

Pacific Montessori Society UNIFORM POLICY

Effective Date: June 6, 2011

POLICY STATEMENT

Independence, individuality and choice are the cornerstones of Selkirk Montessori's philosophy. Accordingly, we believe children and families have the right to choose appropriate clothing for school attire. Teaching good decision-making skills is promoted by providing an understanding of, and opportunity for, appropriate choices.

POLICY RATIONALE

An analysis of the basic tenets of Montessori philosophy leads to the conclusion that imposing school uniforms contradicts the underpinnings of choice and personal responsibility. School policy must follow from fundamental beliefs about learning and development. There must be consistency and integrity throughout.

Basic Tenets of Selkirk Montessori School:

- The child has an innate desire to learn
- The child has "an absorbent mind"
- Children will teach themselves. They are self-motivated.
- The pace of learning is determined by the individual child.
- The choice of activities is determined by the child.
- Children learn by doing; from the concrete to the abstract.
- The child will "seek to achieve".
- The child learns best in a social environment that is multi-aged.
- Children learn from each other.
- The child learns through real-life skills.
- The teacher's job is "to follow the child"

When determining policy our school always looks to the tenets of the Montessori Method, originated by Maria Montessori. Some of her quotes that were reviewed in the formation and determination of this policy follow:

"No one is free unless he is independent: therefore, the first active manifestation of the child's individual liberty must be so guided that through this activity, he arrives at independence."

"We must ... quit our roles as jailers and instead take care to prepare an environment in which we do as little as possible to exhaust the child with our surveillance and instruction."

“In their dealings with children, adults do not become egotistic but egocentric. They look upon everything pertaining to a child’s soul from their own point of view and, consequently, their misapprehensions increase.”

“It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience.”

“Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity, which is derived from a sense of independence.”

“Character formation cannot be taught. It comes from experience and not from explanation.”

“If teaching is to be effective with young children, it must assist them to advance on the way to independence. It must initiate them into those kinds of activities which they can perform themselves and which keep them from being a burden to others because of their inabilities. We must help them to learn how to walk without assistance, to run, to go up and down the stairs, to pick up fallen objects, to dress and undress, to wash themselves, to express their needs in a way that is clearly understood, and to attempt to satisfy their desires through their own efforts. All this is part of an education for independence.”

Maria Montessori

POLICY

The very core of Montessori is respect for the individual child’s development. Montessori honours the child’s process of becoming. This honouring is achieved through a trust and belief that the child has the innate capacity to become all he/she can be. Imposing school uniforms dramatically shifts the trust in individual growth from the child to the adult. The power that should rest with the child is taken by the adult in order to induce conformity. Teaching good decision-making skills is not promoted by eliminating choice. The skills are taught by life examples so that good decisions can be made. When viewed from this perspective, it is seen that school uniforms are a fundamental contradiction in all we believe about children and learning.

Selkirk Montessori School does not impose a dress code on its students and staff. Instead we follow the guidelines of practical dress. Students are expected to wear attire that allows them to comfortably attend lessons on the carpet, gym and music lessons, and move freely about the school without undergarments showing. When inappropriate clothing choices have been made students will be given a pair of sweatpants or sweatshirt to wear for the remainder of the day. More importantly, students will have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on appropriate choices of clothing for the setting with the guidance of a teacher or administrator.