

1. What is the Montessori Method?

The Montessori Method is named after its founder, Dr. Maria Montessori. This approach to education emphasises the potential of the child from birth through adolescence, and develops this potential by offering environments of uniquely designed learning materials under the direction of trained Montessori teachers. Maria Montessori felt that the goal of early education should be the cultivation of the child's own natural desire to learn. It is a psychologically-rooted method that takes the developmental needs of the child as the basis and foundation for learning.

2. How are the classes structured?

Alpha International Montessori School educates children from 18 months to 12 years of age.

We offer five multi-age groupings:

Toddlers (18 months to 2 years)

Twos (2-3 years)

Pre-school (3-6 years)

Lower Elementary (6-9 years)

Upper Elementary (9-12 years)

3. How does the classroom work?

The classroom is a scientifically designed environment that includes developmental learning materials and activities. These are sequential, meant to be experienced over a three-year cycle (*Pre-school and above*). The classrooms are child-centred and children have freedom of choice and movement within them. Trained and certified teachers form an integral component of this prepared environment, helping children to learn respect for self and for others. Multi-aged Montessori classrooms offer an inherent motivator for the children to constantly challenge themselves. Younger children have models for emulation, while older children can reinforce their knowledge by helping the younger ones. This helps development of confidence, independence and leadership. Each child thus has the opportunity to experience being the youngest, middle, and oldest member of a group. Children can progress at their own pace and level of understanding: a child's progress is measured against his or her own ability not that of others. The Montessori classroom is able to adapt to the individual needs of each child and

offers diversity, stimulation and the opportunity to develop.

4.□□□ Montessori - isn't that where they let the children do what they like?

There is sometimes misunderstanding about the concept of freedom in the Montessori approach. In a true Montessori school the concept of freedom is a freedom within limits - learning to consider and respect what your peers are doing in a specially prepared classroom. The children are free to choose among options of positive value but are not given license to run riot!

5.□□□ Are Montessori schools religious?

The Montessori philosophy itself is not religiously oriented; Dr. Montessori used scientific methods to develop means for teaching children. Alpha International Montessori School seeks to develop harmony within diversity. The celebration of holidays and traditions is treated as another learning experience in the classroom, with sharing of songs, food, and snacks from cultures around the world.

6.□□□ How will my child adjust to a traditional school after a Montessori school?

Studies show that generally Montessori children adjust well and are often among the better students. They spend their time productively, are self-directed with a positive attitude towards learning, and are able to socialize effectively.

7.□□□ If my child is left to choose his/her own projects, won't he do the same thing day in and day out, or do nothing at all?

At Alpha International Montessori School our staff are trained to observe children as they work. When a child has mastered a skill, the teacher will give the child the next lesson that is more challenging, and appropriate to the age and interest of each child. The prepared environment

offers many stimulating choices for the child and it is seldom that they 'do nothing'.

8. Are lunches and snacks provided by the school?

As part of their 'practical life exercises' children help to set the table. Children need healthy and fresh food and we encourage them to know what they are eating.

- The children have a **morning snack**, which they bring from home each day. A morning snack should be in a box or bag, and could consist of unseeded fruit or a few biscuits, some milk or fruit juice.
- Full-day children have an **afternoon snack**, provided by the school.
- Full-day children have **lunch** at school. The menu changes every day[1], but always includes soup, a main dish and some fresh fruit for dessert.

9. Why is a 5-day school week necessary for the younger Montessori child?

The Montessori classroom experience is structured around five consecutive days to allow children to learn spontaneously and smoothly. A child that misses school every other day does not have the same opportunity to pursue her/his unfolding interests. Consistency develops the social and working community of the class.

10. What does the teacher do?

Montessori teachers guide the children's interest. The teacher prepares the environment and provides stimulation to each child to ensure development and progress towards self-discipline. Montessori teachers are specially trained for the age group with which they work, i.e. toddlers and twos, three to six year olds, and elementary level. The training is comprehensive and thorough for specific developmental stages.

11. What is the Montessori Curriculum?

The Montessori Curriculum at all levels is developed around the developmental needs of the child and is presented in the form of lessons as the child shows interest and readiness. Activities are geared towards facilitating independence, language acquisition, movement, exploration of the senses, and nurturing of absorbent minds.

[1] The Lunch Menu is available from the office.