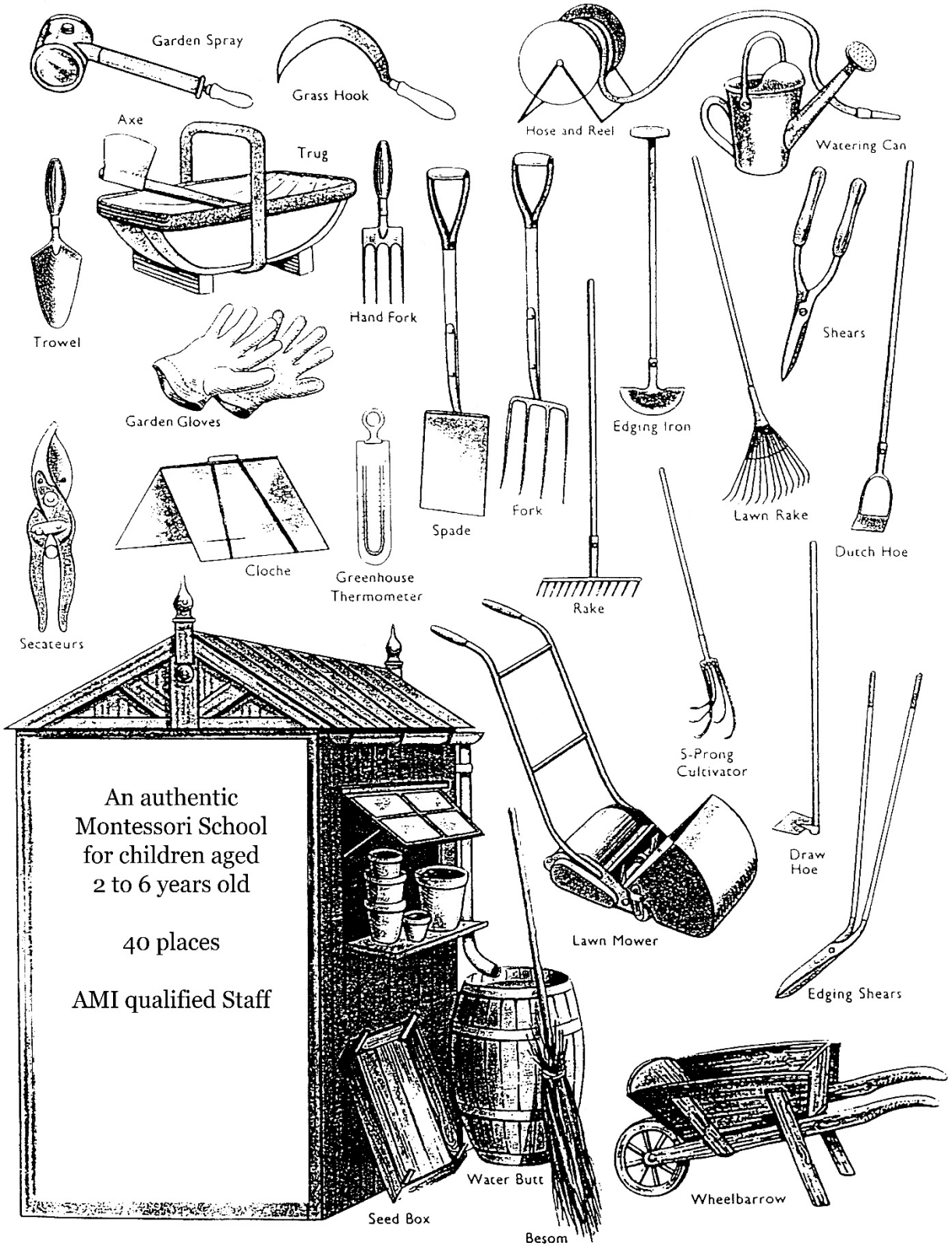


# Bethnal Green Montessori



An authentic  
 Montessori School  
 for children aged  
 2 to 6 years old  
  
 40 places  
  
 AMI qualified Staff

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## THE SCHOOL

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The school was opened by Sidonie in January 1992 in a small house in Quilter Street, Bethnal Green, with six children and one assistant. We had room for 12 children and were full by the Autumn. In January 1993, with a growing group of children, we moved into the newly built Community room at the Pebble Centre in Warner Place, where the space accommodated 16 children. Still with an increasing waiting list, in February 1997 we moved into our own permanent premises at 68 Warner Place, the former 'Jeremiah Bullfrog' pub. Soon after, we re-opened the Pebble Centre space next door as a second group running in tandem with the group at '68'. In September 2013, we moved the Pebble Centre group to permanent, self-contained premises at No. 1 Marian Place, Pritchard's Road, E2 9AX where we now have 24 places. Altogether we have places for 48 children in two linked locations, both offering a social grouping of mixed age for children approaching their third birthday, up to six years old. We are open five days a week, 43 weeks a year, organised as three traditional school terms and an extra optional 'summer school' during July and August.

We also have a separate afternoon group for younger children held at Pritchard's Road, for those aged two and over, for two to five sessions a week to introduce them into the environment and give them an experience of being in a small group before they move up to morning group.

Both classrooms have large, secure walled gardens. We are near two small green public spaces, and across the road from Hackney City Farm and Haggerston Park which we visit regularly. We offer a broad and balanced education, accredited by Montessori Education UK as authentic, staffed by well-qualified and dedicated teachers. Our group is stable, and we expect children to stay a minimum of two years, preferably three or more, to get the full benefits which accrue from the Montessori approach, so uniquely designed for this phase.

The school is still owned and managed by its founder and Principal, Sidonie Winter. We have a total of seven teaching staff. All staff are either fully qualified AMI Montessori Directresses (teachers), qualified AMI Montessori Assistants, or are in the process of obtaining these qualifications. We therefore have a highly qualified and trained staff team sharing a vision of an authentic Montessori education. The school is lead and managed by the Principal and full time Administrator, with regular senior management team meetings between themselves and the senior directress from each class. A daily Cleaner ensures that the classrooms and environments are in pristine condition to receive the children each day.

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## DAILY ROUTINE

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Children arrive at 8.45am at the main street door. At the inner door they say goodbye to parents/carers. They are collected at 12.00pm unless staying for lunch.

Each day all the Montessori activities and materials are in place ready and accessible to the child. The directress's skill is to gradually introduce each piece of material on a one- to-one basis. The child is shown how to handle and use the materials, and where to replace them. After this the child is free to choose from these activities his or her own 'work', and follow their inclinations and interests throughout the morning. Children work on floor-mats or at tables, most singly but sometimes in pairs or groups. The directress or assistant brings the children together for stories, singing, I-Spy sound games, music groups, practising social skills and sharing news. Freedom of movement is considered very important, but we create an environment in which there are opportunities for '**purposeful activity**' which will engage the mind as well as the body. The garden is open to the children all day during the summer term, and at any other times when the

weather allows. Whatever the weather, all children will get time to play outside at some stage of every session. In the outside space all the same activities can be carried out and many more to do with gardening and the school pets. There is time for energetic activity on bikes, trikes and scooters and traditional games like hopscotch, skipping, throwing and catching, hoops and climbing. During the morning an 'open access' snack table is set up at which the children can sit and pour themselves a glass of milk or water, accompanied by a choice of healthy snacks or fresh fruit which they learn to prepare themselves. Children are shown how to help themselves, and how to clear away, wash and dry dishes, and set out things ready for the next person. This helps children to appreciate the social dimension of all our activities. The children grow in confidence as they take responsibility for making things enjoyable and ready for others.

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## THE MONTESSORI METHOD - AN INTRODUCTION

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A Montessori nursery school or 'Children's House' is modelled on the 'Casa dei Bambini' which Maria Montessori first set up in San Lorenzo in Rome in 1907. The group of children for whom she first developed her unique approach and materials responded to their new environment and the freedom of activity which they were permitted within it, in a way which struck Montessori with the force of revelation. It showed her that within every child is a powerful urge to develop his or her own potential which unfolds naturally under the right conditions. She devoted her life to building on her initial discoveries and developing a programme to assist the child in his or her task of constructing himself/herself.

One of the most interesting and fundamental concepts to emerge was that of '**order**' as a quality inherent in the child and needing to be expressed. This urge enables the child to begin to orientate himself within the environment and understand it. The Montessori approach sees order as a vital element permeating all areas of human experience and expression.

Of the San Lorenzo children, she wrote:

*"Here among these children, order came from mysterious, hidden directives, which can manifest themselves only if the freedom permitting them to be heeded is given. In order to give this type of freedom, it was precisely necessary that nobody interfere to obstruct the constructive, spontaneous activity of the children in an environment prepared so that their need for development can find satisfaction"*

*(Formation of Man)*

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## THE DIRECTRESS

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This is the preferred title for a qualified Montessori teacher. An A.M.I (Association Montessori Internationale) trained teacher has attended a highly intensive, rigorous full- time one-year or part-time two-year course with a balance of theoretical and practical input, including observation and teaching practice in registered schools. The directress is trained to adopt a non-traditional role, not to directly instruct, but to 'link' the child with an environment containing materials which he is shown how to use and through which he or she develops towards specific goals. Using her skill and observation, the directress 'presents' materials to an individual child at the moment judged most conducive to arousing his interest and satisfying his inner needs. Our directresses are mainly university graduates with a wealth of life experience and interests to enrich their relationship with the children. We value warmth and creativity in our teaching staff, as we know that this age group absorb the emotional atmosphere as much as the educational one.

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## THE MATERIALS

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The materials in a Montessori school are those which were designed and developed by Maria Montessori, and later, her son Mario. They are unique. They are produced by authorised manufacturers, to exact specifications, of the highest quality materials. They are beautiful and enticing, chosen after prolonged observation by Montessori as those which had the power to interest the child deeply.

The materials are graded and progressive, offering a challenge while ensuring the means to solve problems. The child is offered real choices and takes decisions spontaneously, learning to think for himself. This leads to growing confidence and self-reliance, and the intellect and personality flourish. Will-power is developed and grows strong. In the Montessori environment it is as if each child steps onto a ladder which leads step by step from one goal to the next. Once begun, the child is never static but always climbing by realisable steps towards the maximum of his potential.

The environment is completed by carefully chosen real utensils and objects in natural materials, hand-made resources created by the directresses to support the curriculum and in response to the children's individual interests including sets of 'classified' pictures and small books, hand-made cloths and table-cloths made to the right size, plants and pets to be cared for, musical instruments, art materials, the Book Corner, surprise 'feeling' bags, painting easel, brushes and paints, globes, maps and exploratory land and water models, and many, many more materials designed to further the child's interests in any and every direction.

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## THE MONTESSORI CURRICULUM & THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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We are registered with the DFE in order to receive Nursery Funding for eligible two, three and four- year olds and we are therefore inspected by OFSTED. Our Inspection reports and Action Plans can be seen on the OFSTED website or in the School Office. We have consistently received excellent Ofsted ratings in our reports since inspections began.

Activities are organised into five areas: (1) *Practical Life*, (2) *Sensorial*, (3) *Language*, (4) *Mathematics*, (5) *Culture*. All categories are deeply inter-connected, but the first two are the fundamental preparation for all subsequent learning.

***Practical Life*** activities are based on familiar domestic activities like sweeping, washing, polishing, fastening, pouring, opening and closing etc. These allow the child to be active and feel useful right from the start and are organised so as to enhance the development of the child's concentration span and co-ordination of movement. They give the child the chance to become a self-directed, independent and beneficial participant in the life of the group and help the child to develop an orderly way of working through a sequence of actions to completion. The children find these activities hugely engrossing and satisfying, and visitors will notice the harmony in the group which arises from these activities.

These are the fundamental activities which enable the children to achieve the Foundation Stage Early Years Outcomes in the area of **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**, and also **Physical Development**, but because the child has freedom of choice and movement, supported by an intelligent and enabling environment, many aspects of **Mathematics**, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, as well as **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**, are being developed. Two important, unique Montessori activities in this area focus on the child's

development of equilibrium. In its physical form this is found in 'Walking on the Line', where the children balance on a elliptical white painted line, learning to centre themselves as they walk, adding challenges to their growing awareness of balance by carrying small objects in their hands or on their heads. The second activity concerns the child's awareness of inner balance, which is developed by the 'Silence Game', in which the children challenge themselves to achieve the maximum **physical and spiritual** self-control by achieving stillness and silence voluntarily in a group.

**Sensorial** activities, by contrast, involve specially designed materials with no counterpart in the world of utensils. They provide concrete experiences of different abstract concepts like length, breadth, volume, weight, texture, pitch and so on. The materials actually isolate and embody the concept. Work with these materials marks the beginning of intellectual development as the child learns to notice contrasts and similarities, identify matching characteristics, pair, sort, group and distinguish. **Mathematical language** can be given with great precision when connected to the child's own sensory exploration with these materials, and mathematical patterns are recognised and found repeated across a range of materials.

Activities from this area and Practical Life run parallel with each other, and soon inter- connect with activities from the other three areas. The Sensorial materials prepare the child for key aspects of Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, but equally Creativity and Communication, Language and Literacy.

**Language** activities build on the child's naturally intense interest in language by developing his oral expression and building up his awareness of the sounds in words then exploring through tactile letter shapes the way these sounds are represented by symbols, before fusing these two to arrive at an explosive moment when the child discovers writing, reading and later the fascinating structure of grammar and punctuation. As soon as the child reaches sufficient phonemic awareness, he or she is enabled to express their thoughts in written form using loose letters laid on a mat. In this way children often start 'writing' before they discover 'reading', motivated by the natural desire to communicate and record their own thoughts. In the many language activities children are able to achieve all the goals set out in the Early Learning Outcomes for **Language and Literacy**, alongside aspects of Creativity related to stories, books, drama, writing and self- expression.

**Mathematics** materials introduce the child who at this age has been observed to have a spontaneous interest in developing numeracy to all aspects of numbers. **Quantity, symbol and sequence** are discovered one by one. The beautiful structure of the decimal system is explored and discovered with its categories of units, tens and hundreds; place value and hierarchies; the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division; counting from one to one hundred, then one thousand. The materials are designed and presented so that the child moves gradually from a concrete to an abstract level, from counting on fingers to eventually as skill develops using pen and paper or calculating purely mentally. In the environment children find plenty of opportunities to put this mathematical awareness to use in problem solving, especially when they prepare the tables for lunch, counting numbers of chairs, plates or name cards, or organise and distribute the snack, placing the appropriate number card to show how many pieces of apple or snack may be taken. In this way children meet all the Early Learning Outcomes for Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy.

**Culture** materials introduce the child to geography, nature studies, music, art and science, past and present. A wide range of activities in these areas promote the Early Learning Outcomes for Knowledge and Understanding of the World. The child's physical development is continually

considered and observed in the way the environment is designed and the freedom the child has to move around in pursuit of purposeful activities. As well as the development of co-ordination and control, highlighted in the aims of the Practical Life activities, the organisation and structure of activities helps children to develop an awareness of space and of others right from the beginning. The children have time outside in the garden every day and undertake a whole range of activities in gardening and caring for the school animals. They learn to use appropriate tools safely. They also enjoy games with hoops, balls, bats and skittles as well as being introduced to traditional games like hopscotch and skipping. In this way the Early Learning Goals for Physical development are met.

***Creative development***, in the Montessori approach, is the whole miraculous and unique stage of development which occurs during the phase from birth to six years old, now recognised as the Early Years Foundation Stage, a continuum of self-construction according to natural laws of human development. We offer the means for the child to develop great sensory awareness and refinement, using each and every sense in the exploration of the senses carried out in the Sensorial activities, with their focus on colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions. The children have many opportunities to acquire the skills necessary for art and put them into practise. Music is offered in materials for exploring sounds through volume, pitch and the notes of the scale. Percussion instruments introduce and develop rhythm, singing in groups is an important daily activity, sometimes involving dance. Music and Movement is offered when the children show a need for this type of activity, often if it is too wet to go outside in the garden. A dance session building up sequences of movement and interpretation of music is offered once a week in the afternoons where the children respond to a wide range of music and use imaginative interpretation to tell a story through movement. Projects and art activities related to festivals or topics are also offered regularly. The emphasis is on the child producing and evaluating their own creations, rather than teachers generating work to 'take home'. Children's artwork has won prizes in local borough competitions, and the success children achieve later in music, art, dance and story-writing is proof that the foundations for creativity have been nurtured and supported in the Montessori environment.

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#### **TERM DATES**

Terms follow closely the dates of local schools. Each term is divided into two halves of approximately six or seven weeks each, with a week's half-term break in between. Exact term dates are given at the beginning of each year.

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#### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

During July and August we remain open for three to five of the six weeks traditional holiday break, with an alteration to hours to offer an 8.45-3.00 pm active summer programme, bookable on a weekly basis, which may include other children, siblings, or ex-Montessori school pupils ('oldies' who like to come back!). The emphasis during these lovely summer days is on outdoor play, themes for generating creative ideas and projects, and lots of craft activities. Information is available in the second half of the summer term at school, and places must be booked in advance.

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## VISITS

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We recommend that after reading the Prospectus, you telephone and arrange to visit the school to see it running at first hand. To be able to sit and observe, we suggest you do not bring your child on this visit. However, if you have difficulty arranging for their care, tell us and we will work out a compromise solution with you. We want you to be able to see the directresses and children at work under typical conditions, without being disturbed from their normal routines.

The Principal normally shows visitors around the classroom and answers any questions, usually fifteen to twenty minutes is sufficient for you to form an impression of the atmosphere and relationships in the group. If you have many questions, the Principal will be happy to talk to you afterwards in the office. If the Principal is not available, the Administrator will be able to conduct visits and answer questions.

If you think your child will be happy here, you can ask for an enrolment form and you will be able to discuss preferred start dates, class, number of sessions, etc.

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## ENROLMENT

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When you enrol, we will ask you to fill in an Information Record/Registration Form and return it together with a non-refundable cheque for £25. This will allow us to keep a place on the waiting list for your child to start at the appropriate time. We will discuss with you a start date, and close to this date we will invite your child to come in for some visits with you, to get used to the place and the people. We will discuss with you a settling-in procedure. This will vary depending on how confident your child is, whether he or she has been used to being in a group without you, and how you feel yourself about the separation.

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## SETTLING IN, 'KEY PERSON' and DIRECTRESS'S ROLES

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During these preliminary visits you can stay with your child. If your child is confident to stay alone after this, they may be able to start coming regularly without you. If your child is not wholly secure we will suggest you come in for the first proper morning and sit at the side with a book to read or something to look at, so that your child does not feel you are watching him or her! Let the directress deal with your child and give him or her a chance to thoroughly explore and observe, and maybe even join in. After this, if all goes well, you can suggest to your child that on the next morning you will leave briefly and return to pick them up before going-home time. Your child will show when they are happy to stay alone and confident that you will be returning for them at the appropriate time. It is very important that you help by *talking* to your child about the school and explaining that it is a special place of their own where they can stay safely without you.

At an agreed time, you will find that you can bring your child to the door, say a cheerful (and brief) goodbye and watch her walk happily into school. Independence is achieved most happily where both parent and child are clear about their aims and confident about the school. The greatest re-assurance however is in the fact that independence is a vital human tendency, and all of us need it and desire to achieve it.



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## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

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*Open Evenings, Parent Conferences, Montessori Talks and Demonstrations, Events*

It is very important that a close and supportive relationship develops between the directresses and the parents. Any worries should be brought up straight away so that they can be dealt with promptly. Although brief messages can be exchanged at the door on arrival or departure, there are several ways in which we try to make ourselves accessible to parents and encourage you to take an interest in our approach.

To introduce 'new' parents to 'old' parents we hold OPEN EVENINGS twice a year. This is a relaxed occasion for looking around the school, exploring the materials and activities, talking to other parents, borrowing books or information and talking to staff.

Once every term, usually on a Saturday, the Lead Directress will hold PARENT CONFERENCES at appointed times, when individual parents can receive a verbal report on their child's progress. This is also an important opportunity for exchanging information and observations, and the directress will want to extend her understanding of the child by asking questions about routines at home, important experiences or concerns. Parents are encouraged to bring questions. At any other times, to talk to one of the directresses about any concerns, please telephone the school to ask for an appointment to be made.

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## **MONTESSORI TALKS**

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*Talks will be offered once a year to help parents understand the Montessori approach and materials.*

The school has a tried and tested annual cycle of regular SPECIAL EVENTS during the year including our whole-school Summer Picnic, Christmas Concert, Easter Egg Hunt and other celebrations to which all parents and carers are invited. These social occasions are great fun, and everyone can share in the preparation. The children also go out on a variety of OUTINGS which include science and nature workshops at the Soane Centre, Early Years concerts at LSO St. Luke's, 'Walk and Talk' outings to Haggerston Park to observe seasonal change and nature. We invite parents to accompany us on these very enjoyable trips.

In the Office we hold a small library of books by Maria Montessori and useful Parents guides to the Montessori school and curriculum: these are available to be borrowed. We also have a very useful DVD called 'Montessori in Action', made by the Director of the AMI training college in London, in which footage from filming done in three selected Montessori schools includes some (memorable) scenes from Bethnal Green Montessori School!

We have made our own small DVD from one directress's film of children at work over the last week of the summer term in her class. It can be seen at Open Evenings or borrowed to watch at home, and gives you the chance to be a fly-on-the-wall of this actual class.

Termly class 'Scrapbook's' recording the daily life of the classroom, some outings, celebrations, birthdays, festivals or special occasions are available to look at when you visit the Office.

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## SCHOOL POLICIES: BEHAVIOUR: EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

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When dealing with very young children discipline and social skills must develop from within and cannot be imposed. We do not punish or reprimand the children. We are firm if required, but generally seek to re-direct or anticipate.

We actively demonstrate and discuss with the children acceptable and helpful strategies for dealing with the complicated issues which genuine free social interaction brings with it. Above all, we behave consistently and considerately ourselves.

The ground rules are few and very simple: they apply equally to everyone in the Children's House, adults and children alike.

### • ***Respect one another***

This means not disturbing another person's work. If a child wants something that another child is using, they must wait until it is replaced on the shelf. We take care to explain to each other what we want. We consider carefully the space each of us needs (floor mats and table mats help to define this).

### • ***Respect the materials***

The Montessori materials each have a particular purpose and use. To help the child focus on the activity we show how to handle them carefully, use them in order and replace them in the proper place. Because order is maintained in the environment, the child will never experience the frustration of looking for things which are lost, finding things broken or incomplete. This does not mean that the child can only use them in one way. Exploration is encouraged, children are learning through their own discoveries. At the same time in a civilised and humane society we must learn to value the objects we own and the tools we use.

***What happens if children come into conflict with one another?*** We comfort the victim. We also comfort and protect the aggressor, because often the child who has struck out is feeling insecure or is trying unsuccessfully to communicate, may even be trying to make friends! We seek to redirect the children and give them positive ways to achieve their goals and interesting tasks to challenge them. We reinforce the mutual rights of all in the group to be included and to feel respected.

*The directress is always re-examining her relationship with the child to make sure we are equals, collaborators in the child's work of self-development. For this reason, it is pointless for us to insist on apologies between children. When a child has developed sufficient self-awareness, he or she will apologise spontaneously and sincerely. Until this point, to insist on apologies merely shows the adult imposing their will by force - the child will learn about how we impose our wills by force, rather than how we show consideration and value other people's feelings.*

Often the children themselves show more understanding and forgiveness of each other than adults would expect. Although it can be upsetting for a parent to feel their child has been hurt by another it is important not to over-react. Speak to the teachers if you are at all anxious but do not make assumptions about incidents or try to influence your child's efforts to deal with problems, as this could easily confuse or escalate minor upsets.

*Children become very mature and caring in this atmosphere. They show great compassion for one another in misfortune. They also become liberated and happy within themselves. This kind of caring becomes a fixed characteristic of that child's personality.*

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## ILLNESS

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If your child is unwell the best place for him or her is at home. In the case of infectious illness please seek medical advice on how long to keep your child off school. Please ALWAYS telephone the school and leave a message if your child is not coming (for any reason).

In the case of contagious illnesses which can pose a health risk to others, such as German measles, notices will be put up to inform all parents. In the case of routine childhood infections where there is no advance sign during the infectious stage (like chickenpox) but where there is no risk to others, it is the school's policy to leave it to the individual parents to decide when their child feels well enough to return. It is much better for your child to be exposed to many of these illnesses in early rather than later life.

**Late nights** Sometimes children go through periods of disturbed sleep patterns. Please inform the school so that we are aware children may be feeling tired. This helps us enormously. Often children will cope perfectly well; sometimes it is better to let the child rest at home rather than experience an *unenjoyable* day at school. It is also important to try and find out what may have disturbed their sleep pattern. Sometimes a child who may be coming down with an illness will be very sleepy at school/and or uncharacteristically fragile emotionally. We have a comfortable rest mat with sheet, blanket and pillow which will be put in a quiet corner should the child need a sleep, and parents will be contacted and informed. Long-term problems need help, and advice should be sought from your health visitor or doctor. Whenever you are seeking advice about any aspect of your child's health, please also inform the school.

**Medication** If your child needs to take prescribed medication whilst at school please complete a Medicine form authorising staff to administer the medicine. We do not administer medicines otherwise. We do not use Calpol. If a child has a temperature, we will send them home.

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## ACCIDENTS

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Accidental bumps and trips will occur when the child is still developing balance and co- ordination. These will be treated with a cold compress, comfort and re-assurance. The person collecting the child at the end of the session will be informed.

Cuts or more serious accidents will be recorded in the Accident Book. Parents will be shown the report and asked to sign the book. In the case of an injury requiring hospital treatment, parents will be contacted straight away. There is always a qualified First Aider present in each and every session, and First Aid training is now a requirement for every member of staff.

Parents must sign on Enrolment giving permission for us to seek immediate hospital treatment if necessary. Social Services are notified of serious accidents requiring hospital admission. The incident will be fully written up in the Accident Book and the parent will be shown and asked to sign the book.

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## CHARGES

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A Registration fee of £25 will be requested in order to secure a place on the waiting list for your child, to cover administration costs. This is non-refundable.

A Deposit of £400 is payable on accepting the offer of a place in one of the main morning groups, which is non-refundable in the event of your failing to take up the place held for your child at the school. The deposit will be refunded as a deduction from your final half-term's fee bill on receipt of one *complete* half-term's written notice of withdrawing your child from the school.

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## FEES

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The rates for the school year **September 2022 - July 2023** are as follows:

### **2.5 - 6-year olds**

**Five mornings 8.45 – 12.00pm, Mon-Fri, ..... £185 per week**

**Afternoon sessions 12.00pm – 3.00pm, Mon-Fri..... £30 per session**

*Afternoon sessions are for children fully settled into weekday mornings, by agreement with directresses.*

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## CHILDCARE COSTS – HELP FOR PARENTS

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Help with fees is currently available for most children in the school, in a variety of forms:

The following information you can find on:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/childcare>

There is a childcare costs calculator on the website from which you can find out how much help you are eligible for.

**You can get help with childcare costs for children under 18. You might be able to apply for:**

- Tax- Free Childcare
- tax credits
- Universal Credit
- help while you study

**You could also get free hours childcare when your child is aged 2 to 4. You might be able to apply for:**

- Free education and childcare for 2 years olds
- 15 hours free childcare for to 3 to 4-year olds
- 30 hours free childcare for 3 to 4year old

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## PAYMENT

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Payment is required in advance, at the beginning of each half-term. Fee invoices will be sent out by the Administrator in advance of each half term. Payment by BACS is preferred. Cheques should be made payable to Bethnal Green Montessori School and sent to The Administrator, Bethnal Green Montessori School, 68 Warner Place, London E2 7DA. Surcharges for late payment are as follows: £25.00 will be added to bills if payment is more than 14 days overdue, £50.00 if payment is more than 28 days overdue.

Please note that it is part of the School-Parent Contract that fees are paid on time, and late payment constitutes a breach of this contract. It also causes a great waste of administrative time and shows a lack of courtesy to the school. In certain cases, late payment may lead to asking that a child be withdrawn until payment is received.

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## PERIOD OF NOTICE

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A minimum of **one full half-term's** notice is required when you wish to withdraw your child from the school. As well as giving notice in person to the class directress or Administrator, notice must be sent in writing/by email to the principal before the first day of your intended final half-term. In the absence of this notice, fees will be payable equivalent to five morning sessions for one additional half-term.

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## MOVING ON

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*We are qualified and equipped to teach children up to and including age 6+.* Parents must consider carefully the right time for their children to move into primary school. From our experience of children who have left, we can offer advice and information. However, anyone seriously considering the benefits of the Montessori approach to education should take into account the disruptive effect of moving on children before they have completed the special period of development which Montessori identified between birth and six, and for which (for the 3-6 year old) she designed the unique environment and materials of the Children's House. This period is an organic whole and quite different to what follows. Above all, children need the proper time to mature and develop in tune with their surroundings. Children who leave at 4+ may have learnt a lot but they will not have had time to experience the immense confidence and self-esteem which flowers when they have the time to *realise* the opportunity this knowledge gives them to be in control of their actions and choices. For the 4+ year old, with all his or her skills and achievements, *our* job is only half done.

We give as much help as we can when the time comes for children to leave and we will not put any pressure on parents to keep their children with us. We hope that parents will consider their options and make the best-informed choice available to them. We always provide a comprehensive and informative record ('Leaver's Report') of the child's progress and achievements which can be passed on to the next school and allows their new teacher to start off with an accurate and full picture of the child's abilities, strengths and interests. We also pass on to you an album containing photographs, descriptions, quotes and examples of work, depicting your child's **Personal Learning Journey** throughout their time with us.

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## **THE FUTURE: A MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?**

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We cherish the hope to open an Elementary class at Bethnal Green Montessori School. This would allow children to continue with a Montessori Education to 9 or 12 years old. We have now set up a charitable trust to help us fundraise and make progress towards realising this goal, called Child Futures. If you are interested in helping to set up this new section of the school please speak to us. Our two main requirements are secure suitable premises and high calibre Elementary trained Montessori staff.

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## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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*All children must be cared for with equal concern and with due regard to their religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background. (Children's Act Part X, sec.74.6.)*

The Bethnal Green Montessori School is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all children and families. We believe that no child, individual or family should be excluded from the Montessori school's activities on the grounds of age, gender, sexuality, special needs, class, family status, means, disability, colour, ethnic origin, culture, religion or belief. We aim to ensure that all who are genuinely committed to Montessori education and wish to work in or help with the Montessori school have an equal chance to do so.

Montessori schools are founded upon the recognition of universal human characteristics and needs. They flourish in all cultures and communities throughout the world. The Montessori A.M.I. is an international organisation, and students from all over the world take part in their training course in London. As part of their training, students from the course come to our school on Observation and Teaching Practice placements. They contribute a unique flavour of internationalism to the 'Children's House'.

All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured. Activities and the freedom of choice made possible by the prepared environment offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination. Opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.

In seeking to be a 'help to life', we look to nurture the developmental tendencies of the child. Through the child we believe we can learn the way to individual freedom and fulfilment; celebrating the unknown potential of each unique individual, we work tirelessly in the cause of world peace.

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## **ADMISSIONS**

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The Bethnal Green Montessori School is open to all children of eligible age on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. On receipt of the Registration form, children are placed on the waiting list for the term in which they become three. Places are offered as they become available, usually termly, to those on the waiting list approaching their third birthday, taking into account the following considerations:

- Priority is given to siblings of those children already attending the school
- Children who will be three in the term approaching.
- Order of Registration
- Occasionally we accept children later than their third birthday. Older children will be considered if their parents demonstrate a genuine commitment to the Montessori approach and the directresses consider that they will benefit and settle successfully into the group.

Please note that a place in the 2-year-olds afternoon group will not change positions on the main school waiting list. Although we envisage all 2-year-olds moving on to the main school when ready, a place in the introductory group does not constitute a guarantee of this.

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## **POLICIES**

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Copies of all school policies and procedures (as listed in Appendix A) regarding Admissions, Behaviour, Child Protection, Complaints, Equal Opportunities, Fire, Health & Safety, Hygiene, Key Person, Lost Children, Medication and Sick Children, No Smoking, Outings, Risk Assessment and Special Needs, together with OFSTED Reports, Action Plans, and other required documents may be inspected at the School Office

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## **DATA PROTECTION**

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The Bethnal Green Montessori School is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 (Registration no. Z7504787) to hold information about children and their parents that is necessary to support their development and pastoral care, monitor their progress and assess the performance of the setting. This information is held in the strictest confidence and may be shared only with other non-commercial organisations which are officially related to the provision of childcare and education and are subject to the same requirements of Fair Processing under the Data Protection Act.

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## **APPENDIX A:**

**As a condition of your child's acceptance into our school, parents are asked to be aware of and read all school policies. The complete school policies file is available to view at any time in the school office at 68 Warner Place.**

### **BGMS: POLICY & PROCEDURES INDEX:**

**Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy**

**Admissions Policy**

**Biting Policy & Procedure**

**Child Not Collected Policy**

**Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

**Cleaning Policy**

**Complaints / Compliments Policy Procedure**

**Early Years Processing Notice - Data Protection Act 1998**

**Emergency Procedure In Case of Injury**  
**Fire Drill Policy and Procedures**  
**Fire Risk Assessment**  
**First Aid Policy**  
**Food and Drink Policy**  
**Health & Safety Policy**  
**Hygiene Policy (children/adults)**  
**Key Groups and Montessori Roles Policy**  
**Lost Child Policy**  
**Medication Procedure & Policy**  
**Medicines Administration Consent Form**  
**Named Persons' Responsibilities**  
**Nappy Changing Policy**  
**Outings Policy Parental Involvement**  
**Risk Assessment Policy**  
**Sick Children Policy**  
**Smoke-Free Policy**  
**Special Educational Needs/Inclusion Policy**  
**Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality Policy**  
**Prevent Policy**

June 2021