

St Christopher School

Montessori Nursery

Information

2009-10

Nursery Manager: Lesley Edwards

Main school switchboard	01462 650850
Monte office	01462 650851
After school care (Valerie Olton)	01462 650851
Email (Nursery Manager)	lesley.edwards@stchris.co.uk

www.stchris.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the "Monte".

Children usually join the Monte between the age of two years nine months and three years old. They can stay with us and progress onto the Junior School at the start of the Autumn Term following their fourth birthday. They will need to be toilet trained when they join the Monte.

In their first year with us the children are referred to as 'Half Montes' and are eligible to stay for a half day session. When children become 'Top Montes' they can stay for a whole day, which includes lunch.

During their time in the Monte, the children are introduced to a range of Montessori activities and materials designed to nurture their sense of independence and self esteem. Through these activities concentration, confidence and perseverance develop naturally.

We aim to provide children with an environment where they can be a positive and valued member of a small community; where their help and collaboration is needed, encouraged and appreciated. They learn to care for others with kindness and gentleness. Being part of a group with a mixed age range provides them with many opportunities to do this on a daily basis.

Children are encouraged to choose their own activities and work independently. They complete their work at an individual pace. They also enjoy group time.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum at the Monte is divided into five main areas of activity: Practical Life, Sensorial, Maths, Language and Culture (which includes Art, Science, Music, Geography and Botany).

PRACTICAL LIFE

Activities in this area include tasks such as pouring, carrying, washing – themselves, dishes, cups, tables; sweeping, dressing, cooking, laying and clearing the lunch tables. All of these activities will help the children develop competence and confidence. This is the first step to achieving independence. Other activities are designed to help children settle harmoniously and happily in the Monte community. All the utensils available to the children are made to their size.

SENSORIAL

The Sensorial activities are problem-solving tasks that challenge a child's judgement of size, shape, colour, sound, taste, smell, texture, weight and heat. Children will gain experience and competence in judging what is the same and what is different. Children will learn how to grade things by width and length. They will learn to recognise basic geometric shapes.

MATHS

Our Maths area is extensive and consists of various groups: the first involves working with numbers from 1 to 10. The second, working with teens and counting up to 100 and to 1000. The third group explores the decimal system, the formation of complex numbers and games involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. All the Maths work involves handling objects. This enables a link to be made between a number and something concrete. These introductory activities create a strong foundation for future learning. Games are also devised that lead to the discovery of fractions, time, weight and measurement.

LANGUAGE

Our Montessori language programme consists of pre-reading and writing materials. The language associated with songs, poems, stories and discussion are an important part of pre-reading and writing skills. We begin with a phonetical system. Children can explore many ways of discovering how words are formed. Nurturing a love of books is paramount.

ART

A wide range of creative materials is always available. Children will have opportunities to develop skills such as cutting, collage, painting, colouring and sewing. Children produce their own original work.

SCIENCE

Science experiments introduce the children to concepts such as light, electricity, magnetism and colour.

CULTURE

Children can explore the world around us using a beautiful set of puzzle maps of the world, the continents and countries. Land and water forms are explored. Many different festivals are celebrated from around our world. Plant and animal care are part of everyday activities.

CLASSROOMS

The Daisy and Tulip Rooms: These are our Montessori environments, filled with our beautiful Montessori materials.

The Sunflower Room: This room is designed for rich social and language experiences. Children will enjoy activities in groups and can explore imaginary play, creative activities and small world play.

The Outdoor Classroom: This covered outdoor space will be available to the children come rain or shine. Children will be able to enjoy this space everyday. Montessori materials will be available to the children to use outside. There is also a vegetable garden and pet area.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication between home and School is vital. In addition to parent consultation evenings staff are available for a quick chat first thing in the morning and will be happy to respond to telephone calls or emails. Individual appointments can also be made to discuss more specific issues.

There is a notice board in the cloakroom as well as the outside board. This has pertinent information for parents and visitors and photos of all School staff. There is a weekly forecast of events. A folder is available containing all of the staff qualifications. Regular newsletters are sent home with the children each term.

Details of events can also be found on the School's online calendar at www.stchris.co.uk.

"KEEP TRACK" RECORD KEEPING SYSTEM

In the Monte we use the Keep Track record keeping system. It is an easy to use software package that records each child's progress through observations. The Keep Track system allows staff to plot a child's development during their time at the Monte. As well as highlighting presentations staff can also monitor the early learning goals that have been demonstrated; it assists staff when creating reports and when discussing planning for individual children. Staff can also store photographs with the observations.

ACCIDENT FORMS

If a minor accident or incident occurs during the day we will record what happened and ask the parent to read this information and sign it. These records are kept on file in the Monte. If necessary we also call the nurse to seek her advice. If an emergency occurs the appropriate emergency service will be called first before the parent.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

At the Monte we have a legal duty to safe guard children in our care. We will follow guidelines and procedures complying with statutory requirements.

PARENT CONSULTATIONS

Meetings are held every term. These are opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss the children's progress. We schedule two dates each term so we can be available to as many parents as possible.

Parent consultations are 10 minutes each and are by appointment only. Appointment slots are posted on the notice boards in each cloakroom and are on a first-come-first-served basis.

Please consult our termly calendar or our online diary at www.stchris.co.uk for dates and times.

THE MONTE DAY

8.00am	Monte Club (before school care)
8.30	Children's arrival
	Montessori Work Cycle begins (includes the outdoor classroom, group time, gardening and snack)
11.00	Half Montes outdoor play
11.30	End of Work Cycle and lunch time preparation
11.45	Half Montes leave
12.00pm	Lunch
1.00	Outdoor play
1.30	Top Montes depart. Afternoon session begins (optional)
3.00	Afternoon session ends. Snack
3.10	Top Montes leave
3.20	Monte Club (after school care)

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

Afternoon activities for children who are participating in these sessions are planned each term. They must be booked in advance and parents can choose any option ranging from one afternoon to five afternoons.

SAMPLE SESSION PLAN

Monday	Art
Tuesday	Drama/Music & Movement
Wednesday	Swimming
Thursday	Gardening/Nature
Friday	Cooking

SWIMMING

Children have the opportunity to use St Christopher School's pool. The Half Montes must be accompanied by a parent/carer. Their session is always when their morning ends at 11.45am. The Top Montes go swimming as an afternoon option; they are accompanied by the staff. Parents are welcome to join us.

MONTE CLUB

We offer wrap-around care for those families that need it. The times are as follows:

8.00 – 8.30am	All children
11.45 – 18.00pm	Half Montes
15.20 – 18.00pm	Top Montes

The children will be looked after in a caring and familiar environment. It is a time to play, rest and eat in the haven of the Montessori setting. Valerie is the Monte Club Manager and can be reached at the same number as the Monte.

PARENT LIBRARY

A selection of books and magazines relating to education and childcare are available for parents in the cloakroom.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Being part of a large school means there are many social functions. Parents are welcome to attend as many as they wish. Information about forthcoming events will be posted on the notice boards, sent in mailings and email communications. Information can also be found on the online Parents page, under "People" and on the online calendar.

PARENTS' CIRCLE

This is an organisation that involves parents in the School. Both the Junior School and the Montessori Nursery have parent representatives. Any parent can attend committee meetings.

COLLECTING YOUR CHILD

Once our goodbye group is finished your child will be called to the children's entrance where you can greet them. We will not let your child go with an unfamiliar adult unless we have your written permission and/or have agreed a password.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- All the children must wear indoor shoes (slippers).
- A spare set of labelled clothes must be left in the cloakroom.
- Waterproof clothing and wellies as we do go outside come rain or shine!
- Children's toys stay at home. If a child's toy is broken or lost it can be very upsetting, especially if it is a very precious toy.

LUNCH

Lunch is prepared and cooked in the School kitchen and brought over to us in the Monte. The children sit in small social groups with a member of staff. They are encouraged to serve themselves and to explore different tastes and flavours. The vegetarian menu is displayed on the notice board. Water is available at lunchtime and throughout the day.

BIRTHDAYS

We have a special birthday group for each child. Children may bring in something special to eat to share with their friends if they wish. Please see Lesley if you are planning a birthday treat so you can be made aware of any allergies.

ABSENCES

The School must be notified of all absences in writing.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The comprehensive list of policies and procedures, including the School's Child Protection Policy can all be found under "Downloads" on the School website:

www.stcnris.co.uk

COMPLAINTS

The open climate of the School encourages parents, along with children and staff, to voice their concerns. Usually discussion of the matter will allay or remove the worry without the need for formal procedures.

All complaints will be carefully considered. It is sometimes difficult to tell at the outset the seriousness of a complaint. Potentially serious issues may be raised in an informal and friendly way and apparently trivial issues in an adversarial manner. Sometimes a complaint will generate a counter-complaint. It is usually helpful for

there to be a discussion at an early stage about the issue, the procedures and the possible outcomes.

The School's Complaints Procedure can be found under "Downloads" at www.stchris.co.uk.

CONTACTING THE GOVERNORS

The Chair of Governors may be contacted via the Bursar (Clerk to the Governors), St Christopher School, Barrington Road, Letchworth Garden City, Herts SG6 3JZ, or via bursar@stchris.co.uk

VISITORS

All visitors must report to the Nursery Office.

HEALTH

If your child becomes ill while at School we will contact you to collect your child. The School has a nurse who can be contacted if there has been an accident.

The guidelines given to us by our nurse are:

- Conjunctivitis: Child must stay at home until the infection has completely cleared;
- Sickness and diarrhoea: child should be clear of all symptoms for 24 hours before returning to School;
- Antibiotics: child should stay at home for the first 48 hours of taking antibiotics;
- Please inform us if your child has head lice.

MOVING ON

Children who have attended the Monte have automatic entry into the Junior School. Children will visit their new environment on several occasions so it becomes familiar. The Heads of Department work closely together to ensure a smooth transition.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this booklet is to provide information and advice. It will be revised each year and suggestions for additional information are always welcome.