



MONTESSORI
EDUCATION (UK) LTD



A Handbook for Schools Seeking Accreditation

Becoming accredited with MEUK



Benefits of MEUK Accreditation

- Being accredited by MEUK reassures parents that you are offering authentic Montessori education, and will raise the profile of your school.
- MEUK is there for you and will take up issues relating to Montessori education with other organisations and agencies on your behalf if your school is accredited with MEUK.
- Free, on-going professional development is offered to you and your staff in the form of our annual Accredited Schools Day. This is always well attended, and is a valuable opportunity for you to network with other Montessori practitioners who share your passion for your work with the children.
- As an accredited school, you and your staff benefit from a discount on our annual National Conference, a forum for advancing Montessori education in the UK.
- You receive termly e-mail bulletins, keeping you up to date with what's happening in the Montessori community.

The standards you need to meet

As an organisation, Montessori Education UK understands and embraces the unique aspects of the Montessori approach. The purpose of accreditation is to recognise and promote excellent Montessori practice in your school, and to support you in providing quality Montessori education.

To be eligible for accreditation, you need to have at least 8 children attending every day and be open for at least 5 days a week.



Definition of a School

For the purposes of accreditation, a school is taken to mean an institution with a single head teacher, a unified system of staff and student records and a specific licence from the appropriate licensing authority e.g. Ofsted.

Such an institution may be housed in several buildings or on several sites.

A multi-site operation under one name is defined as one school if there is a single head teacher, an integrated system of staff and student records, and daily interchange of core staff, materials or children between sites. A multi-site operation is not defined as one school if different sites have different names, or there is more than one head teacher, or staff and student records are not integrated, or there is no daily interchange of core staff, materials or children between sites.

Our key standards

Here are the key standards you need to meet in order for your school to be accredited. Alongside each are examples of the types of evidence you can provide to show how your school meets the standard in question.

	Key standard	Suggested examples of evidence
1	Safeguarding: Children are safe, secure and safeguarded at all times	To be directly observed during the accreditation visit.
2	Qualifications of staff: The school is led by a Montessori qualified teacher, non-Montessori qualified staff are undertaking Montessori professional development; class teachers are qualified at, or working towards Montessori qualifications relevant to the age group they are working with.	Diplomas and certificates; CPD records.
3	Vertical grouping: Classes are a mixed age group.	Register, class lists, staff rota
4	The work cycle: The working time lasts for an uninterrupted period of at least two and a half hours, preferably three. During this time, the children mostly work individually but come together when they wish to, in small or larger groups.	To be directly observed during the accreditation visit.
5	Care: Care routines embody the Montessori ethos.	To be directly observed during the accreditation visit.
6	Activities and materials: Children have continual and free access to a full range of the Montessori materials and other materials and activities based on Montessori philosophy that are appropriate for their ages and stages of learning.	Recorded on <i>Details of Curriculum Areas Form</i> and verified by assessor.
7	Prepared environment: A Montessori 'prepared environment', suitable for the ages and stages of development of the children within it, is set up and maintained so they can actively engage with materials and activities that are designed from a developmental point of view and which lead them to successive levels of discovery about their world.	To be directly observed during the accreditation visit.
8	Classroom management: Classes are run in such a way that they promote the children's freedom to make spontaneous choices; to be independent; to complete cycles of work; to develop a sense of responsibility within the group; to use the materials properly and to work on their own or with others as they like.	To be directly observed during the accreditation visit.
9	Materials: Materials are displayed in an orderly way, well maintained and complete.	To be directly observed during the accreditation visit.
10	Observation, planning and assessment: The school undertakes written observations of the children which inform their assessment, review and planning of all Montessori aspects of the provision.	A range of written observations completed and held on file; individual work and planning records.
11	Montessori-driven management structures: Management structures allow for the implementation of Montessori principles and support staff in their professional development.	Job descriptions; staff self-assessment forms; staff organisational chart; staff appraisals; certificates of professional development; staff training record; minutes of staff meetings.
12	Policies and procedures: Effective policies and procedures relating to implementing the Montessori approach and monitoring its effectiveness are in place, and available to staff and parents.	Written policies and procedures; monitoring records.
13	Partnership with parents: There is an effective partnership with parents.	Parent handbook; notices; invitations; records of appointments; photographs; letters; class planning; newsletter articles

Accreditation process

The process of accreditation involves:

1. Registering for accreditation

You can do this on-line by going to <http://www.montessorieducationuk.org> and paying the appropriate fee. Please check website for current fees.

2. Booking an optional mentor visit

The fee for this would be in addition to the cost of the assessment visit. Your MEUK mentor can view your school with experienced eyes and recommend changes and adjustments to make in order for the assessment visit to be successful.

3. Completing the on-line forms and submitting them

4. Having your assessment visit

As soon as your forms are submitted the School Accreditation Co-ordinator will contact you to offer you a choice of dates for the visit.

A qualified assessor is appointed to carry out your visit. She contacts you before the visit to discuss the details and to clarify anything that may be unclear from the paperwork you have submitted. You agree a timetable for the day. On the day of the visit the assessor observes the operation of the school day, meets you and your staff team individually, reviews the paperwork and gives oral feedback.

Within two weeks she writes a detailed report of her findings, highlighting key issues and making a recommendation to MEUK regarding the granting of accreditation.

The MEUK Accreditation Panel (detailed below) reviews the report and the recommendation before reaching its decision on the granting of accreditation.

You receive official notification, together with a copy of the report.

5. Annual return and per capita fees

While your MEUK accreditation is in force you are required to make an annual return in January of each year to notify MEUK of any changes that have occurred in the previous twelve months, and to update the information that is held on file. One of the pieces of information you supply is the number of children on roll on 10 January. This figure is used to calculate the per capita fees payable to MEUK for that school year. A pro-rata figure is used in the case of incomplete years, for example the first year of accreditation. Please check website for current per capita fee.

6. Mandatory requirements and recommendations in your report

If the assessor identifies key standards that have not been met, she sets out 'mandatory requirements' in her report. These need to be satisfied before accreditation can be granted. Until this happens granting of accreditation to your school is deferred.

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Accreditation process

During the visit the assessor may notice certain aspects of practice which could be improved, and with this in mind she may make recommendations for you to consider. These are not mandatory, and you are not required to implement them, but usually our assessors' suggestions are practical and arise from long experience in the field.

If your report contains mandatory requirements you have up to four months to comply with them and submit an account with supporting evidence of how they have been addressed. Sometimes a short follow-up visit is needed to confirm the changes that have been made. When the assessor is satisfied that the mandatory requirements have been satisfactorily addressed, the school is granted accreditation.

7. Award of Accreditation

If the Assessor recommends that accreditation be granted, and provided that Montessori Education (UK) is satisfied that the school is meeting the standards required, the school is granted accreditation for a period of four years.

Schools that are granted accreditation are awarded a certificate. On signing a licence agreement, the school has the right to use the Montessori Education (UK) logo with the wording: **This is a Montessori Accredited School accredited by Montessori Education (UK) Ltd.** This logo may be used on stationery, stickers and t-shirts, as well as in advertisements promoting the Montessori education offered by the school.

Each year the accredited school is required to complete an annual return confirming contact details, providing staff and enrolment details, and giving notice of any relevant changes that may have occurred in the year.

A small annual per capita fee, based on the number of children enrolled in the school, is payable from the date of accreditation on a pro-rata basis. We recommend that this fee is itemised on school invoices, to highlight to parents the benefit and value to their child of attending a Montessori Accredited school.

The school is given a plaque in recognition of its achievement.



How long does accreditation last?

Initially your school is granted accreditation for four years. Following a 'spot check' visit in the fourth year, accreditation may be extended for a further three years.

After seven years you need to undergo a re-accreditation, and the cycle of a full assessment visit followed by a 'spot check' visit in the fourth year is repeated, as long as the standards for accreditation are being met.

Not happy with something?

If you're not happy with the way the assessment visit was conducted or the factual content of the assessor's report you need to let MEUK know within two weeks of you receiving the report. All complaints are handled through our [complaints procedure](#).

Celebrating your success

When accreditation is granted you receive your accreditation certificate, together with a license to use the MEUK logo and a wall plaque to recognise and advertise your achievement in becoming accredited.

By signing the licence agreement, you gain the right to use the Montessori Education (UK) logo with the wording, 'This is an [Authentic Montessori School](#)

accredited by Montessori Education (UK) Ltd' on stationery, brochures, stickers and T-shirts, as well as in advertisements promoting the Montessori education offered by the school.



Refusal of accreditation

If the mandatory requirements are not met within the specified time-frame MEUK reserves the right not to grant accreditation. The school may reapply after an interval of 12 months.

Suspension of accreditation

MEUK reserves the right to suspend accreditation if an allegation of a serious breach of statutory regulations is made against your school, or against a member of your staff. If the allegation is upheld accreditation will be withdrawn.

Withdrawal of accreditation

ME(UK) reserves the right to withdraw accreditation if:

- Your school breaches the accreditation criteria during the accreditation period. A breach of the criteria might include, but not be limited to:
- Failure to employ Montessori trained class teacher(s)
- Classes segregated by age
- Failure to ensure an uninterrupted work cycle of a minimum of two and a half hours
- If your school fails to comply with any statutory legal requirements
- If you break the terms of your agreement with regard to using our logo
- If you fail an Ofsted inspection
- If you fail to pay any fees due to ME(UK)



Other points to be aware of

Change of Ownership

In the event of a change of ownership of a school, the new owner may apply for Montessori Accreditation to be carried over, provided that this application is made within six months of the changeover.

Montessori Education (UK) will then activate a 'spot check' visit at the school's expense. If, following a 'spot check' visit the Assessor recommends that Montessori Accreditation be continued and provided that Montessori Education (UK) is satisfied that the school is continuing to meet the standards required, the school will be granted Montessori Accreditation for a further three years.

Schools that are granted an extension of accreditation are awarded a certificate of extended accreditation. If, following a 'spot check' visit, Montessori Education (UK) is not satisfied that the school is continuing to meet the standards required, the school will be subject to the full accreditation procedure.

Change of Premises

In the event of a change of premises or significant extension of the site of a school, the owner may apply for Montessori Accreditation to be carried over, provided that this application is made within three months of the change.

Montessori Education (UK) will then activate a 'spot check' visit at the school's expense. If, following a 'spot

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check' visit the Assessor recommends that Montessori Accreditation be continued and provided that Montessori Education (UK) is satisfied that the school is continuing to meet the standards required, the school will be granted Montessori Accreditation for a further three years. Schools that are granted an extension of Montessori Accreditation are awarded a certificate of extended accreditation.

If, following a 'spot check' visit, Montessori Education (UK) is not satisfied that the school is continuing to meet the standards required, the school will be subject to the full Montessori Accreditation procedure.

Policies and procedures

Complaints Procedures

MEUK's complaints procedures are outlined below:

In the case of a complaint against MEUK

If someone has a complaint about any aspect of the service offered to them by MEUK, including complaints relating to the conduct of assessment visits by MEUK's assessors, they should raise the matter in the first instance with the Company Secretary, who will discuss the matter with them to establish the facts and try to resolve the issue. In the event that the matter remains unresolved, the person making the complaint must send full details in writing to the Chairman of the Board, who will also endeavour to find a solution. If the issue is still unresolved, a panel will be convened to consider the evidence, hear the views of all parties and reach a decision on the issue. This panel will consist of two of the Trustees of MEUK and an independent Montessorian.

The decision of the panel will be final.

In the case of a complaint against an accredited school alleging breach of statutory regulations

Where a complaint is made against an MEUK accredited school, or a school that is partly accredited by MEUK, alleging breach of statutory regulations, MEUK will immediately suspend the school's accreditation until such time as the issue has been investigated and the outcome of the investigation notified to MEUK in writing.

If the allegation is dismissed, MEUK accreditation will be reinstated immediately, but if it is upheld, accreditation will be permanently withdrawn.

NOTE: *If an allegation of a serious breach of statutory regulations is made against an individual from an accredited school or the school itself, it does not lie within the remit of MEUK to carry out investigations. In such a case, the person complaining, and the person or school named in the complaint will always be referred to the appropriate regulatory authority, i.e. Police, Social Services and Ofsted.*

In the case of a complaint against an accredited school alleging practice that runs counter to Montessori principles

In such a case, the procedures followed are as outlined in (1) above. The person making the complaint should raise the matter in the first instance with the Company Secretary, who will discuss it with them to establish the facts and try to resolve the issue.

In the event that the matter remains unresolved, the person making the complaint must send full details in writing to the Chairman of the Board, who will also endeavour to find a solution. If the issue is still

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unresolved, a panel will be convened to consider the evidence, hear the views of all parties and reach a decision on the issue. This panel will consist of two of the Trustees of MEUK and an independent Montessorian.

Conflict of Interest

MEUK's assessors, mentors and panel members have all signed an undertaking to declare any possible conflict of

interest arising in the process of accrediting a school. Schools also sign a similar declaration as part of their application.

Anyone declaring a conflict of interest must step down from any involvement in the matter in relation to which the conflict of interest has been declared.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality relating to everyone connected with a school being accredited, the children, the families and the staff, is safeguarded at all times. Information is available on a 'need to know' basis. MEUK assessors sign a confidentiality undertaking.

Social networking:

Assessors undertake not to refer to parents, carers, children, confidential aspects of the school's or MEUK's business, or any other accreditation-related issue when communicating on social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter, or in public places. Assessors must not either become, or invite parents/carers to become social networking friends.

Identifying children:

Where assessors are carrying out an accreditation visit to a school, children observed are not identified by name and no photographs are taken.

Whistle blowing

Whistle blowing is when someone in an organisation is unable to follow specified channels of procedure to draw attention to a serious situation or cause for concern in any area of the organisation.

As an organisation MEUK is committed to openness and transparency in all its activities and operational decisions. It has detailed and carefully thought through policies, supported by clearly defined procedures. There are grievance procedures in place to be followed in order to resolve disputes and we welcome open and frank discussion of any issues that may arise.

However, if anyone connected with MEUK feels that something is so seriously wrong that the only course of action is to refer their concerns to a higher authority they can get advice from the independent whistle blowing charity Public Concern at Work, which they can phone on 020 7404 6609 or email whistle@pcaw.co.uk



Montessori Accreditation Awarding Panel

The awarding panel for the Montessori Accreditation reports to the Council of Montessori Education (UK). The panel members are experienced Montessorians. The School Accreditation coordinator is also a member of the panel. All panel members hold Montessori Diplomas. Each panel member undertakes the Assessors Training Programme.

All panel members sign the panel agreement and read and sign the ME (UK) Equal Opportunities Policy. They are required to give notice of any conflict of interest that might arise.

Montessori Accreditation reports are read by two panel members and checked for accuracy against the evidence gathered and presented by the Assessor. Both panel members must agree the body of the report prior to the school being granted accreditation. Should there be a disagreement between the panel members a third member will read the report and make the final decision.

**Montessori Education (UK)
reserves the right not to grant
accreditation.**