



PARENT HANDBOOK

Learning Through Play.



Policy Manual and Parent Handbook Introduction

This policy manual, Code of Ethics and handbook has been developed as a resource for families, staff, and community members. Please read and familiarize yourselves with the policies and procedures enclosed. Further questions should be directed to the Head of School. While this Parent Handbook should be a useful tool throughout your child's time at school, it cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question. If you have questions after reading the Handbook, please talk with the Head of School. In order to maintain the necessary flexibility in administration, CMS reserves the right to change or revise the guidelines described at any time, or to deviate from them when circumstances warrant it. Whenever practical, we will attempt to notify parents in advance of any changes. Policy affirmation/consent form must be signed and submitted to school before the commencement of each academic year. Management reserves the right to modify and amend any of the policies at any given time to provide better operation of the school. Please contact the office for further clarification.

A *education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking: it involves the spiritual development of the individual, the enhancement of his value as an individual and the preparation of young people to times in which they live.*

-Maria Montessori



WELCOME

Dear Families of Coco's Montessori School,

The foundational principles for the educational philosophy of CMS have been formed and established by Dr. Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori educational system and implemented by Katherine Akua Akoto-Bamford, a passionate Montessori teacher and trainer who aims at providing true, authentic, Montessori education to parents and families who appreciate this pedagogy in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis.

CMS is a learning environment for young minds who willingly engage and embrace the freedom of an educational process that combines the love for finding, exploring, engaging and experimenting in a prepared environment to give the child answers to questions asked in life.

Our school's mission statement, core values and beliefs establishes a positive school culture and demonstrates an interconnectedness of enhanced academic outcomes. We provide a school climate where scholars feel safe, supported, academically challenged, enthused about learning and socially capable.

Scholar success at CMS is based on our unwavering commitment to combining our authentic educational program and its ancient view of learning and traditional teaching methods that promotes critical thinking skills.

Today's world demands that schools focus not on "what is taught" but rather on "what is learnt" and to this end we will strive and hold ourselves accountable.

Welcome to Coco's Montessori School!!!

Enjoy your educational journey here.

Katherine Akua Akoto-Bamford

Head of School/Principal

head@cocosmontessori.com



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Good communication is essential for school and parents to work together to aid the child's healthy development. The most effective means of communicating with the school is through whatsapp or email. During class time, Guides are focused on the children. Emails, whatsapp and phone calls are answered during lunch breaks or after school. You can expect a response within 24 hours. If you have an immediate need or message, please call the main line. CMS Office hours are 8:00am to 4:00pm and the office is open Monday through Friday according to our school calendar. Please use these mediums to STAY INFORMED.

Weekly whatsapp and Email; this is our primary method of communication regarding school events and other important information. Please read your messages and emails every Friday to know what we sent out. This is the best way to stay up to date on information specific to school activities.

CMS Website; The school website is a good source of information such as yearly academic calendar, termly school events, links for forms, volunteer needs and more.

Facebook & Social Media; Office staff is working to expand our school presence in these areas. We appreciate your support by giving positive reviews online of your CMS experience!

Telephone Numbers

School line (MAIN LINE)	–	0244-634-009
Proprietress (KATHERINE)	–	0264-634-009
Administrator (JOANA)	–	0202-997-389
Financial (ZECA)	–	0500-370-692

EMAILS

head@cocosmontessori.com for mails to the proprietress and Head

admin@cocosmontessori.com for mails to administration and finance

support@cocosmontessori.com for mails requesting IT support from technical team

POSTAL

Coco's Montessori School

c/o P.O Box MC 467

Takoradi

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: Coco's Montessori School

Instagram: Coco's Montessori School

WEBSITE

www.cocosmontessori.com



Our Mission

To guide each student on their path of development by providing a carefully prepared environment this nurtures the mind, body, and spirit of each individual.

Goals

- To awaken a love a learning, passion for knowledge, and joy of creativity in each student
- To support the development of independent, self confident learners
- To foster a strong sense of self, respect for others and an ability to work as part of a group
- To develop a repertoire of life skills and a strong academic foundation
- To provide developmentally appropriate physical activity and healthy nutritional snacks
- To encourage regular practice of self-reflection and nurturing the peace within
- To provide a reliable source of care and information for families

Core Values

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Compassion
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Awareness

Our History

Coco's Montessori School is a bilingual, traditional Montessori School located in the quiet suburbs of the Anaji Namibia Estates in Takoradi, Western Region.

It was established in 2014 by a montessori teacher to provide a tailored, niche service to Parents who appreciate the unadulterated, authentic benefits of the true Montessori Education for their Pre-schoolers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis.

We offer Montessori education to children between the ages of 1year – 6years,with other curriculum enrichment programs to aid in the total holistic education of children in our care.



Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician, educator and innovator who developed an educational approach that builds on the way children naturally learn & develop. A true pioneer, she was the 1st woman to graduate from medical school in her home country Italy. Dr. Montessori had a keen interest in children and applied scientific methods to the study of their development. Dr. Montessori opened her first school, the Casa dei Bambini or Children's House, in Rome in 1907. Following world-wide acclaim for the success of her method, she travelled the world, writing about method & training others in its use. She was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1949, for her work regarding education and world peace.

Dr. Montessori continued her work up until her death in 1952. Maria Montessori's method is embraced in at least 110 countries worldwide. At CMS we wholeheartedly embrace the philosophy and approach of Maria Montessori. Children are encouraged to follow their interests, develop their passions and challenge themselves. By combining the hand, the mind and the will, the child develops into a self-confident and self-motivated learner.

The Montessori Philosophy

Dr. Montessori recognized in children a natural curiosity and desire to learn. All her efforts were centered on this fundamental belief. Her careful study and development of teaching materials and methods was focused on awakening this desire to learn and channeling the child's natural curiosity into a vibrant and motivating learning experience. The Montessori Method emphasizes and develops the potential of the child by using special teaching materials, a deliberately prepared learning environment, an understanding of the individual needs of children in the classroom, a focus on independence, and teachers who are trained in developmental needs of children and in the use of the Montessori methods and philosophy.

The Montessori Culture is built on the values of independence and respect – independence of thought and action; respect for self, peers, adults, knowledge, and the world around us. Dr. Montessori believed that with confidence and respect, the child would grow into an adult who could achieve great things.

The Ungraded Classroom

In the Montessori environment, the greatest possibility exists for flexibility in individual lessons and progress, while still retaining group sessions at no expense to the individual child. The use of individual materials permits varied pace. Students work in a group composed of individuals in a three-year age grouping in a non-competitive environment. It permits the younger children a series of models for imitation and the older ones an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge and develop skills of leadership by helping the younger ones. Hence, the child adds to the group and receives from it what he/she needs. Children at all levels are constantly evaluated by one or more of their teachers, and written reports (except at the Toddler level) are issued to parents two or three times each year, depending on level.

Until the children enter Junior High, they do not participate in formal tests and marking that would be found in a conventional classroom. Teachers evaluate students based on their success with concepts in their everyday work, and in this way are able to continuously guide and assist children without undue focus on memorization or the disruption of testing. In Junior High, the students are specifically taught the skills required to prepare for and take formal tests, and are given regular tests in preparation for their move to high school.





The Montessori Decalogue

Dr. Montessori's list of 10 critical guidelines for working with children that she developed in the 1940's to summarize her approach.

1. Never touch the child unless invited by him (in some form or the other).
2. Never speak ill of the child in his presence or absence.
3. Concentrate on strengthening and helping the development of what is good in the child so that its presence may leave less and less space for evil.
4. Be active in preparing the environment. Take meticulous and constant care of it. Help the child establish constructive relations with it. Show the proper place where the means of development are kept and demonstrate their proper use.
5. Be ever ready to answer the call of the child who stands in need of you and always listen and respond to the child who appeals to you.
6. Respect the child who makes a mistake and can then or later correct himself, but stop firmly and immediately any misuse of the environment and any action which endangers the child, his development or others.
7. Respect the child who takes rest or watches others working or ponders over what he himself has done or will do. Neither call him, nor force him to other forms of activity.
8. Help those who are in search of activity and cannot find it.
9. Be untiring in repeating presentations to the child who refused them earlier, in helping the child acquire what is not yet his own and overcome imperfections. Do this by animating the environment with care, with restraint and silence, with mild words and loving presence. Make your ready presence felt to the child who searches and hide from the child who has found.
10. Always treat the child with the best of good manners and offer him the best you have in yourself and at your disposal.



Nido Class

The infant community is called a 'nido' – Italian for 'nest' and the learning environment is designed to meet the developmental needs of babies to approximately 16 months of age. The 'nido' environment is especially prepared to stimulate the young infant and is divided into five areas: movement, eating, sleeping, physical care and outside. The focus of the infant environment is on fostering basic trust in the child. The Montessori adult has a caring, respectful response to the infant's needs, both physical and psychological and conveys the message of unconditional love and acceptance. There are very few Montessori nido communities for children under 16 months in Takoradi.

International Community Class

The toddler community is designed for children who are walking securely through age three. New opportunities for movement and independence, along with the development of spoken language form the curriculum for this class. Group activities such as singing and stories provide young children with the experience of belonging to a community. Food preparation and outdoor play provide a framework to encourage social development. Through his or her chosen activity, the toddler's concentration and self confidence grows. Everything in the environment is proportionate to the child's size and is designed to be safe and aesthetically pleasing for children.

Casa Class

At the core of the Montessori approach to education is the curriculum developed by Dr Montessori for the 3-6 year-old child. The Montessori 3-6 programme is attended by the largest number of children.

The young child is curious about everything and needs to explore and discover. The Montessori 3-6 learning environment is designed to encourage each child to move, touch, and manipulate. The child has freedom to work independently, based on their own initiatives with gentle and respectful guidance from their teacher.

Montessori 3-6 learning environments are inviting, attractive indoor and outdoor spaces with an intriguing array of learning materials, books, plants, animals, art and music materials, gardening and nature activities.

The Montessori environment contains specially designed, hands on materials that invite children to engage in learning activities of their own individual choice.

Sunset Programs

Our sunset programs are paid after school, child care program after the hours of 4:20pm to 5:30pm. Call the school for arrangement should you require such a service often.

Summer Vacation Programs

Depending on request volumes from Parents, CMS sometimes organizes activities for the summer vacation period which is in the month of August. Parents can enroll their child for arts and crafts, cooking, gardening, music, swimming and open ended play sessions at the school. Please enquire and register your child before the month of June. Remember final decision is based on a minimum amount of children needed to make it successful. Management reserves the right to cancel this program if minimum number can not be achieved. We will confirm with parents if the program will be able take of or not by the 2nd week in July.





Animals on campus

Nature and the outdoors are an integral part of healthy development and the spacious campus we enjoy at CMS provides ample opportunities for this. The lawn and gardens surrounding the school occasionally bring us wild visitors, like mosquitoes, snakes and a variety of birds. Staff teaches the children to be respectful to wild visitors and stay at a distance to observe them. We have some parrots on campus. Some classrooms have class pets. Small animals on the CMS campus are seen by a veterinarian at least once a year.

Arrival Procedure

Arrival for all students is 8:00 am. Staff are at the reception area on hand to greet children and see them to their classrooms. Parents should say their goodbyes at the reception area. CMS staff will see that your child gets to their classroom safely. Montessori philosophy promotes the child's independence as much as possible and that includes their arrival at school. Please encourage your child to walk on their own to class. Your child's day is greatly affected by arriving late! Activities are already underway in their class and they feel left out and behind. Some also cry when dropped in late disturbing a class in session. Please do your best to be consistently on time for school. School gates are locked at 8:30am so office staff must leave a class and walk to open you, should you arrive late.

Departure Procedure

Departure for all students is 2:30 pm. Complementary after school care for all children is between 2:30pm to 4:20pm. Students must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. Please be respectful to staff who work late hours caring for children. We understand issues arise on occasions but we appreciate your efforts to pick up on time. If someone other than yourself is going to pick up your child, please make sure they are on your Authorization list for pick-up. Please call us before departure time. If this person is unknown to the staff, they may refuse releasing a child. Please inform the person picking up your child of CMS departure procedures. On your child's enrollment form, there is a section for parents to list individuals that have permission to pick up the child. CMS assumes biological parents have this right, unless we have legal documentation on file stating otherwise. We cannot refuse a parent without such documentation. Giving someone permission to pick up your child from school is not the same as authorizing them as an emergency contact. If you need clarification, please contact the office.



Attendance

Daily attendance is taken shortly after the arrival time ends. Children who arrive at school during our designated arrival time are signed in by staff taking attendance - no need for parents to sign them in. Parents will be contacted about excessive tardiness and/or absences. Your student's progress may be affected.

Reporting an Absence

School policy requires parents to notify the school of a child's absence. If we do not hear from you by approximately 9:00 a.m and your child is absent, the school will not be able to refund/credit your child's feeding fee for that day. Please assist us in this policy by reporting your child's absence before 9:00am.

Birthdays

A Birthday celebration at CMS focuses on the child's passage through time. We also allow **modest** celebrations at school on Fridays for children whose birthdays fell during the week. This is to help us run a successful, uninterrupted curriculum. Your child's Guide will provide specific information on how birthdays are celebrated in their class. Parents may request assistance from the CMS staff in distributing invitations for birthday celebrations held outside of school, provided that every child in the class is invited.

Parking

The parking lot must be used with care. Parents must park facing the wall at all times and not in reverse parking. Do not park across the car park taking up multiple spots. Please refrain from using mobile phones so you're not distracted. Slow down when pulling up and check your rear for children before pulling out.

Parents will be notified of off campus trips at least 10 days in advance, with details of departure and return times, location, and activities planned. Volunteer drivers may be used to transport children. Parents wanting to volunteer must submit driver's license and proof of insurance to the office at the start of school.



Items brought to or from School

Our Montessori environments are thoughtfully and carefully prepared. Please refrain from allowing your child to bring toys, or other items not requested by school management. Your Orientation packet provides information on what children need to bring. Other items should remain at home or in the car. If an item from home does find its way to school, Guides will hold on to it until departure. Often, these items create difficulties for staff and children when they get broken or lost. Sometimes school items, such as Pink Tower cubes or golden beads, find their way into a pocket and come home. Because each item plays an important role in the environment, we ask that parents please return them promptly. We thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation

Student behavior and discipline

Our mission at CMS is partnering with families to foster the healthy development of children in the Montessori environment. The collaborative community experienced in Montessori classrooms helps children learn how to assert their individual personality while still functioning harmoniously within the group. At CMS, we recognize that consistent limits, strong role models and instruction on what to do, rather than focusing on what NOT to do, helps children learn appropriate behavior. Our staff provides this support for students as they discover the balance of self and others. When aggressive or inappropriate behavior occurs at school, adults will address the issue immediately as is appropriate for the specific situation. In most cases, the child will be removed temporarily from the situation or asked to stay with the adult. Minor incidents may only require re-direction. Parents will be informed of more significant occurrences or of repeated or escalating situations by communication from the head/administrator. The head/administrator may request a meeting with parents to address the situation and discuss solutions. If we continue to experience issues at school, the head/administrator and parents will meet to form an Action Plan for the student. CMS reserves the right, in cases of serious behavioral issues, to require the child to leave school for the day. The school head reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or family from the school at any time. Our goal is to ensure every child has a safe environment in which to learn. This policy is in place to help us achieve that goal.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality regarding information, directory and conflict steps taken to resolve is expected from all parties involved at school.



Conflict Resolution

The first step is the timely discussion of the problem between the parties involved. For example - parents concerned with classroom operations should first discuss their concerns with the Guide directly. The parties are encouraged to resolve the problem together. If they cannot reach a mutually-satisfying result, then either party may inform the Director who will assist in resolution, by meeting with both parties to discuss concerns and offer solutions.

Child Abuse and Neglect

If a CMS employee has reason to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, the law requires them to report it to the Department of social welfare Services or a law enforcement agency. The individual reporting may do so anonymously or may elect to inform the Director.

Inclusive Policy:

CMS respects and encourages diversity at school. As such we accept all children and their families from diverse backgrounds irrespective of their creed. There are no barriers regarding children and their families from different race, color, nationality, sex, age, disability, faith, religion or ethnicity. We acknowledge and celebrate different holidays and celebrations of the diverse community we have here.

Harassment

Anti-Harassment Policy

The student anti-harassment policy applies to school hours; to any school-sponsored event or activity, including during school arranged transportation of any type to or from an event or activity, and whether the activity or event occurs on or off the school campus; while on school property, or at any other time when the event or activity has any school recognition. Conduct violating these standards whether occurring at school or during school sponsored events, activities or functions or not, or on campus or not is subject to appropriate action by the school.

The student anti-harassment policy may also apply to harassment committed during hours when school is not in session and/or off campus without any connection to school if the harassment by a CMS student to a CMS student becomes a significant disruption to the educational process.



Home Work Policy

on rare occasions worksheets, books and activity books will be given to children to take home over a weekend or long holiday. Home works are abstract learning of concrete concepts discovered in class. Please do not do works for children. Help them to do the activity themselves. All home works are to be signed by Parents before being returned to school every Monday morning or back to school day. Failure to sign your child's home work book might result in him/her not taking works back home. We will like to know that works were done under adult supervision. Home work files and books must be returned else a double charge will be billed for a replacement.

Charity

As part of our Montessori philosophy, CMS engages in scheduled charity programs. Please contact Administration if you and your family will like to be part of this fulfilling journey.

Late Pickup

Late fees are charged on children picked up after their complementary after school care has expired. Departure time is 4:20pm. A late pickup charge is communicated to parents before the commencement of each term. Please ask about the current charges applicable. Late pickup fees are to be paid to the waiting teacher before the child is released to the parent. Failure to fulfill this will result in your child not being accepted in school the following day.

PTA

Conferences help the teacher and the parents to better understand the progress of each child and the class as a whole. Conferences occur at least twice a year and, if necessary, additional meetings can be arranged. The teacher will gladly meet with you whenever there is a need, however, please make an appointment by calling the office. Per our school policy, we bill parents who do not attend PTA meetings. We also request that for your own and your child's privacy, please refrain from engaging staff in conversation during drop-off and pick-up times, or during class time.

Parent Education Opportunities

The Montessori approach to education is most successful when families and the school operate in partnership on behalf of the child, and when expectations at home are as consistent as possible with expectations at school. Therefore, we highly recommend that parents familiarize themselves with the Montessori Philosophy. Education opportunities for family members throughout the school year include: Classroom Observations, Parent/Child Class Visits, Moving Up Sessions, Parent Conferences etc.



Children Who Nap

All children in our Infant and Toddler Programs are offered a sleep period every afternoon after their lunch and according to their biological sleep pattern. Children in the preschool programs are also offered sleep unless the parents have indicated that they no longer want their child to participate in a sleep time. This request must be made in writing by the parent. We provide adequate floor beds with clean sheets for infants and toddlers and also provide a climber bed for the preschoolers should they desire to sleep.

All children who nap are supervised, and staff will record the napping period of each child daily. For toddlers this will become part of their daily observation report.

Parents are requested to provide any direction on sleep requirements which could be unique to their Child.

Reporting an Absence

School authority requires that all children's illness be reported to the school on the day of absence. Please phone the school between 7:10-9:00 a.m. to report an absence.

Illness

In the event of a child becoming ill at school, we will contact the parent at home or at work. When contacted, parents are mandated to pick up their sick child within an hour from school. The school cannot accommodate sick children, nor can they be kept in over the lunch hour or outdoor playtime. Please use your discretion and do not send a sick child to school. We attempt to provide a healthy environment for all involved.

Accidents

Although we try to avoid it, accidents sometimes occur. In most cases, minor first aid at the school is all that is required. When serious injuries occur, the parent or designated person is contacted and informed of the need of emergency medical attention. Incident Communication Reports and Accident Reports are completed. In case of emergency, if we are unable to make immediate telephone contact with parents or guardians, we will call for ambulance service or drive and accompany the injured child to the hospital. Parents have to reimburse the school of any costs accrued in providing emergency care for their ward(s) in the situation where they cannot be reached.



Head Injuries

If a staff member sees or suspects that a child has had an injury to the head, then the parent will be called. We highly encourage that the parent seeks medical attention from Emergency or the child's doctor to determine if a concussion occurred. If a concussion is diagnosed, it is imperative that the family informs the school so that we can take necessary measures to help the student recover from the concussion.

Immunizations

immunization forms are required with each application for new children. These forms must be submitted and a copy must be provided to the Academy. All children are required by law to have up to date immunizations. If a student's immunizations are not kept up to date, then the parents will be notified. If this does not happen during the designated period of time then the school is required to suspend the student until this is remedied.

In the case of an immunization exemption these also need to be submitted to the School upon enrolment. An exemption for medical reasons is completed by a medical practitioner and an exemption for religious or personal consciences purposes must be notarized by a commissioner or religious, regional head office.

Head Lice Policy

Please notify the school immediately if your child has head lice. Home treatment should include a type of medicated shampoo or recommended lice treatment of the head. Personal belongings should all be treated as well. Every effort to remove all nits with a lice comb is absolutely essential before returning to school. After initial treatment, regular follow-up treatments should occur over the course of several weeks to eradicate the lice. Checks for head lice are made at school on an as-needed basis. If head lice or nits are found, parents are required to pick up their child immediately within an hour and begin treatment. When a case is detected in a class, all parents will be notified. We recommend that parents check their child's scalp weekly.

Communicable Diseases

Chicken Pox	Must remain home until fever-free without medication
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Exclude if yellowish discharge is present and 24 hours after medication
Diarrhea	Must remain home until 24 hours fever/symptom-free without medication
Influenza	Must remain home until 24 hours fever/symptom-free without medication
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment begins



Measles (Rubella)	4 days from appearance of rash
German Measles (Rubella)	7 days from appearance of rash
Meningitis	Must remain home until a doctor's permission obtained
Mumps	9 days or until swelling subsides
Strep throat	24 hours after starting antibiotics
Whooping Cough	5 days after starting antibiotics

***Fever, Vomiting, Diarrhea Must be free for at least 24 hours from last bout or break of fever, without medication.**

Please note: in special situations, during flu seasons, the time at home may increase to a 48-hour symptom-free period

Student Health Records

A School Health Questionnaire is included in the yearly registration package. This must be completed and updated annually with the registration procedure. Also, upon initial application to the Academy, a copy of your child's birth certificate is required to be placed on the file. It will not be required upon subsequent re-registration.

Student Emergency Information

Forms are completed by families during all New Student Admissions and at Re-Enrolment time in. They are available again in August for your careful review; we ask you to update them where necessary and return them to the school before classes begin in September. If at any time during the school year this information changes, you must notify the school immediately. This information stays near the telephone at your child's school for emergency purposes and it is the parent's responsibility to provide the school with complete and updated student emergency information. Please ensure emergency contact information is always complete and up-to-date.

Medication Policy

A medication form must accompany all medications, and is available from the Main Office. All prescription and non-prescription medications, as well as natural health supplements, must be accounted for on this form, accompanied by a physician's/parent signature. Long-term regular prescriptions can be filled out as a one-time form to be kept on file for the year. Medications cannot be administered without this documentation. Medications sent to the school must be sent in their original labeled containers and marked with child's name.



Leaving School Property

Once students arrive at school, they are not permitted to leave the property without a parent or authorized person accompanying them and signing them out in the Sign In/Out book, which is kept at Reception or verbally with the administrator .

Pick up Release Policy

The standard release of a child is only to those listed in the enrolment information. If you would like this changed, please contact the office. Unknown or unauthorized persons appearing at the school office or to a child's teacher requesting to take a student out of school (for any reason) will not be permitted to do so without advance approval or consent of the parent or legal guardian.

Emergency Evacuation

In Case of an emergency, Smoke detectors are located in each area of the school. These detectors are checked regularly and inspected annually. The detectors and emergency fire alarm pulls are located at vantage points. When an alarm is set off the fire department is called immediately. Fire drills are held once a term. Fire extinguishers are located on the wall near each exit and near the kitchen stove. These extinguishers are checked regularly and inspected by a professional annually. Emergency phone numbers are located on the wall near the main line phone. A first aid kit is also available at school. In case of an emergency The teacher will ring the bell and ask children to stop what they are doing and quietly walk to the nearest exit. In case of a fire emergency, the smoke detector alarm will go off and the teacher will instruct children to line up at the nearest exit immediately. As the children are lining up the teacher or her assistant will check all areas of the classroom for children (bathroom, sleeping room, dining etc.) and get the emergency contact list and phone. The teacher will guide the children out of the building as quickly as possible, checking that all children are present. Since a quick evacuation is essential in a fire, this may mean leaving clothing, food and other essentials behind. The teacher will walk with the children to the designated assembly place. Once assembled in a safe place the teacher will take attendance using the class list. Authorities and Parents will be notified using the emergency contact list. This list is checked and updated termly.

Fire Drills

The safety of our students is a high priority at CMS. We make all possible effort to keep our grounds, building and practices consistent with those promoting the safety of children. CMS is inspected annually by the Fire Service, Health Department and state child care licensing agency. In addition, CMS staff conducts playground checks, termly fire drills and building emergency drills throughout the school year. Evacuation routes are posted in all buildings and staff are trained in safety and emergency procedures



Medical Emergencies

In the case of a serious medical emergency, a senior teacher or staff member trained by the Red Cross in first aid/cpr will evaluate the situation, direct someone to call for ambulance, and follow instructions from emergency personnel. If a first aid/cpr trained staff member is not immediately available the supervising adult will call and follow the instructions from emergency personnel. Should the child need to be transported to NEW CRYSTAL or SYCAMORE hospital, a familiar teacher or staff member will ride with the child to the hospital and remain with the child until a parent or guardian arrives. A floating staff will step into the classroom to ensure remaining children are being supervised according to required ratios. It is important to keep all of your emergency contact information up to date; the school, using this information, will contact parents. Parents are to refund within 48hours, all financial costs accrued by the school to provide a prompt, medical, emergency care for their ward.

School Closings and Delayed Openings

If severe weather conditions make travel hazardous or an infectious disease/pest poses a risk to children coming to school, the school may be postponed, closed early, or canceled. Coco's Montessori School will follow advice and recommendations of government approved institutions responsible for such recommendations. There is no credit or make up days given for emergency related school closings. In the event that children and staff need to evacuate the building due to a national or local emergency, they will proceed to the closest safe building as directed by emergency personnel. The school will only be evacuated in the event the building is deemed not safe for occupancy by the police/fire department. Please ensure that all information, telephone numbers and emergency contacts are updated and checked throughout the year. The school highly recommends that each family have an emergency plan for picking your child up at school. School Closes for Meetings and Staff Professional Developments In order to ensure the highest quality program and to meet licensing requirements for professional development required. Coco's Montessori School closes school to hold regular staff meetings, professional development days (such as Red Cross CPR Training, fire Training,) and attend educational conferences. These dates are marked on the regular school calendar

First Aid/Sunscreen release Policy

There is adequate first aid provision for staff and visitors to the school. All injuries will be treated by a staff member who holds a current first aid certificate. The school shall administer first aid medication/products according to manufacturer, physician's and first aid training written instructions should it be required. Other medication may be administered as required, subjected to a release form available at the office. You cannot not hold Coco's Montessori School liable for any allergic reactions or other symptoms when the medication/products are used in accordance with these terms.



Image Release Policy

Your child will be photographed in a positive limelight here at CMS or at events organized by CMS outside school premises. These photographs may be used for promotional or advertising purposes and may also be uploaded onto the school website and social media. Parents must sign image release consent on the enrollment packet before a child can be enrolled.





Tuition Payment

The termly Tuition Bill covers all costs, including registration and basic program delivery and operational expenses. This fee also covers local excursions, events, stationery supplies, work books, text books, a student folder and art supplies. Tuition bills must be paid into the following account:

COCO'S MONTESSORI SCHOOL
STANDARD CHARTED BANK
TAKORADI BRANCH
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 0100105908700

Sibling Discount

Family discounts apply to tuition for the second and subsequent children enrolled as follows: for the second child 10%, third child 15%, fourth and subsequent children 20%. Deductions will be applied according to the tuition payment plan chosen. Please note that discount is on tuition charge only and not available for total bill inclusive of other charges.

Cheque Return / Delay Policy

Cheques returned by the bank attracts the face value bank charges which is applicable by the bank. Installment cheques not honoured will attract a 3% charge on amount billed by the school. Please do well to follow all installment arrangements given by the school.

Installment Policy

CMS is a termly fee paying school and not monthly. Some parents also choose to pay yearly which is very encouraged. Based on our home school size, collective funds are needed for bulk purchases and effective running of the school. We do not offer monthly school fee payment, however if a parent requires an installment package the office must be contacted to draw up a feasible payment plan. An installment package will run for a 6 week period starting from first day of reopening and will not go beyond communicated date. All outstanding fees must be paid before the commencement of the half term holidays. A maximum of three installments will be offered to parents payable every two weeks. **It is mandatory for parents to leave post dated cheques** for due dates that installment payments are due.

Feeding Fees

Feeding is available for children who are subscribed on to a minimum of one week feeding program here at school. Feeding covers the provision of one fresh hot meal at lunch. We do not provide emergency feeding for children who are not on our program. Feeding fees must be paid and child's feeding record book signed by parents. Feeding must be paid a week before lunch can be provided. Children who do not pay their week's feeding before or on the Monday risk not being served at school.



Supplementary Bills

The school charges for other bills including uniforms, photographs etc.. These are not included in the school bill. When required please do well to pay within the deadline communicated.

Administrative Office Hours

Official school administrative hours are from 7:10am-4:00pm. Please make sure to contact the administrator within these hours to be attended to.

Application

Our goal is to enroll students who will thrive and meet their full potential in the Montessori education program. Potential parents must attend a Montessori Information Session and School Tour to assist in learning about the school, teaching methods, and the learning environment. Interested families are asked to submit an Application Form online. Applications for the upcoming school year are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Admission Policy

If we are able to offer your child Admission at Coco's Montessori School, you will receive an Offer of Admission. If you return the documents as outlined below within 10 business days of the Offer of Admission, your child will be enrolled in our program.

1. Signed Confirmation of Enrollment Packet.
(Admission Form, health form, emergency contact, immunization records, health questionnaire, birth certificate)
2. Full payment of the Admission and Enrolment bill
3. Code of Ethics Affirmation / Parent Handbook consent form

If the above documents are not received within 10 days, this Offer of Admission will be available to other applicants.

Enrollment (New Students)

New student applications will subsequently be considered based on available space in the program beginning in July. When siblings are considered for admission, the School will give precedence to families that have allowed their older children to complete the entire Casa program (3 years) over those who have not. CMS will evaluate each application on a case-by-case basis, with the needs and composition of the classrooms determining admission decisions.



Re-enrollment (Continuing Students)

Re-enrolment is required for all returning students on an annual basis and is processed beginning in June for the September Academic year.

All returning students will be re-enrolled for the upcoming year provided that the following required documents are returned to the Office by the re-enrolment deadline which is before or on July 20th:

1. Signed Confirmation of Re-Enrollment Form.
2. Re-enrollment Deposit of 10% of new academic year first term's bill which is credited..
3. Updated student contact information. Please submit any changes as necessary.
4. Code of Ethics Affirmation / Parent Handbook consent form

Specific details about class placement for students moving up to a new level within the program will be sent in July or as soon as available. Information to assist you in preparing for the start of the school year is available upon request in mid-July.

Withdrawal Policy

Notwithstanding that a student has enrolled in the school, they may nevertheless submit a written notice of intent to withdraw either before they begin or during the first term academic school year for which payment has been made. If a written notice is received:

1. Before August 1st, the admission deposit and all tuition paid will be returned;
2. After September 1st, the admission deposit is non-refundable, but any tuition paid will be returned.
3. Before October 30th half of the payment will be made.
4. After October 30th no refund can be made.

Dismissal Policy

There are occasions when a child does not seem to be thriving in one or more areas of development. To determine if they are functioning well in the classroom, we ask: Can the child make independent work choices? Is the child a peaceful, respectful member of the community? Does the child have healthy social relationships within the classroom community? If we can answer yes to these questions but still have concerns



about the child's progress, we may ask for additional support through tutoring, outside evaluations and the like to help a student struggling in one or more academic areas. If the answer to these questions is no, it may be that CMS is not able to serve the needs of that child and we shall request the Parent to seek an alternative educational experience for their child.

CMS reserves the right, in cases of serious behavioral issues, to require a child to leave school for the day. Parents who have conflicting expectations of what the school seeks to provide will have to be removed if the school can not meet such expectations. The Head reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or family from the school at any given time if conflicts cannot be resolved. Our goal is to ensure every child has a safe and peaceful environment to learn in. This policy is in place to help us achieve that goal. The student will either not be re-enrolled again or made to leave the term uncompleted.

Wait Pool Policy

We are not always able to accommodate all applicants. Once classrooms reach capacity, any new application will be placed in a wait pool. It is our practice to keep your application on file for one year, in the event that we are unable to offer your child admission. Furthermore, at the Infant/Toddler/Casa levels aspects of policies affect the number and make-up of each classroom environment, thereby affecting the wait pool. Priority in the wait pool is given to applicants who have a sibling currently enrolled in the school or if the applicant is transferring from another Montessori school. As a Montessori school we have mixed-age groupings, meaning that each level (infant, Toddler, Casa) is made up of children from 2- or 3-year age groupings. To the best of our ability, we try to balance the number of children at each age level in each classroom environment. Therefore, wait pool priority may be given to children of a specific age in certain cases. We also try to balance genders within a classroom. Therefore, priority may be given to children of a specific gender in certain cases. The Child Care and Early Years Act contains regulated limits on the number of youngest Casa students that are allowed in classroom environments. Accordingly, only a certain percentage of the Casa student populations can be made up of children who are 2-years 8-months old as of September 1st during each school year. The wait pool may be affected by this regulation in certain cases.

Wait Pool Composition

Application forms are submitted electronically. Each application receives a date upon submission; those dates are used to determine the initial wait pool composition, on a first-come/first-served basis, and shall remain a priority based on date relative to others in the wait pool. Subject to the potential circumstances outlined above, each applicant will move up in priority in the wait pool as children are placed in classrooms or when other families choose to be removed from the wait pool.



Observations and Classroom Visits

Classroom observation increases a parent's appreciation of the Montessori Method of education and will answer many questions about your child's day at school. They also enhance the value of parent conferences with the Montessori teacher. Observations are open in the month of November and April for 30 minutes during the morning work period and are scheduled through the front office. Observers sign in at the office upon arrival at school and receive Guidelines for Observations before we walk you to class. Cell phone use and photography is not permitted during Observations. Our classrooms are also open for observations by teachers, training students, and prospective parents. All observers are expected to be respectful of the privacy of the students. Infant and toddler classrooms are not open for observation because it can be too distracting for them. However, Toddler parents can arrange for an after-school session to work with their child through their child's teacher. This provides parents with ongoing communication and understanding of their child's first school experience. If you have questions about something you observed, please discuss privately with the Guide and/or Director.

Record Keeping

We document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families through observation, conversation, meetings both between educators and with the parents. All of these things will take place anywhere from a daily/weekly basis when it comes to record keeping, report writing and observations, to regular meetings that would take place at a minimum once a semester. Additionally children will receive detailed written reports that go home at least thrice a year and in the case where a child requires additional reporting either verbally or written that can be arranged.

Parents are also encouraged to come into the School to either work with their child or observe them during a work period in their classroom. For the toddler child, additional daily records can be kept which document their toileting, napping and eating routines.



Dress Code Policy

All clothing and other belongings, which are brought to school, should be clearly labeled with your child's name. A supply of clothes for change should be packed in the child's bag each day. The children work with materials in the classroom that may result in their clothing becoming soiled or wet (water, paint, etc), sometimes more than once a day. They appreciate the option of changing into clean dry clothes on their own. Sometimes there are toilet misses requiring fresh clean changes. Since self-sufficiency is encouraged, parents are asked to consider the ease with which their child is able to dress him or herself. For example, overalls may look cute but will be a challenge for your child to unhook when they need to use the bathroom. Each child should keep a pair of indoor clogs or slippers to wear while at school. This helps keep our environment clean and healthy. Every child must wear some type of shoe at all times in case there is an emergency or fire drill and we must exit the classroom. Please ensure that your child has shoes suitable for running, climbing and active play while they are at school for outdoor play. Children at the Nido class must wear comfortable cotton house clothes to school with easy fasteners. All children in the International Community and Casa classes are to wear prescribed uniforms for the days. Valuable or sentimentally important jewelry should be kept safe at home. Come equipped for the weather, we go out often. Your Guide will provide additional information regarding what to bring for this purpose. The following items should stay at home: Pretend play or costume clothing such as capes, camouflage, or masks. Cowboy boots, flip-flops, and high heels, Belts or overalls that may pose a safety hazard to children. Necklaces and other jewelry, hair beads, hoop earrings and Shoes that light up or have wheels embedded should not be worn to school.

Lost and Found

Unlabeled items of children which can not be traced to its owners will be placed in a lost and found basket at the reception area. Please do well to go through them if your child's item did not make it back home. Lost and found basket will be emptied and items donated to charity by each month if items are not claimed.

Diaper Policy

Children who still wear diapers are to have a packet of labeled diapers and wipes kept at school always. Parents must add diaper disposable bags as well for the sanitary disposal of their ward's used diapers.

Toys and Possessions

Children are not to bring to school any toy from the house. The school is very cautious over safety of all play and learning materials. Materials found in school are of the right non chokable size and made of high grade material with non toxic finish. Children who keep bringing items to school after persistent caution will have the items taken and donated to charity should it keep happening.

Back Packs

Children must have a well sealed back pack. Daily checks of these back packs are important. Parents must not place money in children's back packs as its receipt can not be guaranteed. The school or any of its employees shall not be held liable for loss of such money. We do not offer the service of buying items externally for children such as snacks nor guarantee personal services offered by teachers to parents. Every child's bag must have daily changing clothes for the child as well as wipes for sanitary use.





Meal Times

Breakfast 7:10-8:30am. The school will feed children with their own provided breakfast if children are not able to eat breakfast at home. Breakfast in school ends at 8:30am for the IC and Casa students. We encourage parents to drop their children before 8:30am if they are to have their breakfast in school. Lunch time is from 11:45am-12:30pm. Children eat food provided by the school or from their homes. Snack time is at 2:00pm -2:30pm. After school care children have their late snack at 4:00pm

Dietary Restrictions

Children are included in meal and snack preparation often as possible in school. Serving sizes are appropriate to the age of the child. Food is never forced on a child, rather offered frequently throughout the day. If meal ingredients, patterns or serving sizes will not meet a child's nutritional needs, a medical statement must be obtained documenting the appropriateness of the variation. Every effort will be made to accommodate food preferences for personal, religious, or medical reasons.

Lunch

Lunch at CMS is a relaxed experience, a time to enjoy pleasant conversation and good food. The school provides fresh cooked lunches upon request. Students set tables with cups, cutlery and dishes provided by the school. Healthy eating is important to sustain children throughout their day. Please avoid sending foods that are primarily empty calories in your child's lunch box. We limit the amount of sugar students consume at school – please do not send sweets in the lunchbox. Parents are required to provide a balanced, nutritious lunch for their children. Parents should remember to include a protein, grains, vegetables and fruits for lunch. Candy and other highly sugared foods are not appropriate and prohibited. If parents are having trouble discovering meals their child is willing to eat, they are encouraged to speak with staff members who will be happy to give them ideas. The school can refrigerate and/or reheat lunches if required subject to availability of electricity. The children's work at school is directly affected by the nutritional quality of their meals so please provide a nutritious breakfast at home each morning. This is the time to educate kids about making good choices. The Harvard "Healthy Eating Plate" is a great place to start! On occasion, classes will have a special lunch of some kind. Your child's Guide will provide more specific information for their class.



Snacks

Parents are asked to bring healthy snacks for their wards. After care students must have extra snack in their bags always for late snacking. Please refrain from placing sweets and candies in a child's snack bag. We do not serve candy in school. Bottles holding juice must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized daily. Name tags on bottles and lunch boxes must be changed weekly to avoid germs and bacteria growing. The school observes healthy snacking week which is observed every last week of the month. We do not allow processed food, sweets, fizzy drinks etc at school during that week. Snack brought during the healthy week should be healthy fresh foods made eg; tuna sandwich, meat pie, fruits, cheese and bread, home baked cookies, fresh fruit juice, etc.

Water Bottles

Every child must bring to school water for drinking. Please monitor your child and know what size to get your child. Children play a lot and require a lot of rehydration. Remember to provide water to your ward each day for drinking.

Allergies

To ensure the safety of students with food allergies, CMS is a crustacean and nut-free campus.

Cultural Lunches

Cultural lunches are a fun tradition at CMS. They provide an opportunity for students to explore the tastes of other cultures. In Children's House classrooms, the Guide and parents take a more active role in preparing the cultural lunch for the children. In the Casa classes, adults and children prepare lunches for the community daily. Parents are asked to volunteer to bring groceries for the week's meals. Nido families collaborate with school staff to provide the right foods for the child at the stage they are currently in. Cooking is a popular activity for students at CMS and there are a variety of options for this activity, from baking biscuits in Casa to pasta making.



Code of ethics for children

Every day at Coco's Montessori School we strive to create a community of a respect and care for oneself, others and our physical world. To do this we have established a Code of Ethics that guide all of the interactions of our community, and is specifically worded to be applicable to our different ages of students in the School.

Make the School a Safe Place

Students must not engage in play fighting, kicking, biting or hitting. This ensures that you will not be in a position to cause harm - whether accidental or intentional, to others.

Respect Personal Property

Students must show proper care for their property, school property and the property of others.

Use Kind Words

Make the school a safe place by not teasing, threatening or hurting others' feelings. Try not to exclude others from games. Remember to say 'please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me'. Co-operate with Teachers, Supervisors and Fellow Students. Be polite and respectful at all times, even if disagreeing. Treat others fairly.

Classroom Behaviour

We have come together to learn in a fun, peaceful, and quiet environment. Be responsible – allow others to concentrate. Choose your work from the shelf, not from another child.

Consequences for all Students

The school may, at its discretion, take appropriate disciplinary action against students who violate this Code of Ethics. Every effort will be made to instill in students a sense of responsibility and accountability in our choice of response. Some examples would be a 'time out', or a verbal apology. Disciplinary action may also include the issuing of a 'Communication Report', parent conference, a limitation of school privileges or other reasonable sanctions. In rare circumstances, where these consequences have not proven effective in ensuring adherence to a safe environment for all, the School may at its discretion determine that a student be suspended or ultimately could be asked to leave the School.



Code of ethics for parents

At Coco's Montessori School we are proud to have supportive parents who recognise that educating children is a process that involves a partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our parents understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/ carers to participate fully in the life of our school. The positive contribution that parents make to a school are vital if we want to remain an educational institution of note in the community. Without parental co-operation and commitment to a partnership of excellence within the school, the institution cannot flourish and continue to strive for excellence. The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, caregivers and visitors to our school about expected conduct. This is important so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

- We expect parents, carers and visitors to:
 - Respect the caring ethos and school pride of our school.
 - Be friendly towards the learners and staff.
 - Support the school in all disciplinary actions.
 - Be willing to volunteer and assist.
 - See that learners are attired properly.
 - Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children
 - Encourage their children to be responsible and accountable at an age appropriate level.
 - Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour.
 - Correct your own child's behaviour especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour.
 - Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern through the correct channels.
 - Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view first in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.



- Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behaviour.
- In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school cannot tolerate parents, caregivers and visitors exhibiting the following:
 - Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a teacher's classroom, the administration staff, maintenance staff, office area or any other area on the school grounds.
 - Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper.
 - Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, stakeholder, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
 - Damaging or destroying school property.
 - Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication. Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parent/staff, at the school on Facebook or other social media sites.
 - Displaying any form of physical aggression towards another adult or child on school premises.
 - Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences.)
 - Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property.
 - Any illegal substances or objects being brought on to school premises.

Should any of the above behaviour occur on school premises the school may feel it is necessary to contact the appropriate authorities and if necessary, even ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds or an action taken to affect child's enrollment here.



PARENT HANDBOOK AFFIRMATION FORM

FOR THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR 20.....

Coco’s Montessori School requires that all forms listed below are complete and in the child’s file before they can start the new academic school year. Tick the boxes to indicate forms that have been signed and submitted:

- Enrollment / Re-enrollment Form
- Immunization Records
- Birth certificate (provided once only)
- Emergency Information
- Pick-up Authorization
- First Aid and Sun Screen Permission
- Parent Handbook Affirmation
- Image release policy
- Field Trip Release
- Medical Emergency Action Release

Yes, I/We.....

and.....

Parents/Guardians of

Student in the class ofNIDOINTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

.....CASA

have read the Parent Handbook and shall abide by the policies. Please sign and return this page with the other required forms listed up.

Date:.....

Signature.....

Signature:.....

(For Father)

(For Mother)



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