and families.
- If a child or staff member has been unable to attend the centre because of an infectious illness, when the child or staff member has fully recovered the family or staff member they may be asked to obtain a certificate from their doctor which specifically states the child or staff member is not infectious and is able to attend care or return to work.
- Parents/Guardians are to be informed that it is their responsibility to inform the service immediately of an infectious disease that has been discovered in their family. This is important to minimise the risk of spread of the illness.

**Elonera will:**

- Agree to the requests that we receive from NSW Health regarding health alerts that deal with infectious diseases and immunisation.
- Regularly check NSW Health provides for up to date information on their website on infectious diseases, and exclusion policies for schools.
- Ensure that contact information for parents, external service providers and emergency services is readily available if the school was required to close the school.
- Maintain privacy of staff, children and families. If the Nominated Supervisor is told that a child or child's Parent/Guardian or member of the family is infected with HIV, or hepatitis C, the information must remain confidential, unless that person has given their consent to inform educators and other staff.

# Recommended minimum exclusion periods

ADAPTED FROM STAYING HEALTHY | 5TH EDITION | 2013

Condition	Exclusion of case	Exclusion of contacts <sup>a</sup>
Campylobacter infection	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Candidiasis (thrush)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	Not excluded	Not excluded
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from the eyes has stopped, unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis	Not excluded
Cryptosporidium	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Diarhoea (No organism identified)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Fungal infections of the skin or nails (e.g. ringworm, tinea)	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate antifungal treatment	Not excluded
Giardiasis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Glandular fever (mononucleosis, Epstein Barr virus [EBV] infection)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until the person has received appropriate antibiotic treatment for at least 4 days	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice
Head lice (pediculosis)	Not excluded if effective treatment begins before the next day at the education and care service. The child does not need to be sent home immediately if head lice are detected	Not excluded
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received and until at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about vaccinating or treating children in the same room or group
Hepatitis B	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hepatitis C	Not excluded	Not excluded
Herpes simplex (cold sores, fever blisters)	Not excluded if the person can maintain hygiene practices to minimise the risk of transmission. If the person cannot comply with these practices (e.g. because they are too young), they should be excluded until the sores are dry. Sores should be covered with a dressing, where possible	Not excluded
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	Not excluded. If the person is severely immune compromised, they will be vulnerable to other people's illnesses	Not excluded
Human parvovirus B19 (fifth disease, erythema infectiosum, slapped cheek syndrome)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hydatid disease	Not excluded	Not excluded
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has started. Any sores on exposed skin should be covered with a watertight dressing	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Listeriosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Measles	Exclude for 4 days after the onset of the rash	Immunised and immune contacts are not excluded For non-immunised contacts, contact a public health unit for specialist advice. All immunocompromised children should be excluded until 14 days after the appearance of the rash in the last case
Meningitis (viral)	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Meningococcal infection	Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about antibiotics and/or vaccination for people who were in the same room as the case
Molluscum contagiosum	Not excluded	Not excluded
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
Norovirus	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours	Not excluded
Pertussis (whooping cough)	Exclude until 5 days after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment, or for 21 days from the onset of coughing	Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about excluding non-vaccinated and incompletely vaccinated contacts, or antibiotics
Pneumococcal disease	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Roseola	Not excluded	Not excluded
Ross River virus	Not excluded	Not excluded
Rotavirus infection	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of the rash	Not excluded
Salmonellosis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Scabies	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate treatment	Not excluded
Shigellosis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Streptococcal sore throat (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well	Not excluded
Toxoplasmosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Tuberculosis (TB)	Exclude until medical certificate is produced from the appropriate health authority	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about screening, antibiotics or specialist TB clinics
Varicella (chickenpox)	Exclude until all blisters have dried—this is usually at least 5 days after the rash first appeared in non-immunised children, and less in immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise, not excluded
Viral gastroenteritis (viral diarrhoea)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Worms	Exclude if loose bowel motions are occurring. Exclusion is not necessary if treatment has occurred	Not excluded

<sup>a</sup> The definition of 'contacts' will vary according to the disease—refer to the specific fact sheet for more information.

<sup>b</sup> If the cause is unknown, possible exclusion for 48 hours until cause is identified. However, educators and other staff who have a food handling role should always be excluded until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours.

Adapted from SA Health Communicable Disease Control Branch: <http://www.dhsa.gov.au/pdfs/branches/branch-communicable.htm>. Note that exclusion advice is consistent with Series of National Guidelines (SoNGs) where available.

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## Delivery and Collection Procedure

**Statement:** This policy specifies the drop off and collection of children to and from the service. It ensures that children are protected and supervised at all times when arriving at the service or leaving. It ensures that the educators and parents are aware of the procedures in place if a child has not been picked up by end of the day, and the appropriate communication steps to follow.

**Background:** Elonera has different start and end times for some of the services. This policy is designed to facilitate the parent and staff understanding of the procedures to follow. There are contingency plans designed to protect and support the children, staff and families.

**Relevant Legislation:** National Regulations: 84 – Awareness of child protection law; 99 – Delivery and collection of children; 157 – Access for parents; and 158 – Children’s attendance record to be kept by approved provider 168 – Education and care service must have policies and procedures.

**Key Resources:** ACECQA, National Regulations, EYLF and NQS (QA2, 2.2 – Each child is protected), Child Protection Policy

### Procedures:

- Children are to be in care during the operational or booked hours only. The safety of children and educators is of primary importance.
- Times recorded are taken from the clock displayed at the centre.
- The operating times are as follows:

Service	Opening time	Fee structure
Long Day Care (Nido)	8:00 am to 4:00 pm	\$108/ day (CCS approved)
Morning OOSH (Primary Students)	8:00 am to 8:45 am	\$6.50/ session (CCS approved)
Morning OOSH	8:30 am to 8:45 am	No charge
Stage 1	8:00 am to 3:20* pm	Term fee – see fee structure
Stage 2/3/4/5	8:45 am to 3:00** pm	Term fee – see fee structure
Stage 6	8:45 am to 3:15 pm	Term fee – see fee structure
OOSH	3:00 pm to 4:00 pm	\$14.50/ session (CCS approved)
OOSH	3:00 pm to 5:30 pm	\$29.00/ session (CCS approved)
School Holiday Program (selected days only)	8:00 am to 5:30 pm	\$89.00/ day (CCS approved)

\*Children in Stage 1 will be signed into OOSH at 3:20 if they have not already been picked up.

\*\*Children in Stages 2,3,4 and 5 will be signed into OOSH at 3:15 OOSH if they have not already been picked up.

### Drop off/ delivery

- No child can be dropped off before the opening time of the service.
- Children in Nido and Stage 1 must be signed in by an authorised pickup person and the time recorded. If the authorised pickup person forgets to sign, the Authorised supervisor must sign and have the parent co-sign at the next available opportunity.
- Children are encouraged to say good morning to their class teacher and shake hands at the beginning of the day.
- The parents should say goodbye each morning.
- Children arriving in Morning OOSH will be signed in by the supervisor and the time recorded.

- Children from Stage 2 and 3 sign themselves into afternoon OOSH under the supervisors' supervision.
- Children from Stage 1 are signed into OOSH by a Stage 1 educator.
- If the child requires medication for the day, this should be handed to the supervisor with the required documentation (available from the Office).

Service	Start time
Long Day Care (Nido), Stage 1	8:00 am
Morning OOSH, School Holiday Program	8:00 am
Stage 2 and 3	8:45 am
Stage 4/5/6	8:15 am

### Pickup/ collection

- **Parents are asked to plan sufficient time to speak to staff, dress their child, collect the child's artwork, clothing, bag, food, and leave the centre by the closing time.**
- Children are encouraged to say goodbye to their class teacher and shake hands at the end of the day.
- Children in Nido and Stage 1 must be signed out by an authorised pickup person and the time recorded. If the authorised pickup person forgets to sign the Authorised supervisor must sign and have the parent co-sign at the next available opportunity.
- Children leaving school from Stages 2 and 3 will wait with the classroom teacher until the teacher has seen the authorised pickup person. They will then shake the child's hand and say good afternoon.
- **Parents are encouraged to actively supervise their child from the point of collection and leave the site quickly to minimise traffic and congestion for the school community and our neighbours.**
- Children being collected from OOSH will be signed out by the authorised pickup person and the time recorded.
- If a child leaving school from any stage (including 4-6) has not been picked up by 3:15pm, they are required to attend OOSH
- Children from Stage 3/4/5/6 may leave with an older sibling/take the bus/ride a bike/ etc if an *Alternate Pick-Up* form has been completed.
- If the person picking up the child is not known to staff they will be required to provide photo identification (e.g. a drivers licence) and this information will be checked with Eloner's database (Kidsoft). If the person is not on the authorised pickup list, the parents or guardians will be contacted. If they do not respond the child must stay on the premises.
- If an attempt is made to take the child or an individual leaves with a child when they are not authorised the police will be called using 000.
- Parents can give verbal permission for a child to be collected by someone not on the authorised contact list, this person will be required to show photo identification and parents will be asked to fill out a new authorisation to collect form.
- If an authorised pickup person appears unwell or intoxicated the educator will advise that they make alternative arrangements, such as a taxi or another authorised pickup person. If they refuse and leave with the child the staff member will report the circumstances to the Head of School, Deputy and police. They will document the incident.

Service	Close time
Long Day Care (Nido)	4:00 pm
Stage 1	3:20 pm

Stage 2/3/4/5	3:00 pm
Stage 6	3:15 pm
OOSH	5:30 pm
School Holiday Program (selected days only)	5:30 pm

### Late collection

- Two educators will remain with the child(ren) at all times.
- Parents will need to advise Elonera if they will be collecting their child(ren) late. This prevents both the educator and the child from worrying.
- If a parent is unable to collect their child(ren) they must make alternative arrangements and advise Elonera.
- A late fee will be charged per child if not collected within their booked hours prior to the service closing.
- The late fee covers the cost of the educators' overtime to remain with the child.
- A *Late Payment Form* will be completed by the staff member for the parents to sign.

Pickup time	Late fee
1 to 15 minutes after the service closing	\$26
16 to 30 minutes after the service closing	\$52
31 to 45 minutes after the service closing	\$78
46 to 60 minutes after the service closing	\$104

- If child(ren) are not collected within one hour of the closing time of the service and no contact has been made with any family members the Police and/ or Family Services will be called. The Centre Coordinator is to contact either the Head of School or the Deputy after.

Time	Roles and responsibilities of staff
At closing time	Contact parent or other authorised pickups. Record in diary.
15 minutes after closing time	Contact parent or other authorised pickups. Contact emergency contacts.
30 minutes after closing time	Educators to inform Head of School or Deputy.
1 hour after closing	Head of School or Deputy to be informed. Police/ Child Services (132111) to be informed.

### Access for Parents

- When a child is enrolled and being cared for by Elonera the parents of this child are allowed onsite at any time during the day, unless the parent poses a threat to other children or staff, or this request directly contravenes a Court Order.

### Other permissible ways for a child to leave the service

- If the child is on an excursion with the service.
- If there is a medical emergency and the child requires medical, hospital or ambulance treatment, in all situations the emergency contacts will be informed if possible.
- Other emergencies.

## Child Protection Policy

**Policy Statement:** The safety, protection and well-being of all students are fundamentally important to Elonera Montessori School. Staff and the school, contractors and volunteers have obligations that include:

- A duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students
- Obligations under child protection legislation and
- Obligations under work health and safety legislation

**Rationale:** Child protection is a community responsibility.

**Legislation:** There are three pieces of legislation in NSW:

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)

### Your Obligations to report:

The school requires you to report any concern you may have about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person to the Head of School.

All teachers, classroom assistants and child care workers are mandatory reporters. The online NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide (May 2013) provides definitions of abuse as well as decision making trees to assist you in the following areas of abuse:

Physical, Neglect (Supervision, shelter, food, medical care, mental health care, habitual absence from school, sexual abuse, psychological harm, carer concern, danger to self and others).

**You can make a report directly to Family & Community Services on 13 36 27.**

### Other School Policies that relate to Child Protection:

You need to be aware of other school policies (but not limited to) the:

- Charter of Respect
- Code of Conduct
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Grace and Courtesy Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Blueprint of the Fundamental Values and Beliefs

### Legislative Amendments:

Provisions proclaimed on 24 January 2010 (regarding Children and Young Persons Care and Protection Act 1998) that relate to schools include:

- Raising the mandatory reporting threshold from “risk of harm” to “risk of significant harm”

- New grounds for risk of significant harm (educational neglect and cumulative impact)
- Child Wellbeing Units in government reporting agencies (we access the AIS as non-govt agency)
- Provisions allowing agencies to exchange information relating to child safety, welfare or wellbeing (proclaimed on 30 October 2009)

Working with children checks amendments. The following employment categories require background checks as of 31 March 2010: People who manage children's services; contractors whose work involves direct unsupervised contact with children; high-risk volunteers. New Employees and volunteers must apply for a Working with Children Check online at [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au).

You are required to deal with all reports regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student with confidentiality and only disclose it to the Head of School and any other person the Head nominates. Failure to do so will be a breach of this policy.

#### **Further information:**

**[www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au)**

**PART A: The Care and Protection Act** (mandatory reporting of children at risk of significant harm).

#### **Reporting to Community Services**

A mandatory reporter must, where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child (under 16 years of age) is at risk of significant harm, report to Family & Community Services as soon as practicable, the name of the child and the grounds for suspecting that the child is at risk of significant harm.

In addition, while not mandatory, the School considers that a report should also be made to Family & Community Services where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a young person (16 or 17 years of age) is at risk of significant harm and there are current concerns about the safety, welfare and well-being of the young person.

#### **Reasonable grounds**

'Reasonable grounds' refers to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm, based on:

- first hand observations of the child, young person or family
- what the child, young person, parent or another person has disclosed
- what can reasonably be inferred based on professional training and/or experience.

#### **Significant harm**

'at risk of significant harm' occurs if current concerns of any one or more of the following circumstances:

- the child's/young person's basic physical or psychological needs are not/or are at risk of not being met,
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged/or are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child/young person to receive necessary medical care,

- in the case of a child/young person who is required to attend school in accordance with the Education Act 1990 —the parents or caregivers have not arranged/or are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child/young person to receive an education in accordance with that Act,
- the child or young person has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated,
- the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm,
- a parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child or young person that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm,
- the child was the subject of a pre-natal report under section 25 of the Care and Protection Act and the birth mother of the child did not engage successfully with support services to eliminate, or minimise to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk factors that gave rise to the report.

### **Policy definition of significant harm**

What is meant by the phrase 'to a significant extent' is that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent; not minor or trivial, and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child or young person's safety, welfare or well-being.

In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial, and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child after the child's birth.

The significance can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these.

Child is a person under the age of 16 years for the purposes of the Care and Protection Act.

### **Child abuse and neglect**

There are different forms of child abuse. These include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

Neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation.

Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints.

Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.

Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.

Although it is possible for 'one-off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child.

This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Child sexual abuse is a crime.

Child wellbeing concerns are safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns for a child or young person that do not meet the mandatory reporting threshold, risk of significant harm.

Young person means a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years for the purposes of the Care and Protection Act.

**Reporting by the School about these matters to Family & Community Services** and, where necessary, the police, is generally undertaken by the Head of School. This is in accordance with best practice principles and is the expectation of the School.

If you have a concern that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm you should contact the Head of School as soon as possible to discuss whether the case reaches the threshold of 'risk of significant harm' and the steps required to report the matter.

However, if there is an immediate danger to the child or young person and the Head or next most senior member of staff is not contactable you should speak to the Police and/or the Child Protection Helpline directly and then advise the Head of School or next most senior member of staff at the School as soon as possible.

You are not required to, and must not undertake any investigation of the matter yourself.

You are not to inform the parents or caregivers that a report to Family & Community Services has been made.

You are required to deal with the matter confidentially and only disclose it to the persons referred to above or as required to comply with your mandatory reporting obligations. Failure to maintain confidentiality will not only be a breach of this policy, but could expose you to potential civil proceedings for defamation.

## **PART B: The Ombudsman Act**

### **Responsibilities**

Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act requires the heads of non government schools in New South Wales, to notify the NSW Ombudsman of all allegations of reportable conduct by an 'employee' and the outcome of the School's investigation of these allegations.

An 'employee' includes employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience participants, clergy, ministers of religion and instructors of religion who provide pastoral or liturgical services. In this part where there is a reference to an employee it includes all of these persons.

### **The Ombudsman**

- must keep under scrutiny the systems for preventing reportable conduct by employees of non government schools and the handling of, or response to, reportable allegations (including allegations which are exempt from notification) or convictions;
- must receive and assess notifications from non-government schools concerning reportable conduct or reportable convictions;
- is required to oversee or monitor the conduct of investigations by non-government schools into allegations of reportable or reportable convictions;
- must determine whether an investigation that has been monitored has been conducted properly, and whether appropriate action has been taken as a result of the investigation;
- may directly investigate an allegation of reportable conduct or reportable conviction against an employee of a non-government school, or the handling of or response to such a matter (eg arising out of complaints by the person who is the subject of an allegation); and
- may undertake 'own motion' investigations of non-government schools where the Ombudsman considers it appropriate to do so, including where there is evidence of systemic failure or serious conflict of interests.

### **Head of Agency**

The Head of Agency is the Head of the School. Under the Ombudsman Act the Head of Agency must:

- set up systems within their organisation to ensure that they are advised of any allegations of reportable conduct against employees;
- notify the Ombudsman as soon as possible and no later than thirty days after being made aware of an allegation;
- notify the Ombudsman whether or not the School plans to take disciplinary or other action in relation to an employee who is the subject of a reportable allegation or conviction, and the reasons for taking or not taking any such action as soon as practicable; and
- provide the Ombudsman with any documentary and other information as the Ombudsman may from time to time request to assist in the Ombudsman's monitoring of an investigation.

## **Your obligations to report**

You must report any concerns you may have about any other employee engaging in reportable conduct or any allegation of 'reportable conduct' that has been made to you, to the Head of School, including information about yourself. If you are not sure whether the conduct is reportable conduct but consider that it is inappropriate behaviour you must still report it.

You must also report to Head of School if you become aware that an employee has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving reportable conduct. This includes information relating to yourself.

If the allegation involves the Head of School, you are required to report to the Chairman of the School Board.

## **Contact for parents**

The Head of School is the contact point for parents if they wish to report an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee.

## **Definition of reportable conduct**

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence or an offence involving child abuse material);
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child; and
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

*Reportable conduct does not extend to:*

- conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards; or
- the use of physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures; or
- conduct of a class or kind exempted from being reportable conduct by the Ombudsman under section 25CA.

## **Other relevant definitions in relation to reportable conduct**

Behaviour that causes **psychological harm** to a child is behaviour that is obviously or very clearly unreasonable and results in significant harm or trauma to a child. There needs to be a proven causal link between the inappropriate behaviour and the harm, and the harm must be more than transient.

**Child** is a person under the age of 18 years for the purposes of the Ombudsman Act.

**Ill-treatment** captures those circumstances where a person treats a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel manner. The focus is on the alleged conduct rather than the actual effect of the conduct on the child. Ill-treatment can include disciplining or correcting a child in an obviously unreasonable and seriously inappropriate manner; making

excessive and/or degrading demands on a child; hostile use of force towards a child; and/or pattern of hostile or unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, degrading comments or behaviour towards a child.

**Neglect** includes either an action or inaction by a person who has care responsibility towards a child. The nature of the employee's responsibilities provides the context against which the conduct needs to be assessed.

**Supervisory neglect:** An intentional or reckless failure to adequately supervise a child that results in the death of, or significant harm to, a child, or a significantly careless act or failure to act, that involves a gross breach of professional standards, and has the potential to result in the death or significant harm to a child.

**Carer neglect:** Grossly inadequate care that involves depriving a child of the basic necessities of life: such as the provision of food and drink, clothing, critical medical care or treatment, or shelter.

**Failure to protect from abuse:** An obviously or very clearly unreasonable failure to respond to information strongly indicating actual or potential serious abuse of a child.

**Reckless act (or failure to act):** A reckless act, or failure to act, that involves a gross breach of professional standards, and has the potential to result in the death of, or significant harm to, a child.

**Physical Assault** is any act by which a person intentionally inflicts unjustified use of physical force against another. An assault can also occur if a person causes another person to reasonably apprehend that unjustified force is going to be used against them. Even if a person who inflicts physical harm or causes another person to reasonably apprehend physical harm does not actually intend to inflict the harm or cause fear, they may still have committed an assault if they acted 'recklessly'. *'Recklessness' in this context relates to circumstances when the person ought to have known that their actions would cause a person physical harm or cause them to fear injury.*

Assaults can include hitting, pushing, shoving, throwing objects or making threats to physically harm a child.

**PSOA** 'person subject to the allegation'.

**Reportable conviction** means a conviction (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction), in NSW or elsewhere, of an offence involving reportable conduct.

**Sexual Misconduct** has two categories which include:

- crossing professional boundaries, and
- sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour.

The alleged conduct must have been committed against, with or in the presence of a child.

### **Crossing professional boundaries**

Sexual misconduct includes behaviour that can reasonably be construed as involving an inappropriate and overly personal or intimate:

- relationship with;

- conduct towards; or
- focus on;
- a child or young person, or a group of children or young persons.

Our Code of conduct outlines the nature of the professional boundaries which should exist between employees and children/young people.

### **Sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour**

Behaviour involving sexually explicit comments and overtly sexual behaviour can constitute sexual misconduct. Forms of this behaviour can involve crossing professional boundaries such as:

- inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
- comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- sexual exhibitionism
- personal correspondence (including e-mails and text messages) with a child or young person in relation to the adult's sexual feelings for a child or young person
- exposure of children and young people to sexual behaviour of others including display of pornography
- watching children undress. For example, in change rooms or toilets when supervision is not required or justified.

**Sexual Offences** encompasses all criminal offences involving a sexual element that are 'committed against, with or in the presence of a child'. These offences include (but are not limited to) the following:

- indecent assault
- sexual assault
- aggravated sexual assault
- sexual intercourse and attempted sexual intercourse
- possession/ dissemination/ production of child pornography or child abuse material
- using children to produce pornography
- grooming or procuring children under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity
- deemed non-consensual sexual activity on the basis of special care relationships

### **When an allegation of reportable conduct is made:**

#### **Initial steps**

Once an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is received, the Head is required to:

- determine on face value whether it is an allegation of reportable conduct;
- assess whether Family & Community Services or the Police need to be notified (ie, if reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm or criminal offence);

- notify the child's parents (unless to do so would be likely to compromise the investigation or any investigation by Family & Community Services or the Police);
- notify the Ombudsman within 30 days of receiving the allegation;
- carry out a risk assessment and take action to reduce/remove risk, where appropriate; and
- investigate the allegation or appoint someone to investigate the allegation.

### **Investigation principles**

The School will:

- be mindful of the principles of procedural fairness;
- inform the person subject of the allegation (PSOA) of the substance of any allegations made against them and provide them with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations;
- make reasonable enquiries or investigations before making a decision;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- conduct the investigation without unjustifiable delay;
- handle the matter as confidentially as possible; and
- provide appropriate support for all parties including the child/children, witnesses and the PSOA.

### **Investigation steps**

In an investigation the Head of Agency or appointed investigator will generally:

- interview relevant witnesses and gather relevant documentation;
- provide a letter of allegation to the PSOA;
- interview the PSOA;
- consider relevant evidence and make a preliminary finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman guidelines;
- inform the PSOA of the preliminary finding and provide them with an opportunity to respond;
- consider any response provided by the PSOA;
- make a final finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman Guidelines;
- decide on the disciplinary action, if any, to be taken against the PSOA;
- apply the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) Guidelines and decide if the matter is reportable to the OCG; and
- send the final report to the Ombudsman and report to the OCG (where required) (see Part C).

The steps followed in the investigation process will be guided by the "Recommended Protocols for Internal Investigative and Disciplinary Proceedings, 2001" (IEU/AIS) as updated from time to time

The steps outlined above may need to be varied on occasion to meet particular circumstances. For example it may be necessary to take different steps where the matter is also being investigated by Family & Community Services or the NSW Police.

A PSOA may have an appropriate support person with them during the interview process. Such a person is there for support only and as a witness to the proceedings and not as an advocate or to take an active role.

### **Risk management**

Risk management means identifying the potential for an incident or accident to occur and taking steps to reduce the likelihood or severity of its occurrence.

The Head of Agency is responsible for risk management throughout the investigation and will assess risk at the beginning of the investigation, during and at the end of the investigation.

### **Initial risk assessment**

One of the first steps following an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is for the Head of Agency to conduct a risk assessment to identify and minimise the risks to:

- the child(ren) who are the subject of the allegation;
- other children with whom the employee may have contact;
- the PSOA;
- the School, and
- the proper investigation of the allegation.

The factors which will be considered during the risk assessment include:

- the nature and seriousness of the allegations;
- the vulnerability of the child(ren) the PSOA has contact with at work;
- the nature of the position occupied by the PSOA;
- the level of supervision of the PSOA; and
- the disciplinary history or safety of the PSOA and possible risks to the investigation.

The Head of Agency will take appropriate action to minimise risks. This may include the PSOA being temporarily relieved of some duties, being required not to have contact with certain students, or being suspended from duty. When taking action to address any risks identified, the School will take into consideration both the needs of the child(ren) and the PSOA.

*Please Note: A decision to take action on the basis of a risk assessment is not indicative of the findings of the matter. Until the investigation is completed and a finding is made, any action, such as an employee being suspended, is not to be considered to be an indication that the alleged conduct by the employee did occur.*

### **Ongoing Risk Management**

The Head of Agency will continually monitor risk during the investigation including in the light of any new relevant information that emerges.

### **Risk Management at the Conclusion of the Investigation**

At the completion of the investigation, a finding will be made in relation to the allegation and a decision made by the Head of Agency regarding what action, if any, is required in relation to the PSOA, the child(ren) involved and any other parties.

## **What information will be provided to the PSOA?**

The PSOA will be advised:

- (a) that an allegation has been made against them (at the appropriate time in the investigation);
- (b) of the substance of the allegation, or of any preliminary finding and the final finding.

The PSOA does not automatically have the right to:

- (a) know or have confirmed the identity of the person who made the allegation; or
- (b) be shown the content of the Ombudsman notification form or other investigation material that reveals all information provided by other employees or witnesses.

The WWC Act enables a person who has a finding referred to the OCG under the Act to request access to the records held by the School in relation to the finding of misconduct involving children (see Part C section 3).

## **Disciplinary Action**

As a result of the allegations, investigation or final findings, the School may take disciplinary action against the PSOA (including termination of employment).

In relation to any disciplinary action the School will:

- (a) give the PSOA details of the proposed disciplinary action; and
- (b) give the PSOA a reasonable opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

## **Confidentiality**

It is important when dealing with allegations of reportable conduct that the matter be dealt with as confidentially as possible.

The School requires that all parties maintain confidentiality during the investigation including in relation to the handling and storing of documents and records.

Records about allegations of reportable conduct against employees will be kept in a secure area and will be accessible by the Head of School.

No employee may comment to the media about an allegation of reportable conduct.

If you become aware of a breach of confidentiality in relation to a reportable conduct allegation you must advise the Head of School.

## **School Procedures**

**The school does not permit corporal punishment** of students. Never physically punish children by hitting, shaking, pinching; do not use abusive, derogatory, humiliating language or inappropriately punish children (i.e. isolation, withdrawal of food).

**To ensure the safety of long day care and preschool students and to ensure their protection from abuse while in care:**

- i **Ensure that there is one mattress for each child** and children resting can be viewed by all staff in all indoor and outdoor areas.
- i **Ensure the supervision and visibility of children at all times** in all indoor and outdoor areas eg have two staff present or in view when changing pants or washing children.

## The Origin and Theory of Montessori Education

*Lillard, Paula Polk Montessori Today, Schocken Books, New York, 1996 pp3-23*

Maria Montessori concentrated upon the goal of education rather than its methods. She defined this goal as “the development of a complete human being, oriented to the environment and adapted to his or her time, place and culture.” This adaptation involved the capacity to meet new situations and to have the intelligence and courage to transform them when change is needed. Today we might define this goal as the preparation of children to live successfully in *their* world, by which we mean the future, rather than to live primarily in ours, which is the present and the past. Montessori had no preconceived ideas as to how to reach this goal for children... She was a visionary in her faith that the answers which she sought would lead not only to more meaningful lives for individual children but would contribute to humanity itself.

Montessori, a medical doctor and pioneer educator was born in Italy in 1879 and died in 1952. She lived principally in Italy, Spain, India and the Netherlands through a turbulent period of World Wars and revolutions. Although uprooted many times in her life and several times as a refugee, she continued to study children, establish schools, give lectures, and train teachers on three continents. Today, there are Montessori schools in fifty-two countries on six continents and their number continues to expand worldwide.

Montessori based her educational plan upon the observation of children in diverse, cultures and in many countries. Therefore, her discoveries are not actually described as Montessori principles. They are universal principles of human behaviour, which belong to all peoples, societies and cultures. These universal principles are a sound foundation for educational systems everywhere.

Montessori considered her work ongoing. Therefore, she did not attempt to formulate her ideas into a final theory of education. However, in her last three years of life, when she was already in her eighties, she looked back upon her life’s work and presented the essence of her ideas in an overview. Three main theses appear in this summary:

That human development does not occur in a steady, linear ascent but in a series of formative planes

That the complete development of human beings is made possible by their tendencies to certain universal actions in relation to their environment

That the interaction with the environment is most productive in terms of the individual’s development when it is self-chosen and founded upon individual interest.

As a young medical student at the University of Rome in the 1890s, Montessori studied the origin and formation of living beings. When she returned to the University of Rome, after a successful medical career, to study pedagogy, philosophy and anthropology, Montessori continued to be intrigued by development in all forms of life. As she worked with children and young adults in the following years, she gradually recognised that there were specific stages in human formation.

Eventually, she identified four planes of development. There are two planes of childhood, resulting at age twelve in a mature child and two formative stages of adulthood, completed when a young adult reaches maturity at age twenty-four.

These four planes of development form the structural outline of this book (*Montessori Today*). The details specific to each plane are covered in the pertinent chapters. In this introductory chapter, however, I discuss those principles and general information that are germane to all four planes.

Montessori discovered that three things are happening in each of the four formative planes:

- There is a specific goal in development
- There is a readily identified direction being followed to reach that goal
- There are specific sensitivities given to human beings in each period of development which facilitate reaching the definitive goal for that plane.

To highlight the dramatic nature of the child's transitions from one plateau of development to the next, Montessori likened developmental planes to the metamorphoses of a butterfly. The various stages of larva, chrysalis and adult butterfly are so radically different as to be unrecognisable one from the other. So, too, the differences of each plane of human formation are so extraordinary that the young person appears in each as a re-created being. Each of these four planes of development builds upon the last so that faulty development in any one affects the successful completion of all the others.

Montessori observed that regular education takes no heed of these planes of development. In virtually every country in the world, the first stage of development, from birth to age six, is ignored because schooling does not begin until it is over or nearly so. Beginning at the child's sixth year, education follows a steady ascent, becoming increasingly more difficult each year with more and more subjects added, more and more teachers introduced, more and more study and production required, based on outwardly imposed curriculum and tests.

In spite of being a successful student in such a system herself, winning many prizes and honours throughout her schooling and university courses, Montessori saw many errors in this approach. She referred to the school children of her day as so many "dried butterflies" pinned to a display board. She drew a chart depicting the linear ascent of education based as it is upon feeding information to children as if they are blanks to be imprinted upon. She coloured it in an "awful greyness" to reflect the boredom it inflicted on the children. Its underlying assumption is that intelligence increases with age.

In contrast Montessori drew a chart reflecting the actual development of children. It shows that in each plane there is an emergence or rebirth of development that reaches a peak and then declines. It emphasises the uniformity and regularity of human development in this regard.

Montessori believed that schooling should correspond to the child's developmental periods... "we should divide education in planes and each of these should correspond to the phase the developing individual goes through."<sup>1</sup>

Montessori became aware that regular education is not sufficient to the needs of children. As a medical doctor, she was responsible for the care of children in the State Orthophrenic School in Rome. Uneducable children were gathered in this school from other institutions of the city: orphanages, asylums, hospitals and schools. Montessori was interested in the development of

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Montessori, *The Four Planes of Education*

these children as human beings, rather than as “school children.” As she was concerned about their complete health, both physical and spiritual, she began to try to reach their minds, and especially as their minds related to the control of their bodies in behaviour.

Montessori studied the pioneer work of everyone that she could find who had contributed to the field. Throughout her life, she acknowledged her supreme debt to two earlier French physicians, Jean Itard and Edouard Seguin, who had developed methods for helping both mentally deficient and deaf children. Montessori devised various materials of her own, as well as using those of Itard and Seguin, to help her children. To everyone’s astonishment many of these children not only learned to read and write but, in state examinations at least, equalled their peers of the regular school system. This was the same system that had earlier rejected them as “uneducable”.

Montessori was puzzled, for she knew the very real limitations of her students. She made a bold and, to her medical colleagues, a foolhardy decision. She left the practice of medicine for the far less prestigious and less lucrative career of education. She was determined to understand how she could have succeeded where her children’s former teachers had failed.

Montessori wanted to establish an environment in which school-age children of normal ability could be observed using her new materials and methods. In particular, she resolved not to be prejudiced by past educational approaches, nor to disturb the natural behaviour of the children in her new classroom environment with a schedule of demands and interruptions for this or that required activity...

It was by accident and not by design, then, that Montessori first tried her ideas and new materials with preschool children. Because the children of San Lorenzo reacted even more positively to her educational environment and its subsequent revisions than the children of the State Orthophrenic School, Montessori determined that the customary schooling needed not mere reform; education needed a revolution. This revolution must include recognition of the developmental stages of human formation and a realisation of the goals, directions, and powers or characteristics pertinent to each. It must go further.

Montessori proposed that this revolution in education be built upon the basic responses of human beings which make possible their complete development and adaptation to their environment. She believed that she was successful with the children in Rome and San Lorenzo, and subsequently children throughout Europe, because she had inadvertently developed an educational plan that did precisely this.

Tendencies to positive interaction with the environment belong to human beings of all ages. However, they do not operate in the same way throughout life. They take a different direction at each phase of development and, again, in mature life. They are equally important to successful education in every period of life whether in childhood, beginning adulthood, maturity, or old age. Montessori did not identify human tendencies to certain behaviours and seek to develop an educational plan based upon them. It happened the other way round. She observed children and then responded to their behaviour.

Whenever Montessori stood back to reflect on her work with children, she was driven more by questions than answers. By the mid 1940s, she could see that her prepared environments for children from birth through age twelve were assisting their development in positive ways. But why? What made the children respond as they did? Why did they not just stand there in the

doorway? What made them eager to enter Montessori environments and to use the materials within them for their self formation? What gave the children their power and their energy?

Whatever is supplying this ability to respond to the environment has belonged to all human beings, child or adult, male or female, from the beginning. It, therefore, represents a universal principle of human behaviour. When such principles are allowed to operate, the power of human beings for a positive response to life is released. When they are thwarted, people of all ages are correspondingly crippled.

Both as an educator and as an anthropologist, Montessori reflected upon the natural behaviour of human beings in relation to their environment. When she returned to the University of Rome to engage in further studies, she subsequently became a Professor of Anthropology and remained in that post for a number of years. She was familiar with primitive human societies and their responses to varied environments. With this background, it was natural for Montessori to look back to early humans on earth, to reflect on their behaviours in response to their as yet not understood environment and to look for similarities with the behaviour of human beings today, particularly children who also must discover a world unknown to them.

Montessori recognised that human beings do not possess instincts to allow them to meet their needs and ensure their survival, as animals do. Instead, human beings have tendencies toward certain behaviours that help them to fulfil their needs- primary needs for food, shelter, and clothing; and secondary ones for defence and transportation...She used different definitions of behavioural tendencies on separate occasions, reflecting her primary role as an educational practitioner rather than a psychological theorist.

The following terms however can be considered representative of those which she mentioned at various times in her training lectures. They are: *exploration, orientation, order, imagination, manipulation, repetition, precision, control of error leading to perfection, and communication*. Montessori classrooms work well when the teacher understands the necessity of continually appealing to children's innate behaviours that lead to their adaptation to society and ultimately the possibility of changing that society.

Montessori noted that from the beginning it was the relationship of human intelligence to tendencies toward certain behaviours that made it possible for human beings to discover reality thus allowing them to use every environment from the desert to the arctic in meeting their needs for survival...Early humans set out to explore the unknown as free agents, unrestricted by instincts...

Children, who must discover their environment, face a similar challenge, to that of early humans. Children differ, however, in that they have, as yet, incomplete and unformed bodies for this exploration. This apparent weakness is, in fact, an advantage, because it gives children the ability to adapt to the time and place in which each one is born. Human tendencies to certain behaviours then are the means by which the child becomes a part of a specific human group. In addition, behavioural tendencies of human beings have a relationship to human freedom. Children not only can become a part of a specific human group; as they mature, their behavioural tendencies make it possible for them to change that group.

Because human tendencies are basic to an understanding of Montessori education and because their fundamental role in aiding children in their development is seldom recognised by parents and teachers, I will expand briefly on their individual manifestations in children and adults, as noted by Montessori.

Montessori regarded exploration as a fundamental behaviour of human beings from their beginnings. The first human beings had to search their unknown surrounding environment in order to find the sources for meeting their primary needs. Exploration then was the predominate force in human activity from the earliest days, bringing with it, when successful, the exhilaration of achievement. Even today when we set out to explore the challenge of the unknown, the joy of pre-historic human beings still come to us.

Children begin their exploration of the earth's environment from the first moment after birth. They are immediately bombarded with light, sound, smell and touch of skin. Montessori described this initial experience of the child as a 'second birth' because it represents the beginning of a second embryological life- this time outside the womb...impressions are so fundamental that they shape the development of the child's brain...

As we shall see, Montessori education at each succeeding level is predicated upon the basic human urge to explore...We have to know where to start, where to go next, and where to finish. In order for the first human beings to find their way in their explorations, orientation and order had to have been tendencies of their behaviour.

The moment that the child receives impressions, he or she must hold them within the brain in an accessible pattern. There is, then a tendency to order these impressions within the mind for future use. Montessori devised materials that assist the child in understanding this broader classification of impressions...

Order and orientation are facilitated in the Montessori classroom by a well structured environment, the sequencing of materials and the consistency of educational approach....Sequence of materials gives the children an experience of orientation in cause and effect...Enhancement of the children's natural tendencies to order and orientation in the Montessori environment enables them to feel confidence there. This is a place that they can manage, and therefore they feel safe...It is psychological security engendered in part by a properly structured environment which gives children the impulse to try harder to face the unknown, including the unpleasant facts of life. The goal is to help children use their human energies to deal with the failures and disappointments of their lives and not to be destroyed by them. To meet their needs for survival...they must have the ability to imagine and to create abstractions...

When young children are engaged in this circular process from abstraction to manipulation, repetition and control of error in their striving for precision and perfection in Montessori classrooms there is both earnestness and peace about their activity...

One last tendency is equally important...communication by means of language....As we shall see, the children's development of language and communication of thought is unique in Montessori classrooms. From the time they come in the morning, the children never stop talking to each other for long. This occurs because the teacher is freed from the role of lecturing from the front of the classroom, driving, controlling the educational process...Now it is the freedom to communicate and work together in small self-formed groups that is everywhere apparent. As we discover in a later chapter (Montessori Today) it is the sharing of ideas and books that provides the spontaneity and momentum of Montessori education...

Montessori's final concept concerning education involves the child's activity based upon a self-chosen interest...

This last principle of human development reveals another fallacy in the customary approach to education. Human beings do not develop meaningful knowledge by force. We may be coerced into memorising abstract information, but it is soon forgotten. Rather, it is the human tendencies

to manipulate our environment that lead us to build a strong conceptual base for further knowledge and hence to retain it.

Modern technology shows us that our brains are physiologically changed in this process of interacting with our environment. As our brains develop, we can manipulate ever more abstract concepts, but their basis remains in our original sensorial impressions of the material world. Children must form these sensorial impressions through their own activity. The adult cannot do this for them. Equally important, children cannot do this for themselves if they are forced to sit in a chair and only watch or listen to others. They must *act* for themselves...

The educational plan that Montessori eventually evolved, based upon her observations ...contains three essential elements; a prepared environment, a prepared adult, and freedom with responsibility. By changing the details of fulfilment for each of these criteria in the differing planes of development, Montessori allowed for the changing needs and interests of the child in successive ages. Far from being a continuous linear ascent as in regular education Montessori education alters with each plane in the child's development. In this way each stage serves as a solid foundation upon which the next may be built.

Despite the differing direction of the components in Montessori education at each plane, their principles remain the same. The prepared environment is always a place of simplicity, beauty, and order. There is nothing within it that could be an obstacle to the children's development. This means the environment is uncluttered and conducive to activity and concentration.

Much has been made of the educational materials that Montessori placed in her environments for children under six and from six through to twelve years old. Montessori and her many colleagues designed these materials over the years and they are continuously reviewed and revised by the Association Montessori Internationale. These materials are indeed impressive both in design and quality.

Because they are beautifully executed and highly visible many people make the mistake of equating the whole of Montessori education with these specially designed materials. In fact, the materials are secondary. It is the totality of the prepared environment to be explored and acted upon by the children that is primary: the other children, the teacher, the non-manufactured Montessori materials, and the careful arrangement of the classroom. It is possible to have an environment that meets the essentials of Montessori when no manufactured Montessori materials are available. Conversely, not every classroom with a full compliment of Montessori materials meets all of the criteria of a quality Montessori classroom.

The prepared adult acts like a link to the environment for the child. Montessori teachers do not "teach" the child in the usual way. They observe the children in order to discover their needs and interests based on their stages in self-formation and their individual personalities. They then attempt to present just the materials or activities to the children that match their developmental needs. It is in the children's subsequent independent use of these materials and activities that learning takes place.

In the end, it is freedom that allows the children's self-formation. Montessori called freedom "the key process of development."...However, Montessori's idea of freedom is not always understood by parent. Freedom does not mean doing whatever we want, particularly if we are children. Children are in a process of self-formation. Allowing children to do whatever they wish is condemning them to the mercy of their whims and desires of the moment. These will often be destructive to themselves, to others, and to the environment.

In reality to be free means to be in control of self, to be able to do what one chooses to do not what one's feelings or illogical thoughts of the moment may dictate. In order for children to build such self-discipline, adults must be firm, fair and consistent in setting limits from the child's earliest years onward. A parent may decide that her very young child may choose between apples and oranges for lunch; but the child is not free to eat nothing. Children may help to set the table or do the dishes; they are not free to not help with dinner. In the (preschool) classroom may use the red rods or bake biscuits; they are not free to disturb a child who is busily working. In the (primary) classroom children may choose their topics of research and their working companions. They are not free to waste their days in aimless activity or idle conversation with their friends.

When Montessori discussed freedom, she invariably mentioned its relationship to responsibility and self-discipline. We need freedom to exercise responsibility; we need the ability to be responsible before we can be truly free. It is essential to the success of Montessori education that adults, whether parents in the home or teachers in the classroom, be self-disciplined and responsible themselves. It is through their example that children discover what it means to live in freedom.

## The IB Learner Profile

**IB programmes promote the education of the whole person, emphasizing intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth through all domains of knowledge.** By focusing on the dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, independent critical and creative thought and international-mindedness, the IBO espouses the principle of educating the whole person for a life of active, responsible citizenship. Underlying the programme is the concept of education of the whole person as a lifelong process.

**The learner profile is a profile of the whole person as a lifelong learner.** It is not intended to be a profile of the perfect student; rather, it can be considered as a map of a lifelong journey in pursuit of international-mindedness. It places the learner firmly at the heart of IB programmes and focuses attention on the processes and the outcomes of learning.

A school's curriculum includes all those student activities—academic and non-academic—for which the school takes responsibility, since they all have an impact on student learning. The development of the written curriculum, the expression of ideas on paper, is necessary, but alone is not sufficient. The curriculum can be defined as what is to be learned (the written curriculum), how it is to be learned (the taught curriculum) and how it is to be assessed (the learned curriculum).

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

### ***IB learners strive to be:***

**Inquirers** They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

**Knowledgeable** They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

**Thinkers** They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators** They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

**Principled** They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

**Open-minded** They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other Individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring** They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

**Risk-takers** They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

**Balanced** They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

**Reflective** They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

# ELONERA MONTESSORI CHARTER OF RESPECT

All members of the school community have the right to feel safe and to be safe at school.

*Establishing lasting peace is the work of education - Maria Montessori*

<b>Rights of all Members of the School Community</b>	<b>Responsibilities of all Members of the School Community</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have the right to be treated with respect and politeness regardless of any differences</li> <li>• I have the right to be happy and to be treated with understanding</li> <li>• I have the right to be safe</li> <li>• I have the right to a pleasant, safe, clean and well-maintained school environment</li> <li>• I have the right to act if I am concerned about the way I am or someone is being treated</li> <li>• I have the right to ongoing awareness and education about what destructive behaviours are and how to handle them in the school environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have the responsibility to treat others politely and with respect, not to laugh at others or hurt their feelings (including when using digital technology)</li> <li>• I have the responsibility to make the school a safe place by not threatening, hitting or hurting anyone in any way</li> <li>• I have the responsibility to keep other people's and the school's property safe</li> <li>• I have the responsibility to co-operate with teachers, students and parents</li> <li>• I have the responsibility to care for the school environment and its members, and to represent the school in a positive way</li> <li>• I have the responsibility to act when I see poor or destructive behaviour and to respectfully raise concerns to the classroom teacher</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Constructive Behaviours:</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Destructive Behaviours, such as bullying and harassment include:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are responsible for your behaviour and thoughts</li> <li>• You choose the type of person you want to be</li> <li>• You model and encourage considerate ways to behave</li> <li>• You contribute to a safe and supportive environment</li> <li>• You speak with kindness and courtesy to each person with whom you communicate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A repetitive attack or demonstration of disrespect</li> <li>• Aiming to cause an imbalance of power</li> <li>• Verbal: names, put-downs, threats, whispers, swearing, rude remarks</li> <li>• Physical: pushing, tripping, stealing, hitting</li> <li>• Social: excluding, ganging up, texting, emailing, online forums, ignoring</li> <li>• Psychological: spreading rumours, dirty looks, jeering, hiding or damaging possessions</li> </ul>

I acknowledge the Dharawal people, traditional custodians of the Illawarra region.

I acknowledge and agree to adhere to this Charter of Respect.