



VAUCLUSE LITTLE SCHOOL LONG DAY CARE

MONTESSORI EDUCATION

3 Russell Street Vaucluse 2030

Ph: (02) 93374014

www.littleschools.com.au

Enrolment enquiries: vaulittleschool@bigpond.com

Account enquiries: vlittleschool@bigpond.com

Parent Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to **Vaucluse Little School**, Our centre is a privately owned Early Learning Centre providing a Montessori Education.

The centre is open from 8.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, 51 weeks per year and caters for children 1-6 years.

Vaucluse Little School seeks to achieve excellence and enrichment for Early Learners. Our aim is for children to reach their full potential by introducing dynamic learning experiences according to Montessori principles and materials.

We provide a secure and happy environment where children can develop their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, aesthetic skills to become competent and confident individuals.

Our Place and History:

Vaucluse Little School is located in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney of Woollahra Municipality in N.S.W.

Before European settlement the area where Vaucluse is now located was inhabited by the Birrabirragal Aboriginals clan, who belonged to the coastal Dharug language group.

The name is derived from a Village in Provence France, Fontaine De Vaucluse. The hall in which Vaucluse Little School operates was originally the Uniting Church until a new Church was built in 1960.

Blending period styles of lead light from the old church windows and the murals from a local artist Pixie O'Harris creates an abundance of history.

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Ref: Succeed. Operational Folder. Parents. Family Orientation. Parent Handbook

Vaucluse Little School is located in a quiet area of this Suburb close to Sydney Harbour and Watsons Bay.

PHILOSOPHY:

We Believe:

That childhood is an important and significant stage of human development in its own right as well as the foundation for all later learning and development.

In the holistic nature of learning and significance of play in a child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.

In a play based program with a focus on individual interest of children as well as the universal interests of the group.

Providing a safe, healthy and secure environment, which encourages children to learn through active exploration, experimentation and social interaction with their peers.

That a rich, stimulating and nurturing environment has the potential to stimulate imagination, promote creativity and enhance learning across all areas.

In an anti-bias approach, in which every child and family is treated equitably and with respect.

In an inclusive environment that supports all children to fully participate in our centre activities, routines and daily curriculum.

Educators are given the opportunity to participate in professional development opportunities around sustainability and environmental education.

The children are provided with many opportunities to understand their community through a range of incursions and special events.

The centre needs to nurture a strong connection to the local school community as to provide a rich range of resources to further enhance the children's learning experiences for school readiness programs.

We are a central link to information and support services within the wider community.

It is important that the centre plays an active role in referring children and families to the appropriate services and agencies.

Diversity within our centre, families, staff and wider community should be respected and celebrated.

Age Groups

- 1-2 years (14 children maximum)
- 3-6 years (10 children maximum)

Educator Qualifications

Our centre will have highly qualified educators with extensive experience and specialised skills.

We aim for our centre to be unique in that all our educators will have had training and experience in the child care profession. For further details on the qualifications of our educators, please see our Nominated Supervisor. We value and implement further training and development.

The Daily Routine

Although the routines of each room and age group will vary, the same aspects are contained in each. We endeavor to provide a home and family environment at the centre where the children feel comfortable and secure at all times and our daily routines reflect this.

Each child is allowed supervised free choice of classroom activities and freedom of movement based on his or her interests. This promotes initiative and self-confidence.

Throughout the day the children will experience a number of different activities, which are part of the educational and developmental programs operated by all of our educators.

Each room displays their individual routine and is available for parents to read. The appropriate educators can answer any questions regarding this. In place are both summer and winter routines, which adapt to weather conditions.

THE PROGRAM

All of the educators at our centre will have had training in Montessori and experience in areas of long day care and early childhood education. Because of the high standard of our educators, we are able to provide developmental and educational programs for each group of children.

The educators develop a daily program, observe the children in their care and plan their programs around the needs and interests of the children in child free time.

The centre implements the National Early Years Learning Framework as part of the National Quality Reform.

Learning Areas of development include:

Learning Outcome 1- Children have a strong sense of identity

Learning Outcome 2- Children are connected and contribute to their world

Learning Outcome 3- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Learning Outcome 4- Children are confident and involved learners

Learning Outcome 5- Children are effective communicators

If your teacher feels there is an area of concern, she/he will inform you and advise where help may be sought, e.g. speech therapist. It is always your decision to follow this up. The educators are willing to discuss any aspect of development with parents.

Services Offered

- Long Day Care
- Pre-school Program
- Montessori principles
- Special Needs Catered For

MONTESSORI 1-6 PROGRAM

There are four main areas in the pre-school program. Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, and Mathematics. Considerable emphasis is also placed on Creative Arts, Music, Science, Geography and Cultural Studies. We bring the world to the child through Globes, Maps, Songs, Land Forms, collections of pictures of life in different cultures and much more is offered with the aim of helping the child to grow as an individual appreciating the world around them.

PRACTICAL LIFE

A carefully chosen selection of small-motor activities designed to develop the child's independence, coordination, concentration and sense of order and care of the self and their environment. Once these skills are acquired children can advance to more complex Montessori equipment.

SENSORIAL

The sensorial Montessori materials assists the child in refining their senses to explore the environment and compare size, shape, colour, sound and texture. These materials also prepare the child.

LANGUAGE

The language activities enable the child to learn the phonetic sounds for each letter. As the teacher presents the Alphabet symbols to the child they will not only hear and see the sounds but they will feel them by tracing the sandpaper letters. When they are confident with these sounds they begin to read starting with small phonetic words.

MATHEMATICS

Children are introduced to the functions and operations of numbers, arithmetic, algebra and geometry. Through the use of Montessori materials children learn to add, subtract, multiply and divide giving them a sound understanding of the concepts of mathematics before entering School.

Guidance and Discipline

Our centre has a positive approach to child guidance and discipline. All educators will encourage confidence and individuality of children through their discipline and guidance. We encourage the children to resolve conflict in non-violent ways. Negotiating skills are promoted rather than educators simply fixing the problem. Conflict resolution allows children to become confident learners and responsible caring human beings.

NO educators will ever administer physical or corporal punishment. Educator's discipline strategies are always consistent and fair with every child.

Those First Weeks

When a child first starts at a new centre their behavior may change. Do not worry, as this is a natural stage in child development. Changes that may occur are becoming more dependent or a change in their eating habits.

If you notice any change in your child's behavior and you are concerned, please discuss this with your child's educator.

You would appreciate that all children settle into day care in different ways. Educators are sensitive and aware of the anxieties and fears children have about starting childcare.

We understand how distressing it can be to leave your child especially if they are upset. Be assured that if the educators are unable to settle your child, we will ring you immediately.

Remember the settling period may take some children longer than others. Feel free to discuss any problems about your child's settling period with our educators.

Parents if you feel anxious about leaving your child at the centre, our educators are sympathetic to your feelings. You are welcome to drop in or telephone the centre at any time to enquire about your child. Please feel free to talk with our educators about any problems your child may have, as this influences their behavior at the service. Educators are willing to discuss any aspect of your child's progress with you.

CLOTHING

Parents are advised to send their children to the centre in comfortable, inexpensive clothing. The children need to be able to move around during their play period and should be unrestricted by clothing. While paints will come out in the wash, accidents do happen so it is best to send the children along in their "less than good clothes". Young children enjoy and need "messy" play with paint, clay, sand, water and mud.

The centre will only have a limited supply of spare clothing. Please supply at least one change of clothing and underclothing in case of accidents, for 3-5 year olds.

Please mark your child's clothing and replace nametags if they fade in the wash. Please ensure that toddlers have about three complete changes of clothing and plenty of training pants.

In summer our policy is "**NO HAT, PLAY IN THE SHADE**". This policy will be enforced. Parents are asked to provide a hat to wear during outside activities. These must be labeled. A hat is needed for children to ride the bikes, as they must be worn under the helmets to prevent cross infection. The most suitable hat is one, which shades the ears and neck, as research is showing a high incidence of skin cancer on people's ears.

Belongings

Please ensure all belongings are clearly labeled such as dummies, clothes etc. Lost property will be displayed for parent collection in your child's room. The centre discourages toys from home and we will not hold any responsibility for any personal belongings. Please be reassured security items are acceptable.

Notice Boards

These are placed in areas convenient for you. Please read all notices to keep up to date with everything that is happening- there is sure to be something of interest to you.

Hooks

Children are allocated a hook in the foyer for their bag. If your child attends less than five days per week, they will share their hook with another child.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a special event in his/her life. To celebrate your child's birthday, you are welcome to bring in a cake. Please check with your child's educator prior to birthday, in case of other children having special dietary requirements.

Fire Drills

Throughout the year the service holds fire drills, which occur at any given time throughout the day. These are carried out in an organized and orderly manner. Also educators will be trained in using the fire extinguishers that are in the centre. A fire escape plan will be in every room.

Possessions

A soft toy or security item is acceptable for rest time. It is appreciated if their possessions are not brought to the service e.g. guns, toys etc. Any possessions brought must come entirely at the parent's own risk with regards to breakage or loss.

Health

The centre provides a healthy and safe environment for children to grow and develop in – as such the centre has a health policy regarding illnesses and medications. Children with contagious illnesses are required to be kept at home and a doctor's certificate must be presented to show that the infection cannot be passed when the child returns to the centre. NO CHILD will be admitted with obvious signs of any highly contagious infection or illness. Our policy states the incubation period, symptoms and exclusion periods of such diseases. Children who are not immunized will be required to be exempt from the centre.

Medication Educators will be able to administer medication to children who are recovering from illness.

A medication form must be completed and signed by parents before any medication will be given. All prescription medication must be prescribed for your child and not another family member- unless stated otherwise by a doctor's certificate. Medication must be in date and in original packaging.

Any other medication such as cough medicine will not be administered unless accompanied by a doctor's note.

The medication must be handed to an educator to store in a locked cupboard or lockable container in fridge. Please DO NOT leave medication in your child's bag.

The educator who gives medication requires a medication form to be completed by the parent, i.e. tablets, mixture, creams, lotions, doctors and non-prescribed medication.

Asthma

The centre aims to provide a safe environment for children who have asthma. It is centre policy that an "Asthma Record Card" be completed by parents/guardians in consultation with their family doctor. It is also a requirement that your family doctor review the record card annually or as circumstances change. This must be completed and returned before enrolment commences. These forms will be available with the enrolment pack.

Accidents

In case of an accident or illness occurring at the centre, the Nominated Supervisor will contact parents if deemed necessary. As a matter of extreme importance parents must ensure that the service has up to date emergency contact numbers. An incident report will be filled out, outlining the accident and signed by the staff that observed and administered first aid, as well as any witnesses. The Nominated Supervisors and parent's signature will also be required.

What to Bring

1-6 years

- Bring along a Lunch box with sandwich. Morning tea and Afternoon tea Provided.
- A change of clothing that is weather appropriate (younger children- especially those toilet training- will need extra changes)
- A hat
- A security item for rest time.
- A water bottle

Arrival and Departure

For safety and security reasons ALL children must be signed in on arrival, and signed out on departure. The times must be noted. No child will be allowed to leave our centre with a person who is not stated on the enrolment form, unless prior arrangements are made with the Nominated Supervisor.

Accounts

On your first week at our centre you will be required to pay a \$200.00 non-refundable deposit fee plus one month's fees.

Attendance and Absence: Once a child is enrolled at the centre, payment of fees must be continued during the child's absence for illness, public holidays, holidays, etc. When a child is absent for any reason we must be notified. The centre is open for fifty-one weeks of the year and is closed over the Christmas period Public Holidays.

Hours of Operation

Centre hours are 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, 51 weeks per year.

Court Orders

Parents must notify the service if there are any Court Orders affecting residency of their children and a copy given to the Centre. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting your child.

Rest and Sleep

Rest time routine varies according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide stretcher beds for older children. Your child may wish to bring a favorite toy, pillow or blanket to have at rest time. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest needs with our educators.

Fees and Commencement Fees

\$130.00 per day 1-5 Age Group (2017)

\$200.00 non-refundable Deposit fee – per family

Fees are paid on a monthly schedule at the beginning of care.

Notice of Withdrawal

It is our policy that parents must give four weeks written (28 days) notice before they withdraw or drop days from the service. If notice is not given, four weeks of fees will be added onto your account. NOTICE WILL NOT be take after the end of September of the year the child is attending. Changing of days is depending on availability and must only be discuss with Director.

Waiting List

When our rooms have full enrolment, children's names will be put onto a waiting list. Once a position is vacant, parents are then contacted about placement. When parents wish to change days to other days, this can be effective immediately provided the group enrolment is not full. If it is full the child's name will be placed on a waiting list. Once a position is available, days will then be adjusted. Our waiting list does give priority to working parents as per Priority of Access Guidelines.

Educators

Suitable qualified educators are employed in all age groups and the child staff ratios are adhered to according to Licensing regulations. All educators will have their First Aid Certificates, working with children checks and regular educator meetings will be held. Our educators are regularly involved in further development and training.

Parent Involvement

This is vital to ensure maintenance of a quality service. Your contribution of ideas, experiences and skills are welcomed and greatly valued. You may be able to share your skills and experiences in Music, Craft, Cooking and Storytelling, to enhance your child's program at the Centre. Please fill out what you can offer the Centre on the enrolment form.

Parents are welcome to visit the centre at any time. If you have any talents or hobbies please share them with the children

Conclusion

We aim to ensure your child will have a happy, safe and secure relationship with the service and our educators and that the time he or she is in our care will be positive and fulfilling.

Important Contacts for Families

- **Family Assistance Office**
Phone: 13 6150

Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
NSW Department of Education and Communities
Locked Bag 5107
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
Phone: 1800 619 113

- **Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority**
1300 422 327
www.acecqa.gov.au
- **NSW Department of Health**
Locked Bag 961
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
Phone: (02) 9391 9000