

Te Awamutu Montessori Pre School



762 Te Rahu Road, Te Awamutu, PO Box 196, Te Awamutu

PHONE: 07 - 871 2824 EMAIL: admin@tams.co.nz

www.tams.co.nz

The Parent Handbook

Welcome to Te Awamutu Montessori Preschool, Parent Handbook. This handbook is a guide to commonly asked questions. If you have a question that is not covered in this handbook please feel free to contact us.

Absences and Sickness

If a child is absent from school for any reason it is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to contact us via text, email or phone. If a child is absent for longer than 21 consecutive days his WINZ and government funding will cease and the parent or caregiver will be liable to cover these costs.

If a child is going to be absent for more than one week, then their place will be held for them by the payment of their fees thereafter for their enrolled days.

It is the parent or caregiver's responsibility to keep a sick child who is at risk of infecting the other children and staff at home and inform the school of his illness. Any child or teacher showing signs of sickness at Te Awamutu Montessori Pre School will be sent home to minimise the risk of the illness spreading.

If a child is absent due to a contagious sickness such as chickenpox or conjunctivitis, a doctor's note must be provided to Te Awamutu Montessori Pre School with the child's return date. If any child is diagnosed with a contagious disease an information pamphlet will be posted in all children's information pockets so parents may monitor their own child for symptoms. We will inform any non-immunised children's families and they can keep their children at home until the outbreak has passed.

Attendance Register

Te Awamutu Montessori Pre School is required by the Ministry of Education to ensure all children are signed in and out of preschool. An attendance register is kept in the centre's foyer for parents to sign as they arrive and leave. The attendance register is a legal document audited by the Ministry of education, therefore accurate times are essential.

Belongings

It is important all belongings that come to preschool are named including school bag, spare clothing and items for news time. When belongings are named it is easy to return them to their rightful owner. If any belongings are found with no name they are kept in lost property.

Celebrations (Birthday/Leaving Day)

In a Montessori environment there are special celebrations which are held to acknowledge birthdays and when leaving Montessori Pre School. We ask families for a picture from each year of their child's life so far to celebrate all the milestones they have reached. This will be put on the wall during the month of their birthday and then saved in their portfolio to add to until they leave.

A final celebration occurs on a child's leaving day when they are presented with their fully bound portfolio and all their work, paintings, sewing, creations they have saved as special examples.

All families are welcome to share in these celebrations, and if cakes are brought, please ensure they are small cup cake or muffin types, as these are easier to distribute and eat!

Change of Attendance

If you wish to change the days your child attends school please fill in the change of attendance form, attached to your enrolment form, Tania our administrator can help you with this. Changes will be made when spaces become available on your requested days.

Collection of Children

Our school policy on the collection of children has been made for the safety and protection of the children. Only those people listed on your child's enrolment form may pick them up from school. Names of caregivers with permission to pick-up children can be added (or removed) from an enrolment form at any time. To help our staff, if there are Court orders (copies must be supplied) against any family member gaining access to a child, a photo would be helpful to keep with the child's records.

Siblings in the Classroom during pick up and drop off times

Siblings are very welcome for a quick visit when dropping off or picking up their brother or sister but parents are asked to ensure that siblings do not touch the Montessori activities and are supervised at all times.

Communication with Parents

Te Awamutu Montessori Preschool values quality communication with parent's caregivers and the wider community. Methods of communication include the website, parent/teacher meetings, parent discussion evenings, regular newsletters, information in the children's portfolios and a notice board in the foyer. Each family also has its own parent pocket where current information pamphlets, permission slips and latest newsletters are kept for parents to pick up.

Communication with the Teaching Team and Administrator

It is often hard to talk with the teachers at drop off and pick-up time as they are often engaged with the children. If you have a question or comment that is not urgent please write it in the "communication book" which is located by the attendance register.

If you wish to talk to a teacher regarding your child you can request an after preschool meeting at any time.

For enquiries regarding administration please see Tania during the morning or leave her a message and a number to get in touch with you in the Parents communication book.

Complaints Procedure

Please see complaints procedure which is always displayed in our foyer, or

Contact:

Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand (MANZ) eo@montessori.org.nz

Ministry of Education Hamilton 07 858 7130

Nuts

Please be aware that some children have peanut allergies or develop a sensitivity to foods. We will advise all families as soon as we know of a child at our preschool with a serious allergy and that food will not be suitable.

Holidays

Te Awamutu Montessori Pre School is open throughout the year with a probable three week close down period between Christmas and New Year.

If your family takes a holiday during the year please inform Tania so that absences can be accounted for. If the planned holiday is longer than three weeks please also see Tania as soon as possible as it may cause complications with your child's 20 hour ECE funding.

There is a possibility of after pre school care if demand increases. Please let Tania know if you are interested and what time you may require, e.g. half hour, one hour etc.

Independence of the child

At the core of the Montessori Philosophy lies the independence of the child. Please be aware of allowing your child to be independent and perform tasks for himself. Examples of this at preschool would be carrying his own school bag, finding his own name tag, putting his lunchbox and water bottle in the correct place.

Pocket Treasures

Occasionally children may take home pieces of equipment from the classroom. This is a common trait with this age group as they explore the boundaries of what belongs to them and others. We ask that parents regularly look through school bags and support their child in returning any school equipment to a teacher as the Montessori materials are very expensive to replace.

Mat Time News

Each day a special mat time is held where children show items from home to their friends. The items that children show must be of interest to the child, for example a shell they found at the beach or an old family photo etc. Toys are not permitted unless there is a special reason for them, for example a small car that was given as a gift from a special family member.

Each day there are only three spots for mat time news. The children sign their names on a list as they arrive at preschool and if the list is full they must wait until the next day they attend.

Any items that come to preschool as part of news time must be placed in the news time basket or given to a teacher if they are of value or fragile.

Four Year Old Enrolments

Unless a child has previously attended a Montessori Pre School, it is very challenging for the child to adapt to the expectations and practices in a Montessori environment.

Please discuss on a case by case basis with the Head Teacher.

Getting Ready for Preschool

School Bag

Collecting together items for your child's school bag is an important part of starting preschool. Allow your child help to choose his bag and to pack it full of everything he needs.

*It is important that all your child's belongings are named including the bag, lunch box, water bottle and clothing.

Clothing

It is really important that your child is dressed appropriately in clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Clothes need to be functional and comfortable for working in the classroom as well as outside. Please ensure your child has at least one complete change of clothes (including underpants) in his school bag every day. Accidents do happen and children often get wet and dirty from water play during summer time and mud in the winter time.

During the winter months please supply your child with a zip up jacket as this can be put on and off independently. They will also need a raincoat and gumboots for rainy days.

Hat

Hats are compulsory all year round as we support the Ministry of Education's 'No hat – No play' policy. Named hats can be kept in the hat basket at school or in your child's school bag.

Shoes

Sensible seasonal shoes should be worn to school each day for outside activities. During the winter slippers should be worn for comfort in the classroom.

To ensure your child can independently put on and remove their own shoes, appropriate shoes should be supplied according to your child's age. For example; three to five year olds should have Velcro or slip on shoes whereas a five to six year old child could be challenged with laces.

Morning Tea

Morning tea consists of a fruit platter prepared and served by the children. Children add a piece of fruit or vegetable to the fruit basket as this allows them to share his part in this group activity.

Te Awamutu Montessori supplies other snack food such as crackers, cheese, marmite etc

Process cooking is available for each child daily.

Medication and Medicine Register

All medicine to be administered during preschool hours must be signed into the Medical Register by a parent or caregiver.

All medicine must be **prescribed by a doctor** and display a current label with your child's name, dosage and expiry date.

Pamol or medicine that moderates temperatures will not be given to recently sick children as this can inhibit the ability of the teaching staff to assess if the child is seriously sick. However, Pamol or pain relievers may be administered if they are **prescribed by a doctor** for acute on-going conditions such as ear infections.

If your child has an on-going medical condition and needs to keep medication at school for example; an asthma inhaler or Epi-pen, please ensure you fill out a long term medicine form available from our Administrator.

Morning Tea/Afternoon Tea Fruit basket

Please encourage your child to place a piece of fruit or a vegetable in the fruit basket every day they attend. Families are welcome to bring a whole week's fruit or vegies to preschool on their first day of attendance if this is easier. This is not compulsory however it helps your child to feel they are contributing and a part of our Montessori Environment.

Parent Library

We have some books and information available for families. Parents are welcome to borrow these items and return them within the specified time frame (2 weeks) so they can be enjoyed by the whole school community. Please sign out your book with Tania, thank you.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Parent/teacher meetings are held every second term for those who would like to catch up on their child's recent achievements and challenges. This is also a great time to discuss how you can support your child's learning at home.

The meetings are held on different afternoons of the week each term, which we hope helps everyone in being able to meet with a teacher throughout the year.

Please arrange at any time during the term, to meet with your teacher, if you would just like to have a catch up.

Personal Toys at Preschool

Please encourage your child to leave toys at home rather than in their bags at preschool. The lure of toys in the bag can be too tempting for some children even if it is not their own! Te Awamutu Montessori will not take responsibility for any toys that come to school and subsequently go missing or get broken.

Any items that come to school as part of news time must be placed in the news time basket or given to a teacher if they are of value or fragile.

Portfolio

To document each child's learning journey with Te Awamutu Montessori, a beautiful portfolio is developed over time full of information and photographs. Your child's portfolio is an important tool in creating a link between his school and home environment. Parents are encouraged to add their own memories to the portfolio, for example, pictures of their family and stories from holidays and special family celebrations. Portfolios live at school, but go home at the end of each term for families to share. Please sign your portfolio out on the sheet supplied. We would appreciate them coming back at the beginning of the next term.

Sunscreen

All children must be protected from the sun during the summer months. Please ensure your child has sufficient sunscreen cover before school in terms one and four. Screen will be reapplied by the teachers after lunch.

If you wish your child to use a specific sunscreen please name it and supply this to the preschool.

Withdrawing a Child from Preschool

Te Awamutu Montessori requires four weeks written notice of your intention to withdraw your child from school. This not only enables us to notify the next family on the waiting list that a space has become available but allows the teachers to plan for your child's leaving ceremony. Notice given under this time will mean that you are liable for all fees up to the date of the termination of enrolment.

Fees

Outside of the 20 free hours for 3 – 6 year olds, there are charges due fortnightly in advance. WINZ allowances are also available for some families, please see Tania if you think you may be eligible. A non refundable deposit of \$60.00 is payable on enrolling at Te Awamutu Montessori pre school. This ensures your place at our centre (if available, immediately) or on our waiting list. Four week's notice needs to be given in writing if you wish to withdraw your child from our centre. You will continue to be liable for fees on your enrolled days up to the date when your enrolment contract finishes.

Before Starting Preschool

Before your child starts at Te Awamutu Montessori Preschool, you will be asked to attend two pre enrolment visits.

Parent Visit:

The first visit is the 'parent introduction visit' with our Head Teacher. This visit is held after school to ensure ample time for a complete overview of the classroom routine, procedures and for your questions to be answered.

Child Visit:

The second visit is the 'child's orientation visit. The visit is usually set for around 10am on a day close to your child's start date. The visit lasts for approximately one hour and is to familiarise your child with the classroom and its teachers before his first day. A parent or caregiver must be with your child during this visit.

Food

Te Awamutu Montessori Pre School, has a healthy eating policy and so we encourage parents to provide healthy food. Most lunch boxes consist of a sandwich, fruit, yogurt and one treat item. From time to time you may wish to provide your child with a small pot of rice, pasta, beans or soup. These pots will be warmed by the teachers for your child to eat. The children are taught to eat in sequence beginning with their sandwich and ending with their treat. Please ensure that you supply food that is familiar to your child for example; if crusts are removed at home then please do so for school.

Water is available at all times at pre school. Please support us by just giving your child water if they prefer a drink bottle at lunch time.

Special Requirements

If your child has any special requirements for example; long term medication or an allergy, please ensure this is clearly stated on the enrolment form and discussed at the parent introduction visit. This information will allow the teaching team to plan for your child's needs before they start preschool ensuring a smooth transition.

How to approach telling your child about preschool

It's usually best to introduce your child to the idea of preschool a few days before they start. Too much advanced warning can cause anxiety and too little warning can be a shock. Talk to your child and reassure them about what will happen during their day at preschool. It is also a good idea to give them a simple explanation of what you will be doing while they are at preschool.

Preschool routines

The routine of the preschool day remains consistent because preschool aged children love order and repetition. A description of a typical day can be found on our website and will be discussed at the parent introduction visit.

Toileting

Many newly enrolled children are often in the early stages of toilet training, in which case the teachers regularly remind, and actively encourage them to go to the toilet. In many cases starting preschool helps the child complete their toilet training as they are eager to copy their older peers. During the early days children may well have accidents as they get too involved in their activities. These accidents create a perfect learning opportunity for the child to complete their understanding of toileting and caring for themselves. Include plenty of spare underpants and we also have spares at pre school.