

# MONTESSORI PARENT GUIDE

## 6-12 Years



# What do you need to know to choose a Montessori education for your primary child?

## Choosing an education for your child is one of the most important decisions you may make as a parent/whānau.

You may have made the choice to immerse your family/whānau in the Montessori method of education until now, and it's time to investigate the possibility of further education in Montessori, or this might be your first experience. Either way, the choice you make now will have a big impact on your child's primary years and stand them in good stead for their high school years.

Being informed about your choices helps you to make good decisions for your family/whānau, your tamariki (child), and their future.

### Montessori is a philosophy.

There is diversity within the Montessori community worldwide and each school is unique, reflecting its interpretation and practice of Montessori philosophy, Montessori training of kaiako (teacher(s)), the staff and family/whānau, the facilities, resources available and the vision of the school.

Parents frequently ask: "So, how do I know it is really Montessori?"

What are the essential elements of Montessori education?

What should you be looking for when you are considering a Montessori education for your child in their primary years?

Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand (MANZ) has produced this *Parent Guide* to help you better understand Montessori education and to find answers to your questions about Montessori.

# Understanding your Parent Guide

This *Parent Guide* may help you answer the question ‘Can Montessori education meet my child’s needs (including emotional, spiritual and academic) at this stage of their life?’

## Your Parent Guide is in four sections:

- [1. Vision and Leadership](#)
- [2. The Learning Environment](#)
- [3. The Kaiako \(teacher\)](#)
- [4. The Community](#)

In each section we have identified the following:

**Essential Elements ...** are provided to help you better understand what Montessori can offer your child. These elements are aligned to the *Montessori Journey to Excellence Te Ara Ki Huhuatanga (MJ2Ex): Essential Elements* a document schools and kaiako are able to use as a tool for internal evaluation.

**What it looks like ...** examples are given of how each Essential Element may ‘look’ in practice.

**Questions to ask staff ...** some questions that you could ask the staff are provided.

**Questions to ask yourself ...** by observing in a Montessori school or classroom you can answer some of your own questions.

# Visting and observing a Montessori class

## **Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand (MANZ) recommends visiting a Montessori primary classroom/school to observe.**

When you observe, you will usually be asked to sit somewhere unobtrusive. This is so that your presence becomes less obvious. When we stand and walk around, our presence grabs attention because we are so much bigger than most primary children and take up more space. Our presence is like a magnet, pulling the children's attention. If adults quietly sit on a chair at the edges of the classroom observing, their presence tends to recede into the background more, and tamariki will likely carry on as if they were not there. This will allow you to see the class as it actually is and decide if this is somewhere your child/ren will be happy.

When you observe, be sure to take paper and pen so you can make notes of what you see, questions you wish to ask and of your overall impressions. The kaiako might not be available to answer your questions at the time of observation but you can always ask when and how would be a good time for you to ask questions. It is also good practice to visit more than once if possible so you can deepen your understanding of what the Montessori class at this level has to offer your child. You could also visit some state school classes at the same level to understand how Montessori communities offer a different experience for ākonga (students) at this level.

This Parent Guide may help you answer the question 'Can Montessori education meet my child's needs (emotional, spiritual, and academic) at this stage of their life?'

# Visting and observing a Montessori class

## In Aotearoa, there are several models for Montessori primary education.

- 1. A Montessori classroom, referred to as a Montessori Unit in a state school.**

This is by far the most widespread option for Montessori primary classes. In this case, the classrooms sit within a state school. Ākonga are enrolled in the school and under the usual protocols for that school. Most of our Montessori units were set up by parents who had children in local preschools and wanted their tamariki to continue in a Montessori primary classroom. There are several Units throughout the country and each will have different processes for enrolling and how they operate within their particular school.

Units in a state school have to operate within the provenance of the greater school they are situated in, however, most operate with a trust of some sort that helps the unit with its Montessori character.
- 2. Private Montessori Schools.**

There are a few fully private Montessori Primary programmes. Usually, this is a school that enrolls tamariki from 3 to 12 years, or from 6-12 years.
- 3. State Integrated Montessori School.**

There is one state integrated Montessori school, offering education from 3 - 18 years.

# Navigating your Parent Guide

## Contents:

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# Vision and Leadership



**The leadership vision and advocacy within Montessori communities is key to ensuring that the quality of Montessori implementation is upheld in all Governance and Management decisions. Leadership encompasses boards, committees, Parent Trusts, owners, management and head kaiako.**

# Vision and Leadership

## Essential Element One:

The school has a lived vision on how to be a great Montessori school.

### What this results in:

- There is a trust governance document or charter that explicitly explains the importance of Montessori to the school or unit and the steps it takes to ensure it remains so (you could probably see this on their website to check).
- The school board and/or trust makes both short and long term decisions that ensure adherence to Montessori philosophy and education.
- The school or unit has a solid reputation for being consistently Montessori.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What do you do when someone suggests you include another approach?
- Is there a fact sheet of the basic principles you adhere to and is this common knowledge?
- How do you decide what to focus on?
- Do you have Montessori experts come to review your school to help you set goals?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- What are the priorities of this school that I can see, and do they fit with my family/whānau priorities?
- Do we think our tamariki will thrive in this kind of school?
- Why are we thinking of making this change (if you are not carrying on from preschool)?

# Vision and Leadership

## Essential Element Two:

Leadership ensures Montessori kaiako working in the akomanga with ākonga are Montessori trained.

### What this results in:

- Kaiako working with ākonga are either in training or have completed a Montessori primary teacher training programme that includes face to face delivery. They know how to use the materials, how to run the class and how to respond to each student where they are.
- The classroom works efficiently, ākonga are engaged, and learning is assured.
- Any untrained kaiako are supported directly by trained teachers to ensure that their work is in line with the philosophy of the school.
- Training is encouraged and supported by the school/trust.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How do you go about obtaining staff trained in the Montessori philosophy and way of teaching?
- What process do you go through to make sure they are staying true to that?
- How many of your staff hold a Montessori primary teacher training?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- What is different about how kaiako interact with ākonga than we were expecting?
- Has the training made a difference to what the teachers do in the class, and how they are with students?

# Vision and Leadership

## Essential Element Three:

There is an avenue for parents/whānau to learn about the philosophy and functioning of the school.

### What this results in:

- There are regular opportunities for family/whānau to learn about what kind of education their child/ren are receiving.
- Current families/whānau are knowledgeable about what their child/ren are doing at school.
- There are current families/whānau for prospective families/whānau to talk to who are knowledgeable about the school's ethos.

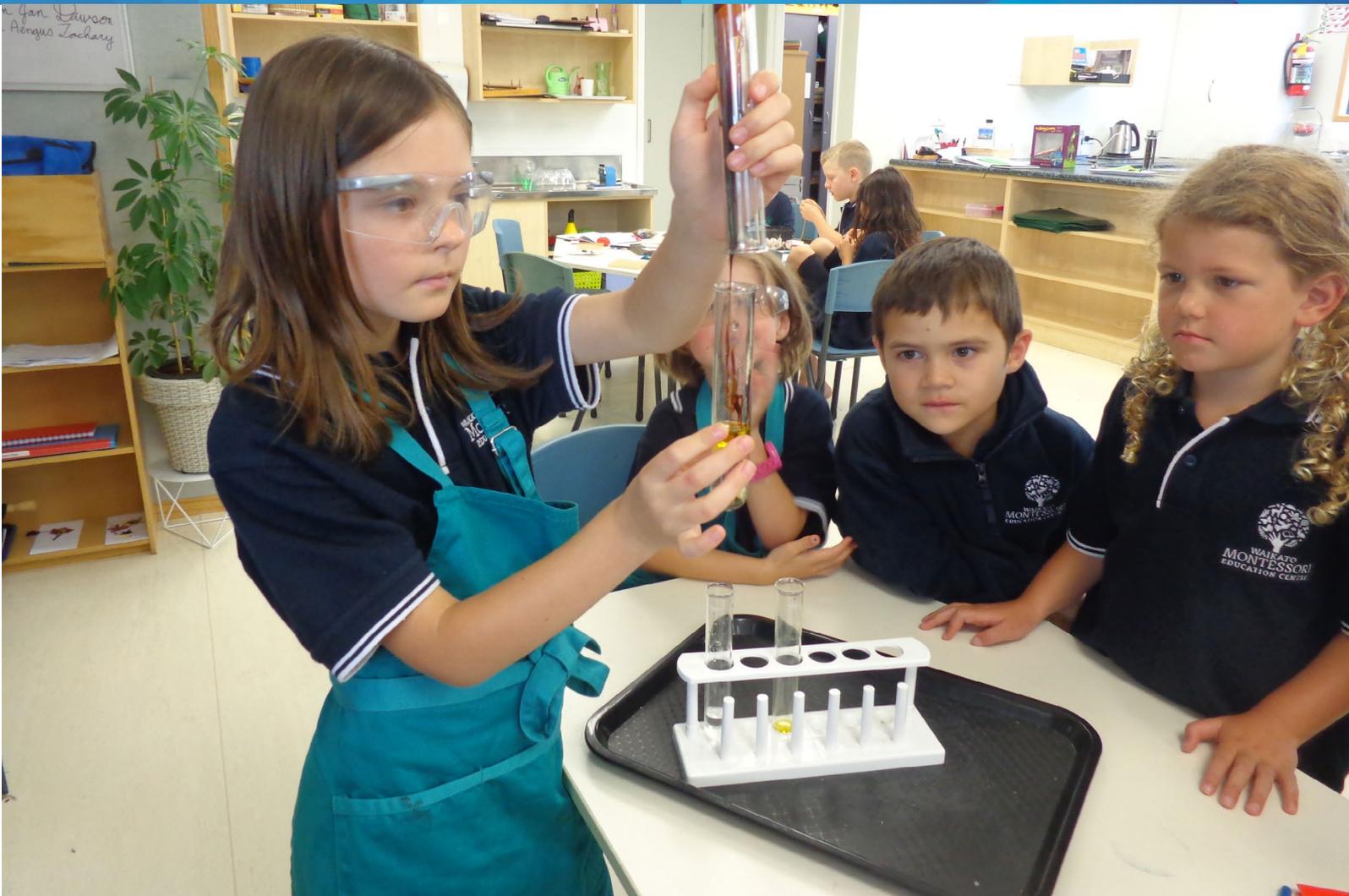
### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What kind of opportunities are there for me/us to learn more about what happens in the class if my/our child/ren comes here?
- Is there a family/whānau with someone my child's age I could talk to about the school and how it works?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Are we committed to learning more about this style of education?
- Does this sound like a good fit with our family values?

# The Learning Environment



**The Montessori environment consists of the physical space (both indoors and out), the materials, tools and equipment provided for ākonga activity, the stories told and ideas discussed, the adults and the students. The environment also embodies the ambience found within the culture and interactions of the community members.**

# The Learning Environment

## Essential Element One:

The Montessori classroom is characterised by multi-aged groupings of three or more years.

### What this results in:

- Montessori primary ages can be grouped together into one or broken into two age groups: 6-9 years and 9-12 years, or 6-12 years.
- In the classrooms, ākonga are taught in integrated classes of three-year age groupings, starting at 6 or across the full primary span.
- Older students help younger students and younger ākonga have role models to follow.
- Students step in to help in social or academic situations, reinforcing their own knowledge in the process.
- Ākonga have the same teacher for the whole three or six years, so that they know each student very well.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What are your age groupings in the classes and how do lessons get taught across several ages?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- How do we think our child will benefit from this kind of grouping?

# The Learning Environment

## Essential Element Two:

The Montessori Primary Environment is orderly, beautiful, and calm. It is set out in such a way as the materials are easily accessible and there is freedom of movement, choice, workmates and long uninterrupted periods of time for engagement and concentration. Preferably there is a kitchen included in the environment.

### What this results in:

- An environment that looks quite different from a traditional primary classroom.
- There is often a large open area that can be used for working on the floor as well as tables and chairs where groups of ākonga can work.
- Work periods of three hours are regularly offered to students - at least five mornings a week, more if the timetable of the school allows.
- There will be shelves with appropriate and supporting resources which are available to ākonga as needed. The shelves are usually grouped in areas that contain a variety of similar content - such as mathematics, geometry, history, geography, botany, zoology etc.
- There are small and large group workspaces as well as a few spaces for ākonga to work alone if needed.
- Views of and access to the outdoors will be easy and frequent.
- The outdoors will be a part of the working space and will be used frequently. Gardens will be part of this.
- The classroom will include areas for art, music, messy work, cooking as well as more academic areas. Ākonga have access to and are engaged in work in these areas as an ongoing part of their programme, not just when specialist teachers come to give lessons.

# The Learning Environment

## Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- Is this your ideal space or are you still working on it? If you are still working on it, what are you wanting to add/change?
- What kind of access do ākonga have to resources?

## Questions you could ask yourself

- How would our child/ren work in this space?
- Can we see students engaged in activities that we think would be attractive to our child/ren?
- Can this school cater for the particular needs and interests of our tamariki?

# The Learning Environment

## Essential Element Three:

The design of the environment fosters independent learning, engaged learners, variety, movement, and socialisation.

### What this results in:

- Most ākonga work whether kaiako are near or not.
- Students have long uninterrupted periods of time in which to work on areas of need or interest.
- They can use multiple ways to gain answers to questions or solve problems they might have – peers, resources, and adults — leading to greater problem solving instead of relying on kaiako for every answer.
- Students move their bodies as they need, having a snack if they are hungry, accessing resources to aid their learning, moving from one activity to the next at their own pace.
- Most lessons are carried out in groups and work time often involves discussion and problem-solving conversations.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How is the day structured to allow the student to meet their needs?
- How does that aid their engagement in learning?
- How do you make sure ākonga are productive learners throughout the day?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Are the students peaceful, engaged, interacting positively with each other?
- Are ākonga moving freely about the room and is that movement, for the most part, purposeful?

# The Learning Environment

## Essential Element Four:

The environment, including the curriculum and routines, allows the human tendencies, needs and characteristics of ākonga in this plane of development to be met.

### What this results in:

- Each ākonga is learning what they need as they need to.
- Different abilities and learning preferences are catered for.
- Students are learning to be in social groups and there are systems to help ākonga master both social interactions and social conflict.
- The classroom routines and layout allow for learning across the curriculum.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How do we know our child is learning what they need to learn as an Aotearoa New Zealand student?
- Our child is particularly interested in..... How will this be catered for in this school?
- How does freedom work at this level?
- What happens if our child/ren doesn't choose to work?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- How will our child/ren react to the freedom and choice in this environment?
- Will their special interests be encouraged at this school?

# The Learning Environment

## Essential Element Five:

Ākonga are not limited to the classroom and kaiako for their learning. A Going-Out programme for student-initiated field trips, excursions and outings is in place.

### What this results in:

- Students go out in small groups to extend their learning. For the youngest ākonga, this could be going outside the classroom to use the grounds, visit the library etc. Once they have mastered this and are fully in the Second Plane of Development (6-12 years) they start leaving the school grounds to further their learning.
- Trained adults ‘chaperone’ these trips for safety only, often trailing behind the students. Ākonga are in charge of planning and implementing these experiences, and hopefully, get to experience what happens if something goes wrong as well as right.
- The Going-Out programme allows the students to extend their academic learning as well as experience the different roles adults play in society.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How does your programme make use of wider resources in the community, people and places?
- What is the process for students moving out of the school grounds?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Would we be comfortable with our child leaving the school grounds? like this?
- What benefit would our child gain from that wider exposure?
- Do we know of experiences that might benefit the classroom?
- Could we be a chaperone with the Going-Out programme?

# The Learning Environment

## Essential Element Six:

Ākonga take part in ensuring the environment meets their needs.

### What this results in:

- Students have ownership of their environment and are confident participants in it.
- Ākonga take part daily in ensuring their environment is kept clean and tidy and ready for the next day.
- Students take responsibility for the resources in the class, replacing (or restoring) materials and tools they use to the correct place and in good order.
- Students treat each other and kaiako with respect, accepting and respecting each other.
- The atmosphere is inclusive and accepting of and by, both students and kaiako.
- Ākonga have regular, student-run and organised classroom meetings to discuss concerns and offer solutions.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What kind of issues are brought up in classroom meetings?
- What do you do if an issue keeps being brought up?
- Why do ākonga run the meetings?
- What do you do if some students aren't as accepted as others?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Does this programme feel inclusive?
- Do all ākonga seem welcome and accepted?
- Does everyone seem to have someone to work with?
- Would our child feel welcome here?

# The Learning Environment

## Essential Element Seven:

New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa is integrated with Montessori Curriculum so that ākonga cover the work they need to, to be ready for the next stage of schooling.

### What this results in:

- There is a clear plan that outlines how the NZC is planned and delivered to students.
- Lessons are delivered in line with Montessori principles utilising the materials and broad stroke and key lessons as dictated by the Montessori curriculum. It does not look like a conventional primary school curriculum delivery.
- Lessons are given in groups to ākonga of the same ability or interest.
- There is not necessarily an expectation that students will engage in follow up work on every lesson.
- There is a child's version of the national curriculum available to older ākonga that allows students to see what is expected of them from the New Zealand Government - which can act as a minimum requirement for them.
- Because ākonga learn at their own pace, there will often be some advanced learning happening in various curriculum areas as students follow their interests and learn deeply. rather than moving to the next content area at a predetermined pace.

# The Learning Environment

## Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How do you ensure the state curriculum is covered?
- What kind of planning tools do you use?
- How do you track a student's achievement, and how do I know this is happening?
- What happens if there are gaps, or ākonga miss some lessons because they are away?
- How do you know students are achieving at the right level?

## Questions you could ask yourself:

- Do we think our child will thrive in this kind of situation?
- Are ākonga learning at the right level – how can you tell?

# The Trained Kaiako



**Kaiako are an active part of the Montessori triangle (kaiako-ākonga-prepared environment). The adult (called teacher, kaiako, guide or directress/director) is the ‘dynamic link’ between ākonga and the prepared environment. To be an effective link and to be able to prepare the environment well, the adult must be Montessori trained, able to observe thoughtfully, reflect deeply, and be committed to the challenging role of kaiako. Why do Montessori teachers spend so much time observing tamariki?**

# The Trained Kaiako

## Essential Element One:

The majority of kaiako in the environment have the appropriate Montessori qualification for the age group.

### What this results in:

- Kaiako can support ākonga in the way that is needed in this important stage of development.
- There may be some individual, but mostly group work happening as students are met where they are and extended from there.
- Teachers use Montessori strategies to ensure they are working with ākonga (observation, individual conferences, journals, lessons and follow up, freedom to choose, responsibility and accountability).

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- Where were the teachers of each classroom trained?
- How is it different from state kaiako training?
- What do you do differently because of your training?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Do kaiako speak knowledgeably and confidently about Montessori philosophy and practice and can answer my/our questions clearly?
- Is the teacher implementing Montessori in a way that is consistent with these guidelines?

# The Trained Kaiako

## Essential Element Two:

The 6-12 year primary Montessori kaiako is a generalist, with many interests they bring into the environment to cater to the intellectual curiosity of the student at this age.

### What this results in:

- Imagination and interest drives ākonga creativity, motivation, and exploration. Learning relates to the needs and interests that kaiako observe in children — they are helped to make connections, to think about happenings in the environment, relevant topical events, and significant aspects of geography, nature, and other wonderings about science.
- Teachers continue to give lessons of interest to ākonga until such time as their interest has been captured and they are wanting to carry on learning a particular concept.
- Much of the learning the students are engaged in is self-directed, with ākonga going to the teacher for support as needed, rather than starting from and depending on the teacher.
- Students are often heavily engaged in work that is far outside the scope of what is normally expected. This 'Big Work' is looked for and celebrated.
- Engaged ākonga are active in their learning.
- Learning looks vastly different than what you would find in a typical primary school.
- Students have a love of learning and a broad general knowledge to take into the high school years.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How does a teacher know what lessons to give?
- How do they plan and keep track of what is going on in the classroom?
- What kind of support do kaiako have to ensure they have sufficient subject knowledge?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Does our child have interests that they are excited about learning?
- Will our child be happy engaged in this kind of self-directed learning?

# The Trained Kaiako

## Essential Element Three:

The overall ratio of kaiako in this area should be around 1 Montessori trained teacher and 1 assistant to between 25 and 35 students.

### What this results in:

- There are small groups of ākonga working in different parts of the classroom, and kaiako are there to teach or support them.
- Direct instruction or lessons are generally in small groups.
- Students take an active part in their lessons; their questions are responded to and they have a chance to offer their opinion.
- Students are engaged, and the teacher can ensure all ākonga in their group are involved.
- While the teacher is involved in small group lessons the rest of the class will be carrying on with their own work.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What is the size of your groups for different kinds of lessons?
- How long are lessons?
- What happens after the lessons?
- Do you give homework?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- How would our child react in this kind of environment?
- Will their special interests be catered for?
- Do we consider our child will be well prepared for high school?

# The Trained Kaiako

## Essential Element Four:

Teachers may use the tools of the *Journal* and the *Individual Conference* to help ākonga plan, manage and evaluate their work.

### What this results in:

- Regular individual conferences that allow the students and kaiako to discuss the time since the last conference, evaluating progress, celebrating successes and planning for the next period.
- Kaiako may use individual conferences, along with observations, as a basis for planning lessons for the next period of time.
  - The student comes to the conference with their Journal, their work and an idea of what they want to do next.
  - Notes are made and kept to track progress over time and both kaiako and ākonga leave the conference with a record of their conversation and follow up plans, goals and requests.
  - This time may be used to help students make plans and request lessons.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How often are conferences held?
- What kind of topics are covered in them?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Do we think this method will successfully follow our child's progress?
- Do we think our child will be lost in the crowd here?
- What kind of support will our child need to excel in this kind of learning environment?

# The Trained Kaiako

## Essential Element Five:

Kaiako reflect on what they are doing, observing their lessons, and the reactions that come. They observe their students, the activities they are engaged in, their academic progress as well as their social interactions. They do not necessarily make immediate corrections.

### What this results in:

- Kaiako know what students are doing and how they react to what they are teaching.
- The teachers can make modifications when something is not working for particular ākonga.
- Observations cover social interactions as well as academics, so they can intervene or give guidance as needed.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How do we know my child is learning what they need to?
- What happens when they miss something?
- What happens if our child is having difficulty socially?
- What happens if our child is having difficulty academically?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Are we confident that if our child has any issues or concerns they would be noticed and dealt with?
- Are we confident our child would get the help they need to succeed?

# The Trained Kaiako

## Essential Element Six:

Respect is apparent in all interactions, teacher to student and student to student.

### What this results in:

- There is a class agreement for the kinds of behaviour that is acceptable in the programme.
- Ākonga and teachers speak to each other respectfully; that is in an inclusive, accepting way that is pleasant, and courteous, even if they aren't friends.
- Students are friendly and polite.
- Kaiako model respectful and courteous interactions with each other and ākonga.
- There is an air of acceptance, no student is left out.
- Ākonga step in to help each other where it is needed.
- Ākonga call each other out for inappropriate behaviour.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What do you do with ākonga who don't adhere to this?
- How often do you get bullying and what do you do about it?
- What about students who are different, how do they fit in?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Are we confident bullying issues if they arose would be taken seriously?
- Are we confident that all students are accepted for who they are?

# The Trained Kaiako

## Essential Element Seven:

Teachers are engaged in furthering their own knowledge and skills.

### What this results in:

- Kaiako are up to date with new research and apply this relevant knowledge in the classroom.
- Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand (MANZ) suggests teachers should attend 10-12 hours of Montessori-focused professional development each year, in addition to other teaching professional development.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How do you stay current with what is happening in Montessori and general education in Aotearoa New Zealand and the wider world?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Are we confident kaiako are using up to date strategies with our child?

# The Community



**The Montessori community is a collaboration of many, including, but not limited to: ākonga and kaiako; whānau, hapū, iwi, and the wider community; leaders and governance bodies; and all supporters who share the goals of the Montessori community.**

# The Community

## Essential Element One:

There are real opportunities for engagement in the class or school community, that is, the society the students engage in as they learn how to be a member of a group and of a community.

### What this results in:

- Ākonga have the opportunity to choose the groups they will be in.
- Conflicts that arise in groups or between individuals (providing it is not bullying), while being observed, will generally be left for ākonga to resolve unless help is directly asked for.
- Lessons in conflict resolution will generally form part of the work of the classroom. This may be termed conflict education, peace education or Grace and Courtesy lessons.
- Students know that their words and actions have consequences and hold each other accountable for them.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What kinds of social problems do ākonga at this age face?
- What happens when the students have problems with each other?
- What happens if those things don't work?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Will our child find this meaningful?
- Are we prepared to let our child learn how to interact socially by being accountable for their behaviour at times?

# The Community

## Essential Element Two:

There are regular opportunities for community work and service in the programme.

### What this results in:

- Students are involved in the wider community in acts of work and service – this could be outside the school, or in other areas of the school if there is one.
- Ākonga see the value in serving others and in giving to their community.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What kinds of community work and service happens, and how often?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Do we have contacts which would be helpful in this area?

# The Community

## Essential Element Three:

The Montessori community nurtures kotahitanga, supports the ethos of aroha, and role models whakamana, all in the context of bicultural (and indeed, multicultural) understanding.

### What this results in:

- Students gain an understanding of te reo Māori throughout many aspects of the curriculum.
- Lessons and discussion about positive role models of our time and throughout history e.g. people who made significant contributions to society.
- Regular community meetings are held to resolve issues and discuss how the community might work collaboratively.
- Ākonga learning to set aside their personal needs for the good of the group.
- Students using reasoning and imagination to problem solve for conflict resolution.
- The idea that the customs and habits of different cultures have arisen from the same fundamental needs that all humans have, therefore are a source of inspiration and appreciation for the ingenuity of humanity.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How are peaceful and respectful interaction encouraged, not just in this community, but when they step outside the classroom?
- What are your priorities for inclusion and acceptance of difference - gender, ethnicity, ability etc?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Do we and our family support this kind of attitude towards others?
- Will we be happy for our child to be educated this way?

# The Community

## Essential Element Four:

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed where necessary to ensure a student's particular needs are met.

### What this results in:

- Ākonga who require additional assistance or resources have access to that.
- Family/whānau are aware of what is happening in their child's educational journey.
- The school is inclusive and accepting of different abilities.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- What would you do for our child (if they have a special ability)?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- How could our child fit into this environment?

# The Community

## Essential Element Five:

There are opportunities for respectful and supportive relationships to form between classes, between whānau and staff.

### What this results in:

- Interactions between parents/whānau and staff, parents/whānau and ākonga and staff and students are respectful, positive, cordial, and friendly.
- Students and kaiako are happy to come to school.
- There are places for interactions to occur.
- The atmosphere in the school is peaceful and cooperative.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How are issues dealt with, what if we are not happy with something, what do we do?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Can we work within the structures the school has for dealing with issues that arise?

# The Community

## Essential Element Six:

Parents/whānau are welcomed into the school as partners in their child's education.

### What this results in:

- Parents/whānau have someone to talk to about their child's education.
- Kaiako follows up quickly with any issues raised.
- There are formal and informal opportunities for parents/whānau to engage with the school.
- Parents/whānau are listened to and considered experts on their child.

### Questions you could ask the Principal/Kaiako/Trust Member:

- How can we be involved in the school as a whole?
- What kind of opportunities are there to be involved in this part of the school?

### Questions you could ask yourself:

- Does this school feel welcoming and accepting of us and our whānau?

# APPENDIX

## Glossary of Māori words

<b>Akomanga</b>	Classroom
<b>Ākonga</b>	Student
<b>Aroha</b>	Compassion, empathy, love, respect
<b>Kaiako</b>	Teacher
<b>Kotahitanga</b>	Unity, togetherness, solidarity
<b>Tamariki</b>	Children
<b>Tuakana-teina</b>	Older children supporting younger children
<b>Whakamana</b>	To enable, empower, or give prestige
<b>Whānau</b>	Family

## Glossary of Montessori Terms

<b>MANZ</b>	Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand (MANZ) is a collective of schools, organisations and individual members who work together to provide and promote Montessori education in Aotearoa.
<b>MJ2Ex</b>	<i>Montessori Journey to Excellence (MJ2Ex): Te Ara Ki Huhuatanga: Essential Elements</i> commenced in 2010 with the aim of identifying essential elements and quality indicators of Montessori practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The revised work, commenced in 2018, continued with the intent of providing a guide for establishing best practice, while recognising the influence of leadership in sustaining quality Montessori education and including a stronger emphasis on Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
<b>Planes of Development</b>	The Four Planes of Development is the holistic framework upon which Montessori built her vision of developmental psychology. This theory encompasses human development from birth until maturity at age 24 years with each plane lasting approximately six years having its own characteristics.

# APPENDIX

## Montessori Principles/ Strategies used to structure a Montessori Programme

The Montessori classroom (indoors and out) is designed to optimise learning, social relationships, and self esteem. Some of the characteristics of this classroom (and its programme) - at all levels of Montessori education - include:

- Respect for the learner’s unique developmental needs and interests. Learners are not compared, they are valued for their individuality. Montessori education embraces multiple styles of learning and understands that each student’s learning journey is different.
- Kaiako are warm and welcoming, trained to connect ākonga with meaningful and relevant experiences.
- Kaiako utilise a variety of observation techniques to assist them in ensuring ākonga are engaged and making progress in their learning.
- Freedom of movement and choice of activity are both encouraged, within the context of respect for others (“common good” and “common courtesy”).
- Appropriate materials and resources are available to ākonga at all times, without needing to ask for the items needed for learning.
- Independent effort is encouraged, as is peer collaboration (see below)
- Mixed Age Range supports peer collaboration (tuakana/ teina relationships). Typical age groupings are:
  - 0 - 15 months (Infants, not yet walking)
  - 15 months - 3 years (Confidently walking)
  - 3 - 6 years (Early learning)
  - 6 - 9 and 9 - 12 years (Primary classes)
  - 6 - 12 years (Primary classes)
  - 12 - 15 years (Middle school)
  - 15 - 18 years (High school)
- Activities such as class meetings, “goings out,” and community service projects put ākonga in charge of their community’s functioning and its culture of friendliness.
- “Rewards” are intrinsic to the programme therefore ākonga are encouraged to notice when they have worked well, and experience satisfaction as a result.

# APPENDIX

<p><b>Needs and Characteristics of the Primary Child</b></p>	<p>Montessori philosophy has as its basis that all humans, no matter when and where they live, have the same tendencies and it is in meeting those tendencies that allow us to adapt to our time and place. These tendencies may differ slightly, from training to training, but for the purpose of this handbook are: to orient, to explore, to order, to move, to imagine, to repeat and perfect, to work, to calculate, to abstract, to communicate and associate. Dr Montessori contends that the way these tendencies manifest at each age changes and therefore the environment that supports the development of said age needs to change to allow optimal growth.</p> <p><b>Physical</b> This is a relatively calm and stable time of growth and development, with a resultant need to challenge themselves physically - what can they do, how high can they climb, jump, how fast can they run, how long can they walk.</p> <p><b>Social</b> Love of the group - herd instinct, they are gregarious by nature, outspoken and often called rude, but more aptly named blunt, a tendency towards hero workshop.</p> <p><b>Emotional</b> Age of justice - "it's not fair", "but you said..." outspoken and blunt in their approach to interactions in their need to understand. Very black and white in their outlook.</p> <p><b>Cognitive</b> They now have a reasoning mind spurred on by their imagination. This is the age of intellectual curiosity, learning for the sake of learning, testing themselves, engaging in big work, a love of codes and language.</p>
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## Ministry of Education (MOE) Document

<p><b>New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.</b></p>	<p>In keeping with the spirit and intent of the Treaty of Waitangi and New Zealand's bi-cultural nationhood, there are two statements of national curriculum: The New Zealand Curriculum, and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. These set the direction for ākonga learning and provides guidance for schools as they design and review their curriculum. It commences with a vision of ākonga developing the competencies they need for study, work, and lifelong learning, so they may go on to realise their potential.</p>
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