

MELBOURNE MONTESSORI COLLEGE

Parent Handbook

Brighton Campus



Melbourne
Montessori
College

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Welcome

Principal's Welcome

Welcome to Melbourne Montessori College.

We are proud to offer an authentic Montessori education spanning from 18 months to 18 years, providing a continuous and carefully designed learning journey from toddlerhood through to young adulthood. The Montessori method is a time-tested approach that prepares students not only for strong academic achievement, but for life beyond the classroom.

Across every stage of development, our students experience academically rich learning and a genuine enjoyment of learning. This is the result of thoughtfully prepared environments that respond to the developmental needs of each age group. At the College, curriculum is delivered through interdisciplinary teaching and project-based learning within connected, multi-age classrooms. Students build knowledge progressively, make connections and understand concepts through hands-on, real-world experiences.

Our classrooms are designed to encourage exploration, independence, resilience and problem solving. Our teachers are trained in Montessori pedagogy and understand how to guide students at each stage of development. Our Montessori curriculum meets the requirements of the Australian Curriculum and encourages students to follow their interests, pursue their passions and extend themselves beyond minimum standards. We place equal importance on social, moral and intellectual development, ensuring every child feels known, valued and safe.

We value the trust our families place in us and the partnership we share in supporting each child.

Janis Coffey, Principal



Head of Campus Welcome

We are so pleased to welcome you and your family to the Brighton campus. We take a lot of pride in our small, warm and connected community. It is a school where we can know each student well and support them with genuine care, while still giving them the space to grow in independence and confidence.

Maria Montessori described adolescence as a time of significant change. Just as toddlers learn to explore the physical world, adolescents are discovering their identity, purpose and place in the community. We work closely with students as they develop a sense of belonging, manage their time, make thoughtful choices and take greater responsibility for their learning.

If you have any questions, please email admin@mmc.vic.edu.au and the team will direct your question.

We look forward to getting to know your child and working closely with you.



Ilja van Weringh, Head of Campus, Brighton

Quick Reference

Information	Details
Address	741 Hawthorn Road, Brighton East VIC 3187
Reception	Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
Phone	03 9131 5200
Email	admin@mmc.vic.edu.au
School day	8:45 am to 3:30 pm. Cycle 3 finishes at 3:15 pm.
Absence	Notify the school through the parent portal, by email or by phone. Email administration and your child's classroom teacher or advisor.
Late arrival	Sign in at reception.
Early departure	Students inform their teacher and sign out at reception. Parents will be contacted to confirm arrangements.
Collection	Students must be collected between 3:15 and 3:45 pm, or have other arrangements in place.
Medical information	schoolnurse@mmc.vic.edu.au
IT help	helpdesk@mmc.vic.edu.au
Learning platforms	Transparent Classrooms for Cycle 3. ManageBac for Cycles 4 to 6.

Who to Contact

If you need to...	Contact
Discuss learning	Classroom teacher or advisor
Discuss wellbeing	Classroom teacher or advisor
Follow up an unresolved concern	Classroom teacher, then advisor, then Cycle leader, then head of campus
Discuss medication or an action plan	School nurse
Get help with a learning platform	IT helpdesk
Ask a general question	Brighton reception

2026 Term Dates

Term 1

Date	Event
Wednesday 14 January	Administration office opens
Thursday 29 January	First day of Term 1 for students, Prep to Year 12
Monday 2 February	New Cycle 1 student transition commences, plus PT and EL
Monday 9 March	Labour Day public holiday
Thursday 26 March	Student-free day for Brighton campus only
Thursday 2 April	End of Term 1 for teaching staff and students

Term 2

Date	Event
Tuesday 21 April	First day of Term 2 for students
Friday 5 June	Curriculum day and report writing day
Monday 8 June	King's Birthday public holiday
Friday 26 June	End of Term 2 for teaching staff and students

Term 3

Date	Event
Tuesday 21 July	First day of Term 3 for students
Friday 14 August	Curriculum day and staff professional learning day
Friday 18 September	End of Term 3 for teaching staff and students

Term 4

Date	Event
Tuesday 6 October	First day of Term 4 for students
Friday 30 October	Curriculum day and report writing day
Monday 2 November	Mid-term break
Tuesday 3 November	Melbourne Cup public holiday
Wednesday 9 December	End of Term 4 for students
Friday 18 December	Administration office closes

The School Day

Students are best placed when they arrive a few minutes early, settled and ready for the start of the day.

School Hours

- Monday to Friday, 8:45 am to 3:30 pm
- Cycle 3 finishes at 3:15 pm
- Lunch is from 12:00 to 1:00 pm

A Typical Day

In Cycle 3, each day begins and ends with a class meeting to plan the day ahead.

In Cycles 4 to 6, the day begins and ends with advisory. Lessons are an hour long.

In the morning, students check in, hear notices and organise their day. In the afternoon, they reflect, reset and help care for the environment. At the end of the day, students complete their jobs to make the environment ready for the next day.

Students can eat a snack in class when needed. We ask students to bring healthy food with minimal packaging.

Community Meetings

Once a week, we have a student-led community meeting to share ideas, raise concerns and celebrate learning. We often include acknowledgements, where students share something positive about another member of the community.

Attendance, Absence and Collection

Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance and punctuality are important. Attendance is recorded each lesson and supports both learning and student safety.

If your child is absent, notify the school through the parent portal, by email or by phone. Emailing admin@mmc.vic.edu.au and your child's classroom teacher or advisor is best.

Students who arrive late must sign in at reception.

Leaving Early

If a student needs to leave early, they must inform their teacher and sign out through reception. Parents will be contacted to confirm arrangements.

Collection

Students need to be collected between 3:15 and 3:45 pm. Teachers supervise students at the front gate during this time. After 3:45 pm, staff move into meetings, planning and preparation, so we can't guarantee supervision. Please make sure your child is collected on time or has other arrangements in place.

Food, Clothing, Devices and Transport

Clothing

There is no uniform at Brighton campus. Students should wear comfortable, practical clothing suitable for an active learning environment. Please avoid offensive slogans. Clothing should be practical and sun-smart, so no spaghetti-strapped tops, bare midriffs or excessively short leg coverings. Safe, closed-toe shoes are important.

Food

Students bring a healthy lunch and snacks each day. There are kitchens for students to use.

Students in Cycles 4 to 6 may visit the nearby café and IGA at lunchtime in small groups. This is a privilege, and we expect sensible, healthy choices.

Parents can pre-order lunches through Renatta School Lunches:

<https://www.renattaschoollunches.com.au/>

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are stored in lockers during the day. Lunchtime is for socialising and connecting with others.

Laptops and Software

Students in Cycle 3 have very limited access to desktop computers in class.

All students in Cycles 4 to 6 must bring their own laptop. A Windows or Mac laptop is recommended. iPads, tablets and Chromebooks are useful for basic access, but are not suitable as a student's main learning device.

Students need access to:

- Microsoft Office 365, including Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Google Workspace, including Google Drive
- Adobe Creative Cloud applications where required

Students log in using their school email address and password. They are responsible for bringing a charged and maintained device with the required software installed.

Minimum device requirements

Mac	Windows
A current macOS version supported by Apple	Windows 11
	i5 processor or equivalent
	8 GB RAM
	SSD storage recommended

IT support is available through helpdesk@mmc.vic.edu.au.

Transport, Parking and Safety

There is parking along Hawthorn Road. Please park a short distance from the school, on the same side of the road, so students do not need to cross this busy street.

Please avoid parking directly in front of the school and do not perform U-turns on Hawthorn Road. Many families arrange a meeting point a little further down the road.

Students are encouraged to walk, ride or use public transport where possible. Bicycle parking is available. Bikes, skateboards and scooters must not be used while moving through the school grounds.

Learning at Brighton

Students are grouped into cycles rather than single year levels. This is a key part of the Montessori approach.

Cycle	Year levels
Cycle 3	Years 4 to 6
Cycle 4	Years 7 and 8
Cycle 5	Years 9 and 10
Cycle 6	Years 11 and 12

Classes are multi-age by design. Younger students learn from older peers. Older students step into leadership and deepen their understanding by supporting others. Over time, each student experiences both roles.

Melbourne Montessori College covers the Australian Curriculum through the lens of Maria Montessori's educational philosophy. Learning is adjusted to the individual. Some students need more time to build foundations, while others are ready to extend further. Both are expected and supported.

Learning at Brighton continues the Montessori journey from the Caulfield campus, with increasing independence and responsibility. We give increasing freedom as students develop, within clear and consistent expectations.

The Work Cycle

The work cycle is an uninterrupted block of time where students plan, focus and extend their learning. Over time, they develop concentration, independence and pride in their work.

Advisory

In Cycles 4 to 6, each student has an advisor who supports their learning and wellbeing. The advisor is the student's first point of contact and helps them stay organised, manage their workload and feel supported.

Occupations

In Cycles 4 and 5, students take part in occupations. These are practical, real-world learning experiences where students apply knowledge, collaborate and develop skills that connect to life beyond school. Students complete occupations in semester blocks.

Hospitality: Students plan, prepare and serve food. They develop kitchen skills, teamwork and the ability to work under pressure in a real service setting.

Horticulture: Students work with the land, grow and maintain plants, and look after the chickens. They learn about sustainability, food systems and caring for the environment.

Makerspace and robotics: Students design, build and program. This develops problem-solving, logical thinking and persistence.

Content creation and theatre making: Students create videos and bring ideas to life through media and performance, with a strong focus on collaboration and communication. Offered in Semester 2.

Textiles: Students design and create using fabric and other materials. They develop practical skills, attention to detail and an understanding of design processes.

Bike education: Students maintain and repair bicycles, learn safe riding skills and plan bike rides. This builds practical independence and confidence.

Assessment and Reporting

Learning Platforms

In Cycle 3, learning is shared through Transparent Classrooms. In Cycles 4 to 6, ManageBac is the main platform used to share learning.

Students and parents can access tasks, deadlines, feedback and progress updates. We encourage families to check regularly and talk with their child about their learning.

You will receive login details from our IT department. Email helpdesk@mmc.vic.edu.au if you need support.

Reports and interviews

Term	Reporting and meetings
Term 1	Parent-teacher interviews
Term 2	Written report
Term 3	Parent-teacher interviews or student-led conferences
Term 4	Written report

If a concern arises, contact your child's classroom teacher or advisor.

Student Wellbeing and Behaviour

Health and Medical Information

If your child is unwell and unable to participate in the school day, please keep them at home and notify the school.

Medication must be arranged with the school and provided in original packaging with the correct documentation.

Students with asthma, allergies or other medical conditions must provide an up-to-date action plan each year. Contact the school nurse at schoolnurse@mmc.vic.edu.au.

Wellbeing and Support

Adolescence is a time of significant growth and change. Students are developing emotionally, socially and academically, and at times they will need support. If you have concerns, contact your child's classroom teacher or advisor and we will work together. Student services includes designated wellbeing spaces and quiet spots in the library.

Staff member	Role
Debbie Lagler	Student services coordinator, Brighton campus
Manya Sikka	Counsellor and learning assistant
Ainsley Kyder-Gould	Neurodivergence coach

How We Work as a Community

- We aim for a calm, respectful and purposeful space where students feel safe and ready to learn.
- Students are expected to arrive prepared, treat others with respect and contribute positively.
- We encourage students to aim high, take ownership of their learning and see challenges as part of the process.

Behaviour Guidance

We focus on respectful relationships, clear expectations and helping students take responsibility for their actions. When things go wrong, we use the principles of restorative practice. We help students understand what happened, repair harm and make better choices next time. See the Behaviour Guidance Policy on our website for further information.

Concerns about bullying, harassment, discrimination or child safety should be raised promptly with your child's classroom teacher or advisor, the cycle leader or the head of campus.

Communication and Who to Contact

Clear, respectful communication is important. Your first point of contact is your child's classroom teacher or advisor. If needed, matters can then be supported by the cycle leader or head of campus.

We aim to respond within one to two working days. Please respect that staff may not respond outside working hours.

If something is concerning you, please reach out early. Small issues are much easier to resolve when addressed early.

Brighton Leadership

Name	Role
Janis Coffey	Principal
Ilja van Weringh	Head of campus
Sarah Jane Watson	Professional learning leader
Oli Ryks and Lisa Stern	Cycle 3 leaders
Ned Smithfield	Cycle 4 leader
Julian Ashton	Cycle 5 leader
Casper Buisman	Cycle 6 leader and IB Diploma Programme coordinator
Tanya Marty	VCE VM coordinator and careers pathways leader

Administration

Name	Role
Christine Nabalarua	Brighton reception
Lauren Moore	Caulfield reception
Deb McGee	College nurse

Camps, Excursions and Visitors

Camps and Excursions

Camps and excursions are an important part of the program. They support independence, teamwork and real-world learning. Activities are carefully planned, with supervision, risk management and consent processes in place.

Visitors

All visitors must sign in at reception and wear a visitor badge while on site.

Withdrawal

Two full school terms' written notice is required when withdrawing from the College. Please contact the head of admissions for further information.

Senior Pathways

In Years 11 and 12, students choose the pathway that best suits their strengths, interests and future goals.

IB Diploma Programme	VCE Vocational Major
A two-year academic programme with six subjects, Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay and Creativity, Activity, Service.	A two-year applied learning programme with literacy, numeracy, personal development skills and work-related skills.
Includes coursework and final examinations.	Includes a VET certificate and workplace or community-based learning. There are no external examinations.
Best suited to students seeking academic challenge and a direct university pathway.	Best suited to students who prefer hands-on learning and pathways such as TAFE, apprenticeships or employment.

Choosing a Pathway

There is no better pathway. The aim is to find the right fit for each student. Families are supported through conversations with staff, meetings with the careers and pathways leader, and structured information and selection processes in Year 10.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do students complete NAPLAN?

Yes. Students complete NAPLAN as part of national benchmarking. Families may discuss withdrawal or exemption arrangements with the school. NAPLAN gives us a useful point of comparison with national standards.

Is the College religious, and how does it approach inclusion?

The College is non-denominational and guided by respect, inclusion and community. Students are expected to treat others with dignity, regardless of religion, culture, gender or sexual orientation.

How much homework is there?

Homework builds gradually as students move through the school, but the main focus is on completing unfinished work from the work cycle.

What if my child is new to Montessori?

Students are supported as they transition into this way of learning. It can take time to adjust. Students are given increasing freedom within clear limits and are expected to manage their time and use the work cycle productively.

Teachers and advisors guide students closely. Over time, students learn to make thoughtful choices, follow through on commitments and take ownership of their learning.

How will I know how my child is going?

You'll see regular updates on Transparent Classrooms or ManageBac. Formal reports and interviews are scheduled across the year. You can also contact your child's classroom teacher or advisor.

Who should I contact if I have a concern?

Start with your child's classroom teacher or advisor. If needed, the matter can be followed up with the cycle leader or head of campus.

What if my child is struggling or not keeping up?

Let us know early. We can adjust support, provide guidance and work with your child to get them back on track.