



STUDENT HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| <i>Our School</i> | <i>Page 3</i> |
| <i>Montessori Education</i> | <i>Page 3 – 4</i> |
| <i>Curriculum</i> | <i>Page 4– 9</i> |
| <i>School Policies and Procedures</i> | <i>Page 9-11</i> |
| <i>Medical/Health Information</i> | <i>Page 11-13</i> |
| <i>School Safety</i> | <i>Page 14-15</i> |
| <i>Parent Information</i> | <i>Page 14 - 17</i> |
| <i>Payment Information</i> | <i>Page 17-18</i> |
| <i>School Directory</i> | <i>Page 18</i> |
| <i>Appendixes- School Policies</i> | <i>Page 19-49</i> |

Our School

Our Mission

Our mission is to foster a strong sense of community and respect for self, others, and the environment in an inclusive and nurturing setting. We aim to provide the children with an opportunity to develop independence in a creative, educational environment and foster a lifelong love of learning.

Our Goal

Our goal at Village Montessori is to assist children in developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to become productive members of their community. Our environment fosters children to be respectful of themselves, others, and their surroundings. We have created an enriched learning environment and employ certified teachers who want to work collaboratively with parents to achieve this.

Montessori Education

Montessori Philosophy

Montessori Education is a preparation for life.

Dr. Montessori taught us that the most important aspects of education are to teach the child how to learn. The motivations for learning must come from within the child. We are all born with an innate desire to better ourselves and our environment and the Montessori classroom is carefully prepared for this.

Dr. Montessori observed that when children grow up in an environment that is warm, encouraging, and stimulating to the senses they will spontaneously explore, create, investigate, and ask questions. Dr. Montessori believed that learning should be relaxed, comfortable and a natural process.

A Montessori Classroom

Montessori is a holistic approach to education, designed to educate the whole child. With this in mind, we prepare an environment that fosters independence, concentration, and self-confidence. Our classrooms offer children the experience of working with specialized materials developed by Dr. Maria Montessori that encourage the overall development of the child. The materials are designed to provide successful learning experiences while developing a love and desire to learn. The children can choose material freely, within their abilities, providing an individual learning program for each child.

Given the time to flourish and be part of our Montessori environment, children will learn to trust their own ability, to think for themselves, and problem solve independently. Montessori encourages even the youngest of children to research, analyse and come to their own

conclusions. Our goal is to lead children to think for themselves and become actively engaged in the learning process

The Great Period- (Montessori's Uninterrupted Work Cycle)

One of the great aspects of a Montessori education is the environment. It is set up for children to reveal characteristics that do not appear under other circumstances. One of the characteristics is the ability to work uninterrupted for long periods of time.

Many children will enter the classroom and choose something relatively simple and work with it for a short time, almost as if they are re-establishing feelings of competence. Their next activity is generally more difficult, and they stay with it for a longer period of time. This is followed by "false fatigue", a time when many children have put their work away and have not selected another activity. If the teacher allows the children to take the time, they need to experience this period of restlessness they will soon settle into their most difficult work choice of the day and stay with it for the longest period of time. During this time, their concentration is the deepest and they make the greatest strides in the development of skills and in the acquisition of knowledge. Montessori called this the "Great Work Period". As the cycle nears its completion, the children put away their work and they appear to be refreshed and relaxed.

~authored by Sheila Linville, Lake Mary Montessori Academy, Florida

The morning work cycle for the Casa and Elementary programme is a three-hour period and the afternoon cycle is between two and two and a half hours long. The afternoon work cycle is utilized to focus on specials. This time is significantly shorter for our Toddler children and typically starts with approximately 60 minutes and gradually extends according to the specific needs of the group and the children's increasing ability to concentrate for longer periods of time.

Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework:

The Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework was developed by the Ministry of Education's Early Childhood Care and Education Unit in response to the need within our community for a guiding document that would ensure consistent provision within the early years. Our school incorporates the learning outcomes of this curriculum framework which includes key focus areas such as Exploration, Respect, Communication and Well-Being at the Toddler and Casa (Young Child) levels.

Cayman Islands National Curriculum:

The new Curriculum was adapted from the English National Curriculum 2014 and has been designed to incorporate modules focused on Caymanian history, geography, and social studies. The curriculum is intended to allow students to become engaged, empowered, and principled citizens.

Toddler Curriculum

The Montessori Method was developed with the belief that young children absorb all that is around them. We have planned a stimulating curriculum to facilitate the children in their quest for knowledge and independence.

The Montessori curriculum covers four classroom areas, Practical Life, Sensorial, Language and Math. Specialized materials and lessons are provided in each of the areas and assist with the development of the whole child.

Practical Life:

Materials and lessons in this area serve to help the child adapt to the environment. Through these lessons' children build independence, concentration, problem solving skills and both fine and gross motor movements. Lessons in grace and courtesy assist the child in developing control of movement and consideration for others.

Sensorial:

Materials are provided for the child as he/she learns to compare, contrast, and discriminate different sense impressions. Children enjoy the freedom to explore with the material and therefore create sensorial impressions based on their individual needs. Areas that are explored are colours, shapes, textures, gradations, size, sound, smell and taste, rhythm, volume.

Language:

Maria Montessori recognized that language is not something that is taught by another, but that it is something created by the children themselves. The language program in a Montessori environment begins by enriching and expanding the child's vocabulary through conversation, stories, songs, poems, and classified picture cards. Next, the child is introduced to the phonetic sounds of our alphabet through use of sound games. Along with the sounds, the child is introduced to the accompanying symbolic representation in the form of sandpaper letters which the child will continue to build on in the Casa classroom.

Counting and Number Work:

Mathematics can simply be defined as an abstract science of number, quantity, and space. For a child to understand the concept of mathematics, he or she must first understand quantity. The toddler materials found in this classroom area allow the child to freely explore quantity and numbers in concrete form.

We aim to provide positive encouragement and activities that foster growth and development in a nurturing environment. The children can take their own time to be observers before becoming participants, and they will have freedom to repeat activities.

In accordance with Montessori philosophy, the adults present are there to allow the children to work as independently as possible. Assistance is available when needed.

Arts and Crafts:

All children will have the freedom to explore their imaginations in a variety of mediums used for expression. The importance of the process is stressed rather than the end product. Arts & Crafts

are traditionally done at the child's own will during classroom time.

Music:

We offer a specialized music enrichment program for all our students. Classes are offered on a weekly basis and include singing, dancing, and instrument exploration.

Outdoor Play:

Our playground offers a beautiful, natural, and shaded play space where children are free to explore, run, and play. In addition to free play, children have the opportunity to engage in activities such as playing on the trampoline, races and water play just to name a few. The children will be outside for a portion of each day except during poor weather conditions. As we are based in Camana Bay the children have the opportunity to explore the island, play in fountains, take nature walks and enjoying the beauty of the entire Camana Bay.

Toddler Toileting:

When the children are showing signs of readiness, we will encourage our toddlers to wear underwear during school hours and during this time of potty-training transition extra clothes and underwear will be required at school.

All children in diapers/nappies are changed and encouraged to use the toilet every day. Please keep in mind we change all wet nappies standing up and encourage the children to help with the process as much as they can. Those children who are no longer in diapers/nappies are reminded to use the bathroom regularly throughout the day.

If your child wears diapers/nappies, you will need to provide an adequate supply throughout the year including wipes.

Casa Curriculum

Our Montessori curriculum is designed to teach children independence, fine/gross motor skills, practical life skills, language, mathematics, geography, and culture. We aim to provide positive encouragement and activities that foster growth and development in a nurturing environment. The children are welcome to observe before participating and are given the freedom to repeat activities as often as they choose. In accordance with Montessori philosophy, the adults present are there to allow the children to work as independently as possible. Assistance is available when needed.

Practical Life:

Practical life activities are tasks of daily living. When children come into the world, their first function is to adapt to their environment so that they can become an active member within it. The daily jobs undertaken by adults in the home environment (i.e., establishing, maintain and embellishing the living environment; the care of others and the care of self) are fascinating to

the child because they are aesthetic, logical and understandable. If the child is welcome and well received, the home environment will become a sense of endless attraction to them and the urge to independently partake in the daily activities will be strong. The activities found in this classroom area include lessons in care of self (dressing, grooming, etc.), care of the indoor and outdoor environment (sweeping, washing up, dusting, polishing, raking leaves etc.) and grace and courtesy (respect for self, others, and the environment). All of the activities found in this area help to develop concentration, independence, control and co-ordination of movement, orderly work habits and logical sequential thinking.

Sensorial:

Aristotle firmly believed and viewed the senses as gateways to intelligence. Dr. Montessori agreed with Aristotle and therefore developed these specialized materials for her schools. The main purposes of the sensorial materials are to help the child to classify and refine their sense perceptions. They invite the child to sort things by size, shape, colour, touch, sound, temperature, and weight. They also allow the child to grade from dark to light and from small to large helping them to classify sensorial impressions in an organized and scientific manner. The activities in this area allow for individual work and for repetition and all have a built-in control of error. Because of this built-in control of error, the children acquire the habit of working independently, unafraid of making mistakes, becoming aware of the fact that errors are essential to the process of learning.

Language:

Maria Montessori recognized that language is not something that is taught by another, but that it is something created by the children themselves. The language program in a Montessori environment begins by enriching and expanding the child's vocabulary through conversation, stories, songs, poems, and classified cards. Next, the child is introduced to the phonetic sounds of our alphabet through use of sound games. Along with the sounds, the child is introduced to the accompanying symbolic representation in the form of sandpaper letters. When children can associate the sound with the symbol or letter, writing naturally occurs followed shortly by reading. The child's hand is also prepared for writing through use of our practical life and sensorial materials as well as by using the metal inset activities and chalkboards.

Mathematics:

Mathematics can simply be defined as an abstract science of number, quantity, and space. For a child to understand the concept of mathematics, he or she must first understand quantity. The materials found in this classroom area are uniquely designed to make the abstract concept of mathematics appear concrete.

Culture and Geography:

These areas are presented as extensions of the language, sensorial and practical life areas and will spontaneously be integrated into our program. Children will gain cultural awareness by exploring art, cuisine, music, language, and traditions from around the world. This will help to initiate respect and admiration towards other people and cultures.

Art:

The children will have the freedom to explore their imaginations in a variety of mediums used for expression. The importance of the process is stressed rather than the end product. We will follow an Art program called "Sharing Art with Children in the Montessori Way" created by a Montessori teacher.

Introduction to Spanish:

An introduction to Spanish will be taught in each class and will be integrated twice weekly during the circle time routine of each classroom. This is a time for the classroom community to come together and is also a time when the teacher will review concepts in Spanish such as calendar, time, weather, songs, poems, and related language to the classrooms current theme. Because children have an innate ability to acquire multiple languages, it is a perfect time to introduce Spanish. Their natural curiosity and ability to imitate sounds allows them to develop a basic, usable command of the Spanish language. In addition, studying another language enables intellectual flexibility, enhances problem-solving skills, heightens creativity, and leads to higher performance in other academic areas.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

Social and emotional learning (SEL) enhances students' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviours to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges. SEL's integrated framework promotes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence. There are five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. At Village Montessori we utilize Growth Mindset; In a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment

Music:

In music we offer the younger children the opportunity for choral expression and music and movement and for the elementary children have the added benefit of getting to explore an instrument.

Physical Education:

In PE children will participate in activities that will utilize their gross motor skills, balance and understanding of team play.

IT:

ICT is the study of Information and communication technologies. Now, more than ever, knowledge and experience with computers and their related technologies is an important part of daily life. In this course we focus on a few different aspects. The primary focus is introducing Coding to students at a young age. This helps not only build a strong computing foundation, but also develops problem solving and pattern recognition skills. We introduce these concepts using a visual "Block" based language that is simple for kids of all ages to understand. During the year we will also explore physical aspects like the hardware of a computer and being able to identify some key components. We will look at various multimedia

applications from animation software to photo and video editing. Students will be guided through proper typing skills and encouraged to practice whenever they can. The goals of this course are to develop skills and abilities that will make using computers easier, all while having fun!!

Themes:

Themes are incorporated throughout the school year and link different disciplines so that students will develop "big" and important ideas. Educational researchers are learning that students are better served when provided opportunities to develop deep knowledge about a few "big ideas" rather than a superficial knowledge of a broader range of ideas and information. The teachers choose themes that are developmentally appropriate and socially engaging for students. Themes will vary in nature and scope and will be motivating to students and relevant to their lives.

Developing themes through a variety of activities over time has particular benefits for many students with disabilities whose experiences may be limited. For students with communication needs, themes enable the entire class to develop a common content vocabulary that they can use to deepen their interactions. As our academic year in the classroom unfolds, you will see how they weave themes into different curricular activities throughout the day.

Elementary Curriculum

The Lower and Upper Elementary Classrooms are a mixed age environment with students between the ages of 6 to 9 years old. Children at the elementary level no longer learn primarily by absorbing information but by direct application. They are eager to understand and are more conscious of the world around them. Specifically, they are no longer interested primarily in facts (what and when) but in questions (why and how). Children at the elementary level are entering what Dr. Montessori referred to as the second plane of development. The children flourish during this time as individuals and as contributing members of society.

The curriculum of an Elementary Classroom is designed to foster a tremendous imagination, an aptitude for the abstract, a strong sense of morality and justice, and strong need for peer relationships. Individually paced academic progress allows students to explore their interests along with acquiring the mastery of basic skills and knowledge. The Village Montessori learning environment reflects activities that provide deeper educational experiences in the areas of mathematics (including geometry and algebra), science and technology, literature, history, botany, zoology, geography, civics, economics, anthropology, and areas of art, music, foreign language, physical education and technology.

Classroom Schedules/Timetables

Schedules for each classroom will be provided at the start of each year and updated as necessary.

School Policies and Procedures

Daily Field Trip to Chef Garden Enrichment Area

The children are taken daily to the Chef Garden as it provides enrichment and extended learning in an outdoor environment. The activities include areas for development of gross motor skills, free play, dramatic play, creative play, water play, sandbox, caboose mud kitchen, chalkboard, and art, weaving on the wooden loom, playing board games, growing fruits and vegetables.

Parents of existing children are to sign waiver granting permission for children to go to the Chef Garden at the beginning of the school year, along with receiving a copy of the school handbook which outlines the policy in place. In future, new parents will sign at registration and enrolment.

Staff to sign and acknowledge policy document outlining daily procedure for taking children safely to and from the garden as follows:

- Children to be reminded daily of the safety procedures to be adhered to for safe passage
- Classroom visuals and posters to remind children of the daily routine
- Classes review rules immediately prior to going
- Children to practice safety routines in class prior to first visit
- Children are escorted by at least two members of staff or more within ratios
- The only path to be used is via the approved route (map attached)
- Camana Bay security is on daily patrol which provides an added measure of security
- Sign to be placed in the area to advise children at play

Leaving School Early

Please let us know ahead of time if you will need to collect your child earlier than the designated dismissal times. If for any reason you will not be on time to collect your child from school, please notify us as soon as possible by calling the office at 640-7827.

Absences

We ask that you please email the office at info@villagemontessori.ky on days that your child will not be at school. Please note that any and all communicable diseases must be reported to the school immediately. This information will be kept confidential. If notice of the illness needs to be communicated to other members of the school community, notification will be sent in generic terms to protect the child's privacy (i.e., "We have a confirmed case of...").

Releasing Students

Village Montessori will not release your child to anyone who is not on our authorized pick-up list without written or verbal consent from you.

Securing Doors

Every door will be checked for security throughout the day and locked. If an unknown person comes to the door they will be sent to the office, and asked to sign in.

Healthy Diet

We strive to promote the benefits of a healthy diet and therefore encourage parents to provide nutritious and well-balanced snacks and packed lunches each day. *Please inform the school if your child has any food allergies or special dietary requirements.*

At Village Montessori we are very aware of the benefits of nutritious foods in order to promote the health and development of the child. We encourage grace, courtesy, independence, while serving each other and ourselves during our snack and lunch times. This is an integral part of the Montessori curriculum. In addition, the children are encouraged to re-hydrate by regularly drinking water throughout the day.

Nut-free Zone

Please note that peanuts, tree nuts and items containing these foods are not permitted in the school.

Items from Home

Children are welcome to bring in items that they have made or objects relating to culture, science, or nature. Books are always welcome. Please label all items! If your child enjoys bringing a toy along for the ride to school, we ask that you please leave these items in the car to ensure a smooth transition at drop off for your child. In the event your child brings home something from school that does not belong to them please return the item as soon as possible. The item may be an integral part of our classroom materials or may belong to another child.

What to Bring To School

Please provide the following items for your child to bring on the first day of school:

- **Hat** (to remain at school and if possible, will have a chin strap)
- **A pair of indoor shoes** (to remain at school and should be easy for your child to manage independently)
- **Spare change of clothes** (to remain at school and be replenished as needed)
- **A water bottle** (filled with water and clearly labelled with your child's name)
- **Nappies/Diapers** (for toddlers only to remain at school and be replenished as needed)
- **Wet Wipes** (to remain at school and be replenished as needed)

Lost and Found

There is a lost and found box located in each classroom. The teachers will put any lost and found items outside the classroom doors at pick up time. Any item left over 30 days will be

added to our spare clothing box if your child is missing an item, please let your child's teacher know.

Clothing and Shoes

Clothing that is simple, washable, sturdy, and easy to manage is encouraged. Please ensure your child has at least one change of clothing at school at all times. This can remain in your child's cubby or be brought in each day. Having a change of clothing is essential, not only for bathroom accidents but for any spills or mishaps.

Please remember that your child will likely get dirty so please dress them accordingly. If your child has a favourite shirt or outfit, and they would be upset if it was ruined perhaps choose a different clothing option. We would prefer that the children wear practical clothing that is easy for them to move easily in and to change as well. We would prefer that superhero /princess dress up and themed clothes not be worn to school. **Due to safety concerns no hoop earrings, bracelets, or necklaces should be worn to school.**

Proper shoes are necessary for the ease of movement and development of your child's muscles and feet as well as safety. Sneakers and sandals with heel straps are all suitable. **Please no flip flops, heels or light up shoes. Also, please no ripped clothing, shorts should have at least a three-inch inseam and no shirts with inappropriate slogans.**

Medical Information

In the event of an accident or onset of illness you will be contacted and asked to collect your child from school. If unable to reach you, or in the event of a severe case it may be necessary for the school to seek outside emergency medical care for your child.

It is imperative that your child's school file be kept current. Please inform the school of any changes to your child's medical information, contact details or any necessary information.

First Aid and CPR

All staff members at Village Montessori are First Aid and CPR trained and each classroom has a fully stocked first aid kit.

Accidents

Given the nature of children, accidents do happen sometimes. In the event that a child is hurt, a staff member will care for the child and take proper first aid procedures and if necessary, a parent will be notified. If medical treatment is required, the child will be sent home. If the injury is related to the head/eye/nose or mouth, we will call the parent. It is often our recommendation for a parent to come to school and check on their child if he/she has been injured. We strongly feel that it is the parent's decision if medical attention is required. If necessary, emergency assistance will be called.

Incident/Accident reports are completed by the staff as needed and will require a parent's signature. These reports will be kept in your child's file for the full duration of their time at our school.

Administration of Medication

The school does not typically administer any over the counter medication or prescribed antibiotics. We administer medication for acute illness only with the parent's written or verbal consent. If requested by the parent, we will provide pain/fever reducing medication in order to provide some comfort for a child while the parent is on route to the school.

Medical Documentation

If your child has a medical need (allergies, asthma, disabilities) please provide documentation from your child's paediatrician as well as an emergency medical plan including instructions on how and when to administer any medicine. A Medication Form must also be obtained from the office and completed by the parent. Any changes to the medication will require a new written authorization.

Health Policy

Our health policy has been developed with the primary concern for the wellbeing of our students and school community. In order to maintain a healthy school environment, please do not send your child to school if any of the following symptoms are present. In addition, we ask that you please follow the advice below.

Please note we will be guided by Public Health directives in the case of any outbreaks, pandemics or any other health related issues as to the protocols we establish.

Appearance/Behaviour - A child should stay home if they are acting unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, irritable, or if they are generally not "themselves".

Fever (Temperature over 99.0° F) -If your child has a fever above 99.0 °F, they will need to remain off school until the fever is completely gone without the use of a fever reducing medicine for 24 hours.

Skin Problems - Any contagious skin related issues will need advice from a doctor prior to returning to school.

Respiratory Illness - A child may return to school once their cough has subsided and is no longer persistent or with mucous. A child who returns to school after a respiratory illness must be healthy enough to be active and participate in our normal daily schedule.

Vomiting and Diarrhoea - A child must be symptom free for *at least 24 hours before returning to school.*

Eye/Nose Discharge – A child must remain out of school if they have excessive amounts of nasal discharge and/or discoloured nasal discharge that is green/yellow

Streptococcal Sore Throat/Scarlet Fever (with Rash)-A child must remain away from school until at least 48 hours after treatment begins. The child will also need to be fever free for 24 hours without medicine.

Head Lice - Children must remain at home until first treatment is completed. We will notify the families in the child's class via email. Head lice can spread rapidly and needs quick treatment.

Chicken Pox – Child needs to remain at home until all blisters have dried into scabs, about six days after the onset of the rash. Please provide a doctor's note evidencing the illness and the all clear to return to school.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) Bacterial – A child should remain at home for 48 hours after treatment begins. **Viral** - The child will remain out of school until a doctor's note is provided assuring the school that the child is no longer contagious and able to return to school.

Our Health Policy is strictly enforced. If any of these symptoms develop during school hours, you will be called to come and pick your child up immediately.

Please note the school reserves the right to make the decision to send a child home due to any illness or injury. A child who comes to school should be well enough to participate in ALL day-to-day activities.

School Safety

Fire/Earthquake Drills

The children will practice fire and earthquake drills approximately once a month. The emergency evacuation exit is posted in each classroom. We will discuss the fire and earthquake drill procedures ahead of time with the children.

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Policy and School Closures

It is possible that Village Montessori may close due to inclement weather or building concerns that would jeopardize the safety of our students and staff. Please note that there will be no refunds for days in which the school is closed in these circumstances.

The Cayman Islands Department of Education will typically close schools in the event of a tropical storm warning or hurricane warning. An announcement will be made on our answering machine as well as by email and through local media in the event that Village Montessori will be closed due to weather.

We will provide any other pertinent information as provided by Public Health Department for any specific illnesses.

Parent Communication, Involvement& Information

Adjustment to School

Most students will adjust to school quite easily. The time frame for a child to transition into school may take approximately six weeks. If a child is very dependent on their parents/ caregiver or external soothing items they may take a bit longer. If the parental/caregiver attitude is positive, the child will normally have a positive experience. When dropping the child off for the first time the separation should be short and matter of fact. Always say goodbye to your child and reassure them you/caregiver will be back to get them. Help your child by being relaxed and supportive. We know that sometimes it's just as hard for the parent to leave the child. They may cry after you leave, but it usually doesn't last very long. Please be sure to collect your child on time as this will cut back on anxiety at the end of the day. If your child is not settling into the day, please be assured that the teachers will give you a call.

Home and School

In the Montessori environment your child will be doing many different things for themselves. Don't be surprised if your child wants to continue doing these things at home as they become more and more independent. Encourage your child to choose their own clothes, brush their own teeth, dress themselves, pour themselves a drink, and participate in any other easy household chores they like. Please be patient with your child as they perform these daily tasks and allow them to make mistakes. If your child makes a mistake, gently show them how to complete the task correctly instead of telling them they are doing it incorrectly.

Please encourage your child to walk into the classroom independently. This will help your child to feel a certain level of independence about arriving at school rather than feeling of being "dropped" off. We also ask that you allow your child to carry their own items to and from school.

The most important thing to remember is to be patient with your child during this journey towards independence.

The first few months are considered as a trial period for the child, parents and the school. If concerns arise about the child's ability to respond to the Montessori environment, the school or family may decide that it would be in the child's best interest to withdraw from the program.

Parent Teacher Communication

There will be a parent/teacher conference held in Term 2 to discuss your child's development and progress at school.

Arrival and dismissal times are reserved for greeting and saying good-bye to our students. Although convenient, these times are not meant for in-depth conversation with the teachers. Teachers are available a half an hour after school by appointment. If, at any time, you are interested in how your child is progressing, please contact their classroom teacher directly by email or phone. Parents are encouraged to call the school for an appointment to discuss any

special circumstances. Please do not feel that you need to wait until the scheduled parent/teacher conferences to discuss your child's development.

If there is something unusual going on at home or in the family, please let your child's teacher know. I.e., house guests, parents away on business, new caregiver, etc. Often times this will explain a child's change in behaviour.

Classroom Newsletters

A newsletter is sent out each month which will highlight what the children have been doing in class including monthly themes, holidays, announcements etc. We encourage you to read the monthly newsletter in order to find out about all the wonderful things going on in your child's classroom.

Parent Grievance Policy

All procedures affecting students and/or parents must be fair and be seen to be fair. Fair procedures provide integrity and consistency in respect to decisions made in the school setting. This in turn will help to avoid misunderstandings and disputes.

To assist our school director and staff, the following guidelines are to be used when resolving matters. Any parent may review school procedures by going through the following steps.

1. If a parent wishes to discuss a concern regarding their child's academic, social, emotional, or physical progress, they will first need to speak with the child's classroom teacher.
2. If further clarification is required or if the parent is not satisfied with the answer given by the child's teacher, the parent may request a meeting with the school director if needed.

Class Email/Phone Lists

There are times throughout the school year when we are asked by parents for a list of students as well as phone numbers and email addresses. If you do not wish for your contact information to be given out, please let us know.

Photo Release

During the year we will be taking pictures and video of children participating in various activities. We will use these for press releases, the school newsletter, advertising, and for our website. If you do not wish for your child's photo to be used, please let us know so that we may respect your wishes.

Birthday Traditions

We approach birthdays a little differently at Village Montessori. In lieu of the usual cakes or treats, we offer the child an opportunity to participate in a special "Birthday Presentation". Parents are encouraged to bring in special photographs of the birthday boy or girl beginning

from birth and up to and including their celebrated age. This is a wonderful exercise in building self-esteem.

It is also a tradition at Village Montessori for the children to present their class with a book on their birthday. The children enjoy this presentation which is a nice example of the joy that comes from giving. If you wish to participate in this tradition, you may inscribe your child's name and birth date in the front cover of the book. We always love to look back at books from children who previously attended Village Montessori with fond memories. Looking for book ideas? One of your child's favourite stories is always a good place to start but topics such as nature, culture, animals, art & poetry, and geography etc. are also welcome additions to our school library. Feel free to consult a teacher for book recommendations.

If you are planning a home party, we will be more than happy to provide you with a class list and offer a list of names of children that your child plays with. Please note that the teacher's will not be able to assist in handing out invitations, thank you cards and presents however, we welcome parents who want to remain at school to hand these out during morning drop off.

Term Dates and School Calendar

The academic school year typically runs from the end of August to the end of June.

We do our best to carefully plan the school calendar each year. However, unexpected events may cause changes and we will do our best to give you advanced notice of any necessary changes.

Attendance

A child's learning and success in our program is directly related to their attendance and punctuality at school. We understand that special circumstances do arise such as holidays, family time, appointments etc. We fully respect these family decisions and in return we ask that parents be mindful that their child's developmental journey in our program will be impacted by a lack of attendance and punctuality.

Developmental Readiness

Acceptance is determined by the child's developmental readiness for a Montessori program and by the parent or guardians understanding of the Montessori approach. The parent's expectations must be consistent with the principles of Montessori and the programs which the school offers in order for the child to experience the maximum success in our school.

Billing Policy

Please note that the annual school fee is the amount due for the year, for your convenience we do offer the option to pay fees monthly, in three equal term payments, or annually. We are not able to discount the annual fee for personal travel during the school year. Fees remain the same throughout the year regardless of illness, holidays, or school closures.

It is agreed that the **Parent** is financially responsible for tuition for the entire school year regardless of their child's actual attendance. Although tuition is based annually from September through June, we offer term and monthly tuition payment options for your convenience.

In signing this contract, you accept responsibility for tuition for the full school year, from August 2022 through June 2023, irrespective of any absences. Please note:

In the case of a student being withdrawn anytime between August 1st, 2022 and December 31st, 2022 tuition for one month will be due to Village Montessori.

In the case of a student being withdrawn any time after December 31st, 2022 tuition for the remainder of the school year will be due to Village Montessori, unless otherwise agreed upon.

There will be no refund of school fees in the event of disruption to the regular school operations due to catastrophic events or circumstances beyond our control.

All withdrawals, for any reason must be in writing.

Monthly fees are due on or before the first of each month. A late fee of CI\$25 will be charged for any fees paid after the 10th of the month. You will receive invoices on the 15th of the month to be paid by the first of the next month.

Starfish Village our parent company is a registered payee with Cayman National Bank online, therefore payments can be made online by registering and then adding us a new payee. Please make sure to put your surname as a reference so we can apply the payment to your account. **Starfish Village KYD\$ account number 011-14221 and USD\$ account number 022-27045.**

We also accept Visa/ Mastercard payments, with a completed authorization form.

Office Hours

The office will be open from 8 am to 4 pm daily. The school director Jeifrene Small and the business manager Traci Bradley will be available during this time.

School Directory

Village Montessori
94 Solaris Avenue
Camana Bay, Grand Cayman
Cayman Islands
Office Telephone: 640-7827

Admin Email: info@villagemontessori.ky

Website: <http://www.villagemontessori.ky>

Special Education Needs and Inclusion Policy

It is our belief at Village Montessori that all children are able to learn. We are committed to creating an environment where each and every child can grow to his/her maximum potential. While we believe in granting children time to grow and mature naturally such growth may require expertise and resources beyond that of the classroom professionals. The aim of this policy is to address the situation in which a child is not working to his/her capacity and when we are no longer able to serve a child's needs with our resources.

The number of children with a variety of learning and behavior needs is on the increase. In both Montessori, and traditional schools and classrooms, school leaders and classroom educators are asking for the knowledge, understanding, and skills they need to best support ALL children in their classroom.

We know that inclusive classrooms that guide each child on a path of meaningful learning and social emotional growth benefit all children. Some of these benefits include:

- Differentiated individualized instruction for all
- Academic supports for all who need it
- Behavioral supports for all who need it
- Respect and acceptance for diversity
- Effective use of school resources

As Montessori school leaders and educators, we begin our task with reflection. To successfully support all children, we must look at our beliefs, our assumptions, and our biases. It has been found that teacher attitude toward inclusive classrooms is the most critical to that success. As we commit to serving all children, we need to cultivate the beliefs that:

- All children are unique individuals with strengths and challenges
- All children want to be respected, accepted, and included for a sense of belonging
- Behaviors and learning cannot be separated
- A child is not a label – a diverse need is not a deficit

As Montessori educators, we know how to design and prepare an environment for the development of the child and level we teach. We attend to the physical, emotional, social, and learning environment in our classroom. When we prepare an Inclusive Prepared Environment, we must attend to all those with the “best practice” details to support the needs of all children – including those dealing with sensory processing issues, attention issues, social and communication issues, learning issues, chronic stress/trauma issues and the emotional issues that tend to co-exist with each of these.

We begin with a physical environment that is aesthetically pleasing, has minimal visual and auditory “clutter”, a room arrangement for movement and whole, small, and individual options for work space, well organized and sequenced curriculum area with thoughtfully displayed materials and activities, and attention to detail needed for children to independently engage.

We explicitly and carefully plan a classroom climate that is positive, responsive, attentive, and cultivates nurturing and responsive relationships with adults and peers. We use responsive guidance techniques

that convey respect and acceptance of each child. We create a predictable daily and weekly schedule with clear and taught routines, and well – structured transitions. We teach clear, consistent expectations for behavior and learning. We intentionally engage in activities to develop a positive, socially cohesive classroom community of children. We teach social-emotional skills and embed these throughout the school day.

Our learning environment must engage every child. We use instruction, provide opportunities for repetition, self-paced learning, and freedom of choice with responsibility. We use ongoing observation of readiness and prior knowledge to inform and impact our lesson planning and instruction responsive to each child.

Creating a peaceful classroom includes Grace and Courtesy lessons, teaching social-emotional skills, engaging learning for each child. But it is a responsive relationship and guidance that is the foundation of a positive, supportive and well managed classroom.

In Montessori, Dr Montessori understood through observation the importance of incorporating the silent game, walking on the line, limiting identical materials, and the importance of teaching grace and courtesy, and conflict resolution. And though she did not use the term “self-regulation” this is the direct result of these activities and skills. We can add to our repertoire by adding a Quiet Space (a corner visually closed to the classroom for one child to practice breathing techniques, and other self-calming tools). We can intentionally teach, model, role-play, and practice a number of self-regulation and social-emotional skills with our children throughout the year.

Some of our children may need accommodations in addition to the intentionally prepared components of the environment. These are the strategies, techniques, and tools that support equitable access and participation. A child who has significant attention difficulties might need an especially prepared workspace to aid his attention needs. A child needing a high degree of structure and predictability might need a visual schedule of the day and perhaps, a work plan. A child with anxiety and sensory needs might need access to the “heavy work” of some practical life activities.

A child with social and emotional difficulties might need specific lessons to teach the communication, and regulation skills necessary for successful interactions. Individualized relationship supports, like encouragements and acknowledgments, and positive feedback might be the tools allowing this child to gain the needed skills and therefore, move to the next stage of development.

Admissions Arrangements

When considering admissions, a child with SEN should be treated no less favorably than applications from other children. Our Admissions Policy is that all children are welcome. Staffing ratios may affect our ability to offer suitable provisions for certain children and individual cases are discussed between families and the management. We will welcome all children and aim to respond appropriately to each child’s background and individual needs. We ask parents to give notice if a child is disabled or has SEN so that we are enabled to explore with them and with any outside professionals and external agencies how we can provide most effectively for that child

Diagnosis

The completion of Montessori training does not qualify a teacher to make a diagnosis of special needs. Pediatricians, psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists and special educators appropriately make this diagnosis. Conversations with parents should reinforce this. Parents may ask for teacher opinions. It is best to sidestep the actual diagnosis, describe your observations, and suggest the best professional to evaluate the child.

Helping Parents Hear Your Concerns – Planting The Seed

It is the duty of classroom educators to recognize behavior and/or learning characteristics that may indicate special needs. These observations need to be shared clearly with parents in a timely manner. Many parents require more than one opportunity to be able to “hear” your concerns. The Montessori Method of “planting a seed” for later growth works well in this instance. Thus, it is acceptable to share with parents of children as young as four that you see some variance between the learning style of their child and others of the same age. In the first conference you may only mention your observations in passing. However, by the second conference at the age of four, if the problem still persists, it is advisable to mention your concerns again and suggest a plan for the future. You might say, “If, we do not see growth in the first two months of Kindergarten, then an outside evaluation may be advisable. With speech and language delays, don’t wait! Early intervention can start as young as two. If you see a language/speech problem with a three-year-old, you need to inform parents and begin the referral process as quickly as possible.

By November of a child’s second year in Casa, if you still have concerns, tell the parent what you are thinking. Do not wait to see if the child progresses before bringing it to their attention. It is far easier to change your mind and decide that the child is ready than to tell a parent in March or May that there will need another year of preschool. No parent should enter the kindergarten year thinking everything is going fine when it is not!

Special Conferences

Special conferences are held to address issues for a child in the areas of behavior, social development or academics. These conferences are held in addition to regular progress conferences and require the completion of a Parent Conference Report, signed by all in attendance. Prior to the conference the staff discusses the area(s) to be addressed at the conference. These are noted on the form as well as the parent’s comments as they unfold. Designate a staff member to be responsible for the form’s completion during the conference. At the conclusion of the conference, the form is read aloud and all attendees must sign the conference form. A copy is made for the parents and all parties leave with the results of the conference and the plan of action agreed upon.

Types of Special Needs

When noticing that a child is experiencing difficulty in one or more areas of the educational setting it is important to narrow down the area of concern. Concerns fit into one of the following categories.

- Behavior
- Speech/Language
- Academic
- Motor Concerns
- Multiple Concerns

There is an appropriate referral source for each of these characteristics.

Protocol For Referring A Child For Testing

1. Systematic Observations

The best method for refining your concerns is systematic observation and reflection. It is advisable to place a sheet of paper next to your recording sheet for special observation of a specific child. Seek input from other adults in the school; language teachers, nap teachers, teachers who share your playground or bathroom schedule and aftercare staff often add valuable pieces to the puzzle and help you get a thorough picture of the child. Observe the frequency of the behavior as well as the duration. Look for spontaneous growth or resolution of the problem. Consider maturity, family situation, adjustment, diet, sleep patterns, and adjustment as factors in this child's life. Try to feel the problem from the child's point of view.

Be sure to document your observations. Include the date and time of the observation. Keep these filed in a safe place for further use.

2. Adjustment to the Child's Program Based on These Observations

It is sometimes necessary and appropriate to adjust the educational program for a child. This may mean offering more direction, limiting choices, sitting with a child while he works, reducing the pieces in a work so the number of steps necessary for completion, etc. Such intervention may not be a permanent solution but may assist the child in making the most of his time at school. Be sure such intervention is done "matter-of-factly" and with a gentle and kind spirit. Be sure to document your classroom accommodations for this child.

3. Share Your Concerns With The Director

Share your concerns about this child with the director of the school. She must be kept current on such situations and can be of enormous assistance in helping you to see a child a bit differently. You can may also want to discuss this with the designated Special Needs Support advocate.

4. Ask the Director to Observe the Child

Arrange for the director of the school to come and observe the child. This can be combined with her regular visits or a special visit can be arranged. Be sure she is clear about the nature of your concerns and the adjustments you have made to the curriculum for that child. In addition, the director may ask another teacher from your level or another level to observe the child. Provide her with a list of concerns to ponder

as she observes. Having a minute observation of the child of concern is enormously helpful in seeing the quantity, intensity, and duration of the concerning behaviors.

5. Discuss the Observation with the Director or Teacher Observer

Discuss the observation with the director. Use her eyes as an aid to see what is happening and for help in determining possible solutions and or accommodations.

6. Call a Special Parent Conference to Discuss Your Concerns

Share your observations of the child with the parents. (“John needs many more repetitions than most other children to master his sandpaper letter sounds. He tends to know them one day and forget them the next”; “Gabriella takes longer to complete a task than other children her age”; “It is difficult for us to understand May”; “John has a tantrum when he cannot do what he wants”). Ask them if they have seen similar things at home. Listen to how parents are addressing these issues, Share the steps that you have already taken to understand the nature of the problem. Explain the observation process as well as the accommodations that have been made to assist the child. After a discussion make a plan of action. What are you going to do in the classroom and how long are you going to do it? When will you meet again? Do not let more than two weeks pass without a follow up conference.

Be prepared for a variety of parental reactions depending on how comfortable the parents are with the information shared in the conference. They may be relieved, surprised, confused, angry, or even feel guilty. They may even blame you, the school, or the Montessori Method. If you think that an outside evaluation may be necessary, it is positive to mention it in passing. This may help the parent get used to the idea. **BE SURE TO FILL OUT THE PARENT CONFERENCE REPORT AND HAVE IT SIGNED BY ALL PARTIES.**

7. Carry Out the Plan of Action

Follow through on the plan you made. Continue to take copious notes. Spend a little time each work period to record the day or make spot notes during the work time itself.

Be sure to record the time, date and weather for each day. (Some children are affected by changes in the weather causing potential problems with sinuses and ears that could explain a change in their behavior.) Look for patterns in the behavior and notice which parts of the plan are working and what are not. Share with the parents at regular intervals and document what you are sharing. If you send a note, keep a copy. Keep the director informed of your progress.

8. Refer the Child to Other Professionals

If you have worked with a child for a reasonable amount of time, and progress is not being made, refer the child to a specific qualified professional such as a speech/language pathologist, pediatric occupational therapist or child psychologist. It is often unnecessary to begin with the child’s regular pediatrician as they often have little or no training in special needs and often tend to take a wait and see attitude. Invite the parents to another special conference to do this. Review the steps that the school has taken to help the child and the results of these steps. Reaffirm that we all want what is best for the child. Do this in person and not over the phone. Invite the director to attend the conference if you feel you’d like the support.

Provide the parents with suggestions of specific professionals that they might contact. Be sure to have these resources available. It is best to have more than one choice. Often, a family's insurance will fund part or all of the cost of evaluation. Sometimes insurance companies will require that families go through their pediatrician to get evaluations. **BE SURE TO FILL OUT THE PARENT CONFERENCE REPORT AND HAVE ALL PARTIES SIGN IT.**

Offer to provide any assistance the family needs in getting the evaluation completed. Offer to fill out any forms necessary, discuss the child with a professional or provide any additional information. Make it clear that you feel this is in the best interest of the child. Make a plan for the time frame in which the next step will be taken and inquire about the progress. Do not just suggest a child be evaluated and then let it drop until the next schedule conference.

9. Meet With Parents to Discuss the Results of the Evaluation

Ask that parents bring a copy of the testing report for you to keep. You will want to read this report thoroughly before meeting with the parents. Parents may request that this not be filed in the child's permanent folder, as they do not want this information to follow the child throughout school. It is necessary to read the original report and follow through on the suggestions made. This may require you to fill out more forms or attend a meeting with the psychologist or other professional or contact them by phone. Often the suggestions of the professional can seem quite burdensome. Making the effort to implement the modifications suggested usually yields positive results.

10. Stay In Close Touch with the Parents Regarding the Suggestions That They Will Need to Act Upon

Again, don't just expect that these things are happening. Ask questions that assume the parents are following up on the suggestions made. "Which occupational therapist did you decide to use. How soon would she like me to contact her?" "Have another formal meeting if necessary".

11. When Our Best Isn't Enough

Although we believe in the power of the Montessori environment and the ability of each child to become normalized, situations exist where a Montessori school is not the best fit for a child or a family. If there is no resolution of the problem and the problem does not correct itself, it may become necessary to admit that the Montessori school no longer meets the needs of this child and family and an alternative school needs to be found. Families will appreciate the school's aid and assistance in finding and selecting a more appropriate placement for their child. Suggest the type of environment that you feel is best for the child's learning style. Discuss the specific characteristics that would benefit this child. Sometimes, smaller groups, lower child/teacher ratios or classes that have all children do the same thing at the same time may be a better fit. Perhaps a more specialized environment catering to children with exceptionalities is best.

The very nature of this conference is sensitive. You will need to have the director with you at this time. Be sure you and the director previously has met to decide what will be said. Continue to emphasize that all parties have the child's best interests in mind. Reaffirm the steps you have taken to meet the child's needs and the growth that has or has not transpired. Aid the family in considering alternative placements. If the

above protocol has been followed, the result of this conference should not come as a surprise. Thank the family for the opportunity to work with their child and wish them well.

Reference:

Perolan, Cathie; *Practical Special Needs for the Montessori Method: A Handbook for 3-6 Teachers and Homeschoolers Assessing Children with Exceptionalities Ages 3-6*

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

For our purposes school means educational institution including early childhood and compulsory age children.

At Village Montessori we believe that all members of the school community deserve a welcoming, supportive, respectful and inclusive learning environment, which values individual safety, well-being and the right to learn. In particular at Village Montessori, we are passionate about our responsibility to provide a social learning context that is significant in influencing positive student behaviour and encourages individuals to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. This school behaviour Policy provides a framework for such learning. Teachers encourage appropriate behaviour by teaching, guiding, directing, and providing opportunities for new learning to occur.

Behaviour at Village Montessori is based on a positive attitude toward children, awareness of the developmental psychology of children and the unique ability to view and address each child's needs as an individual. Teachers model appropriate behaviours and teach children problem-solving skills and conflict resolution strategies. The goal is to help children arrive at inner discipline through concentrated work, and the child is assisted in developing the skills necessary to control his/her own actions to develop self-discipline.

Maria Montessori developed the concept of "normalization" to describe the process by which each child acquires certain personality characteristics that lead to success in the classroom and throughout life. A "normalized" child will love learning, be kind to others, develop concentration and good work habits and become independent.

Montessori children are not coerced children are guided and teachers talk with them rationally and with great compassion and love.

The primary goal of the Montessori approach is to help create a social/emotional environment where children are given the tools to succeed in becoming responsible, respectful and capable members of their communities and families.

Village Montessori's focus, based on Montessori pedagogy, is on preventative measures for such behaviours, by teaching children how to:

1. Be caring and courteous
2. Cooperate with others
3. Deal with angry feelings
4. Stand up for themselves without being aggressive
5. Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person
6. Make appropriate behaviour and academic choices

The School's basic rules are:

- Everyone must be treated with respect. This means no physical or mental harm.
- The environment must be treated with respect. Materials are to be used carefully and returned neatly when not in use. Any accidents are to be cleaned up.
- Work of others must never be disturbed.
- Lessons may be chosen only after an invitation/presentation by the teacher.

If a teacher needs to talk with a child about his or her actions, the teacher will do so in a manner that respects the child (e.g speaking quietly with the child away from peers). Sometimes children only need some time and space to gain control of their actions. If the child cannot control his or her actions, the child may be gently removed from the classroom, with an adult in close proximity, until able to regain composure and return voluntarily.

Procedure for dealing with unacceptable behaviour:

- Make immediate response
- Go quickly and quietly to the child without calling across the room unless a person or the environment is in danger
- Get down to the child's level. Let your serious expression and tone of voice communicate your sincerity. It is not necessary to raise your voice.
- Make and maintain eye contact
- Seriously and simply state the rule or condition that is the problem. Do not tell the child what should or should not be done. Say "Yelling is NOT allowed", instead of "you shouldn't yell", or "You should use a quiet voice".
- Maintain eye contact for three seconds after speaking.
- Ask "What did I say?" and have the child repeat it to you.
- Ask "Do you understand?" In the rare case that a child does not understand, restate the condition differently until the child admits that he/she understands.
- If the behaviour is repeated, say NOTHING! It is difficult, but important to refrain from lecturing and repeating. You MUST simply gesture to the child to be seated at a separate table. Make NO remarks or expression of emotion.
- After the child has regained self-control, gesture or invite the child to return to his/her work.

A child who continually annoys others or disturbs their work must be provided with a place to sit alone. He must be given many lessons in an attempt to get him interested in his own work.

Physical aggression (hitting, biting, scratching, pushing, etc.) requires that the child sit alone for a time appropriate to the circumstances so that the child may regain control over his or her actions.

Perspective on Biting

Biting is a very common behavior among children birth to three years of age. Biting is a form of communication and is almost always a response to the child's needs not being met or coping with a challenge or stressor. At Montessori Village we believe that by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual needs, we can proactively prevent many biting behaviors by the environment which we create for the children.

We understand that children biting other children, is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors to deal with in group child care settings. It can occur without warning, can be difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in both children, the families, and the caregivers involved.

For many young children, the biting stage is just a passing problem. For some young children they try it out as a way to get what they want from another. They are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. They discover that biting is a sure-fire way to cause the other child to drop

what they are holding so the child who has bitten can pick it up. However, they experience the disapproval of the adults nearby and eventually learn other ways of gaining possession of objects or expressing difficult feelings.

For other children, biting is a persistent and chronic problem. They may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

- **Quality relationships:** Teachers develop nurturing relationships with the children and get to know each child individually. They are given many opportunities for professional development to help learn ways to build quality relationships with the children.
- **Environmental influences on a child's behaviors:** Children are given opportunities to work in both small and large groups; there is a variety of work and children are given lessons on how to be in the environment with other children appropriately, as well as witnessing constant modeling of appropriate interactions. A Montessori environment is often productive and concentration-promoting, which is very soothing to children; and guides are very aware of and willing to help a child that is feeling overwhelmed.
- **Targeted social-emotional supports:** Children have an environment that consists of gross motor time, time to pursue own work, and snack time. Children learn early how to navigate classroom transitions in a way that helps them build confidence and alleviate stress. Teachers talk about emotions/feelings through books and other work and teach strategies to help children learn to calm themselves.

No matter what the cause, it is important to be aware of the potential problem before it happens.

Response to Biting - Action Plan

Before biting occurs:

1. The biting policy is part of our Behavioural Policy that will be shared with all our families.
2. We will continue to provide an environment that meets the developmental needs of the children. Monitor and supervise all children while working and/or playing. Redirect in situations where a potential biting incident may occur. Create an environment which meets the developmental needs of the children. Monitor and supervise all children while working and/or playing. Redirect in situations where a potential biting incident may occur. Maintain an environment that elicits calm, thoughtful behavior.

For the child that bites:

1. The child that has bitten is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as "I see X is crying/has a mark. "Biting hurt X, and made X sad", "biting is not okay – it hurts", "We use our mouth for food and water." We will avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter. Caring attention will be focused on the child who was bitten.
2. The child that has bitten will not be allowed to return to the activity that elicited the bite, and will be talked to on a level which the child can understand. "I can see that you want that activity, but I can't let you hurt X."

3. The child will be asked to make amends with the child that was bitten. For example, getting an icepack from the freezer and holding it on the site of the bite (with the bitten child's permission). The child can return to an activity after making amends that is approved by the child bitten. The child who bit may also just watch the guide apply the icepack.
4. The child the has bitten will be redirected to other work/play/
5. Classroom teachers will complete two Village Montessori incident reports (one for the family of the biter and the other for family of the victim) to sign, before it is given to the Director of the school to sign and file. All incident reports are confidential.

For the bitten child:

1. Classroom teachers will separate the child who was bitten from the biter.
2. Special attention will be given to comfort the child.
3. Classroom teachers will administer appropriate first aid as follows:
 - a. Assess the wound and if it is bleeding, apply pressure directly to the wound, using a clean, dry cloth, until the bleeding stops.
 - b. Clean the bite wound with a mild soap and warm running water for approximately 3 - 5 minutes.
 - c. Rinse thoroughly, and pat dry with a clean, dry cloth.
 - d. Cover the wound with a clean, dry dressing.
 - e. Should the wound require immediate medical attention, appropriate action will be taken and parents will be notified immediately.
4. Classroom teachers will complete two Village Montessori incident reports (one for the family of the biter and the other for family of the victim) to sign, before it is given to the Director of the school to sign and file. All incident reports are confidential.
5. Classroom teacher will confer with the Director to review the context of the biting incident, whether adequate supervision was present and whether the environment contributed to the biting incident. If changes in supervision and/or environment are warranted, then those changes will be implemented.

When biting continues:

1. Classroom teachers will meet with the administrator on a routine basis for advice, support and strategy planning.
2. Classroom teachers will chart every occurrence, including attempted bites, and indicate location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances.
3. Classroom teachers will work together as partners with the parents of both biting children and frequent victims to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change.
4. Classroom teachers will hold a conference with the parents of the biting child to develop a written plan of action. Schedule follow-up meetings or telephone conversations as needed. This may include, but is not limited to, an evaluation by a speech therapist, an evaluation by an occupational therapist specializing in sensory behaviors, or changes in the home life (such as limit-setting, media exposure, etc). Failure to make and keep appointments or follow the plan of action can result in dismissal.
5. The child will be shadowed (short term) to help prevent any biting accidents. The child will be observed by the teachers to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.
6. Prepare the parents of the biting child for the possibility that the child may have to be removed from the school and help them to make contingency plans.

- a. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 days of school attendance) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
 - b. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be asked to take a one week break from school.
 - c. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements.
 - d. If a child, who has been through step 1 and step 2 and the then 3 goes weeks (15 days of school attendance) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.
 - e. If a child bites twice in an hour, the child will be required to be picked up from school for the remainder of the day.
7. If it is deemed in the best interest of the child, school, and other children, terminates the child from Village Montessori for the duration of the biting stage. Written warning will be given to the families before this action will be taken.

Biting Confidentiality: Village Montessori staff and teachers will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents that their child has been bitten or bit another child.

Bullying

The Ministry of Education, within its Policy and Guidance documentation defines bullying as 'any repeated conduct by a child where the conduct is intended by that child to have the effect of, or that child ought to know that the conduct would likely have the effect of:

Causing physical, emotional, psychological or social harm to another child.

Placing another child in reasonable fear of physical, emotional, psychological or social harm.

Placing another child in reasonable fear of damage to that child's property.

Creating an intimidating, threatening, hostile or abusive educational environment for another child.

Disrupting the academic progress of another child.

Damaging the reputation of another child.

Infringing on the rights of another child to participate in school activities.

Village Montessori endeavours to comply with the Ministry of Education requirements placed on schools and our Anti-bullying Policy outlines detailed procedures and protocols to 'encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of students and in particular preventing all forms of bullying among students' (children).

The ethos of our school is based on self-regulation and control, we foster a loving and caring environment and encourage open communication which should lessen any incidents of bullying. If Bullying is suspected or reported we will get both parents in and work with the families to eliminate the behaviour. We also take part in any National initiatives to help eliminate bullying e.g., Stood Up campaign.

Behaviour of parents/guardians and other visitors to the school

Village Montessori encourages close links with parents/guardians and the community. We believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. "While the vast majority of parents, guardians and others visiting our school are keen to partner with us and are supportive of the school, in those instances wherein there is a negative attitude, it is unacceptable for it to be expressed aggressively, with threatening behaviour, or in the form of written, verbal and/or physical abuse towards a member of the school community." Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community will not be tolerated. When formulating our procedures, reference was made to the Education Law (2016) and the Ministry of Education Complaints Policy.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable

The following list outlines the types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated towards any member of the school community. This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- Shouting and or swearing either in person or over the telephone.
- Speaking in an aggressive/threatening tone.
- Physical intimidation e.g. standing very close to her/him.
- The use of aggressive hand gestures/exaggerated movements.
- Physical threats.
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person.
- Pushing.
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching or kicking.
- Spitting.
- Racist or sexist comments.
- Sending inappropriate or abusive e-mails to school staff or to the general school e-mail address
- Publishing or posting derogatory or inappropriate comments which relate to the school, its students or staff/volunteers on a social networking site
- Breaking the school's security procedures

Procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour:

When a parent/guardian or member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way during a telephone conversation, staff at the school have the right to terminate the call. The incident will be reported by staff to the Senior Management Team. The school reserves the right to take

any necessary actions to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to verbal abuse. The school may warn the aggressor and/or contact the police.

When any parent/caregiver or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way in person towards a member of the school staff a member of the Senior Management Team will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continues, or where there is an extreme act of violence, the discussion will be terminated and the visitor will be asked to leave the school immediately. As it is also an offence under the Education Law (2016) for any person (including a parent) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises and the police will be called if necessary. If it has been determined that an offence has been committed then the perpetrator is liable under summary conviction to a fine of \$5000 and may also be banned from the school premises for a period of time.

Parent Support/Education

- Acquiring the knowledge, skills and patience to raise healthy happy and well-adjusted children is an on-going process that requires a tremendous amount of effort and diligence. Several resources are available, and parents are expected to take proactive responsibility in this area.
- The school has a small resource library of helpful books that can be checked out by the parents. VMS can provide a recommended resource list that covers Montessori and other topics of education.
- Parent/Teacher discussions may be scheduled at any time with your child's teacher to exchange ideas and strategies for specific behavioural issues that may be impacting the child or family. The Director and Business Manager are also available to discuss educational and behavioural issues.
- Parents are encouraged to visit the school regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behaviour support process designed to promote positive choices and behaviour.

The following are some guidelines of Montessori discipline that parents should seek to apply at home as well as at the school:

- Hold the child to a standard; he/she will rise to expectations,
- Behaviour: think satisfaction and motivation vs. gratification and manipulation
- Make reward internal not external
- To maintain strong, effective discipline, seek consistency and clarity
- Catch children "doing something right"
- Engage and interest the child
- Involve and stimulate the child
- Redirect the child from destructive, negative behaviour
- Be respectful. Maintain unconditional love. Love is not a "bargaining chip"
- Use humour to defuse, not to deflate
- Let natural consequences flow from inappropriate behaviour

General Standards of Behaviour

AT ALL TIMES

- Respect yourself, others and our environment
- Demonstrate responsibility, respect and self-restraint
- Keep the school environment clean and orderly
- Keep the bathrooms neat and clean
- Keep your hands to yourself

HALLWAYS/PATHS

- Walk quietly in the hallways/paths
- Walk in a single file line
- Keep your hands to yourself

CLASSROOMS

- Treat all classroom materials with great respect and care
- Return all things to their proper place
- Do not run inside the school building
- Use an inside voice (low volume to avoid disturbing a friend's work)

RECESS

- Follow the playground rules
- Teachers on recess duty must be visible to all children on the playground. They must position themselves around the playground and avoid standing in clusters.
- Any activity that is deemed unsafe by an adult on duty should be addressed immediately; we have zero tolerance for any inappropriate physical contact. Adults have the final say with any and all issues that pertain to safety.
- Children who choose not to follow these rules are eligible to lose their recess privileges; adults should report unsafe or inappropriate activity on an incident report. Adults on duty have the responsibility to give a child consequence for unsafe or inappropriate activity at recess. Our goal is to develop appropriate social behaviours in all of our children.

General Respect Toward All Staff, Children and Parents in The School

- Enforce all rules equally for all children. Adults must follow rules, too! Remember that children learn by example
- If you are not sure of an incident ask, "What happened?". Ask every child involved and give equal opportunity to explain.
- Be careful to refrain from reacting to "tattling". It is usually used to get attention. Have the child accompany you to the person about whom he is tattling and directly address the problem with that person. Let the children work it out wherever possible
- Consequences should relate to the consequences of the unacceptable behaviour as much as possible, e.g. for throwing sand out of the sand box the child may not play in the sand box during that playtime

- Never argue with a child
- Never withhold food as a consequence of unacceptable behaviour
- If the child cannot control him or herself, the child may need to be in a safe place where he or she can regain control. Be careful to provide the child with opportunities for developing self-control, through work with hands which leads to concentration.
- Be careful not to interfere with the child's individual pattern of development and natural creative powers. This requires careful and objective observations

Use of Language:

- Never lecture or moralize on the condition, such as, "It isn't nice to yell", or "people do not like it when you yell". This is an adult tendency that causes children to tune out.
- Never ask, "Why did you do this?". Some children are not developmentally able to analyze their actions".
- Never threaten consequences that are unreasonable and cannot be carried out. Be sure to follow through with what you say.
- Be careful not to impose what you wish or think the child should be doing. Remember to state a condition, not a "should" or need to". "There is rice on the floor", instead of, "You need to sweep up the rice". "Your chair is still out", instead of, "You must push your chair in". "Running is not allowed inside", in place of, "You need to go back and walk"
- Wear a smile. The children are usually behaving appropriately and need to know you accept them. Corrections do not always have to be done unpleasantly, just firmly.
- Keep verbalization during lesson presentation and especially discipline to a minimum.

Children will immediately follow the direction of any Village Montessori staff member. If there are disagreements about how a staff member handled a situation the student and /or parent has a right to seek the support of the administration.

Village Montessori understands that our community may not suit everyone and that parents have the opportunity and right to seek alternative schooling options.

HAZARD MANAGEMENT PLAN

HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Definition of School

For our purposes please note that school means educational institution including early childhood and compulsory years.

Health Policy

Our health policy has been developed with the primary concern for the wellbeing of our students. In order to maintain a healthy school environment, parents are advised to keep their child at home when any of the following symptoms are present.

- Fever (temperature over 98.6° F)
- Rash
- Mucous Cough
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Discoloured or excessive amounts of nasal congestion
- Sore throat
- Head lice
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

If any of these symptoms occur during school hours the Classroom Teacher will call the parent to come and collect the child. Children who experience diarrhoea and or vomiting are required to be symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Children who have had a fever are required to have a normal temperature for at least 24hours without medication before returning to school. Please note that the school reserves the right to make the decision to send a child home due to illness or injury.

Any child presenting with any of the above ailments will be removed from class and isolated in the office (our sick bay) while they wait for their parent/caregiver to arrive.

Accidents and Medical Emergencies

In case of an accident, illness, or other medical emergency, the procedure listed below must be followed.

Medical Emergency Procedure

1. Attend to the child's immediate needs, assuring comfort and safety
 - All head injuries need to be reported to parents via a phone call
 - For all head injuries child should be made to drink water to help calm their bodies.

- For all head injuries an ice pack or cold compress should be applied to the injury.
 - If a child falls and hits their head the child should not be moved until the extent of the injury is verified and it is safe to move the child.
2. Apply appropriate care i.e. First Aid, C.P.R.
 3. The lead teacher/ teacher with the student should not leave the child. Another staff member should call the parent and inform Admin ASAP.
 - If unavailable the emergency contact person provided in the child's file must be contacted.
 4. Ensure that any special medical/emergency instructions for the child are being followed.
 5. If necessary, 911

Accident/Incident Reports

The Accident/Incident form must be filled out any time there is an injury or unusual incident involving a child (including behavioural incidents). The form must be completed by the staff member who was in attendance when the incident occurred. It should detail what happened, what action was taken to remedy the situation, the location of the incident, date and time. Once reported to the parent or guardian, the form must be signed by the staff member and the Director/Business Manager.

Epidemic/Pandemic Plan

In the case where there is an epidemic or pandemic, we follow the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Public Health department. We have the fact sheets which Public Health Department provide when there is an outbreak and we follow their procedures and advice as best practice. (see attached copies of Public Health fact sheets)

School Reopening After the Pandemic

Schools will reopen when the all-clear is provided by the Public Health and Government Authorities. All schools should be thoroughly deep-cleaned/sanitised and inspections and maintenance checks conducted prior to reopening. The process for reopening a school after this pandemic will be similar to processes already established for reopening after summer and other breaks, with some special considerations:

- It is recognised that the emotional, mental health and wellbeing of students and staff may be significantly impacted by this pandemic. Mental health and wellness sessions, stress management, establishing clear routines and maintaining effective communication will be crucial for both students and teachers. Awareness training for staff and the provision of resources that support responses to various behaviours will need to be arranged. Principals

should utilise support from educational psychologists, counsellors, and other specialists within the public and private sector to support students and staff.

- There may be a change in staffing as some staff may have opted to leave the island and others may not be in a position to return to work for various reasons (illness, death in the family, etc.). Consistent communication with staff regarding their plans/existing circumstances is crucial for staff planning for the re-start of schools. Each principal should establish a contingency plan for a lack in the full complement of teaching staff in place for the reopening of school. There may be a change in student enrolment as parents may opt to home school, relocate to other countries or switch schools. Schools should remind parents of the relevant forms/processes to enable these changes.

See attached Pandemic Procedure Reopening Document.

Missing Child Policy

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing the following basic measures will be taken to try to locate the child, prior to reporting the child as missing:

- Staff to maintain the safety and well being of other children.
- Inform the Director or in their absence the Business Manager.
- Speak to friends who might know where the child has gone or currently is located.
- Ensure that the child is not on the school premises by searching relevant areas where they may be located. A member of the Senior Management Team and at least one other member of staff will search the immediate vicinity.
- If the child is not found in the immediate vicinity of the school immediately notify DART security to help us search the wider property here at Camana Bay.

- If off-site, one teacher will remain with the group of children whilst the other teacher will search the immediate vicinity for the missing child. Help will be requested at the venue where the group is assembled.
- Parents of the child will be contacted and informed about the missing episode and a check made to establish whether the child has returned home from school.
- If a child is found during these enquiries then a full investigation will take place at school, which the Director will chair. A Risk Assessment will be carried out and any recommendations made by the investigation team will then be implemented into school policy.

******* However, if there is any cause to believe that the child may have been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, has a history of missing episodes or is known to be at risk of exploitation, then the police must be called immediately on 911 and Dart Security 525-0446**

******* Any reporting to the police will be made by a member of the senior management team - typically this will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director.**

- If the child cannot be found then the school will contact the police, providing as much information as possible, including;
 - Name/DOB/Any Alias
 - Previous Addresses
 - Phone numbers/Emails/Social Media details
 - Family Details (Names/Addresses etc)
 - Contact details for any key worker/Social Worker
 - List of Associates
 - Details of any vulnerability (i.e. Learning Disabilities/Mental Health/Physical injury or Illness/Medication)
 - Details of any current concern/issue for the child
 - Circumstances of Disappearance
 - The school will inform the police of any changes or updates to this information, particularly where this may alter the level of risk.

FIRE & NATURAL DISASTER POLICIES

Earthquakes

The Cayman Islands lie close to the boundary zone of the Caribbean and North American tectonic plates. This transform boundary, where the plates slide past each other, is known to generate earthquakes. The earthquake of 14 December 2004 is associated with this plate boundary. So, although the Cayman Islands has not experienced many strong earthquakes in recent times, there is the potential for us to be affected by a major earthquake.

What to Expect in an Earthquake?

During an earthquake, the ground moves like waves on the ocean. The actual movement of the ground, however, is seldom the cause of injury or death. Most injuries and deaths are caused by the collapse of structures. Injuries are commonly caused by:

- Structures collapsing, falling blocks, walls, poles, roofs, ceiling plaster, light fixtures and pictures
- Flying glass from broken windows

- Overturned bookcases, wall units, filing cabinets, and other heavy furniture
- Fires from ruptured gas and broken electrical lines (this danger may be aggravated by a lack of water due to broken water mains)
- Fallen power lines
- Vehicular accidents

During an Earthquake

- **Stay calm** — think through the consequences of any action you take.
- If you are inside, stay inside. Take cover under a heavy desk, table, bench, in a reinforced doorway, or a corner. Evacuate by stairway when the shaking stops. Never use elevators to evacuate after an earthquake.
- If you are outdoors, stay outdoors. During earthquakes, many injuries occur as people are entering or leaving buildings. Move away from buildings, utility wires, glass, hanging signs and other objects which may fall and cause injury. Get to an open space and stay there until the shaking stops.

Duck, Cover and Hold

- Practice the Duck, Cover and Hold procedure until it becomes second nature.
 - Duck – get under a sturdy piece of furniture, making yourself into a little ball (do not duck under beds or other objects that could collapse).
 - Cover – keep your head and eyes protected from falling or flying objects. Cover your head with one hand.
 - Hold – with your other hand, hold onto the piece of furniture. If it moves, move with it. Stay under shelter until you are sure the shaking has stopped.

If you cannot shelter under furniture, move against an interior wall if you are indoors, duck, put your arms over your head and across the back of your neck for protection.

If you are driving when an earthquake starts, slow down carefully and come to a stop in an area free of hazards.

After an Earthquake

- Evacuate the building in an orderly manner as soon as the shaking stops and head to muster point located in the parking lot. The secondary muster point in case needed is on the Crescent by the big water fountain.
- **EXPECT AFTERSHOCKS.** Although most of these are smaller than the main shock, some may be large enough to cause additional damage and damaged buildings to collapse.

- If you are on the coast, move inland or to higher ground in case there is a [tsunami](#).
- WEAR STURDY SHOES to avoid injury from broken glass and debris.
- CHECK FOR INJURIES (if a person is bleeding, put direct pressure on the wound, use clean gauze or cloth if available; If a person is not breathing administer CPR; DO NOT attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in further danger of injury; COVER injured persons with blankets to keep warm; SEEK medical help for serious injuries

Upon the first indication of an earthquake, teachers should direct students to DUCK, COVER AND HOLD. Follow the procedures below for all earthquake events.

- Avoid glass and falling objects. Move away from windows and overhead hazards.
- When the shaking stops, evacuate all staff and students from building.
- Teachers must take with them a class list, phone list and cell phone/school phone and First Aid kit.
- Assemble to post a safe distance away from building.
- A head count of students and staff must be taken and the Head Teacher of each program must be informed of any missing staff or students.
- If the area appears safe, the Head of School or other person in charge will make an initial inspection of school buildings.
- The Director or other person in charge will contact the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit 244-5734 to determine if additional actions are deemed necessary.
- Once all clear is given, normal school operations can resume.

Tsunami Plan

The National Science Foundation calls tsunamis the Caribbean's "forgotten hazard." A tsunami (pronounced soo-nah-mee) is an ocean wave or series of ocean waves caused by an abrupt disturbance of the ocean floor that displaces a large mass of water. Earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, explosions and even the impact of asteroids, meteorites or comets can generate tsunamis.

The main sources for tsunami in the Caribbean are earthquakes (generated at the boundaries of the Caribbean Plate or within the Plate), submarine landslides, volcanoes, and large earthquakes which occur far away and generate a large tsunami which reaches the Caribbean.

What to do in the event of a tsunami

If a tsunami warning is given, proceed to the fourth floor of the carpark adjacent to the playground where there will be a designated area for our children. .

Fire Plan

In the event of a fire, evacuate all students and staff from building.

- Assemble to post a safe distance away from building.
- A head count of students and staff must be taken by each classroom teacher or assistant.
- Wait for a report from Director or person in charge.

Earthquake and fire drills will be held in order to provide maximum protection in case of earthquake, fire or other emergency.

See attached Fire Evacuation Plan document.

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Plan

It is possible that Village Montessori may close due to inclement weather or building concerns that would jeopardize the safety of our students and staff. Village Montessori follows the advice from the Ministry of Education/ Department of Education Services when it comes to school closures due to weather and or natural disasters. Typically, schools will close in the event of a Tropical Storm Warning or Hurricane Warning depending on the severity of the storm.

If Cayman goes into a Tropical Storm or Hurricane WATCH scenario, the school will begin to make arrangements to:

- Communicate possible school closures to parents if needed
- Secure Garden & Patio Areas
- Secure Indoor spaces
- Confirm all staff have a Hurricane Preparedness Plan in place

The typical alerts for a Tropical Storm/Hurricane are as follows:

- **ALERT | Take Precautions Hurricane/tropical storm could strike within 72 hours.**
- **WATCH | Batten Down Hurricane/tropical storm could strike within 48 hours**
- **WARNING | Take Refuge Hurricane/tropical storm could strike within 36 hours**
 - **A Warning remains in effect until the storm has passed or is no longer a threat**

All staff should be familiar with the Cayman Prepared Hurricane Information Document. It can be found at this link: <http://www.caymanprepared.ky/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/13086540.PDF>

Mandated School Closures

As per Section 13.5 of the Education Law 2016 which states, "The Minister may, under the advice of the agency responsible for Hazard Management, close educational institutions due to potential health and safety risk as a result of a natural disaster"

An announcement will be made on our school answering machine as well as by email in the event that Village Montessori is closed on a day when normal operations would be expected.

In the event that a school closure is announced while children are in our care, the office administrator will contact parents by email and by phone. If unable to contact a parent, the emergency contact list will be referred to and the emergency contact for that child will be called. In order to facilitate a smooth

and orderly dismissal, parents/emergency contact will be asked to collect their child as soon as possible. Staff will be required to remain with their students until each child has been collected from their class.

Lockdown and Lockout Plan

Lockout is a procedure that prevents unauthorised persons from entering the school and is commonly used when the threat is general or the incident is occurring off the school property. This procedure allows school activities to continue as normal during the outside disruption.

Lockdown is a procedure used when there is an immediate threat to the school e.g. school intruders. Lockdown minimises access to the school and secures staff and students in rooms. As part of this procedure, everyone must remain in the room until the situation has been declared safe by an authorised person e.g. Director/ Business Manager/Security Guard or Police Officer.

Lockout Procedures

Steps to implement lockout:

- A whistle will sound which alerts designated staff to implement the lockout.
- If necessary, the principal, or supervising staff should direct students who are in the playground or outside school fences (e.g. ovals) to immediately return to the nearest school building and classroom.
- The principal or supervising staff should ensure that all doors and patio fence are secured and that students are accounted for and safe.
- The only entry to the school for the period of lockout should be through the main patio entrance. The Director/ Business Manager needs to ensure main entry door is secured and supervises restricted entry. The principal ensures that only authorised personnel have access.
- The Director/ Business Manager liaise with Police, Dart Security and other emergency services if necessary, to develop and implement a plan for students to depart at the end of the school day if the incident is still continuing.

Lockdown Procedures

Steps to implement lockdown:

- Lockdown signal/code is given – A foghorn will sound which alerts designated staff to implement the lockdown. Should an intruder be identified, the staff member who identifies the intruder should contact the Director/ Business Manager or most senior staff member who will determine if lockdown procedures should be initiated.
- External unit doors are to be locked. Staff are to remain with students at all times.
- Director/ Business Manager or most senior staff member calls Police and Dart Security office.

- If safe to do so, the principal or most senior staff member will wait outside the main entrance of the school to direct emergency services or will delegate another member of staff to do this. Only authorised personnel should be allowed access to the school premises.
- All outside activities should cease immediately. If appropriate the principal, most senior staff member or supervising staff should direct students who are in the playground or outside school fences (e.g. ovals), to immediately return to the nearest school building and classroom or evacuate to a predetermined off-site location. Off site evacuation would be to the garden area outside the cinema at Camana Bay. Staff where staff should ensure students remain calm and quiet.
- Staff should record the names of students who are in the room. Any missing and/or extra students should be noted. Staff should phone through details of students present / absent / unaccounted to Director or Business Manager on School phone number or cell numbers listed below. During extended periods of lock down, teachers are advised to implement 'quiet' activities e.g. quiet reading. Students with medical alerts are to be situated in close proximity to staff and require close monitoring. Any change of condition / instability should be communicated to the office.
- Where the lockdown lasts an extended period of time or extends beyond normal school hours, the principal or most senior staff member should notify parents with the assistance of police.

All clear return to normal activities.

Contact Numbers

Early Childhood Care and Education Unit- 244-5734/ Darbra Bodden 936-0267
 Ministry of Education Strategy Officer- Kimberly Kirkconnell 925-2183
 Public Health School Coordinator -Carvell Bailey 244-2621
 School Office number-640-7827
 Jeifrene Small – 916-2277
 Traci Bradley – 516-5613

Emergency Service Phone Numbers

Police/Fire/Hospital: **911**

Dart Security Centre:525-0446

National Emergency Operations Centre (NHC): **949-6555** (Available after an activation)
 Website: www.neoc.gov.ky

Emergency Information Hotline: **946-3333** (Activated during 'Alert' phase)

Red Cross: **345-949-6785 | 345-916-3345**; Fax: **345-945-4813**; Email: dm@redcross.org.ky;
 Website: www.redcross.org.ky

SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Child Safeguarding Policy
2. Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Policy

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Definition of School

For our purposes, please note that school means educational institution including early childhood and compulsory years.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Cayman Islands Bill of Rights (Bill of Rights) outlines the responsibilities of the government and public officials to protect and safeguard children and young people.

A Safe Environment Policy helps prevent situations in which children are at an increased risk for abuse because of the physical characteristics of a building. A safe environment is one that increases visibility, ensures adequate supervision and controls access.

The Ministry of Education is committed to working with the Department of Education Services (DES) and schools to develop welcoming, supportive and inclusive learning environments that promote the well-being of all students and staff.

The Ministry of Education wishes to promote a 'spirit' of child protection and establish the baseline expectation of supervision of students. The Safe Environment Policy dictates what the responsibilities of staff are in protecting and perpetuating a safe environment for students.

The Ministry of Education requires that all schools and other government educational establishments have a safe environment policy which sets out to address the issues of visibility, supervision and access

a) Where feasible, the Senior Management Team will ensure visibility within the school by providing:

- Clear lines of sight throughout the building and in the classrooms
- Landscaping that ensures open, visible spaces with no possibility of concealment
- Doors with windows

No locked doors

- Classroom windows should not be obscured
- Bright lighting in all areas
- Locked unused areas or room accessible by staff only

b) Ensure that the activities of children and staff are adequately supervised by implementing the following:

- Adequate supervision in the classroom, as per the established formula for staffing
- Adequate playground and non-classroom supervision (for example, hallways, stairwells, and
- Periodic walk-throughs of the building and its grounds to ensure there are no unidentified persons on site
- Where appropriate, monitoring devices such as security cameras could be installed in key zone

c)Ensure that access to children and staff is controlled by implementing:

- Signs posted around the school directing visitors to school office
- Requiring that all visitors, volunteers, and contractors sign in at the main office and wear a visitor badge identifying them at all times
- Ensuring all staff are aware of restrictions to noncustodial parents' access to a child or children
- Requiring that children entering or leaving at times other than typical arrival or dismissal do so only with parental permission, except in the case of emergency
- Requiring that when removing a child from the school, parent/guardian should notify the school office and sign the child out.
- Ensuring that all fences, gates, and so on surrounding the grounds are functioning properly and in good repair

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY

Definition of Child Abuse

Child Abuse is defined as any intentional act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver (e.g. clergy, coach, teacher) that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.

- Physical Abuse: intentional actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent injury through neglectful actions.
- Child Sexual Abuse: any sexual act, including non-contact acts, with a child performed by an adult or an older child, including but not limited to:
 - sexual touching on any part of the body, clothed or unclothed
 - penetrative sex, including penetration of the mouth
 - encouraging a child to engage in a sexual activity, including masturbation
 - intentionally engaging in sexual activity in front of a child
 - showing children pornography, or using children to create pornography
 - encouraging a child to engage in prostitution
 - exposing oneself or saying sexual things
- Emotional Abuse: actual or likely severe negative impact on a child's emotional, psychological and behavioural development, resulting from persistent or severe emotional/psychological ill-treatment.

- Neglect: severe or persistent failure to provide for a child's physical, emotional or basic needs.

Legal Requirement to Notify – Children Law (2012 Revision), Part IIIA.32A

If a teacher, principal, counsellor or other employee/volunteer in an institution established for the care and education of children has a reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work, that person shall notify the Department (Department of Children and Family Services) of the suspicion as soon as practicable after s/he forms the suspicion.

A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of one year or both.

A notification under this section shall be made by the employee or volunteer following Village Montessori *Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect* procedures, (See Appendix 2) which entails completing the *Child Abuse Incident Report Form*.

Responsibilities of School Employees and Volunteers

Starfish Village T/A Village Montessori employees and volunteers who have reason to believe that a child is being abused are mandated to report that information to the Primary Child Protection Officer Simone Ross or, if that is not possible before the close of day, to the other assigned Child Protection Officer, Jeifrene Small designated in accordance with the Starfish Village *Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect* procedures.

- In deciding whether to report an incident or situation of suspected abuse/neglect to the Child Protection Officer, it is not required that the person making the report have proof that abuse/neglect has occurred. Any uncertainty in deciding to report suspicion shall be resolved in favour of the child and the report made immediately.
- The employee or volunteer will report to the Child Protection Officer what has been said by the student or what has been observed leading to the suspicion of child abuse/neglect, including the context of that information. There shall be no attempt by the employee or volunteer to question the child, as the role of investigation lies with Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and/or Family Support Unit (FSU) of Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS). The child shall be protected from repeated disclosures.
- If the child is injured, the employee/volunteer shall seek appropriate medical attention and inform the Child Protection Officer of the action.
- The employee or volunteer referring the suspected case of child abuse/neglect must **not** contact the parents. In the event that the suspect is another staff member or volunteer, the reporter must not contact that person.
- Given the sensitive nature of child abuse/neglect referrals, the employee or volunteer should not expect feedback following the referral to the Child Protection Officer. Children Law, (2012 Revision) Part IIIA.32C provides protection to the notifier and requires that the receiver of notification of

suspected child abuse (DCFS/FSU) shall not disclose the identity of the notifier to any other person other than in the instance of communicating to another person acting in the course of official duty. Only in cases when “the court is satisfied that the evidence is of critical importance in the proceedings and that failure to admit it would prejudice the proper administration of justice” will a notifier be called to provide evidence. In these instances, the DES will support the employee by assigning another professional to accompany them at such hearing.

- School leadership shall undertake to ensure that all employees and volunteers are provided with information and training that will enable them to carry out their duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect as well as training regarding identifying and responding appropriately to Child Protection issues.

Responsibilities of School Child Protection Officer

Starfish Village T/A Village Montessori has appointed Simone Ross as the school’s Child Protection Officer.

The Management of the school will ensure that staff has the opportunities needed to have access to training in relation to keeping current with child protection matters.

If the Child Protection Officers have reasonable suspicion that a child may be suffering or may have suffered abuse/neglect, there is immediate duty to report that suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). This requirement applies whether the information was initially extended in confidence. This requirement also applies whether the information comes directly from the child or indirectly from another employee, volunteer or community member.

It is the Child Protection Officer’s (CPO) duty to report incidents or suspicions of child abuse/neglect; it is not the CPO’s responsibility to investigate. In speaking with the child, the CPO will take careful note of what is said and the context in which it is said. Care will be taken not to ask leading or unnecessary questions. Documentation of what is said (or of any injuries) is important. The child’s own words shall be used as much as possible.

Immediate duty to report, in this case, means that the report is communicated to DCFS according to the *Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect* procedures.

Once information for a report has been obtained, the Child Protection Officer will make a direct referral to DCFS utilizing the DCFS *Referral Information For Child Abuse* Form. The Referral Information Form should be emailed to DCFSIntake@gov.ky .

Immediately prior to or soon after making a report of suspected abuse/neglect, the

Child Protection Officer shall inform the school Director, Jeifrene Small. She will be informed of the report but not the specific details of the report.

It is not the Child Protection Officer's responsibility to inform parents of any report of suspected child abuse/neglect; however, when making the referral to DCFS, how the parents become informed could be discussed and the best course of action agreed upon with that agency. A record of follow-up contact made to external agencies regarding a referral made shall be kept.

Responsibilities of the School after Referring Cases of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Following any report of suspected child abuse/neglect, the Child Protection Officer will assume a role of child support and advocacy as required. The Director and the Senior Management Team will cooperate with DCFS throughout any investigation and release relevant student records and employee/volunteer reports in consultation with Department of Education Services' Child Protection Officer.

If the suspected offender is an employee of the school the Director and Senior Management team will be informed and the suspect will be suspended and removed from the premises pending a full investigation.

When following procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse/neglect, the safety and welfare of the student will always dictate which course of action is to be pursued. Any uncertainty shall always be resolved in favour of the child's best interest. When in doubt, consult the Child Protection Officer.