

HARMONY™



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Welcome Pack

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Giving your child the best start...

Dear Parents,

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) says -

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances."

It further says –

"Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

We, the Team Harmony, endeavour to provide high quality learning to the children following the national curriculum as mentioned in the EYFS framework.

We have a team of well qualified and experienced Practitioners who very well understand individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and support child's home language, if different from English, in their everyday play and learning.

I, on behalf of my team, can promise that your child will be provided with best learning environment to grow and develop in all areas of development through their own interest together with adult-led activities. The balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help them prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

I promise your child the best start by joining Harmony Nursery, which is known for its quality deliverances.

With Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Harish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Harish Marwaha
Director

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About Harmony Montessori Nursery

At Harmony Montessori Nursery the staff are dedicated to ensuring that each child is happy and fulfilled in our setting so that they flourish and reach their capacity in all areas of development.

We work with child 0 to 5 years of age and take them through as they are ready to go to Reception class in a School.

As per the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012), the Setting is required to meet standards of learning, development and care for the children through following learning goals:

Active Learning –

children concentrate and keep of trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;

Playing and Exploring –

Children investigate and experience things, and “have a go”.

Creating and Thinking Critically –

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We work with children to ensure that they develop in confidence and independence. Through quality play experiences in a caring environment, we will encourage a spirit of lifelong learning.

We appreciate that each child is an individual and so has individual needs and ‘styles of learning’. In our Setting, each child’s needs are considered favourably and our staff makes its best efforts to meet such requirements. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which is the legal requirement in the U.K. for Learning, Development and Welfare, is the best way that takes us through to make the child enjoy and achieve holistically.

In case, you wish to have a look at the EYFS framework, you are most welcome to contact the Manager of the Setting.

Montessori Background

Montessori Ethos



The inspiration for the Montessori Method of education comes from Dr Maria Montessori (1870-1952) who was a pioneer of child-centered education. She became the first woman to qualify as a medical doctor in Italy and it is her scientific background which underpins much of the teaching philosophy.

Like many nineteenth century women of her class, she felt social responsibility for the poor and supported them far beyond the duty expected of a doctor. In 1897 she was asked to visit Rome's asylums and became intrigued with trying to educate the poor and mentally disadvantaged children who were thought to be 'unteachable'. Her first notable success was to have several of her 'unteachable' students pass the State exams for reading and writing with above average scores. These mentally disadvantaged children made her wonder in awe at the untapped potential she might be able to discover in normal children.

After establishing her first school in 1907 she began observing children's reactions to their new environment without any pre-conceived ideas of what would happen –this is what we would call today: 'action research'. She modified the materials originally used on the mentally disadvantaged children in relation to the normal children's usage and her insights formed the basis for her first book, 'The Montessori Method' published in 1912. In this book she describes children as:

- being capable of extended periods of concentration;
- enjoying repetition and order;
- revelling in the freedom of movement and choice;
- enjoying purposeful activities (preferred work to play);
- self-motivated, displaying behaviours that did not require punishments or rewards;
- taking delight in silence and harmony of the environment;

- possessing personal dignity and spontaneous self-discipline;
- being capable of learning to read and write.

Montessori believed that these characteristics represented the potential of humanity. She advocated that all children should be given the opportunity to 'reveal themselves' in a developmentally appropriate environment that would facilitate their natural growth and development. The favourable environment forms one of the key links in the triangle of components at the heart of the Montessori Method. The other two links being the child and the teacher.



Montessori Practice:

A prepared environment

Montessori education seeks to provide the child with an environment ideally suited **to his stage of development which allows him to respond to the inner call of specific 'sensitivities', and the freedom to act in accordance with the natural behavioural** tendencies. This provides a secure and permanent foundation on which to base education, if education is viewed as a method to fulfil the optimum potential of the child in every facet of his emerging personality.

The child needs a place designed to meet these innate sensitivities and tendencies. This place, or 'prepared environment' is different for each developmental plane, but guided by the same principles. The prepared environment and the role of the teacher in the classroom distinguish Montessori from other educational approaches. For example, independent activity constitutes about 80% of the work while teacher-directed activity accounts for the remaining 20%. The reverse percentages are generally true for traditional education. The special environments enable children to perform various tasks which induce thinking about relationships. The logical, sequential nature of the environment provides orderly structures that guide discovery. Every aspect of the curriculum involves creative invention and careful, thoughtful analysis

Montessori materials

The most widespread examples are the Montessori environments prepared for 3-6 year olds. At this formative age the child is consolidating the formation of the self as an individual being that began at birth. The environment is set up as a bridge between the home and the wider world. Montessori called this place a *Casa dei Bambini* or *Children's House*. The first materials the child encounters in this setting are the 'practical life' activities. These are everyday activities, familiar to the child from his home, such as pouring, scrubbing a table, polishing or buttoning. Whilst helping the child's independence by acquiring a particular skill, the main purpose of these activities is to help the child develop his ability to concentrate and to coordinate his movements.

The other areas of the curriculum for the children of this age are the 'sensorial' materials, mathematics, language and culture. The sensorial materials respond to the way the child learns at this age – through the senses rather than the intellect. There are materials for the refinement of each sense, with each activity isolating one particular quality, for example colour, size, loudness, taste or weight. For example, the material known as the pink tower is made up of ten pink cubes of varying sizes. The 3 year-old child constructs a tower with the largest cube on the bottom and the smallest on top. This material isolates the concept of size. The cubes are all the same colour and texture; the only difference is their size.



Other materials isolate different concepts: colour tablets for colour, geometry materials for form, and so on.

As the child's exploration continues, the materials interrelate and build upon each other. The ability to count or calculate, to write or read are by-products of the child's time in this prepared environment, not the goal.

The same applies with language. The subtle preparation the child has been given in this environment – a rich diet of songs, stories, poems, or the control over the movement of the hand through polishing, allows 4 and 5 year olds to effortlessly start to write and read. Montessori education has been using an effective system of synthetic phonics for 100 years.

Finally, the cultural materials bring to the child his world and the animals, plants and people within it. Like everything offered to the child at this age, the materials are sensory-based and are introduced to the child in an orderly way; first the world, then the plants and animals in it; first animals, then mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish; first the concrete – a real plant, then the more abstract pictures or reading that may accompany it.

Sandpaper globe and puzzle map of the world



Tree Puzzle

Materials that aid independence

The materials themselves invite activity. There are bright arrays of solid geometric forms, knobbed puzzle maps, coloured beads, and various specialised rods and blocks. All the materials in a Montessori environment are designed for maximum independence in the child: Everything, including a dustpan and brush, is child sized; activities are laid out in an orderly way on easily accessible open shelves; and the design of the materials make it easy for the child to identify, and gradually correct, any error. This last point all but eliminates the need for correction by a teacher, a feature that has become a mainstay of traditional education. Instead of an external force judging them, the child instead relies on the impersonal judgement that comes from their senses. The guide in the material may be mechanical (all the pieces only fit together one way), it may be visual (the eye checking groups of objects sorted by touch), or there may be an answer sheet. Either way, by coming to rely on his own self-appraisal, the child develops a 'friendly feeling' towards error, setting him on a path to self-improvement.

Background to Montessori Practice

The Montessori method has been and is very popular around the world with early childhood professionals and parents. The Montessori approach is designed to support the natural development of children in a well-prepared environment.

Five basic principles fairly and accurately represent how Montessori educators implement the Montessori method in many kinds of programs. These principles include: 1. respect for the child, 2. the absorbent mind, 3. sensitive periods, 4. the prepared environment, and 5. Auto-education.

1. Respect for the Child

Respect for the child is the cornerstone on which all other Montessori principles rest. As Montessori said,

As a rule, however, we do not respect children. We try to force them to follow us without regard to their special needs. We are overbearing with them, and above all, rude; and then we expect them to be submissive and well-behaved, knowing all the time how strong is their instinct of imitation and how touching their faith in and admiration of us. They will imitate us in any case. Let us treat them, therefore, with all the kindness which we would wish to help to develop in them (Montessori, 1965).

Teachers show respect for children when they help them do things and learn for themselves. When children have choices, they are able to develop the skills and abilities necessary for effective learning autonomy, and positive self-esteem.

2. The Absorbent Mind

Montessori believed that children educate themselves: "It may be said that we acquire knowledge by using our minds; but the child absorbs knowledge directly into his psychic life. Simply by continuing to live, the child learns to speak his native tongue" (Montessori, 1966). This is the concept of the absorbent mind.

Montessori wanted us to understand that children can't help learning. Simply by living, children learn from their environment. Children are born to learn, and they are remarkable learning systems. Children learn because they are thinking

beings. But what they learn depends greatly on their teachers, experiences, and environments.

3. Sensitive Periods

Montessori believed there are sensitive periods when children are more susceptible to certain behaviors and can learn specific skills more easily:

Although all children experience the same sensitive periods (e.g., a sensitive period for writing), the sequence and timing vary for each child. One role of the teacher is to use observation to detect times of sensitivity and provide the setting for optimum fulfillment.

4. The Prepared Environment

Montessori believed that children learn best in a prepared environment, a place in which children can do things for themselves. The prepared environment makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an orderly format. Classrooms Montessori described are really what educators advocate when they talk about child-centered education and active learning. Freedom is the essential characteristic of the prepared environment. Since children within the environment are free to explore materials of their own choosing, they absorb what they find there. A Montessori environment is created for young children to enable them to be independent, active, and learn.

5. Auto-education

Montessori named the concept that children are capable of educating themselves autoeducation (also known as self-education). Children who are actively involved in a prepared environment and who exercise freedom of choice educate themselves. Montessori teachers prepare classrooms so that children educate themselves.

The Teacher's Role

Montessori believed that "it is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may be always ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience" (Montessori, 1967).

The Montessori teacher demonstrates key behaviors to implement this child-centered approach:

- **Make children the center of learning**
- **Encourage children to learn** by providing freedom for them in the prepared environment.
- **Observe children** so as to prepare the best possible environment, recognizing sensitive periods and diverting inappropriate behavior to meaningful tasks.
- **Prepare the learning environment** by ensuring that learning materials are provided in an orderly format and the materials provide for appropriate experiences for all the children.
- **Respect each child** and model ongoing respect for all children and their work.
- **Introduce learning materials**, demonstrate learning materials, and support children's learning. The teacher introduces learning materials after observing each child.

Policies and Procedures

All parents are welcome to go through the Policies and Procedures of Harmony Montessori Nursery . Just contact the Manager or Deputy Manager, on duty to arrange this.

Below are a few points drawn from our Policies which you will find useful.

Settling In and Key Person

The Setting has a system of Key Person allocated to each child for ensuring that your child settles in happily and keep the parents updated on the child's progress. Parents will be informed of the name of the Key Person during setting in period. They will also be your first point of contact if you wish to discuss your child.

The Key Person also ensures that your child's records are up to date and regular observations are recorded.

The nursery staff will, in partnership with you, settle your child into the nursery environment by:

- Providing you with relevant information regarding the policies and procedures of the nursery;
- Encouraging you and your child to visit the nursery during the weeks before an admission is planned;
- Welcoming you to stay with your child during the first week, and gradually reduce stay until your child feels settled and you feel comfortable about leaving your child. Settling in visits and introductory sessions are key to smooth transition and to ensure good communication and information sharing between staff and parents
- Please be prepared and patient if your child is taking longer time settling into the nursery, as it is sometimes hard parting away for both parents and child. Eventually, child progresses and settles;
- Reviewing the nominated key person if the child is bonding with another member of staff to ensure the child's needs are supported
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the nursery, and reassuring them of their child's progress towards settling in.

No child will be taken on an outing from the nursery until s/he is completely settled.

The key person will meet with the parent/s to discuss and review their child's needs 4 weeks after settling in of the child.

Parental Involvement

We believe that in order for children to receive quality care and early learning that suits the individual needs, parents and staff need to work together in a close partnership.

Good communication is key. Please do not hesitate to let us know of any concerns you may have and anything you may be interested in discussing.

The notice board and the monitor in reception area will keep you up to date with nursery news. We will also produce a regular newsletter and contributions from all will be welcome. We will hold regular parents meetings to discuss your child's progress and to update you on the curriculum. There will also be family social events. Our website is another source of communication and information.

We encourage and welcome parents participation in nursery activities please do let us know, if you like to volunteer.

Behaviour

At Harmony Montessori Nursery we encourage mutual respect. Positive, caring and polite behaviour is expected of staff, visitors and parents, and encouraged in children.

The behaviour policy reflects this.

Clothing

Please ensure that your child wears comfortable clothes that are suitable for the weather conditions. We recommend nursery uniform for the child as your child will be involved in messy activities, climbing and exploring some of the time. We will encourage children to wear aprons/outdoor clothing where appropriate and we request you to dress your child in clothes that are easily washable and practical and comfortable footwear.

Please ensure your child doesn't wear jewellery in the nursery. If your child has pierced ears then sleepers or studs may be worn.

Your child will need:-

- A set of spare clothing (socks, underwear, t-shirt, trousers or skirt, jumper or cardigan) in the Gym Bag provided by the Nursery as part of Uniform.
- A pair of wellington boots to keep at nursery.

Food

Please ensure that if your child is in the nursery between the hours of 12 and 1 pm that you provide them with a balanced and healthy packed lunch in a lunchbox or bag labelled with their name. Please note that we do not re-heat food in the Nursery, as per our Food Hygiene Policy.

Please note that **no crisps, nuts or sweets of any kind, are allowed in the nursery.**

Staff will eat with the children and encourage conversation and good manners.

We provide:-

- Water at all times
- Healthy snacks including juice, milk, fruit and vegetables during both morning and afternoon sessions

Trips and Outings

As part of the early learning planning, the nursery will arrange local visits and walks in the neighbourhood to support children's knowledge, understanding and experiences. For example, they could learn about different kinds of food and cooking ingredients during a trip to a supermarket, or collect objects of interest for a collage or table display during a walk in the park.

For your child to take part in such activities we require your written permission. Please see the permission slip.

All outings away from the nursery will be assessed to identify risks and put measures in place to ensure children, staff and assistants are safe during their time away from the nursery.

Adult to child ratios will be higher than normal on these occasions and we would welcome any parents who would feel able to accompany us on short walks and trips.

Please note that separate letters and permission slips will be sent out for visits and trips further afield.

We are planning future trips to museums, galleries, the theatre and places of natural beauty or of particular interest. Details will be given well in advance.

Nursery Hours and Late Collection

Please try to drop off your child at the beginning of the session in order for them and others to benefit fully from the session. If you are going to be late do please try to let us know.

Children must be collected punctually at the end of each session. A charge is made for late collection at a rate of £5 for each 15 minutes or part thereof.

If your child is going to be collected by another person on a regular or one-off basis we would like you to introduce us to this person. If this is not possible (for example an emergency) then please let us know and we will issue a password to ensure safe collection.

Health and Safety

Most of our members of staff have a Paediatric First Aid Qualification, and there will always be one of these members of staff on duty.

Sickness and Illness

Children should not be dropped at nursery if they are unwell. If a child is unwell then they will prefer to be at home with their parent/s rather than at nursery with their peers. We will follow these procedures to ensure the welfare of all children within the nursery:

- If a child becomes ill during the nursery day, their parents will be contacted and asked to pick their child up as soon as possible. During this time the child will be cared for in a quiet, calm area with their key person.
- If a child has an infectious disease such as an eye/ear infection or vomiting and diarrhoea, or the child is on prescribed antibiotics, they should not return to nursery until they have been clear for at least 48 hours;
- It is vital that we follow the advice given to us by our registering authority and exclude specific contagious conditions, e.g. vomiting and diarrhoea and chicken pox, to protect other children in the nursery. Illnesses of this nature are very contagious and it is very unfair to expose other children to the risk of an infection
- If a contagious infection is identified in the nursery, parents will be informed to enable them to spot the early signs of this illness. All equipment and resources that may have come into contact with a contagious child will be cleaned and sterilised thoroughly to reduce the spread of infection;
- It is important that children are not subjected to the rigours of the nursery day, which requires socialising with other children and being part of a group setting, when they first become ill enough to require a course of

- antibiotics. Our policy, therefore, is to exclude children on antibiotics for the first 48 hours of the course
- The nursery has the right to refuse admission to a child who is unwell. This decision will be taken by the manager on duty and is non-negotiable;
 - If head lice are present within the nursery, posters and advice leaflets will be displayed and provided. Parents are asked to check their children's hair regularly, treat as required and inform the nursery if head lice are present.

Meningitis procedure

If a parent informs the nursery that their child has meningitis, the nursery manager should contact the Infection Control (IC) Nurse for their area, and Ofsted. The IC Nurse will give guidance and support in each individual case. If parents do not inform the nursery, we will be contacted directly by the IC Nurse and the appropriate support will be given.

Transporting children to hospital procedure

- If the sickness is severe, staff will call for an ambulance immediately. They will not transport the sick child in their own vehicles.
- While waiting for the ambulance, we will contact the child's parent and arrange to meet them at the hospital
- A senior member of staff will accompany the child and collect together registration forms, relevant medication sheets, medication and the child's comforter. A member of the management team will be informed immediately

Medication

We will administer prescription medication that is required for long-term conditions.

If your child is prescribed a short course of medication or if you wish your child to be given medication that has not been prescribed, please see the manager on duty who will go through the nursery's policy on medication we may and may not give.

If your child develops a temperature while in the nursery and you cannot be contacted we are able, with your prior written permission at the manager's discretion, to administer liquid paracetamol (Calpol). We will record the time and dosage and inform you in writing.

Explore

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