



Information Pack

Rockingham Montessori School



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Welcome

To Rockingham Montessori School

Thank you for expressing your interest in our School. This information pack includes details of our school and classroom structure, comparisons of Montessori and traditional primary education, a guide to websites on Montessori, an outline of our fees and charges and an application for admission form.

Our Primary School is located at 7 Attwood Way, in the beach side suburb of Rockingham, close to public transport. Our Adolescent Program campus is co-located on the Murdoch University Campus on the Dixon road Rockingham site. Rockingham Montessori School currently has approximately 190 children attending our eight Primary classrooms, 55 students in our High School, and a further 30 children attending our Infant Toddler group. Rockingham Montessori School has a small, close knit community and students benefit from low student to teacher ratios.

The Rockingham Montessori School, formerly known as Rockingham Family School, was established in February 1985 by a group of dedicated parents and Elizabeth Sugars; the leader and founder of the school. Elizabeth inspired all by keeping the "T.E.A.M. Spirit" foremost in everyone's mind; "T.E.A.M" being an acronym for "together everybody achieves more". The school started in a small house in Safety Bay. The success of this school brought about the planning of a new school, and in 1988, the school on Attwood way was built.

The original parents moved on, and in 1998 those parents who had their children at the school chose to adopt the Montessori philosophy in its entirety. This is unique as most Montessori schools grow with their children. Montessori trained staff were employed, Montessori materials and equipment bought and programs put in place at the start of 1999. In 2012 our Adolescent Program commenced and in 2013 our school was registered to deliver a comprehensive Montessori education Program from 3 years of age through to 18 years of age.

Mission Statement

To provide a Montessori environment in which the needs of the whole child are met in a nurturing, safe, caring school, by encouraging independence, mutual respect and self-discipline, so that students are prepared to take their place in the global community.

We hope that our mission and values will guide the activities of children, parents, staff and volunteers within our school community.



Administration and Governance

Principal

Vanessa Aikins has over 25 years' experience in education and teaching, with 15 of these years in administration roles. Vanessa commenced at Rockingham Montessori School as Principal in 2011.

School Board Members

Vanessa Aikins – Principal

Shea O'Neill – Chairman

Professor Barry Down – Vice Chairman

Andrew Holmes – General Board Member

Scott Mitchell – General Board Member



Enrolment Procedure

The following information will guide you through the enrolment process when you choose to apply for your child's admission in Rockingham Montessori School.

Please Note: This information does not include our Infant Toddler Program, admissions for this can be done by visiting our admin office or via email reception@rms.wa.edu.au.

Step One: Application Form

Application Forms should be completed and returned to the school along with a copy of your child's **birth certificate, current immunisation history (within 2 months of application date) and last school report**. To submit your application form and have your child placed on our waitlist, there is a one off non-refundable fee of \$110.

Step Two: Interview

Should a place become available for your child, you will be contacted to arrange an interview. This interview is between the Principal, the child's parents/guardians and the child. At the interview you will discuss your child, as well as have the opportunity to ask any questions. If you are unfamiliar with Montessori, you can also request an "observation"- an opportunity to sit quietly for thirty minutes to view the students in the classroom.

Step Three: Orientation and Visit Days

After a successful interview, you will be contacted with dates for your child's classroom orientation, and visit days. The orientation is a brief meeting between your child and their potential teacher, and an opportunity for the child to view their classroom. Visit days will follow, where your child comes into their class room for a few hours to get acquainted with their classroom, peers and teacher.

Step Four: Offer of a Place

After successful visit days, your child will be offered a place at our school. You will receive this offer via post or from your classroom teacher, along with an invoice for start-up fees, and an Enrolment Agreement form. The start-up fees comprise of an enrolment fee of \$420 along with a Bond Deposit (equivalent to one term's fees, but not covering any fees).

Upon receipt of your payment of start-up fees, your child will be ready to start.

Step Five: Your child can begin

You are now part of the RMS family! When your child begins, you will receive a School Handbook containing all the information you will need regarding the school and its procedures.

Administrative Officers

Please phone or drop in to administration so we can answer any questions regarding our school, and to assist you with your child's application for enrolment. Or alternatively, visit our website at www.rms.wa.edu.au

Infant Toddler Program (1-3 year olds)

Children can attend the Infant Toddler / Playgroup Program from 1-3 years of age. Sessions run Monday-Wednesday from 9.15am to 11.15am, at Attwood Way, Rockingham. Parents or Guardians stay with their children for the duration of the morning. The Infant Toddler Program provides children an excellent introduction to Montessori learning.

The sessions are run by Orla, who brings with her a wealth of life experience, being brought up and trained as a Montessori Leader and also qualified as a nurse. She greets each child personally with a handshake at their level and bids them farewell at the end of the session.



The shelves have puzzles, arts & crafts and Practical Life trays arranged carefully upon them, in a similar way to a Montessori classroom. Parents attend with their one to three year olds, helping them to master the jobs they have chosen. Independence is encouraged and children of different ages may work together, learning from one another.

There is a 'bring and share' morning tea, where children collect and set out their own placemats, glasses and plates at a communal table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves with child-sized tongs and pour their own water from child-sized jugs. The table is decorated by flowers in vases collected and arranged by one of the children.

Children then wash up their own dishes and go out to play. After a time they return inside for a story, singing, musical instruments and free style dancing. It is very much a fun morning and the children enjoy themselves immensely. For further information, or to apply, please contact the school.

Children's House (3-6 year olds)

We have three Children House classrooms, each with dedicated and highly trained Montessori specialist teachers; Deb Dwyer (Dolphins), Ayesha Meer (Seahorse), Tom Cullity (Penguins). Each classroom has Education Assistants; Renea Russell (Dolphins), Shelley Diamond (Seahorse), Carla Darcy (Penguins).

Montessori children begin Children's House around the time of their third birthday. Children begin attending for five mornings a week, between 8.30am-11.45am. When the child is considered by their teacher as ready, they will gradually transition to attending 5 full days a week, from 8.30am-3.00pm (this transition is generally after their fourth birthday).



The Children's House introduces children to a wide range of sensorial materials with which they explore the world; for example, music bells to strike and match, sound cylinders for shaking and matching, sandpaper tablets giving experiences of rough, rougher, roughest, a tower of cubes to demonstrate volume. These and other materials help the child to develop a sound base for learning through the use of language and mathematical materials which are introduced later.

The children are also provided with experiences in practical living; cooking, brushing and polishing for example. There is a kitchen area in which everything is scaled down to a size easily used by children. There are no toys here. Though smaller than the adult world, the brushes, pans and stoves are real. These real life activities develop confidence and manual dexterity and provide a link between what happens at school and at home. The Children's House is a very special time for a child to begin their Montessori journey.

Lower-Primary (6-9 year olds)

We have three Lower-Primary classrooms, staffed by three fabulous teachers, Vanita Sutherland (Starfish), Deb Lynass (Sealions) and Di Edmonds (Jellyfish) along with their Education Assistants, Regan Weymouth & Lizeth Velazquez (Starfish), Mark Sims (Sealions) and Lisa Kelly (Jellyfish). Children begin the transition to Lower-Primary around the time of their sixth birthday.

The Lower-Primary classroom provides children with a wide range of Montessori materials to help them explore and learn. The equipment is on shelves within easy reach of the children and is organised carefully into sections for Maths, Language, Geography, History and Zoology. Once the child has been introduced to a particular piece of equipment by the teacher, and shown its purpose, the child is free to take it from the shelf and use it.



Alongside their individual work, children in this age range often work in groups, enhancing co-operation and leadership skills. Social and personal developments are strengths within the Montessori philosophy which begin to be emphasised at this age. Montessori education takes a holistic view, aimed at developing the child into a well-rounded human being. Lower-Primary is a very important time for children to continue on their learning journey.

Upper-Primary (9-12 year olds)

Children begin transitioning to Upper-Primary, Dugongs or Turtles class around their ninth birthday. Children will stay in Upper-Primary until they are twelve, when they will graduate from Rockingham Montessori Primary School and transition to our High School campus. Venus Olsen (Turtles) & Jodi

Kerslake (Dugongs) are our wonderful Upper-Primary class teachers, with their Education Assistants Emma Thomsen & Sandy McNeil (Turtles) & Jessica Simmons (Dugongs)



At this stage, children spend a lot of time carrying out their own research projects. As with the 6-9 year olds, this is often done in groups with the children sharing the responsibility along with intra-personal skills. Research tools such as computers, books and other texts are fully utilised and the range of research topics widen as the children become interested in moral and social issues. At this age, ethics and justice are prime foci and issues relating to these often form the basis of their projects as students explore their place within society.

Adolescent Program (12-18 year olds)

Rockingham Montessori School commenced its Adolescent program in January 2012 in conjunction with Murdoch University. The Adolescent Program is co-located on the Murdoch University, Dixon Rd, Rockingham site. Whilst continuing to provide a strong Montessori philosophy, the high school has been developed in conjunction with Big Picture Education Australia (www.bigpicture.org.au).

The Adolescent Program follows the Australian Montessori Curriculum and incorporates Western Australia's Senior School Curriculum in the form of Courses of Study. The Adolescent Program has a strong influence on the child's personal growth in the areas of public speaking, the arts, sports, business, economics, entrepreneurship, out of school activities and work readiness skills. The Adolescent Program incorporates internships to ensure students gain real life experiences to guide their future career pathways to ensure a comprehensive portfolio is developed which may lead to successful university entry. Senior School Students have the opportunity to link to relevant under graduate units through Murdoch University.



Curriculum

Rockingham Montessori School follows the Australian Montessori Curriculum and is proud to participate in the Montessori Australia Foundation Quality Assurance Program which ensures the delivery of a quality Montessori program. Our present curriculum initiatives are designed in a format compatible with the Australian Curriculum. Parents can therefore be certain that children remaining at the school through the primary and adolescent years will attain levels of education that other students do, with the addition of deeper learning achieved by the integrated Montessori approach.

The Childrens House provides a programme which is divided into five areas and provides every opportunity to ensure that children achieve agreed outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework for Australian Early Childhood.

The five areas are:

1. Practical life exercises (including Health & Physical Education);
2. Sensorial materials;
3. Language learning area;
4. Mathematics learning area; and
5. Cultural activities (Science, History & Geography, The Arts, Technology & Enterprise).

The Primary and Adolescent programme for early and middle childhood and adolescence follows the key learning areas as set out in the Australian Montessori Curriculum.

- Creative Arts & Music;
- Language;
- Health and Physical Education;
- Mathematics with Geometry;
- English;
- Science with Biology;
- History & Geography,
- Technology and Enterprise.



Comparisons

Montessori and traditional primary education

MONTESSORI

- Three year age span
- Motivated by self-development
- Ungraded
- Self-correcting materials
- Children learn by handling objects themselves
- Individual learning
- Teacher is observer and facilitator
- Child completes “cycles of activity”
- Few teacher interruptions
- Freedom to move and work within classroom
- Emphasis on cognitive learning
- Quiet by choice and out of regard for others
- Materials used for specific purpose with sequence of steps
- Work for joy of working and sense of discovery
- Environment provides discipline
- Encouraged to help one another
- Child chooses materials
- Child sets own pace
- Child free to discover on own
- Emphasis on concrete
- Reality-oriented
- Specific places for materials, sense of order
- Child provides own stimulus to learning
- Self-education through self-correcting materials
- Recognition of sensitive periods
- Multi-sensory materials to develop specific skills

TRADITIONAL

- One/Two year age span
- Teacher-motivated
- Graded
- Teacher corrects errors
- Teacher teaches
- Small & whole group learning
- Teacher is focal point and dominant influence
- Activity cycles determined by set timetable
- Frequent teacher interruptions
- Assigned seats and specific class periods
- Postponement of 3R's, emphasis on social development.
- Quiet enforced
- Materials used in many ways without previous instruction
- Work because they're told to
- Teacher provides discipline
- Seek help from teacher
- Teacher sets curriculum
- Teacher sets pace
- Teacher guides child
- Emphasis on abstract
- Much role-playing and fantasy
- Random placement & many displays of visual collections
- Teacher provides
- Use of reward and punishment in motivation.
- All children treated alike
- Play materials for non-specific skills

The following sites are recommended with the perspective of the parent in mind. They offer resources like books, videos/DVDs, answers to frequently asked questions, ways to support the Montessori approach in the home, finding a school, parent education and more. This is a beginning and one step on the journey of ongoing learning offered by involvement with Montessori. Enjoy!

montessori.org.au

1. This is the site of the Montessori Australia Foundation, based in Sydney. It has statistical information on Montessori in Australia, a simple definition of the Montessori approach, manuals and policy templates for Montessori school boards, answers on questions like children's transition to mainstream classrooms or schools, how to find a school, current work on quality assurance in Montessori schools in Australia, photos you can download for promotional purposes, briefing documents prepared for media/government use, research results on Montessori,, and Montessori as a social movement. There are links to suppliers of Montessori books and materials manufacturers.

michaelolaf.net

2. This site, based in California, contains simple and sound information on the philosophy and practice of Montessori. It has for more than 20 years been producing catalogues which are much more than catalogues, filled with Montessori quotes, materials for use in the home, beautiful photos and drawings, and even fundraising ideas. I recommend their publications *The Joyful Child* and *Child of the World*, they are superb resources. You can download chapters from these publications.

montessori-ami.org

3. This is the site of the organisation founded by Dr. Montessori in 1929, based in Holland. It lists the goals and activities of the organisation, offers information on the central notion of the Prepared Environment, the history of Montessori, the pedagogy, and the role of the Montessori teacher. It has excellent publications for parents produced by its USA branch which can be purchased using a credit card. This site also contains the article which appeared in the journal 'Science' in September, 2006 on outcomes for children in a Montessori program, a longitudinal study.

Whitepaperpress.us

4. This excellent site offers a wide range of publications, blogs and podcasts on Montessori. Based in the United States it provides regular updates on Montessori across the globe. Often a presence at Montessori gatherings and conferences, the founder of the site Dr Laura Flores Shaw has visited and presented at RMS parent education events.

montessorichild.com.au

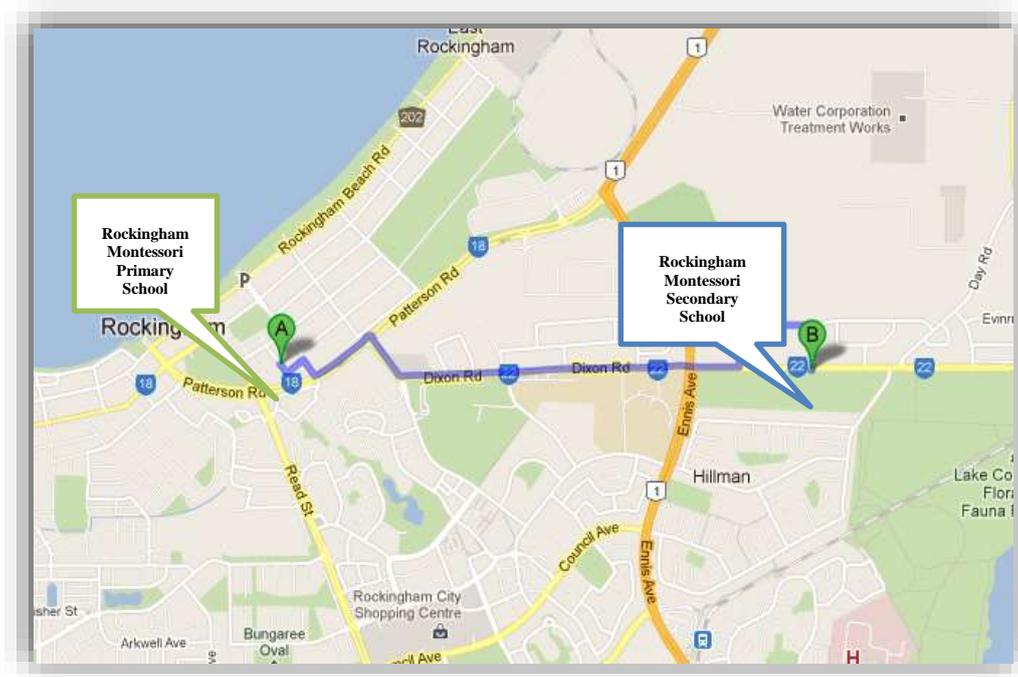
5. This site is a great source of toys/baskets/aprons/kitchenware and such for children, both in the prepared environment at school and in the home. Its complete catalogue is still in construction, but there is a good selection listed on the site.

montessorifoundation.org

6. This is the site of the Montessori Children's Foundation, a national organisation based in Sydney. Its focus is to "promote Montessori as a means to achieving peace and social reform." It supports projects in indigenous communities in Australia. This site has excellent articles and research in this area.

montessori-namta.org

7. This is the site of the North American Montessori Teachers Association but it has excellent resources for parents. Here you will find wonderful information on home environment design, the Montessori toddler community (what is often called here 'Montessori playgroup') common misconceptions about Montessori, and an accurate comparison to mainstream education ('A Paradigm Shift'). NAMTA sells DVDs and booklets specifically for parent education.



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