

The Montessori School of Tokyo

Parent Handbook

Academic Year 2023-2024



Preface

Maria Montessori - and how it all began

Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in Italy, to an educated but not affluent middle class family. She grew up in a country and an era when women had few opportunities to pursue their own careers. However, even against the considerable opposition of her father and teachers, Montessori pursued a scientific education and was one of the first women in Italy to become a physician.

In 1901, Montessori was appointed Director of the new Orthophrenic School. This was formerly used as the asylum for the “deficient and insane” children of the city, who had been confined in empty rooms. Recognizing her patients’ needs for stimulation, and self-esteem, Montessori insisted that the staff speak with the highest respect to the patients. She set up a programme to teach her young charges how to care for themselves and their environment. She spent much time studying her youngsters, listening and carefully noting everything they did and said. Slowly she began to get a sense of who they really were and what methods worked best. Two years after she began, many of her “deficient” adolescents were able to pass the standard sixth grade exams. Acclaimed for this “miracle,” Montessori responded by suggesting that her results proved only that public schools should be able to get dramatically better results with normal children.

Unfortunately, the Italian Ministry of Education did not welcome this idea, and she was denied access to school-aged children. However, in 1907, she was given the opportunity to coordinate a day-care centre for working class children who were too young to attend public school. The first “Children’s House” was located in the worst slum district of Rome, and the conditions Montessori faced were appalling. Her first class consisted of fifty children between two and five years old, taught by one untrained caregiver. They entered on the first day crying and pushing, exhibiting generally aggressive and impatient behaviour. Montessori, not knowing whether her experiment would work under such conditions, began by teaching the older children how to help with the everyday tasks that needed to be done. She also introduced some of the puzzles that she had used with the mentally handicapped.

The results surprised her, for unlike the special needs children who had to be encouraged to use the materials, these children were naturally drawn to the work she introduced. Children who had wandered aimlessly the week before, began to settle down to long periods of constructive activity. Also, to Montessori’s amazement, the young children took the greatest delight in learning practical everyday living skills, reinforcing their independence. Every day they begged her to show them more and soon the older children were taking care of their school, assisting with the preparation and serving of meals and the maintenance of a spotless environment. Their behaviour as a group changed dramatically, from street urchins running wild to models of grace and courtesy.

Her children exploded into academics, keen to learn how to read and write. They learned to do so quickly and enthusiastically, using special sensorial materials that Montessori designed for maximum appeal and effectiveness. The children were fascinated by numbers; to meet their interest, Montessori developed a series of concrete maths learning materials.

The final proof of the children’s interest came shortly after her first school became famous when a group of mothers gave the school a collection of lovely expensive new toys. The new gifts held the children’s attention for a few days, but the children soon returned to the learning materials. To Montessori’s surprise, children who had experienced both preferred work over play most of the time.

One discovery followed another. Montessori discovered that the environment itself was all important in obtaining the results that she had observed. She had carpenters build child-sized tables and chairs as well as low open shelves on which the activities were always available to the children. She was the first to create this furniture; recognising the frustration that a little child experiences in an adult-sized world.

The children also loved to sit on the floor, so she bought little rugs to define their work areas, and the children quickly learned to use them and walk around them.

Maria Montessori's first "Children's House" received overnight attention and thousands of visitors came away amazed and enthusiastic. As an internationally respected scientist, Montessori had a rare credibility. The Montessori method seemed to offer something for everyone. Conservatives appreciated the calm, responsible behaviour of the little children, along with their love for work. Liberals applauded the freedom and spontaneity.

Between 1907 and the 1930s Montessori gave up her medical practice to devote all her energies to advocating for the rights and intellectual potential of all children, women's rights, and the need for peace education. During her lifetime, Dr Montessori was acknowledged as one of the world's leading educators. Today, over 100 years later, her schools continue to thrive and expand, a tribute to her inspirational insight which has helped change the course of childhood education.

The Peace Poem

May there be peace above you, and below you;
may there be peace before you, and behind you;
 may there be peace from your lips,
 and peace from your heart.
May there be peace all around you.

~ Author unknown

On Children

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
 They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
 You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
 For they have their own thoughts.
 You may house their bodies but not their souls,
 For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
 which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
 You may strive to be like them,
 but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
 You are the bows from which your children
 as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
 and He bends you with His might
 that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
 For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
 so He loves also the bow that is stable.

~ Khalil Gibran

There's Nothing In My Bag Today

Today I did my math and science,
Today I toasted bread.
I halved and quartered, counted, measured
Used my eyes and ears and head.
I added and subtracted on the way,
I used a magnet, blocks and memory tray.
I learned about a rainbow and how to weigh.
So please don't say, "Anything in your bag today?"

You see I'm sharing as I play.
I learned to listen and
speak clearly when I talk,
to wait my turn, and when inside to walk.
To put my thoughts into a phrase,
to guide a crayon through a maze.
To find my name and write it down,
to do it with a smile and not a frown.
To put my pasting brush away,
So please don't say, "What, nothing in your bag today?"

I've learned about a snail and a worm,
remembering how to take my turn.
Helped a friend when he was stuck,
learned that water runs off a duck.
I looked at words from left to right,
agreed to differ, not to fight.
So please don't say, "Did you only play today?"

~ Author unknown

Think Before You Buy

When you do your holiday shopping
And you're picking out the toys,
Please remember that your choices
Will be building girls and boys.

Tools and science sets and paints
And books of other lands,
Should now replace the things of war
In all our children's hands.

Give them blocks for building peace;
Our youth can make it true.
And toys that make a game of war
Should never come from you!

War's too grim a thing for fun
And much too sad for play.
So give our youth constructive toys
As a promise of a better day.

~ Author unknown

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1. Welcome to The Montessori School of Tokyo

1.1 Mission and Philosophy

MST Mission Statement:

“Stimulating curiosity while developing independence in thought and action”

Our Core Values:

Confidence - Respect - Compassion

Thank you for choosing to educate your child at The Montessori School of Tokyo. Montessori education focuses on the development of the whole child and our methods are most successful when there is a high degree of congruence between home and school expectations.

Our mission statement reflects our belief in what a quality school should do. We wish to engender a love of learning as well as an acceptance of personal responsibility for intellectual growth and social interaction. We believe that The Montessori School of Tokyo (MST) offers educational opportunities for students unrivalled by any other school in Tokyo. Our core values of Confidence, Respect and Compassion represent the characteristics which we hold dear and which we strive to instil and uphold in our administration, faculty, and student body.

The Montessori philosophy is based on a profound respect for each child as a unique human being. Our approach assumes that children are born intelligent, curious, and creative and are ripe to develop a sense of wonder and imagination. The goal is not to control but to inspire our children to learn voluntarily. In its essence, Montessori is designed to teach children to think deeply, to think for themselves, and to think about others. We believe that while learning the right answers will get a child past exams and eventually through school, learning how to think for oneself (in effect, learning how to learn) will get a child through both school and life.

We invite you to join us at MST as we offer the opportunity for a vibrant and fresh vision of education for your child.

Responsibilities of the Child

- To construct the adult he or she will become.

Responsibilities of the School

- To provide a programme that is stimulating, developmentally appropriate, and the best use of the school's resources.
- To provide an environment that is clean, safe, and attractive.
- To provide teachers who strive for professional excellence and who are exceptional in guiding, observing, and caring for children.
- To remain committed to the professional growth of our staff and open to new ideas and research.
- To provide opportunities for family-school partnerships and participation in activities in the larger community.

Responsibilities of the Parents

To support both the child and the school by:

- Attending parent meetings and conferences.
- Engaging in parent education opportunities.
- Keeping informed about goals and policies of school.
- Reading communications from the school.
- Communicating and working in collaboration with the school to support the development of the child within the framework of the educational principles of MST.
- Fulfilling financial and legal obligations to the school promptly.
- Ensuring the continuation of the school.
- Acting as an advocate for the school and its programmes.

1.2 Goals

At MST we are dedicated to the care and education of children by applying the Montessori philosophy. Individual growth and independence are fostered. Teachers provide personal attention, helping each child to progress at her/his own rate and giving every support to build their confidence and self-esteem. The children learn to respect each other and their environment as they develop a sense of belonging to a community. Here are our goals and a brief summary of how we strive to fulfil them using Montessori principles.

- To stimulate the child's curiosity.
- To nurture individual growth and independence.
- To build confidence and responsibility.
- To develop a sense of belonging to a community.
- To foster friendship, love, and respect.
- To instil in each child an appreciation of peace.

To stimulate the child's curiosity

"We must consider that exploring her environment is the child's natural way of learning"

- Maria Montessori

The classrooms at MST are typical Montessori classrooms. Usually referred to as a "prepared environment," they tend to fascinate children and their parents. They are bright, warm, and inviting, filled with intriguing learning materials, fossils, mathematical models, globes, peace tables, etc. The learning materials match the development capabilities and interests of the children enrolled in each class.

To nurture individual growth and independence

"The object of teaching a child is to enable the child to get along without the teacher"

- Arthur C. Clarke

Success in school is directly tied to the degree to which children believe that they are capable and independent human beings. Independence does not come automatically as we grow older: it must be learned.

We recognise that our role as teachers is not so much to teach as to inspire and facilitate the learning process. Our ultimate objective is to help the children to learn how to learn independently. When we introduce the children to new material, our goal is to give the children just enough information to capture their attention and spark their interest so that they will come back independently to continue working with the material. Rather than presenting children with answers, we try to ask the right questions to challenge them to find the answers for themselves.

To build confidence and responsibility

*“Teach children what to think and you limit them to your ideas.
Teach them how to think and their ideas are unlimited”*

- Sandra Parks

Being a classroom of mixed ages, we encourage the elder children to develop an awareness of the needs of the younger children. The best “teacher” of a three-year-old is often another child who is just a little older and has mastered a skill. The elder children serve as tutors and role models for the younger ones, which helps them in their own accomplishment - given we learn things best when we teach them to someone else - and at the same time develop their own self-esteem and confidence.

Many of our activities, particularly in the “Practical Life” section, are directed to enable the child to acquire and perfect the skills of daily living, i.e. washing a plate, sewing, and watering plants. Through these experiences the child learns to do the job properly, finish it, and achieve fulfilment through a simple task. When he/she has completed the task, he/she will return everything to its storage place, and this cleaning up also encourages responsibility.

Within the classroom, we expect even very young children to try to pour their own drink or button their own coat. At first the drink ends up on the floor and the buttons are uneven. However, with practice, the skills are mastered and the young child is delighted. To experience this kind of success at such an early age is to build up a self-image as a successful person and lead the child to approach the next task with confidence. The children open up to the world around them and find that mistakes are not something to be feared, but rather they are opportunities to learn from experience.

The elementary children learn to plan and be responsible for their own education. Elementary children can work together to do research, plan and execute projects, and then share them with other members of the class who are interested. They work in multi-age groups, making use of the various interests and abilities of all. This is excellent preparation for adult life in a peaceful society. From our example as teachers, the child learns how to teach. This facilitates social development, creativity, and independent thinking.

Middle School students build upon this foundation through their focus on social organisation to establish a strong sense of purpose, intentionality and mastery.

To develop a sense of belonging to a community

*“Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”*

- Ben Franklin

In each classroom with the exception of our Little People class, we have children spanning three age levels. As most children will be with us for three years, it allows the teachers to know each child’s learning style and personality very well, and it provides the opportunity for strong bonds to develop between the children. We are part of a community in which children learn and work cooperatively. In a very real sense, the children in the Little People and Sunshine classes are responsible for the care of

their child-sized environment, which is why Dr. Montessori called it a "Children's House." They sweep, dust, and wash mirrors and windows, prepare snacks and maintain the order of the classroom. When something spills, for example, the children help each other carefully clean up.

The elementary child also wishes to find his place in the world. In partnership with the parents, it is our goal to teach children to be good citizens of our global community. We want to create a sense of awareness and eagerness for children to be a contributing part of the community.

Learning how to work and play together with others in a peaceful and caring community is perhaps the most important life skill that we can impart to our children. The school is like an extended family, a home away from home, where the children take care of themselves and each other.

To foster friendship, love, and respect.

"Extend respect and then expect respect"

- Linda and Richard Eyre

Everyday kindness and courtesy are vital practical life skills. Even the youngest child is treated by her classmates with dignity and respect. The children come to understand and accept that we all have responsibilities to each other. The classroom itself provides the means for children to become aware of each other's needs.

As it is so fundamental to a peaceful classroom, we devote a lot of time to reinforcing the areas of grace and courtesy, the language of respect.

These are a few examples of areas we cover in the classrooms.

- Saying "please" and "thank you"
- Using an appropriate indoor voice
- Walking in the classroom
- Asking for permission to join in an activity
- Expressing one's feelings appropriately
- Shaking hands - learning to greet and leave graciously
- Expressing compliments and appreciation
- Learning to apologise

Elementary and Middle School students have many responsibilities which contribute to the climate of respect in the classroom. Among them are:

- Expressing one's feelings appropriately
- Being responsible for one's own actions
- Showing consideration and respect for self, others, and the environment
- Using positive conflict resolution strategies
- Working towards self-discipline

Creating a peaceful classroom

"Establishing lasting peace is the work of education"

- Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for introducing Peace Education to all schools, leading to a Science of Peace. Her ultimate goal was that world peace could be achieved through the reconstruction of society, starting with early education. Within MST, we have adopted many of her ideas in order to develop the concept of peace and peacemaking skills within the children.

- Our first step is to establish a culture of kindness in our classrooms by making lessons in grace and courtesy our first priority. Appropriate ways to act in the Montessori setting are the foundation for creating a calm classroom and are reinforced day by day.
- We encourage the children to recognise and understand feelings, first within themselves and then to be able to empathise with emotions in others.
- Children normally find it difficult to tell us and each other how they feel. The peace table plays an important part in our younger classrooms, and two children having a disagreement will normally decide to retreat to the peace table to discuss and solve their problem.

Teaching peace involves far more than lessons presented to our children. It involves finding a way to appreciate our differences and work together more effectively than ever.

2. Parent Information

2.1 MST Classes and Location

Importance of Group Dynamics:

While always ensuring that children are in an environment best suited to their developmental needs, the class as a group is very important. This means that children will typically remain in their class for a complete academic year as the unity of the group is an important part of their social development.

MST will typically place students into classes according to their age as of August 31st of the year of entry. Regarding transitions to new programmes, we prioritise developmental characteristics over birthdate, and some students may spend more or less time in a programme than others, based on individual needs and progress. The final decision on placement and timing of transition is at the discretion of MST.

In some cases and if necessary, individual students may transition between programmes mid-year provided both the sending and receiving teachers both deem a student ready to transition, and provided there is space for the receiving class to welcome another student mid-year. For families to whom this might apply, the class teachers are the first point-of-call as regards the mid-year transition process.

Meetings for all parents of transitioning students typically take place in January or February, before a child's transition to the next programme in August that same calendar year.

Montessori Classes	Age Range (approx)	MST Classes	Characteristics of the Age
Toddler (Orchard)	18 months -3yrs	Little People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pine 	Independence / Coordination / Concentration / Order
Early Childhood (Forest)	3-6yrs	Sunshine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazel ● Cedar ● Sequoia ● Olive 	Independence / Coordination / Concentration / Order
Lower Elementary (Forest)	6-9yrs	Lower Elementary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maple ● Oak 	Imagination / Socialisation / Reasoning Mind / Moral Justice
Lower Elementary (Grove)	6-9yrs	Lower Elementary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ginkgo 	
Upper Elementary (Grove)	9-12yrs	Upper Elementary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Willow 	
Middle School (Grove)	11-15yrs	Middle School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eucalyptus 	Economic Independence / Service / Social Dynamics / Emotional Understanding

The address of each building is as follows:

Forest:

3-5-13 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 106-0047
Phone Number: 03-5449-7067
Fax Number: 03-5449-0087

Orchard:

3-5-12 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo,
106-0047

Grove:

2-1-18 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 106-0047
Phone Number: 03-5793-3243

Planes of Development

The First Plane of Development (from birth to six years old) is a time of acquisition followed by consolidation. It is characterised by functions of the absorbent mind. The basis of the child's personality and how it adapts to life are established. At this stage the child is a factual learner; one who acquires knowledge through experience. In this period the child develops language, movement, and takes on the behaviours of the cultural group into which she has been born.

The curriculum in this plane is essentially one which brings the outside world into the classroom. The joy and wonder of the real world are presented to the child through pictures, stories, and real objects. Cultural studies (botany, geography, history, science, art, music, etc.) are all introduced. The cornerstone of all of these is practical life: the care of self and environment through which the child learns concentration and development of the will. Language and mathematics are presented to the child as she naturally gravitates to the materials covering these subjects.

The Second Plane of Development (six to twelve years old) is when the child becomes a reasoning learner and begins the path towards abstraction. The child's willpower, ability to concentrate, and use of imagination are still developing. Montessori characterises this stage as the "metamorphic age". The body of an elementary child strengthens, and the mind is propelled with tremendous imagination and wonder. The elementary child wants to know the reasons for things. He is no longer content with only the classroom surroundings. Instead, he requires going out into the world both to discover and understand it and to find his place in it. The peer group is an important element at this stage where there is an interest in the rules and regulations of society, and interpersonal relationships become very important. It is during this time that the child becomes emotionally and physically strong. The elementary curriculum is vast and rich. There are many opportunities to inspire and engage children of this age. At this age they are more social, preferring to work and learn together with their peers. They are also becoming more aware of moral values and seem to have a great sense of social injustices - sometimes extremely exaggerated. Children in the upper elementary level (nine-twelve) are in an age of solidification and refinement; they pursue, in depth, topics which hold great interest to them.

The Third Plane of Development (12-18) ushers in a new level of independence which must be provided for in the Montessori environment by increasing activity from the point of view of work level, choices, and planning.

The general premise for the adolescent programme at MST is that it must bring into consciousness the moral outlook and worldview of the elementary years. The middle school student can make great cognitive leaps, while integrating ideas and values in conjunction with current events, home life, or community activities.

Service programmes, community farming, and apprenticeships or mentorships in the workplace, are a part of an advancing "going out" that gives the adolescent a combined vocational and liberal arts curriculum, with a particular emphasis on economic enterprise.

In general, the goal of this age is not to master skills and content but to bring the student into full membership of society. These students need their voices to be heard as they struggle for independence from the family and adults. Relationships and community are increasingly important and all limits will be challenged.

Montessori observed that the individual who successfully completed the developmental work at each stage would lay stronger foundations for further development. The classes at MST cover the first and second planes of development as well as the start of the third plane. Our aim is to provide a holistic education from 2 to 15 years of age.

2.2 Communication Between Home and School

We try to explain all aspects of the operations at MST in the Parents' Handbook and/or on the website, to which you should have quick and easy access. Please note that emails, announcements, and other communications from the school to families will be delivered in English only.

Occasionally we may find that something is not clear or a new perspective on a situation comes up. The following are the most frequent topics and situations about which parents sometimes have questions. Please see below for the best people to help you find the answers you may need.

Questions About Your Child

The classroom teacher is always your first point of inquiry and the teacher should be able to assist you with the majority of questions. They can be reached at the email address associated with the name of their class (eg. hazel@montessorijapan.com, oak@montessorijapan.com) and will engage relevant administrators as necessary.

Should you feel it necessary to discuss your concern with a member of the leadership team, please contact Assistant Head of School Gel Hannan (**Gel Hannan**) who will liaise with Curriculum Coordinators/Level Leads as necessary.

Transparent Classroom

Once your child is enrolled at MST, an account on Transparent Classroom will be activated for them.

Transparent Classroom is a record keeping platform that we at MST use in different ways. Among other things, teachers use it to upload pictures of each child at work and to record the lessons each child has received. As a parent, you will receive a notification when a new post has been added.

We value parent/teacher communication and we believe an open recordkeeping tool that families can access lays a strong foundation for a relationship of mutual trust and understanding. However, TC notes do not have the purpose of giving a full picture of each child's progress, but more a valuable insight into your child's school life. For specific information about each child's development in school, we continue to rely on Parent Teacher Conferences and Progress Reports. If you have any topic you wish to discuss with teachers outside of these occasions, do not hesitate to reach out to your class teachers as indicated above.

General Inquiries

The Front Office on the ground floor of Forest campus is the focal point for general inquiries and communications and can be reached on the school telephone number 03-5449-7067 or email info@montessorijapan.com

Questions About Tuition Fees

The Administration Office handles all inquiries related to the payment of tuition fees, issuing and timing of invoices, etc. Please call 03-5449-7067 or email info@montessorijapan.com

Questions About After School Programmes

Details of After School Activities (ASAs) and other after school programmes including ITP (Instrument Tuition Programme) are posted on the school website before the commencement of each session. For further information on these please call 03-5449-7067 or email enrich@montessorijapan.com

Pigeon Holes /Mailboxes

Each family has a designated pigeon hole (mailbox) in the shelf situated in the Forest and Grove entrance lobbies. At times, communication is disseminated through here so please check your pigeon hole regularly.

Work Folders

Every Friday, Little People and Sunshine children bring home some of their week's work in a folder. Some children may have very little in their folder, or indeed nothing. This doesn't mean that your child has done "nothing" all week (though you might be told that by your child!). Much of the Montessori work is based on hands-on experimenting with school materials, which remain at school. The folder should be returned to school promptly every Monday.

The students in the Elementary Programmes take their work home at least three times a year or when the student's folder or notebook becomes too full.

Observing The Classes At Work

In all programmes other than Little People, we are very pleased to welcome you into our classrooms and we hope you will gain some useful insights into how the school operates on a daily basis. The Sunshine teachers will send out an invitation for parents to sign-up for an observation. For Elementary visits, please contact your child's teachers and arrange the date that you wish to visit. Visits generally begin in October once the class has settled. While you are making your observations, we would be grateful if you could follow a few general classroom rules (available from the Office), which will help you to see the class in its most natural state.

During the first sensitive weeks of the school year, students (especially the younger children) are familiarising themselves with a new routine and new environment. For this reason, we do not schedule class observations during this period.

So, What Did You Do At School Today?

Have you experienced frustration when asking this question? Did you get the common answer, "nothing"? Or possibly your child tells you every day that they did the same thing such as painting or spooning beans. Don't be alarmed. We can assure you that your child is very busy at school doing a variety of learning activities designed to support his development.

Young children often have difficulty talking about what they do at school. They have done so many things that they often cannot sort out the specifics. Sometimes they don't remember the name of the materials that they used, such as the Trinomial Cube, the metal insets, or the Addition Strip Board.

In addition to the difficulty children may have talking about their school experience, you may have noted that not many papers come home. They can be doing complex maths, word building, writing in a sand tray or on chalkboards, geography, and science lessons, all with manipulative materials that will have no 'paperwork' to show you their progress.

So how can you find out what your child is doing in school?

- Rather than ask questions about what your child did at school, tell them about your day and what you did. Be specific and detailed in your re-telling of what you did.
- Set up a time to observe your child in class.
- Learning how to observe will help you to recognise what your child is learning in everyday contexts.
- Read a Montessori book.
- Read the updates and look at the photos on Transparent Classroom (our record system) as they are sent to you by your child's teachers.
- Set up an appointment for after school to talk to your child's teacher.
- Come to school meetings and workshops.
- Be patient. In time it will be obvious that your child is growing and learning everyday.

Here are some questions you can ask Elementary students to find out about their day:

- Who did you talk to/sit with/work with at school today? *Generally children love to talk about their classmates.*
- What did you work on today? *Maybe they'll say "nothing" but you can ask again, "Really? I'm sure there was something. How's that —project going?"*
- What was the highlight of your day? *Focus on the positive. Tell a highlight of your day, too.*
- Did anything funny happen? *Probably. It's Elementary school.*
- What was a challenge you faced today? *Instil the idea that challenges are good and are growth opportunities. How did your child face it or work through it?*
- Did you learn/read any interesting facts today? *Elementary children love facts. Encourage their interests. Find non-fiction books to look at together. Have an atlas at home.*
- What are you reading this week? What is your teacher reading to you this week? *Talk about the books and ideas. Read aloud to your child at home, too.*
- Did you help anyone today? How? *Coach your child on how to interact in a supportive and empathetic way. Focus on empowering your child for good.*

Learning Conferences

Little People and Sunshine: There are two Learning Conferences every year (with an additional one at the start of the year for parents of students who are starting a new class). Any issue regarding your child can be discussed with his or her class teachers. We will also try and give you more insight into what your child does at school each day and discuss his or her development. Because we will be discussing each child in some detail, it will not be possible for children to be present at the conferences. MST will provide childcare for children of LP age and up, while infant siblings can come to the conference if no other arrangement can be made. It is sometimes difficult to cover everything we would like to in a conference. We are planning things to share with you so if there is anything in particular you wish to discuss or ask, please let us know in advance by submitting the pre-conference form via Transparent Classroom. This way we should be able to make the most of our time together. Preparing a short list of questions to bring on the day might also help you.

Elementary and Middle School: We believe conferences are an important tool to keep parents and teachers in partnership. It is an opportunity for you to gain insight into your child's development and academic growth. It is also an opportunity to further your education about the Montessori method. Your attendance and participation is critical.

For families new to a programme or children new to a classroom, there is a conference at the beginning of the year which focuses on getting to know the child. There are two additional Learning Conferences and one Student-Led Conference. The Student-Led Conference is scheduled at the end of the year to review and celebrate your child's progress and successes.

Missing Learning Conferences

MST tries to schedule Learning Conferences either on Japanese National Holidays in order to maximise the possibility of both parents having the opportunity to attend, or in another way that would facilitate the best possible chances of attendance. Should a family choose to take this time to go on vacation or miss the conference for any other reason, the teachers will unfortunately not be able to reschedule the conference. We thank you for your understanding as we encourage you to avail yourself of the opportunity for discussing your child's progress with his/her teacher on the days scheduled.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued twice per year for students who join from the start of the academic year. For those who join at different times, the following applies:

A student who will ...
... joins before the final two weeks of the first or third quarters receive a progress report for Semester 1 or Semester 2, respectively.
... joins within the final two weeks of the first or third quarters receive a modified (shorter) progress report.
... leaves at the end of the first quarter <u>not</u> receive a progress report unless the family requests it.

The areas covered in the report are, in all cases, areas which are a part of the Montessori curriculum at MST. An important thing to remember is that this curriculum is extremely extensive and covers a wide range of topics and information. It is also a curriculum which is divided into *three-year age spans*. This means that it is not expected that the work, life skills, and behaviours which are listed in this progress report, are all mastered by each child in any given year.

Communication with parents is a critical part of our commitment to working together to ensure a successful and positive school year. It may be helpful to bring the report with you to the Learning Conference where you may discuss it with your child's teachers and ask for further explanations of the contents.

Student-Led Conferences

Once a year, during 'Golden Week', parents are invited to come to school for "Student-Led Classroom Visits" (Sunshine) or "Student-Led Conferences" (Elementary). This is a special opportunity to become a Montessori child for a period of time in the classroom and allow the children to become your teachers. Your child will lead their parents throughout the visit, and show them materials and activities

of their choice. Parents will be invited to be their child's special guest. This is an opportunity for parents to see a little of what is going on in the classrooms and for students to share their work and their day. It should not be seen as an opportunity to test your child's progress.

Parents' Observation Days and Open House

Families of Sunshine children will be invited for an observation in the class - typically during the morning work cycle. One adult is invited at a time, and a sign-up sheet will be shared by class teachers close to the starting date. These observations are meant as an opportunity to become more familiar with your child's school environment, and with the Montessori method.

In addition, there may be other times during the school year when the Elementary & Middle School classes have Open Houses. Sometimes there will be a display of projects that the students have created such as a science fair display, an art exhibition, or a micro-economy demonstration, depending on the programme. At other times parents may be invited inside the classrooms to be shown some lessons, a performance, or to participate in other classroom events. An announcement is sent home detailing the Open House format.

In order to give your child your full attention, we provide childcare on site for siblings of LP and SS ages, while older siblings can wait in the Library. We encourage you to make childcare arrangements for infant siblings. Additionally, please also note that due to space constraints, we typically expect only parents (not extended family) to attend watching days and open houses.

The Montessori Journey

This is an opportunity to get a really deep insight into the Montessori curriculum. Conducted in silence on a Friday evening, you will experience a child's journey through all the programmes of the school. A follow-up exploration and discussion takes place the next day (Saturday morning). There is a limit to the number of places on this tour and participants need to attend both Friday and Saturday sessions.

Parent Education

The Montessori School of Tokyo offers a wide-range of parenting education opportunities such as Parent Information Events, a Montessori Journey, Open House, reading material in the library, as well as a Parenting Course.

A typical year's programme may include such topics/events as:

- A Back to School evening with the following information:
 - The upcoming year – Expectations and hopes
 - Practical Life – an Aid to Life
 - Studying Language in the Montessori Classroom
 - Sensorial Education & Mathematics in the Montessori Classroom
 - Culture Study in the Montessori Classroom
- Positive Discipline (Parenting Course)
- Montessori Moments occur throughout the year and focus on timely education topics
- A talk by an International Montessori author or educator
- Refresher Tours
- Parenting Tips

2.3 Room Parents

Each class has one or more Room Parent(s) who help to welcome new families, support major PI (Parent Involvement) events, send reminders about upcoming events such as field trips, and create opportunities for class parent socials, amongst other responsibilities.

Each Room Parent is also a member of the 'PI Communication Group', and helps to manage each class-wide LINE communication group in order to facilitate smoother and easier communication among the parents of that class. In order to do this, class parent contact details are shared by MST with the PI Core group and Room Parents only, who maintain the confidentiality of this information.

Note that it is not the responsibility of Room Parents to act as an intermediary between individual families and teachers when it comes to any questions about their child's progress, or any classroom incidents/anecdotes about which they would like to know more. As always, every MST family is expected to communicate directly with the classroom teachers in the first instance if they have any questions or concerns about their child's time at school.

2.4 [MST Social, Digital and Print Media Policy](#)

MST is a vibrant learning community with great stories to share. MST uses social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, SoundCloud and other public platforms in order to have several 'windows' through which our parent community can enjoy and celebrate those stories. MST will be using Mailchimp as a platform for our new e-newsletter. It will be a new way to communicate with the MST Community. MST also operates a public website and appears in other forms of media (TV, press etc) on occasion. This is very much in line with the standard practice of other international schools in Tokyo and around the world.

When engaging in media (social, digital or print) MST staff will aim to model the skills of digital citizenship and show awareness and respect for others in our community.

MST staff will adhere to / understand the following guidelines for practice;

1. Photographs and videos of your child (and other forms of media, such as audio clips of music performances for example) may be taken by MST staff or affiliates for use in **MST publications**, the [MST public website](#) and [official MST social media](#) channels (i.e. public Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to better inform the community and to share and celebrate our learning stories. Student's names will never appear without the express permission of parents and would only be used in exceptional circumstances (if a student were to achieve notable success in a local sports competition or the National Spelling Bee for example).
2. MST staff only use official MST social media channels to share MST stories.
3. MST staff utilise school-issued devices for recording and sharing content. If for any reason a personal device were used to capture an image or video (this would only be on rare occasions when a school device was not available), content is deleted once uploaded to an official MST channel.
4. MST staff will not share anything which reveals the identity or current location of MST students (e.g. specific locations of trips and travel, names attached to faces, etc). If *naming* the specific location of a trip (e.g. Tokyo Tower) is necessary, this will only be shared after the class has returned from the trip.

5. On occasion, MST may host agreed visits from the media (TV, press etc) who may wish to interview students/shoot footage for broadcast/publication. Stories explicitly featuring your child will not be permitted without the express permission of parents.
6. MST cannot be held responsible for third party posting or reposting to/from official MST channels (for example the posting onto the Facebook page of photos by former MST students or parents). See below for more on community etiquette.

Parental Rights and Responsibilities

1. Parents should be aware that images of MST students are used in official print or audio/visual publications, visiting external media, official MST social media channels and the MST website).
2. Any family who would like to request that the use of their child's image is more minimal or does not feature prominently (e.g. on the landing page of our website) can register this preference with school administration by emailing info@montessorijapan.com.
3. We ask for parents' understanding that their child may still be included in situations where students are part of a larger group (e.g. whole class/team photograph, general footage of a classroom/garden/field trip etc.) as our experience has been that it can be difficult for one or two students to be asked to move aside during group photographs.
4. MST students are encouraged to develop and share their learning with others. This may include, with the support of their teachers, the use of an appropriate social media platform for showcasing work. MST Parents and other community members are encouraged to share official school stories through their own social media networks as well. Community members are asked to respect child protection practices by posting sensitively and in a way that preserves anonymity (for example, avoiding posting names of other people's children, or of locations if the children are still in that place, or visit on a regular basis). MST may ask community members to delete and/or retract inappropriate postings if necessary.
5. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak to your classroom teachers, or to the Assistant Head of School ([Gel Hannan](#)) at any time.

Digital Skills for MST Students

Given the digital age we live in, one aim at MST is to prepare older students - at a level appropriate to their age - to use technology effectively and responsibly. Our focus therefore is on both digital literacy (so that they can make the most of the technologies available) and digital etiquette (how to protect themselves from harmful activities, or from abusing technology).

Particularly in the Middle School programme, but also to some extent in the Upper Elementary level, digital literacy and etiquette involves modelling and teaching students to use technology (including the internet and social media) effectively and safely. This includes:

- **digital learning;** including knowing how to search for reliable information effectively and to verify facts; how to identify online propaganda.
- **responsibility;** including awareness of appropriate boundaries; digital footprint; expressing opinions respectfully; protecting oneself, and not indulging in mean or provocative behaviour.
- **privacy and safety;** including learning how to navigate privacy settings and geotagging so that their location cannot be pinpointed; and how to protect themselves against internet trolling or other antisocial behaviours.

- **networking;** including how to use social media platforms and developing safe and appropriate teleconferencing skills.

2.5 Mystery Reader (Sunshine only)

Once a week a “Mystery Reader” comes to each classroom. This is an occasion which is eagerly awaited by the children and works as follows. A parent/caregiver or other relative comes to the classroom to read a selection of books to the children. The identity of the reader is kept a secret from the children until they enter the classroom (hence the mystery). Sign-up sheets will be posted by Classroom Parents on the notice boards for those who would like to partake in this.

Mystery Reader Workshop

Early in the school year, you will be given the opportunity to attend a workshop on reading to a large group of young children. It may be useful to pick up tips and ideas as to how to engage the attention of the whole class while reading a book.

2.6 Celebrations

Celebrations are emphasised by all classes during the course of the year, however, each class may add its own special touch on each celebration. Some of the annual traditions we celebrate include the following.

Concerts & Ceremonies

Twice a year, before the Winter Break and at the end of the school year, all classes will organise a moment of celebration and invite all families. This can be done in different ways, with class-by-class events, usually held in the Forest Garden, MPR, or Grove Rooftop, or with a level-specific concert held at a local theatre. Sunshine, Upper Elementary, and Middle School Transition Ceremonies will also be held at the end of each school year. Families of the transitioning students receive special invitations to attend these important events.

Cultural Events

Our Parent Involvement Group helps us to celebrate various cultural events throughout the year. In the past we hosted cultural events related to: Hanukkah, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Korean Culture, Brazilian Culture, Greek Mythology, Rembrandt’s Birthday, Japanese “Mochi Pounding” and many others that parents feel they are able to support.

Other events sometimes held or celebrated at MST include:

- **Family Festivals**
- **Valentine’s Day**

Birthday Celebrations

Birthday celebrations are an important part of your child’s life. It is a time to celebrate life and share in an auspicious occasion.

Little People and Sunshine: On your child’s birthday we have a simple ceremony. We will show photos of your child to the class. We lay out in a circle the 12 names of the months. The sun (a lighted candle) is in the middle of this circle plus a candle for each year of age is placed at the birthday month. The

birthday child then holds the globe in his/her hands, goes to the name of the month when he/she was born and begins to walk around the sun. Upon each complete circle the teacher tells a story about the child's accomplishments and abilities achieved throughout that year. Just as the earth takes one year to complete an elliptical orbit around the sun, your son or daughter grows and develops from one birthday to the next. One birthday candle is lit each time the birthday month is passed.

Sunshine parents are welcome to join the celebration (Little People parents have to wait patiently for one more year!) but are asked not to bring in snacks to share or goody bags to be sent home with the children. If parents would like to contribute a gift to the classroom (e.g. a gift, a plant, a book, etc.) as a part of the birthday celebration, this would be most welcome. The teachers could write the name of the child (who gave the present) somewhere on the gift so the child's birthday can be remembered. Parents should feel free to ask teachers for gift ideas that would have some meaningful impact on the class.

Elementary and Middle School: In the Elementary programmes, birthdays are still an exciting and interesting time for the children. We celebrate in various ways, for example using timelines of the child's life, movement of planets around the sun, noting world events which took place during their lifetime. Each of the classes celebrate in a different way. Please ask your child's teacher about his or her class.

Parents are asked not to bring in snacks to share or goody bags to be sent home with the children. If parents would like to contribute a gift to the classroom (e.g. a gift, a plant, a book, etc.) as a part of the birthday celebration, this would be most welcome. The teachers could write the name of the child (who gave the present) somewhere on the gift so the child's birthday can be remembered. Parents should feel free to ask teachers for gift ideas that would have some meaningful impact on the class.

Middle School students will individually decide how to celebrate their birthdays.

2.7 International Montessori Council (IMC)

The Montessori School of Tokyo is a founding member of the IMC. This is an umbrella organisation of Montessori training centres, schools and individuals. Its main goal is to promote links and communication between the various schools, worldwide. The IMC also sets standards of excellence in Montessori Education and provides support for individual schools to achieve these standards. Since November 2006, we have been accredited by the IMC. The self-study documents which we produce, as well as the suggestions and advice from the visiting accreditation team, allow us opportunities to continually assess our educational organisation and practices.

2.8 The Japan Council of International Schools (JCIS)

The Montessori School of Tokyo is a member of JCIS, an organisation of international schools in Japan, established in 1972. Meetings for administrators (Heads of Schools, Admissions Directors) are held twice a year and opportunities for workshops and other professional development are offered to MST teachers through JCIS.

2.9 The Tokyo Association of International Pre-Schools (TAIP)

The Montessori School of Tokyo is a founding member of TAIP, an organisation of international pre-schools, established in 2005. Each year, TAIP offers a number of workshops, seminars, and other professional development opportunities, focussed on practical applications for Early Childhood teachers.

3. Daily Procedures

3.1 School Hours

Little People and Sunshine classrooms will be open to students at 8:20 a.m. The school cannot be responsible for students who arrive at school earlier than 8:20 a.m. Elementary students are welcomed to enter the building at 8:15 a.m. and head directly to their classrooms.

All students are due in class by 8:30 a.m. The school day will run until 3:30 p.m. for all programmes.

Note: Any Middle School student who has an approved/organised (non-MST) activity after school may depart before 3:30 p.m. The school cannot be responsible for students who remain in or around school after they are dismissed for the day.

3.2 Morning Arrival

In order for the children to feel that their time at school is an important time for them (and is recognised as such by all of us), we feel that it is important that every effort is made to be at school before 8:30 a.m.

If driving to MST Forest Campus, please note that the street is one-way only and that local traffic restrictions prohibit vehicles from proceeding any further past the Forest Campus building until 8:20 a.m. Should you use the [car drop-off service](#), thank you in advance for departing promptly once your child(ren) has/have exited the vehicle.

Early Childhood: Little People students will say goodbye to their parents at the front door of the Orchard building and Sunshine students will be greeted by teachers outside the main door. The children will begin the day by putting their belongings in their own cubby. This will help to establish the fact that he/she is now at school and that coping without a parent for a few hours is not going to be a problem. The more independent and confident your child feels, the easier it is to say goodbye and the more they can get out of each day at school. We have tried to create a friendly environment which is child-centred and is very definitely their space.

Regarding children who have difficulty separating from a parent, our experience is that a quick, cheerful goodbye reinforces the idea in the child's mind that nothing is wrong. Also, your child knows you are going to leave. If he or she is unhappy about this, the longer you delay the moment of departure, the more time you allow the child to be upset, trying to find ways of preventing the departure instead of quickly dealing with the fact that the parent has left.

Elementary and Middle School: Elementary students from Maple and Oak will enter Forest at the elevator entrance and will be greeted by a teacher there. Elementary students from Ginkgo and Willow in Grove will be greeted outside by a teacher. Middle School students may enter Grove on their own. Parents with siblings in more than one classroom would still be expected to drop students off within the window of 8:20 to 8:30.

For safety reasons, pedestrians should always keep their children by their side. Never allow them to run ahead, especially into the street in front of the MST buildings.

3.3 Afternoon Departure

Unless we receive specific permission from you to do otherwise, we will only release your child to the people specified by you in our records.

Dismissal and Road Safety

Dismissal points for each class are as follows:

		Class	Dismissal Point
Orchard	<i>Little People</i>	Pine	Front door
Forest	<i>Sunshine</i>	Hazel	Main entrance
		Cedar	
		Sequoia	
	<i>Lower Elementary</i>	Olive	Elevator entrance
		Oak	
		Maple	
Grove	<i>Lower Elementary</i>	Ginkgo	Front gate
	<i>Middle School</i>	Eucalyptus	
	<i>Upper Elementary</i>	Willow	Garage entrance

Please do your best to arrive on time and wait in an orderly fashion for your child. When parents are late it can cause concern for the children. We also require all parents to leave school promptly after collecting their child to reduce congestion and keep the streets around all MST campuses safe at this time of day.

We recognise that the MST facility is very limited regarding space in front of school for families to gather and socialise and we ask that all families of Little People and Sunshine students keep their children close and away from roads during dismissal time. We encourage families to move away from the school building quickly after collecting their child(ren).

Elementary students are dismissed at the door of their classrooms, and are not directly supervised as they leave the school premises at 3:30 p.m. (or while waiting for After School Activities). Once dismissed, each student will meet their parents at their building entrance or make their own way home. If necessary, elementary students may wait at the entrance or in the library for their parents. Teachers and office staff will not be able to oversee any students after dismissal at 3:30 p.m. If collecting Elementary students, please help them remember to stay off the roads and act in a vigilant and courteous manner. For parents of Elementary students who return home alone, please be clear regarding your expectations for them after school each day.

Grove Campus

There is an allocated area for Elementary students in Grove to wait if they are being picked up by a parent or caregiver. If you are picking up your child, please recognise that this is a steep two-way street and stay to the side of the road.

Middle School students will be dismissed from their classroom at the end of the day.

Responsibility for the safety of all students remains with the parents after the hours of dismissal.

When your child is going home with someone else

In the event that your Little People or Sunshine child needs to be collected by someone who is not specifically registered as a caregiver through the MST Caregiver Form on [OpenApply](#), you must indicate this on arrival in the morning before leaving your child at school and then complete/sign a release form. This form can only be completed on the same day your child is going home with someone else.

To notify the school one or more days in advance of such an event, an email must be sent to info@montessorijapan.com. In an emergency, you may call 03-5449-7067 (Forest Campus) or 03-5793-3243 (Grove Campus) in order to release your child to someone not on your caregiver list.

These rules also apply when students go home with school friends.

We will require identification of anyone whom you have given permission to pick up your child if he or she is not familiar to our staff.

3.4 Library

Library hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:20 p.m. each day. After school, Elementary students may use the library between 3:30 p.m. and 4:20 p.m. Little People and Sunshine students must be accompanied by an adult when using the library after the child is dismissed from the classroom.

3.5 Attendance and Late Arrival

All MST students, even our youngest, are expected to attend school on a daily basis, arriving before the start of the school day.

Consistency and routine are important to every child's development, and especially important for the younger children. Repeated late arrivals are not only disruptive for the class, but also detrimental to the child's sense of order and belonging.

If you are going to be late for school because of a planned commitment, please call or email the school and let us know you will be late. If your child is in Elementary or Middle School and we do not hear from you by 8:45 a.m or 9:15 a.m. respectively, we will call you to make sure your child is safe.

If a child arrives later than 8:30 a.m., the child is considered a Late Arrival. The child must report to the front office both at the Forest and Grove Campuses according to each child's classroom location and will receive a Late Arrival slip, which must be delivered to their classroom teacher. If a child is late five or more times, parents will be informed via an email communication from the administration office. Frequent or excessive tardiness will result in the Assistant Head of School contacting parents to remind them of the importance of timely arrivals.

Note: While we do not record tardies for Little People and Sunshine students, we recommend families make their best effort to arrive by 8.30, to support a smooth transition into the class. If you encounter any challenges with this, please reach out to your class teachers for support and advice.

Note 2: To ensure no needless concern is caused to families whose children attend different campuses, we may review the Late Arrival time during the school year.

3.6 Non-attendance (missing school days and early dismissal)

Absences, Late Arrivals and Early Departures

Our programme depends upon consistency and continuous progress. Every time a child misses school for whatever reason there is a period of readjustment as he or she tries to get back into the routine of his/her work. The longer the absence, or the more frequent the absences or tardies, the more detrimental it becomes to a child's educational development and their integration into the classroom community.

Missing school for various reasons will be treated according to the categories below.

One Day Absence:

Any whole day missed.

Whenever your child will be absent from school (a day or more for whatever reason), please call the Administration Office on 03-5449-7067 (Forest Campus) or 03-5793-3243 (Grove Campus) or email info@montessorijapan.com before 8:30 am.

Late Arrival / Early Departure:

Any arrival after 8:30 for all programmes is considered a Late Arrival. Any departure before 15:30 is considered an Early Departure.

Depending on the time of the day, students may be in the classroom, multi-purpose room, MST garden or any of the nearby parks, so parents should notify the school ahead of time about these departures to ensure that the child is on campus and ready to leave.

Absences will be recorded on student progress reports. Late Arrivals/Early Departures will be recorded on the student progress reports for Elementary and above. Late Arrivals and Early Departures will be recorded in one category.

School-Approved Absences:

Middle School students who miss school to participate in an officially sanctioned sporting activity are eligible for School-Approved Absences. This type of absence is recorded on Transparent Classroom as a day away from school grounds but is not counted as an absence on any official transcript. Middle School families need to contact the Administration Office of the Grove Campus one week before the planned sporting event and provide the school supporting documentation from the sporting organisation to be considered eligible for this type of absence.

Attending Japanese School:

Some Japanese families might decide to enrol their child in Japanese public school once their child reaches the age for First Grade. Requirements to keep a child enrolled with partial attendance vary depending on each Japanese school. In any case, parents who want to explore this path must speak to their class teachers in advance and make a shared plan that takes into account their family needs, their child's wellbeing, and continuity for the whole class community.

National Holidays

Please note that MST is open on many Japanese national holidays throughout the year. Sometimes these days are regular school days, while at other times we use them to support Learning Conferences, Open Houses, Watching Days or other special events that offer an opportunity for parents to spend time at school. The specifics of our academic calendar change annually, so please consult the official school calendar for more information. If there are no entries on a Japanese national holiday, you should assume it is a regular school day for your child.

3.7 Parking

The traffic congestion in front of MST at drop-off and pick-up times can cause problems. None of the parking is “officially” for us, so we ask you to be very careful not to park anywhere which could give any cause for complaint as described below.

The problems arise when cars are stopped (1) in front of neighbours’ parking spaces and (2) on both sides of the road, thereby blocking the two-way flow of traffic which is essential to all in the mornings. Neighbours have complained about the inconvenience caused when their cars cannot exit their parking spaces or when they cannot negotiate their way through the narrow roads, due to MST cars blocking the road, parking close to corners, etc.

Please also note that all areas near school are officially no-parking zones designated by the police. Any cars parked for any length of time, may be ticketed and towed. The school highly recommends that coin-operated public parking be utilised by MST car users who need to get out of their cars for any reason.

Parents dropping off their children by car must either (1) utilise the “20 second drop-off” (Main Campus only) or (2) utilise coin-operated public parking.

“20 second drop-off”

Between 8:20 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. a member of the MST staff in front of the main school entrance will open the rear right side car door, unbuckle the child and bring the child (Little People and Sunshine only) into school. **The driver should not get out of the car; after all children have exited the car safely, the driver should move away from the curbside immediately.**

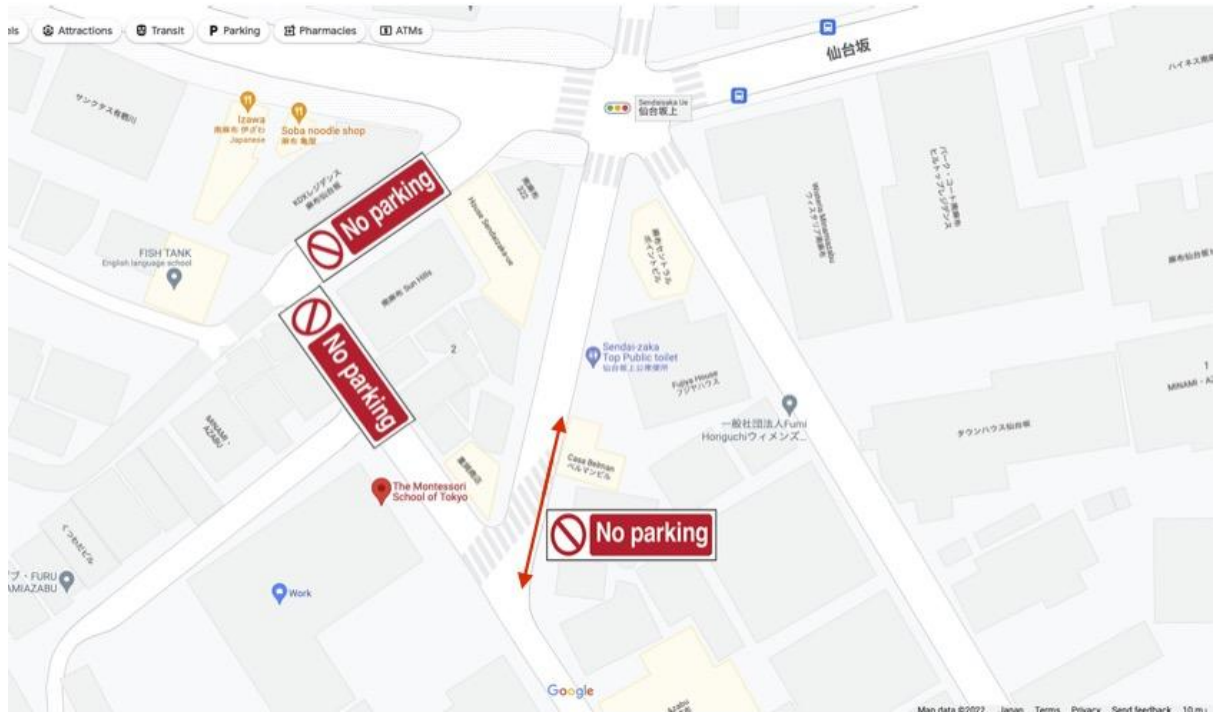
Grove: Unfortunately it is not possible to stop in front of Grove for drop-off or pick-up. Parents who need to drive their children to school should have the children exit the car on a different street from the one that runs in front of the Grove entrance. In the interest of maintaining good relationships with our neighbours, we ask that you please take precautions not to obstruct any of the nearby buildings or driveways.

Pick Up (Dismissal)

Before, during and after pick-up time (15:15 to 15:40), parents are asked to refrain from parking in the location stated below in the map (map 1). Please note that this means:

1. Leave and wait in front of the school for your child to be dismissed.
2. Stay in the car while waiting for your child to be dismissed.

If you plan to pick up your child by car, please first find a [coin parking](#) then collect your child. Please also note that the parking next to the temple (near Orchard building) is restricted as well as it is private property.



3.8 Bicycles, Scooters (and Strollers/Prams)

We have limited parking space for student bicycles and scooters in the basement of the Orchard and Grove buildings. Please store vehicles neatly, avoiding the area between yellow lines and know that MST takes no responsibility for the security of vehicles parked on the premises. All bicycles and scooters should be collected by 4:20 p.m. as the shutters will be closed at that time.

In the event of parking space becoming overcrowded, parking limitations may be put into place and communicated via the MST website. Students who use bicycles as their mode of transport to and from school without their parents will always get priority for bicycle parking.

4. Daily Life

4.1 First Day of School

On the first day of school, please don't linger too long while saying goodbye or react with alarm if your child is hesitant about the separation. It is very important to reassure him/her about where you will be during the day, and by what time you will pick him/her up after school. Some children may be sad for a little while during the first few days, but kind words and reassurance almost always alleviate their fears. The teachers are wonderful in helping children through these situations.

Note: Not all Little People and Sunshine students start school on the same date. Students returning for their 2nd or 3rd year in Sunshine will typically start on the first day of the first semester (as will all Elementary and Middle School students). The start dates for children new to Little People and Sunshine classes are spread out throughout the first two weeks. This allows our teachers to introduce new students to their new environment in small groups, and allows for immediate modelling (by the returning children) of how the classroom functions; which in turn helps the new children settle more quickly.

4.2 What Your Child Will Need

Everything must be clearly marked with your child's name.

Little People:

- A pair of indoor shoes
- Two sets of clothing to be kept in the clothing bag provided by school
- Navy blue MST shirt for field trips (see [Spiritwear](#) on the school website) ordered by parents from Top of the Class.
- Bag of diapers and packet of wipes (if child is not toilet trained yet)

Sunshine:

- A pair of indoor shoes
- A change of clothes
- Navy blue MST shirt for field trips (see [Spiritwear](#) on the school website) ordered by parents from Top of the Class.

Elementary and Middle School:

- A pair of indoor shoes
- A water bottle - It can be refilled at school.
- Navy MST t-shirt for field trips (see [Spiritwear](#) on the school website) ordered by parents from Top of the Class.
- Sports-appropriate athletic shoes for indoor gym use (may be the same shoes used for indoor classroom shoes)

Toys, games, and other personal items

- Toys should not be brought to school, as they can cause distraction for the usual class routines.
- Electronic games of any kind are also not allowed at school.
- Mobile phones are permitted for Elementary and Middle School students. However, they should only be used before and after school hours, used off of school property, and only for the purpose of making calls (no games, websites, etc). All personal devices are stored according to classroom guidelines..

- Smartwatches are discouraged, but permitted. If brought, they may not be worn and must remain in the child's locker or in the teacher's possession throughout the school day.

Children's Clothing at School

On a number of occasions over the years, MST has debated and considered the idea of adopting a school uniform for students. There are families who have supported this idea and families who have not. We have ended up with our own line of Spiritwear which includes polo shirts, caps, shorts, backpacks and sports clothing (see more details on the school website). We ask that all students wear an MST shirt whenever going off campus as a group (on field trips, outings or other occasions when representing the school). The sports wear is required for Elementary and Middle School when participating in PE classes as well as when representing MST at sporting events). Spiritwear is also available in adult sizes.

Aside from the required occasions above, spiritwear can be worn on any day at school and many students do so. MST still doesn't have a required uniform to be worn daily and we enjoy the colourful and individualistic styles seen on campus.

Fantasy Branded Clothing and Accessories

The wearing of any clothing which displays any fantasy characters (Disney Princesses, Marvel, Star Wars, Hello Kitty, Minecraft, etc.) *is not allowed*. The same is held for lunch boxes, backpacks, and all other items brought to school. Many people fail to see the harm in these, and point out that exploring the concepts of superheroes is a natural formative stage in a young child's development. However, as children build their own identities, the use of adult-driven fantasy figures is not always helpful. Over the years, the experiences of our faculty, not to mention a number of studies, have shown that when such items play a large part in the way children interact with their world, they have an undeniable effect on their behaviour.

Children who are over-exposed to adult-created fantasy become preoccupied with working through what they have seen, in almost the same way children need to work through traumas in their play. The intense images, bright colours, actions and characters of adult-created fantasy, which is totally unrelated to reality, can be overwhelming to young children. With the marketing of related products, it is too easily extended into everyday life and children can get lost in these adult-created fantasies. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that your children are stimulated by their own imaginations, and not marching to the commercial beat of marketing departments.

Show and Tell and Sharing Table

Children love to bring in personal possessions from home to show their friends. If there is some treasured item, (i.e. a photo, something given to them by a grandparent etc.) which your child would like to bring to school, please follow the guidelines from your child's teacher about when and how to bring in these items. No weapons (toy or other) will be allowed at MST. We also discourage Barbie, Superhero models, Pokémon, etc. Please remember that Show and Tell and the Sharing Table is a voluntary activity. No one should feel pressured to bring something.

4.3 Lunch

Students bring their lunch to school every day in a clearly labelled lunchbox. Any lunch brought from home should not require heating.

Alternatively parents may choose to order lunch online to be delivered to school daily using external catering services including [Kiwi Kitchen](#), [Luca Deli](#) and [Itadakimasu](#). Note that MST does not typically

send home or refund externally catered lunches if students are absent. If a student who has ordered lunch from an external vendor leaves school early for any reason, they may take their lunch home if it is available at the time of departure. The parent or caregiver of a child who is absent is welcome to collect catered lunch by 15:30 on the same day but note that MST will not be held responsible in the unlikely event of any food-related illness due to storage between delivery and collection.

MST places great emphasis on the importance of good nutrition as the first step to a lifelong wellness education programme. Lunch is a very important part of not only your child's school day, but of her wellness education as well. We need to count on you to work with us to teach the children about health and nutrition.

Please use your own discretion in avoiding overly processed and/or sugary foods in your child's lunchbox. Classroom teachers are happy to offer further guidance on this. Children do not require a drink as the school provides drinking water. Please do not send any drinks besides water.

Upper Elementary and Middle School students have access to a microwave oven to warm food. If required, Little People, Sunshine, and Lower Elementary students need to use insulated containers to keep food warm until it is lunchtime.

All uneaten food which can be contained will be sent home. You will want to monitor your children's lunch boxes to see what they like and dislike, and to determine the correct amount of food to pack. For the same reason, please be sure to always pack cutlery and an empty container/sealable bag on any days when your child receives food from the online catering service, so any uneaten food can be returned home. We appreciate your care in arranging a healthy lunch for your child.

Please note that MST is a nut-aware school. Please see Section [5.4 Allergies](#) for further details.

4.4 Snacks

Little People and Sunshine: Students are welcome to bring a small healthy snack from home, to eat at any point throughout the morning. Students are required to bring their own water in a water bottle every morning, and teachers will refill their bottle with filtered water when needed. Food preparation lessons are often available to the children, and they may include fruit, vegetables, rice, or simple baked preparations.

Elementary and Middle School: In the Elementary and Middle School programmes, the students do not have snacks provided for them. If they wish to do so, students may bring a healthy snack to be eaten before lunch. Note that food preparation is part of the Montessori curriculum, and while children may often be involved in preparing food in class (e.g. vegetable sticks, fruit salad, etc.) this does not mean that sufficient quantity is being prepared for all students to snack each day.

Special Dietary Restrictions - Some students may follow a special diet for religious or medical reasons. Please be sure to notify the teachers if your child should avoid certain foods. This will be taken into account in planning snacks or on days when the class prepares its own lunch. Known food allergies should be noted on the online Health History Form ([OpenApply](#)).

4.5 Field Trips & "Going Out"

Classes will periodically take field trips to local points of interest during the year. They are planned to coordinate with subjects being studied by a class or to take advantage of special community events. You will be notified of upcoming field trips by email. **All field trips and "Going Out" activities (see below) will be covered by a single permission slip signed at the beginning of the school year and submitted online to the Administration office.** Regular trips to local parks are not considered to be field trips.

Little People and Sunshine: Parents will always be notified of any trips scheduled for your child's class. Permission forms for the year should be signed and submitted online to the Administration Office upon registration. On field trip days, please have your child wear his/her MST Spiritwear shirt. Little People field trips are dependent on the needs of the group at the given time of year and as such may not occur every year. Little People field trips can be very simple, i.e. just riding the MST bus or visiting a local park.

“Going Out” Trips:

As part of our Montessori pedagogy, we look to meet the needs of the Elementary and Middle School students who are ready to expand their capabilities outside of the classroom walls. In Montessori, these opportunities to leave the school campus are called “Going Out”. These Going Out excursions are student-planned purposeful trips to gather information or supplies or to do an errand. The purpose of these excursions could be shopping for ingredients or garden supplies, visiting a public library, going to a pet store, or mailing something at the post office, etc.

A “Going Out” trip may last anywhere from 15 minutes to 2 hours (or more for Middle School students). Depending on the length and proximity of the trip, parents may or may not be notified in advance.

On occasion, Middle School students who have shown the required level of responsibility may be allowed to leave campus for these or similar reasons, without adult supervision. Upper Elementary students who have shown the required level of responsibility may be allowed to leave campus without an adult for shopping trips in the neighbourhood of the school.

Elementary: Both Upper and Lower EL classes go on occasional day trips around Tokyo and you will be notified of any field trips in advance. On field trip days please have your child wear his/her MST Spiritwear shirt.

Lower Elementary students typically engage in annual day-trips such as the Lower EL Snow Fun Day, while Upper Elementary students typically take part in overnight trips, which include camp and ski trips. All school trips will be carefully planned and chaperoned. Information about these special trips will be given throughout the year.

Middle School: Since the adolescent programme tends to engage in longer and more significant overnight trips sometimes up to a week or more (e.g. Odyssey), Middle School families and students are given adequate notice in order to prepare the necessary items.

4.6 Performances & Parental Discretion

Occasionally, students will enjoy performances delivered by external specialists (such as a Shakespearean play, for instance). Students will also often perform creative works themselves, such as plays, songs, etc.

Note that many songs, plays, poems, or similar creative works may be *adapted* in order to be age-appropriate for the students involved. For instance, sometimes we may modify songs to ensure that the lyrics and message are child-friendly and age-appropriate.

We recommend that families use parental discretion to preview and screen any media content independently before viewing anything with their child (e.g. YouTube, Spotify, etc.)

4.7 Sunscreen / Insect repellent use

Sunscreen is not permitted to be used at school. Please apply before coming to school.

In the Early Childhood classes, a DEET-free insect repellent will be provided by the school and applied by the teachers if needed. Please do not provide a bottle of insect repellent from home in order to help make sure children do not have unsupervised access to it.

Elementary and Middle School students are permitted to wear insect repellent bracelets and stickers. If insect repellent is necessary to be applied on campus, please provide one which is DEET-free and gel type for safety reasons. Please note that teachers are not always supervising when students apply it.

5. Policies and Procedures

5.1 The Montessori Approach to Behaviour

One goal of Montessori education is to support children in developing self-control and self-discipline. While each teacher will have their own individual way of addressing and supporting a variety of behaviours, their actions will always reflect respect for each child as well as an understanding of their developmental needs and characteristics.

Normal Peer Conflict

Normal peer conflict is a part of every child's life experience. As children learn the give-and-take of social interaction and cooperation, conflict naturally occurs. Young children are still learning self-control and developing a sense of personal space.

Pushing and other unwanted physical acts, getting upset about not being first in line, taking an item from another child, disagreeing or saying, "I'm not going to be your friend anymore" are all examples of normal peer conflict. They do not mean that a bully/victim problem exists.

Conflict may also arise out of natural and necessary freedoms that increase as students approach elementary age. We see such conflicts as learning opportunities for students to discover more about social roles. When actions or events fall *outside* of the normal range expected, it would be typical for teachers to first work in partnership with parents to support the child(ren) experiencing challenges. If students and families need extra assistance beyond what can be offered by trusted adults in the home and school, we may reach out to specialists to work with families on strategies that might help.

If your child finds themselves facing a conflict with a peer, we will work both with your child, and with you to support your child. We will simultaneously work with the other students involved and their family. However, in order to maintain an approach that respects the dignity and needs of every child, as well as the confidentiality and privacy of all students, we use our professional judgement and discretion regarding any details that may be shared regarding how we as a school might be supporting any students involved in conflict.

Bullying

Bullying is a wilful, conscious desire to hurt, frighten, or threaten. Bullying is usually a series of repeated, intentionally cruel incidents, or threats of harm, that involve the same children, in the same bully/victim roles. It involves an imbalance of power, either real or perceived. It can be physical or verbal and can include intimidation, inappropriate gestures or touching, and social exclusion. Due to the wilful and conscious nature, younger children are not typically developmentally capable of carrying out bullying and are more often involved in normal peer conflict.

Each instance of peer conflict at MST is assessed on a case-by-case basis, by professional and experienced staff/teachers who are building a deep understanding of each student. MST staff will respond with appropriate intervention as needed and keep parents informed of any major conflicts/incidents.

5.2 Family Registration and Student Enrolment

At the start of every academic year, we ask all families to complete Family Registration and Student Enrolment on [OpenApply](#).

Family Information

The first step is to update your Family information. Please ensure that your contact information is up to date and accurate. Be sure to enter your current address, phone numbers, email addresses and all other contact information.

It is important to fill in all fields so that MST has up to date and accurate records, and is able to maintain regular contact with your family, both on a day-to-day basis and in the event of any emergency.

"Emergency Contacts" - Emergency contacts must be nominated and can not be the parents. Please find and nominate contacts at your earliest convenience.

"Caregivers" - Caregivers are additional people authorised to collect your child from school on a regular basis. Fill in these fields if you have Little People and/or Sunshine students in your family and someone other than the parents will be collecting them on a regular basis. Failure to list a caregiver will result in your verbal or written approval being required prior to each pick-up. Parents do not have to be listed here.

"Emergency Pick Up Person" - This is someone authorised to collect your child in emergencies (and after emergency drills when appropriate). This is considered a different responsibility than the regular "Caregiver" and this field must be filled in independently of the Caregiver field (even if it is the same person, in which case the information must be entered twice). Parents do not have to be listed here.

OpenApply Checklist

- Class Placement and First Day of School - Online information, assigned to everyone.
- Registration Form - Online form, assigned to everyone.
- Health History Form - Online form, assigned to everyone.
- Caregivers Form - Online form, assigned to LP and SS students.
- Emergency Contact Form - Online form, assigned to everyone.
- Parents Questionnaire - Online form, assigned to every LP and MS student. Only assigned to new SS and EL students.
- Technology Contract Form - Online form, assigned to every Elementary and Middle School student.
- Fee Payment Policy and Fee Schedule
- Employer Registration for Tuition Fee Payment (if applicable) - Online form, assigned to everyone.
- Copy of Japanese Health Insurance card (if applicable) for Elementary and Middle School students. Please email scans to info@montessorijapan.com or upload the file to OpenApply.

Please do ensure that you complete these items before your child's first day of school.

5.3 Staffing

All lead classroom teachers are certified by AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) or AMS (American Montessori Society) in the age level that they are teaching at MST.

MST often hires early career teachers, newly trained or even in training, to work in support roles. These support roles may include working alongside a more experienced teacher as an assistant (in the age level of their training or otherwise) or in some other general support or substituting position.

While it is always our aim to provide consistency of teaching staff for our students, we are aware that as an international and transient community, staffing will change from time to time. One of our strengths as a school is having multiple AMI or AMS trained teachers at every age level, allowing us to re-organise and redistribute our expertise when in the best interests of the broader picture.

We will always have fully qualified teachers leading each class. Existing junior or co-teachers will be considered for lead roles once they have adequate experience and a need arises. The depth of training, experience, and familiarity with the MST culture among our faculty members is designed to be shared across our programme as needs arise.

5.4 Allergies

MST is a nut-aware school committed to providing a safe environment for all students, staff and visitors. The school aims to protect those students who suffer from severe nut allergies and could be in danger of life-threatening anaphylactic reaction. We will endeavour to educate the school community of the risks associated with anaphylaxis and to implement practical, age-appropriate strategies to minimise exposure to known allergens.

Despite our best efforts, MST can not guarantee a completely nut-free environment. Most student lunches are brought from home, and with various events, visits and activities taking place throughout the year, we acknowledge the possibility of avenues that could potentially result in nuts or nut-traces entering campus.

Our "nut-aware" policy is utilised to minimise the risk of exposure to nuts where possible, while also encouraging community awareness and age-appropriate self-responsibility, including the importance of washing hands thoroughly, cleaning communal spaces, not sharing food at school, etc. We have a full time nurse on staff and review plans and policies annually to ensure that we are able to respond effectively to any potential emergencies.

Parents are asked to inform the school of any allergies their child may have upon entrance to the school and annually thereafter through the online Health History Form. Once we receive this information, we will follow our procedures which include notifying all parents in the class about any allergies and, in the case of a severe allergy, requesting parents of a certain class to refrain from sending that allergen (usually, but not always, a food item) to school.

Please note that whilst teachers will try their best to monitor the situation, they will not be able to check the lunch box contents of every student.

For Middle School students, key to their developing independence is the growing and preparation of food for social and economic purposes. It is not possible to guarantee that all of the ingredients in the kitchen are processed in nut-free facilities. Students are taught food handling and kitchen safety procedures to prevent the unintentional introduction of a known allergen and prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen. Items sold by the Middle School micro-economy always list ingredients so that customers can make an informed choice.

Students with severe allergies should keep two EpiPens prescribed by their doctor at school. All students who are capable of self-administering an EpiPen will be educated to carry their own EpiPen in their backpack, with an extra one to be kept in the classroom. Students who are not capable of self-administering an EpiPen will have both in the classroom.

5.5 Illness

If your child is showing any symptoms of illness or is running a fever, please keep them at home. If in doubt, please err on the side of caution. Children must be fever free (37.4°C or lower) for 24 hours before returning to school after an illness.

Please help us try to contain the spread of disease by teaching and requiring the use of good hygiene habits at home. Provide constant reminders to your children to wash their hands after using the toilet, cover their mouths when coughing and sneezing, and to blow their nose when needed. They should also be in the habit of washing hands before eating.

If your child has any contagious illnesses (examples listed below), please have the Medical Confirmation Form signed by a medical physician and submitted to the school office before your child returns to school. The list of illnesses is slightly different depending on class level and can be downloaded from [Medical Forms](#) of the Parent Hub.

Contagious Illnesses:

Chicken pox, German measles, Influenza, Measles, Mumps, Pink eye, Acute Hemorrhagic Conjunctivitis, Meningococcal Meningitis, EHEC infection, Adenovirus infection, Whooping cough, Tuberculosis, Infectious gastroenteritis, Bacterial gastroenteritis, and others.

NB: Please be extra vigilant if your child ever has Head Lice (nits). It is difficult to contain if spread in a school setting and we require watchful cooperation from parents if ever dealing with this common childhood irritation.

5.6 Vaccination/Immunisation

We appreciate that every family has their own beliefs and practices with regard to vaccination/immunisation and, accordingly, will decide for themselves whether they would like their children to be immunised. Should MST deem there to be significant risk of infection to an unvaccinated student, or other students, based on local health conditions and medical advice, a student may be asked to temporarily refrain from coming to school until it is determined safe to return. [Click here](#) for the Japanese immunisation schedule in multiple languages.

5.7 Medication

Except under extraordinary situations, we prefer not to administer medication at school.

Please do not send in any medication with your child, including aspirin or other over-the-counter drugs, except under a doctor's instructions as explained below.

Antibiotics and other medication should be scheduled so that doses are due during hours when the student is at home. When a child is so ill as to require frequent medication, they probably shouldn't be in school for a full day.

Students with severe allergies should keep two EpiPens prescribed by their doctor at school. It is incumbent on the family to be aware of the EpiPens' expiry date and replace them in a timely manner.

When, in the opinion of your child's physician, it is necessary that medication be administered during school hours, a staff member will give it to your child in accordance with the following procedures:

- Parent permission slip (“Medication Consent Form” obtained at the front office or from the [Medical Forms](#) page of the Parent Hub) must be filled out and signed for each prescription. Medication must be provided in a container with the child’s name, date, and time to be taken.
Please do not send any medication or vitamins in your child’s lunch box.
- Our staff members are prohibited from providing or administering any medication, including aspirin, to any student except as authorised by you as parent or guardian by your signing of the permission slip. **We will strictly adhere to this policy.**
- If your Elementary or Middle School child is using any medication with which they are very familiar and entirely proficient at administering by themselves (e.g. eye drops, asthma inhalers, moisturiser for dry skin, sore throat lozenges, etc.) and no assistance is required from MST staff/faculty, then there is no need to fill in any form. Please remind your child that there is to be no sharing of medications between students at school.

For first-aid in school, MST does not use any medications except vaseline, non-steroidal **anti**-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to prevent itching, and natural pain relief gel (arnica). If your child cannot take any of these, please contact our nurse directly.

5.8 Re-enrolment Procedure

In January/February each academic year, the re-enrolment procedure takes place and the following items need to be submitted.

- Re-enrolment/Transfer Form via OpenApply - by submitting this form, you can inform the school of your intention for your child’s enrolment status.
- Deposit - 10% of the tuition will need to be paid by mid February to reserve your child’s place for the following academic year. This amount will be applied to the first semester tuition of the following academic year.
- Annual Tuition fee - The first tuition fee payment is due by 10th June which will secure your child’s place at MST for the next academic year.

Note: Should payment not be received by the stated deadlines, MST will send one reminder with an extended deadline - after which failure to pay will result in your child’s place being made available to new applicants.

5.9 Transferring Student Records

When students transition between MST classes and/or a new teacher joins an MST class, a student records handover meeting takes place between classes/teachers - sharing relevant information with the new/receiving teachers about each student, which may include items such as notes on learning progress and social interactions, communication threads from the student’s family, any official diagnosis, and recommendations from an external specialist about how best to support the child, etc.

When students transfer to another school, we are often required to complete a confidential recommendation form/letter for the receiving school. Such forms typically ask the MST staff member completing the form to disclose any details of learning support the student may have received whilst at MST, any known diagnoses, etc.

5.10 Recommendations for New Schools

Students entering other schools may be asked for an evaluation or recommendation from MST. We will complete recommendations for **up to three schools** within a period of 10 school days after receiving the forms. The procedure is as follows:

- Parents should first speak to the child's teacher to indicate their intention to apply for other schools.
- Submit all hard copy recommendation forms and requests to the front office or email using admit@montessorijapan.com. Please do not send requests directly to teachers.
- For online submissions, please enter the admit@montessorijapan.com email address for the recommendation requests. The forms will then be shared with the corresponding teacher(s) accordingly.
- Any information requested or forms to be completed will be sent by MST directly to the new school. MST cannot provide confidential recommendation(s) to parents directly.
- Should a family require recommendations for more schools, a further 10 school days is required to complete these, again up to a maximum of three.
- Most recommendation letters are sent electronically (and free of charge). Should it be necessary for any documentation to be sent via the postal service or other courier service, parents will be asked to cover any related fees.

5.11 School Certificate / Transcript

If you need any school certificate, such as an "Enrolment Certificate" or "Graduation Certificate", or a transcript (applicable only to Middle School students), please submit an application via the MST website [Parent Hub](#). Visit our 'Sign Up Portal' then select "[School Certificate Application](#)". Please allow for 10 school days after submitting the application to receive an email with an attachment. Should you have any questions, please email info@montessorijapan.com.

5.12 Departure Procedure

As soon as you know your child will withdraw from MST, please inform the school by sending an email to info@montessorijapan.com. For any student withdrawing from MST, thirty days notice is required when submitting the Notification of Student Departure form.

End of Year Withdrawal

If your child will withdraw from MST at the end of an academic year, please indicate so on the Re-enrolment/Transfer Form assigned to your child's records page on OpenApply in February.

Family Acceptance & Sibling Withdrawal

Through our admissions process, we are seeking to work with families who are committed to Montessori principles and believe that any such family would be more likely to send all of their children to a Montessori school. In other words, we seek to not only *enrol students*, but rather to *accept families* whenever possible.

For this reason, applicants are prioritised if they are applying for all of their children, and we offer sibling priority any time that an existing MST family is seeking to enrol a younger sibling.

We believe that this commitment to family acceptance generally supports the growth of a strong school community and student body. This relationship, of course, works both ways, and should an MST family

choose to transfer an older sibling to another international school at an age-level where MST offers a programme of our own, we will no longer be obligated to guarantee a place for the younger sibling(s). Experience tells us that in cases like these, the younger sibling is highly likely to follow and it may be in the best interests of the MST community to enrol new families who wish to register all of their children in our school and be part of the community for some time. We will of course discuss cases like this individually with families should they arise.

Yearbook

Each student is entitled to a school yearbook which is produced at the end of the academic year. If you are leaving MST mid-year for any reason and wish to receive a yearbook in June, please come to the Administration Office to fill in the necessary forms and pay shipping costs. Yearbooks can be shipped to an address within Japan and to an address outside Japan.

Please see below the prices for delivery:

- Address in Japan/Asia/Oceania: ¥3,000 per Yearbook
- Address in Europe: ¥4,500 per Yearbook
- Address in Africa: ¥5,000 per Yearbook
- Address in North/South America: ¥4,000 per Yearbook

5.13 School Closure

In the unlikely event of school not being able to open as normal due to sudden and/or unexpected events (e.g. heavy snow making it inaccessible), a notice will be posted on the Parent Hub by 7:00 a.m. We will also email this information to the parents' registered email addresses.

5.14 Simulated Emergency Evacuation Drill

At least once a year, we will have a simulated emergency evacuation drill in order to practice what we all need to do in the event of a fire or earthquake. Please note the following to assist us in making the drill run as smoothly as possible.

- The teachers will speak to students prior to scheduled drills, to explain their importance and reduce potential anxiety (especially for younger children). If your child is not a native English speaker, please speak to them at home (in their native tongue) prior to any scheduled emergency drills and let us know if we can help by answering any questions.
- In the case of an earthquake, children will first take cover under tables or door portals and then follow the instructions from their teachers.
- In the case of a fire, the children will follow their teachers' instructions and will be led out to safety.
- Information sheets will be posted on both entrances and we will walk to Arisugawa Park to our meeting place.
- Students will **only be released to a parent or caregiver whose name is indicated as an Emergency Pick-up Contact via the Emergency Contact Form in your OpenApply dashboard.**

5.15 Earthquake Emergency Procedures

What will happen at MST if there is a serious earthquake?

- The children have learned during earthquake drills to shelter under the nearest table until directed otherwise.
- Medical attention will be given as required (unless immediate evacuation is necessary).

- After the earthquake has stopped the Head of School or other administration staff will decide whether to evacuate the school. This decision will be based on the state of the school building, the risk of fire or gas leaks, the state of the roads and buildings outside and/or requests from local authorities.
- If the school is evacuated and the route/situation is deemed to be safe, then the teachers and children will walk to the meeting point in Arisugawa Park (see below for details on locating the meeting point). The teachers will carry earthquake kits. Information sheets will be posted outside both school entrances.
- If Internet connection is operational, the administration office will post the latest information on the school website.
- If landline telephones are operational, the administration office will leave a message with the latest information on the NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone) Emergency Message Service. Parents can dial to listen to the message (see below for details).
- Teachers will remain with the children until collected by parents. If children are not collected within 24 hours, the school will notify embassies and next of kin. If necessary, we will eventually relocate to Honmura Elementary School and from then on will follow the guidelines of the authorities.

What should parents do after a serious earthquake?

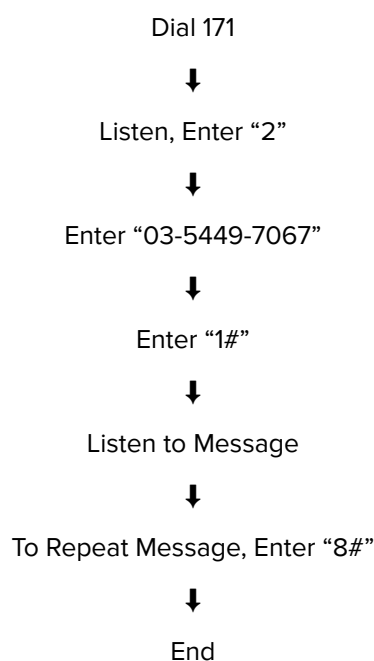
- Walk to the meeting point in Arisugawa Park as soon as possible to collect your child. Parents should decide beforehand which parent will do this. If children are not in Arisugawa Park, proceed to school. Information sheets will be posted outside both school entrances. Please note that meeting points for all campuses (Forest, Orchard, Grove) will be at the same location.

Bring with you enough supplies so that you and your child can walk home: i.e. a stroller, drinks, snacks, suitable footwear/ clothing.

Please do not call the school landline telephone or classroom mobile telephone, as they will be used for outgoing calls.

To get information using the NTT Emergency Message Service

In the event of an emergency the Head of School will leave a message using the NTT Message Service which can be obtained as follows:



Please DO NOT call the school/classroom mobile phone or landline as these will be used for outgoing calls.

Meeting Point

As we are unable to know what the situation will be like in Arisugawa Park, it is difficult to say exactly where we will be. We will enter the park from the entrance opposite the tennis courts (where the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library is) and try to find a patch of ground. Starting from the immediate left and then moving towards the playground area, we will set ourselves up in a place which can accommodate all of us.

How can parents help MST in the event of an earthquake?

- Make sure you have completed all Family Registration and Student Enrolment information.
- Make sure that all information provided is up-to-date at all times.
- Keep mobile phones and the MST Earthquake card with you at all times.
- Make sure that your child is always suitably dressed, according to the season (warm coat for winter, sun hat for hot sunny weather, suitable shoes for walking).
- Make a family earthquake plan. Decide which parent will collect which child and where everyone will meet up. Register your family with your Embassy.
- Equip your home for an earthquake and make sure all family members understand earthquake procedures.

5.16 Student Protection

At MST we are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of our students and staff. We view student protection as a paramount moral obligation as well as a legal duty. As a school, we are a mandatory reporter, meaning that we are required by law to report evidence or suspicion that a child has been abused or neglected.

According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.” Research shows that child abuse occurs in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic sectors of society, and that 90% of abuse is from domestic causes and committed by individuals known to the child. Isolation is a common characteristic of abusive situations, and so we must be sensitive to the vulnerability of international school families who tend to move often and are often separated from their extended families and usual support networks.

MST has a [Student Protection Policy](#) that outlines policies, procedures, and guidelines to prevent and protect students from harassment or abuse and to respond promptly and effectively should abuse be observed, suspected, or disclosed. This includes any alleged abuse of MST students by adults within or outside of our school community. It also includes rules and advice intended to prevent situations in which student abuse by MST employees could occur or be suspected. Policies relating to peer-to-peer conflict of bullying, health and safety, and security are covered separately in the Faculty and Parent Handbooks.

MST does not condone physical punishment.

Raising children can present unique challenges. Families who would like to seek out additional support and information can contact any of the following organisations:

TELL Lifeline: 03-5774-0992 (available every day; please [see website](#) for exact hours).

[Academic Consultation Center](#) (for concerns relating to a child's wellbeing, safety, and mental health).

[Child Guidance Center](#): **0120-52-8343** (Japanese 24/7 Lifeline) or **0120-279-338** (English 24/7 Lifeline)

5.17 Heat-Related Illness Prevention / Pollution Index

During the hot summer months, we will monitor the maximum expected temperature and the air pollution index by consulting the following sources:

- Wet Bulb Globe Temperature Index (WBGT), which aggregates temperature, humidity and radiation data, as provided by the [Ministry of the Environment's Heat Illness Prevention Information site](#); and
- [Minato-ku Air Quality Information site](#)

If the WBGT temperature indicates a maximum of 31°C or above or if the average air pollution index level of PM2.5 monitored at 9AM, exceeds 35µg/m³, we will minimise or cancel outside activities that may result in strenuous physical exertion.

5.18 Screentime Recommendations

In order for a child to be able to take advantage of what a Montessori school has to offer, they need to develop calm focus. Our teachers have observed the lack of attention span of children who spend extensive time playing video games or watching TV/internet. When screen hours are concentrated on the weekend, there can be a visible effect on Monday morning for some children. By choosing to send your child to a Montessori school, you are committing to working in partnership with the school in supporting your child's development of self-direction and self-discipline. Allowing your child to play online games and spend time aimlessly online works directly against the child's ability to progress in a Montessori classroom.

In our Little People and Sunshine programmes, children should not be exposed to videos or games, and we recommend that there is no screen time, other than video calls, before age 2. After age 2, none is best, but minimising screen time and being discerning about what programmes are watched is important and perhaps realistic. Families can enjoy short slow-paced programmes together. (For example, a sing-a-long, Bluey, NHK's Design あ) Programmes that are quick-paced can adversely affect the developing attention span of a young child.

As children enter their elementary years, we understand that screens become more and more a part of life. However, not all screen time is of equal value. Violent games have no place in our community. Montessori is a pedagogy that aims for peace. First-person shooter games go against our core values and students at MST should not be playing these games.

Time spent in front of a screen is time spent not doing something else.

Parents should have access to all of their children's accounts and should be able to read all messages.

We recognise that managing screen time can be a challenge for parents and that every family has different circumstances. We encourage parents to reach out to teachers for support.

6. Further Reading / Information

6.1 Suggested Reading Material Available Through The School

A number of wonderful books, written by Maria Montessori and other authors about Montessori education are available for parents to borrow from the MST Library. Our collection also includes volumes related to general childhood development, parenting, and practical tips on raising children from a variety of sources. Please visit our library and speak to our librarian for assistance at any time at library@montessorijapan.com

MST has an online library resource of hundreds of eBooks and audiobooks for you to borrow with new books added daily. All students will have an account already set up. Parents may request an account for themselves by emailing library@montessorijapan.com Books are restricted by age, so adults will need their own accounts to borrow some books.

Please download the app (ePlatform) first on a computer, phone or iPad, then search for "The Montessori School of Tokyo". Log in to your account using this format: firstname.lastname (Don't forget the dot between your first and last name. No need to capitalise.) Everyone has the same password: library1

An example:

username: maria.montessori password: library1
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Borrow up to two books/audiobooks at a time. (They are renewable unless there is a reserve. Books will be returned automatically after two weeks.)

6.2 Phonics and Learning To Read

When your child is ready we will be using phonics to help him/her begin the process of learning to read.

Phonics is all about the sounds that the letters make, rather than the names of the letters. Once a child learns the sound that corresponds with each symbol (letter) (s)he can begin to build words in a logical way. Eventually (s)he will learn how to blend sounds, and move on to more complex patterns of spelling. This list contains examples of the common phonic sound of each letter.

The following list is not for use with your child - it is a guide for sounding out the letters.

a as in ant, sand, caravan b as in bat, bend, crab c as in cat, cot, crisp d as in dog, dip, sudden e as in egg, end, shed f as in fog, lift, fluff g as in goat, gap, digger h as in hop, hit, hill	o as in orange, on, spot p as in pig, pet, step q as in queen, quick, quiet n as in nut, nip, spin r as in rabbit, rock, run s as in sand, sun, twist t as in top, tug, mat u as in up, under, rush
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<p>i as in ink, Indian, drink j as in jelly, jet, jump k as in king, kind, kettle l as in leg, lost, shell m as in man, mill, shrimp</p>	<p>v as in van, vet, give w as in wind, went, swim x as in ox, flex, fix y as in yes, yellow, yak z as in zoo, zebra, buzz</p>
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An important thing to remember with the sounding of the consonants is not to add a vowel sound to the end. So we say “lll” and not “luh,” “rrr” and not “ruh.” ‘x’ is like “kss.” Some consonants present more difficulties than others (d, c, j amongst them). With these, try to think of a word which ends in the sound and only say that last sound (e.g. bad, back, fridge)

Please remember that it is not part of our philosophy to push children into learning. They all learn at varying speeds and we feel there is little to be gained by introducing a child to a concept for which (s)he is not ready. At the same time, there is a lot we can do in preparation, by planning an environment in which language is an integral and enjoyable part of the school day. We hope that, by a gradual process, we will give the children the knowledge and skills they need to make a successful start on reading.

6.3 Tasks Children Can Help With At Home

Children are capable of performing many of the tasks within the family which help them to feel more confident and self-assured and allow them to feel their importance in the family. Some of the tasks presented below may need to be modified to fit individual needs and age differences, but please don't let that deter you from giving your child the opportunity to accept some of the following responsibilities.

<p>Ages 2 - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Put toys in toy box <input type="checkbox"/> Stack books on shelf <input type="checkbox"/> Place dirty clothes in laundry hamper <input type="checkbox"/> Throw trash away <input type="checkbox"/> Fold washcloths <input type="checkbox"/> Set the table <input type="checkbox"/> Fetch diapers & wipes 	<p>Ages 4 - 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Feed pets <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe up spills <input type="checkbox"/> Put away toys <input type="checkbox"/> Make the bed <input type="checkbox"/> Straighten bedroom <input type="checkbox"/> Water houseplants <input type="checkbox"/> Sort clean silverware <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare simple snacks <input type="checkbox"/> Use hand-held vacuum <input type="checkbox"/> Clear kitchen table <input type="checkbox"/> Dry and put away dishes
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Children at this age love to help, especially when doing things with the rest of the family in a spirit of fun and cooperation. Notice the effort and not the perfection of the job. Train the child slowly as to how to do things. Think out loud as you are doing them: "Let's see. Have I taken everything off the table? No, I forgot the butter." to model the correct way to do each job.

<p>Ages 6 - 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gather trash <input type="checkbox"/> Fold towels <input type="checkbox"/> Dust/mop floors <input type="checkbox"/> Empty dishwasher <input type="checkbox"/> Match clean socks <input type="checkbox"/> Weed garden <input type="checkbox"/> Rake leaves <input type="checkbox"/> Peel potatoes or carrots <input type="checkbox"/> Look after indoor plants (wipe leaves/ water plants) <input type="checkbox"/> Sort laundry (separate towels, white, dark, undies, etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Make salad 	<p>Ages 8 - 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Load dishwasher <input type="checkbox"/> Wash laundry <input type="checkbox"/> Hang/fold clean clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Dust furniture <input type="checkbox"/> Put groceries away <input type="checkbox"/> Scramble eggs <input type="checkbox"/> Bake cookies (with supervision) <input type="checkbox"/> Walk dogs <input type="checkbox"/> Sweep front entrance <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe off table <input type="checkbox"/> Clean the stovetop <input type="checkbox"/> Bring in mail
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Replace toilet paper roll 	
<p>Ages 10 - 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Clean bathrooms □ Vacuum rugs □ Clean countertops □ Deep clean kitchen □ Prepare simple meals □ Prepare lunch for school □ Take out the garbage/recycling □ Do simple mending (hems, buttons, etc.) □ Do small grocery errands □ Change their bedding 	<p>Ages 12 and up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Change overhead lights □ Wash/vacuum car □ Paint walls □ Shop for groceries w/list □ Cook complete dinner □ Bake bread or cake □ Do simple home repairs □ Wash windows □ Iron clothes □ Watch younger siblings □ Be responsible for waking up on time □ Help dress a younger child □ Deep clean the toilet □ Maintain tidiness of own room

6.4 List of Commonly Used Acronyms/Abbreviations at MST

AMI - Association Montessori Internationale	LE - Lower Elementary (6-9 years)
AMS - American Montessori Society	LfH - Learning from Home
ASA - After School Activities	LP - Little People (18 months - 3 years)
	LT - Leadership Team
CGC - The Child Guidance Center	MPR - Multipurpose Room (Forest 2F)
CMT - Case Management Team	MS - Middle School (11-15 years)
CPO - Child Protection Officer	MST - The Montessori School of Tokyo
DSA - During School Activities	OA - OpenApply: Admissions System
	OR - Orchard Building
EC - Early Childhood Programmes (18 months - 6 years)	PD - Professional Development
EL - Elementary Programmes (6-12 years)	PE - Physical Education
EOI - Expression of Interest	PI - Parent Involvement
FO - Forest Campus	SS - Sunshine (3-6 years)
GR - Grove Campus	
IBT - International Benchmark Tests	TAIP - The Tokyo Association of International Pre-Schools
IMC - International Montessori Council	TC - Transparent Classroom
ITP - Instrument Tuition Programme	
JCIS - The Japan Council of International Schools	UE - Upper Elementary (9-12 years)
LCs - Learning Conferences	WBGT - Wet Bulb Globe Temperature Index