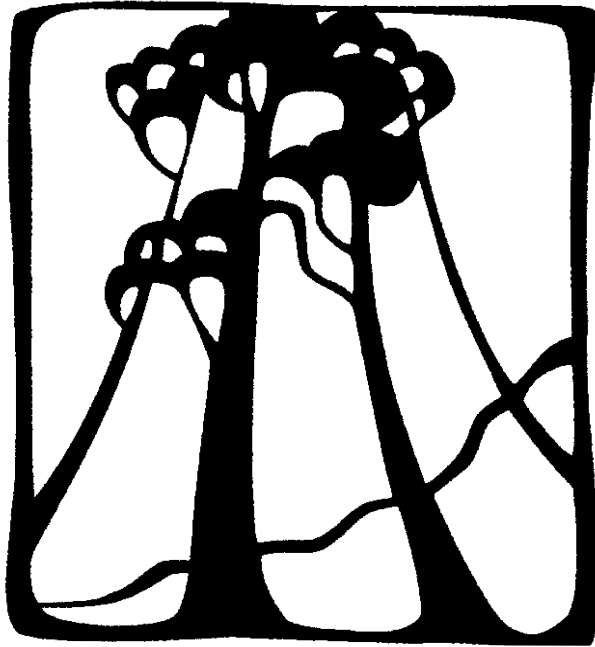


Treetops Montessori School



HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS 2009

Our Vision is that Treetops is a beacon;
an excellent, intimate, Montessori
educational community which, through its
children, makes a difference.

Introduction

Welcome to

Treetops Montessori School.

The aim of this handbook is to provide a
useful reference.

If you require further information please
do not hesitate to ask the staff.

The Role of Parents at Treetops

At Treetops Montessori School we treat each child with respect and endeavour to instil in our children a sense of inner discipline and responsibility for their own behaviour. We recognise that education is not just something that happens at school. Every experience a child has, good or bad, is a learning experience. The success of Treetops' philosophy therefore depends very much on a compatibility between school and home life.

Treetops Montessori School recognises that the parent/guardian is the most important person in the child's life and the school aims to create a partnership in which parents are involved in their children's education guided, of course, by Montessori principles. Parents are invited to assist with a variety of daily activities within the classroom - for example, cooking, craft and accompanying children on excursions. Assisting within the classroom has many benefits - parents gain valuable insight into their child's day at Treetops, teachers develop a closer relationship with parents and, most importantly, our children benefit both directly from the activities and from the joy of having their parent participate in their classroom.

When Parents Participate Everyone Wins!

Treetops is a parent-run school, though parents are expected to be fully supportive of the school's philosophy and practice. As a small close knit community Treetops needs the full support and commitment of all families who are part of that community. Commitment is a life skill our children need to learn and they learn most effectively by following our example, so please attend any functions and events organised by the school.

Parents' Days are held once a year and these give parents a chance to see their children in the class situation and to experience something of how the school runs on a day-to-day level. Further, each child's progress is recorded and shared with parents on a regular basis. However, parents are always welcome to bring any area of concern to the attention of staff as they feel necessary - open communication being the key to harmony.

Finally, you all have special skills that can benefit our school – please don't wait to be asked, your help is always appreciated!

*Please give Treetops
all the support you can.
Enthusiasm is infectious
and our children are the main
beneficiaries.*

Attendance Times and Procedures

Punctuality

It is important that children arrive at school on time. Late arrival is disruptive to the class, embarrassing for the child, difficult for the teacher and is poor role modelling. We understand that there are sometimes unavoidable delays but we ask that everyone make every effort to develop in our children the habit of punctuality. Parents are also asked to collect their children promptly at the end of the day. If for any reason you are unable to do so, please call the office so that we can tell the child/ren that all is well and when to expect their parent.

Sugar Gums (Playgroup):

9.30am to 11.30am

Children attend Sugar Gums from the age of eighteen months until they are ready to begin in the Children's House, at approximately three years of age. Sugar Gums is located in the foyer of the school hall on Owen Road and children attend one two-hour session per week. Parents stay with their children throughout the two-hour sessions to aid the process of interaction with other parents and children.

Fuchsia Gums (3 Year Old Programme):

Coral Gums and Scarlet Gums (Children's House):

9.00am to Noon (Part Time children)

9.00am to 3.00pm (Full Time children)

Parents/Guardians accompany their children to the entrance of their classroom and are responsible for their children until they enter the classroom at 9.00am. Children must also be accompanied at all times in the playground. The doors are opened at 9.00am and the teachers greet each child at the door. The children enter the classroom on their own (unless there are exceptional circumstances), as it is preferable that the child walks away from their parent rather than the parent walking away from the child. The reverse procedure applies when children are collected. Children are not permitted to leave Children's House until collected by a parent or nominated responsible adult. It is important that children are collected promptly. If a parent is unable to collect their child personally, it is necessary to inform the teacher and the office and to supply the name and description of the person who will be collecting the child.

Golden Wattle & Silver Wattle (Lower Primary):

8.50am-3.10pm

It is not a requirement that Wattle children are escorted to their classroom. However, children will not be released at the end of the school day until collected by a parent or other nominated adult.

Karri & Marri (Upper Primary):

8.50am-3.10pm

Karri & Marri children do not have to be escorted to the classroom. They may also leave at the end of school provided written instruction to this effect has been signed by the parent/guardian and lodged with the office.

Jarrah (Middle School) and Tuart (Upper Secondary):

8.50am-3.10pm.

Middle and High School students are expected to be in class and ready to begin their activities by 8.50am. They are allowed to leave the school grounds at 3.10pm provided a written and signed permission form from their parent/guardian has been lodged in the office. Tuart students may also leave the school grounds during lunch time, unaccompanied by an adult, if written instructions to this effect are received by the office and they have a written note to this effect before leaving.

Communication within the School

Treetops is a small, close-knit community where good communication is essential. The school aims to keep parents informed at all times through:

Family Folders

One folder is allocated to each family and can be found outside the classroom of the oldest child in the family. We ask that each family ensures that their folder is checked regularly as it is an important source of information.

Clippings

This newsletter is a major means of communication within the school and is published at least twice per term. It contains information from all the classes, specific requests, interesting articles and dates for your diary. Clippings is sent by e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail address you can collect a copy from the office. Please read **all** of Clippings, not just the sections which relate directly to your child.

Telephone Directory

The school publishes a Telephone Directory each year, which is updated as required, with parents and children's names and phone numbers. If you do not wish to have your telephone number listed, or you have a specific request regarding your details, please advise the office in writing by the end of the first week of school.

Notice Boards

These are located outside all classrooms and outside the office. They display school information, community notices and news of specific events or requests. They do not advertise private business ventures, local or otherwise. Parents are welcome to place notices on the board outside the office only if they have been okayed by the administration staff. Notices will be cleared monthly unless otherwise specified.

Parents are asked not to place notices on classroom notice boards. The easel notice board that stands in the driveway outside the office displays important and urgent notices to parents and children. The large notice board outside the Library in front of the water play area is used for updates on major projects as well as advertising special events.

Word of Mouth

Often information is passed on by word of mouth. It is advisable to check the accuracy of information accessed in this way. Please remember that staff and Board members are approachable at all times to deal with queries. All queries regarding your child should be addressed, in the first place, to the teacher.

Parent Liaisons

Every class is assigned a Parent Liaison. The job of the Parent Liaison is to spread the word about school social events, welcome new parents, help them to settle in and provide information and assistance to *all* parents. They also function as a liaison between teachers and parents if needed.

Administration at Treetops

Parents/Guardians of children enrolled at Treetops Montessori School automatically become members of The Beenong School Association Inc., which is registered with The Department of Education and Training, and is responsible for the school's administration. This membership has no financial or legal obligations, outside the payment of fees and levies. The school is required to run according to the guidelines set out in The Beenong School Association's Constitution (a copy of which is available from the office).

The School Board, made up of parents who are elected at the Annual General Meeting, is responsible for planning and overseeing the administration of the school and setting policy. The School Board has four office bearers, Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, who are chosen at the first meeting of the new Board. The Principal is a standing member of the Board. A staff representative is elected by staff members each year. In addition there is provision for co-opted members and community members to be selected.

Minutes are taken by the Board Secretary and are available in the office, after they have been ratified by the board. Parents are welcome to attend Board meetings, which are held once a month.

All members of The Beenong School Association have voting rights for Board elections and parents are strongly encouraged to attend the AGM, usually held in March/April. Ample notice is given of the date of the AGM and nomination forms for candidates are available in advance from the office. It is a requirement of anyone seeking election to be prepared to remain on the board for a minimum of two years to ensure continuity and a certain level of experience among Board members.

The Principal is accountable to the Board and is responsible for educational issues, the administration of the school, staff matters, financial control and adherence to government regulations. The Principal is available by appointment between 8.30am and 4:00pm

The Administrator shares with the Principal responsibility for the implementation of school policy, development of future plans, enrolments and major new projects. The Administrator is available by appointment between 9:00am and 3:00pm, Monday to Friday.

The Finance Administrator shares responsibility with the Principal for the management of the budget. The Finance Administrator is also responsible for maintaining and administering all financial accounts/fees as well as billing and receipting of funds. The Finance Administrator is available from 11am to 3:30pm, Monday to Friday to answer any queries about accounts, payments and school fees.

The School Coordinator deals with the day to day running of the school and is available from 8:30am to 3:30pm, Monday to Thursday.

School Procedures

Absences from School

It is important that parents phone the office to advise of their child's absence from school **before** the start of classes. It is a requirement from the Department of Education that parents provide the school with a written note should the absence be for more than 2 consecutive days.

Accidents

Any accident which occurs while a child is in school care is dealt with according to the level of severity. A number of staff members hold a St. John Ambulance Senior First Aid Certificate and first aid kits are kept in each class. Parents are informed about any incident as soon as reasonably possible.

After School Activities

After School Activities are offered from time to time and parents will be informed of what is on offer. Fees may need to be charged to cover the costs of running such activities.

Allergies and Known Medical Conditions

The school must be informed about any known allergies and medical conditions. Parents are required to provide the school with a health plan if their child has a medical condition. If there is ever a need to administer medication at school, written instructions and a consent form must be provided with the medication.

After School Care

An out of school care service is available at Mundaring Primary School in Mundaring. Arrangements for enrolment are to be made directly with The Hills Out of School Care Association (HOSCA) on 9299 8687.

Benchmark Testing

Treetops Montessori School is legally required to conduct Benchmark Testing for children in the equivalent of Years Three, Five, Seven and Nine. This a condition required for funding. The tests are administered in as Montessori a way as possible, encouraging the children to see it as a lesson rather than a test and de-mystifying the process as much as possible. Every effort is made to help the children feel comfortable and confident while participating in the process. Results of the tests are sent to the school for our records and for parent information late in Term Four.

Birthdays

Most children enjoy sharing their birthday with friends and parents are welcome to provide a birthday cake to share with the class. We ask that you speak with the teacher about the necessary arrangements.

Bush Fire Procedures

Procedures in the event of a bush fire in our area, as advised by the Midland Fire Department, are as follows: All children congregate in the designated Fire Safety Area and await notification from the Fire Department as to whether evacuation is required. If evacuation is necessary, children are transported by bus to a safe area. The evacuation site is dependent on various factors, including the direction of the fire. Police or Fire Operations are able to advise parents of the evacuation site.

Complaints

All care is taken to avoid any situation which gives rise to a complaint. However, it is recognised that under some circumstances this is unavoidable and certain steps should be followed in order for the complainant to be heard and the issue to be resolved.

Any concern of an educational nature, which includes any incident in the classroom or playground, should first be brought to the attention of the teacher.

Any concern pertaining to the administration of the school should at first be addressed to the Administrator.

The school has a Complaints Policy, available from the office, which outlines the steps to be followed if discussion with the Teacher or Administrator does not resolve the matter.

Curriculum

As a Montessori school, Treetops follows the Montessori Curriculum. It matches much of the State curriculum, but goes beyond what is required in most areas. Specifically, The Montessori Curriculum in Geography, Botany, Geometry and Science is much more rigorous academically than the Education Department requirements at equivalent levels. Treetops also adheres to the Western Australian Curriculum Council "Curriculum Framework." This sets out Outcome Statements for all students from Pre-Primary to Year 10 in eight major learning areas – Maths, English, Science, Studies of Society and Environment, Technology and Enterprise, Health and Physical Education, Language Other Than English and The Arts. At Treetops we work towards educating the whole child with lessons on values, including the Virtues Programme, and with a strong emphasis on self confidence, independence and developing good relationships.

Electronic Music, Game Devices and Mobile Phones

Some of the older children bring electronic music, game devices and mobile phones to school. Children who bring these items to school will be required to turn them off and leave them in their bag or with the teacher during the day. The security of these items is the responsibility of the student and the school takes no responsibility for loss or damage. Parents may request a copy of the school policy pertaining to these items.

Excursions

The students are involved in excursions each term. A written note will be sent home informing parents of the nature of the excursion and method of travel. Parents are required to sign the permission slip and return it to the School prior to the excursion. Excursions are a compulsory part of the School's curriculum and students must attend unless they supply a doctor's certificate.

Footwear

All children **must** wear some form of footwear to school for safety reasons. Thongs are not an acceptable form of footwear as they do not provide adequate support for children's feet and have been responsible for accidents in the past. In the winter months the ground becomes very muddy and children may need Wellington boots. A change of shoes or slippers can be kept in the classroom.

Hats

There is an all year round 'no hat, no play' policy in operation at Treetops. It is recommended that each child keeps a labelled hat at school. There is also a supply of sunscreen in every classroom which is applied before prolonged activity outside.

Health and Emergency Contacts Form

The office requires a Health and Emergency Contact Form for all students. Families are required to fill in the form on entrance of a new child to the school or when any details have changed. Health and Emergency Contacts Forms are kept in the office.

Infectious Diseases

In the case of all infectious diseases, including head lice and impetigo (school sores), students must be excluded from school. Students may only return to school when they are no longer infectious.

Laundry

At the end of each week any classroom laundry is collected and washed by volunteer parents.

Library

Children are encouraged to borrow books from the School Library in order to become familiar with the process of book selection and borrowing for the purposes of project work and reading for pleasure. There is also a selection of books for parents available for borrowing from the Library. Anyone who wishes to borrow books should see the Librarian.

Lice

Health Department Regulations require that any child who has an infestation of head lice be excluded from school until treatment with an effective method has begun. At Treetops, children are checked for lice weekly and if a child is found to have head lice their parent is contacted to collect the child. The child may return to school once they have been treated. Information on our Nitz Blitz programme is available from the office.

Lilly Pillys Afternoon Programme

Lilly Pillys Afternoon Programme operates from Monday to Friday in the foyer of the school hall. It is available for part-time Children's House and 3 Year Old Programme children between 12:00 noon and 3:30pm. Children are accompanied from class to Lilly Pillys by a staff member. To enrol a child in this programme parents are required to fill in an application and submit it to the office.

Lost Property

There is a lost property box outside the office. Please check it regularly. All clothing should be labelled to ensure it can be returned to its owner.

Lunches and Snacks

Treetops has a policy of encouraging healthy eating and most children bring packed lunches. Lunches can also be ordered from the Treetops Pines Menu and are delivered to the school. Some classes also share a "special lunch" catered by parents once a week. We ask that parents do not send lollies, chocolate, sugary snacks, fizzy drinks or anything of this nature to school as they cause disagreement and problems between the children as well as raising sugar levels to sometimes difficult states. Please resist your child's pleas for this type of treat to be brought to school. If teachers see children with such items, they will be held until home time and then returned to the parent.

Medication

Prescription and homeopathic medications must be handed directly to the classroom teacher. Medications are not to be left in your child's bag. Prescription medications will not be administered by staff without appropriate written instructions from the prescribing doctor or pharmacist. Homeopathic medications will not be administered by staff without appropriate written instructions from the prescribing homeopath.

Observation in Classrooms

It is recommended that parents observe in the classroom regularly as a means to understanding the workings of the Montessori classroom. This is of particular value when a child is ready to move into the next classroom. Observations are stimulating, thought-provoking and reassuring and appointments may be arranged through the office.

Parent Interviews

Formal interviews between parents and teachers are conducted at the end of each school year and whenever else either parents or teachers request. A timetable is placed on the notice boards with appointment times. The teachers are also readily available for brief, informal 'chats', but appointments should be made in advance with the teacher if the need for a longer consultation arises. Interviews between parents and the principal are conducted as required.

Parent Information Evenings

Parent Information Evenings are held twice a year for the purpose of educating and informing parents about different school related topics.

Privacy Policy

Treetops Montessori School is bound by the National Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth Privacy Act. This basically means that Treetops will not pass on your private details to any third parties without your consent. For more information, please feel free to read the Privacy Policy available from the office.

Professional Development Days

Two to three times per school year, staff attend professional development days and on these occasions the school is closed to our children and alternative arrangements for their care should be made by parents.

School Clothing

In keeping with Montessori philosophy, and the focus on the individual, Treetops does not have a compulsory uniform. However, we ask that children wear practical clothing (not expensive clothing, designer wear or anything too revealing). All items of clothing should be clearly marked with the child's name.

Sick Children at School

Any child who is unwell is expected to remain at home until fully recovered. If illness manifests itself during school hours the child is cared for by a member of staff and the parent is contacted. If we are unable to contact the parent a designated emergency contact person is phoned.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are held twice per term and on these days the school closes at 2pm.

Toys

Toys brought to school are a source of conflict. While we understand that children may wish to display new toys to their friends, they become a source of distraction in the classroom and invariably get lost, broken or fought over. Please do not allow your child to bring toys or valuable items to school. If children bring such items for news etc, they will be held by the teacher after the session until home time and then returned.

For more information on Montessori Education try:

The International Montessori Index of Practical Montessori Information on
<http://www.montessori.edu>

Montessori Australia Foundation
<http://www.montessori.org.au>