

Dandelions Montessori Pre Enrollment Pack

www.DandelionsMontessori.com
DandelionsMontessori@gmail.com
(085) 270 6615

Dear Parent,

Please note the following and keep as reference.

Childcare Regulations

Is Dandelions Montessori registered with TUSLA?

Yes. Dandelions Montessori is about providing a high quality Early Years Education to children aged 2.5 to 5.5 years. It is a Private Service and is classified as a Sessional Service under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Has Dandelions Montessori been inspected by TUSLA and/or Pobal?

Yes. Dandelions Montessori is regularly inspected by all Government Representative Bodies to insure we provide a high quality service, passing all inspections.

Are staff qualified and Garda Vetted?

Yes. All staff are fully qualified with an Early Childhood and Education Degree Qualification and are fully Garda Vetted. Other qualifications to include but are not limited to: Art Therapy, Play Therapy, Child Psychology, First Aid, FAR-First Aid Responder (Paramedic Level), Fire Safety Officer, Linc- Leadership for Inclusion, Challenging Behaviour, Special Needs Assistance, Child Protection, Performing Arts, Animation, Hanan (Language and Literacy Development for Children), Infection Prevention and Control and many more. Staff continually upskill and attend refresher courses throughout the year to insure top quality and standard.

How many children are in each group?

22 children per session. Each session is halved into 2 groups with 11 children per group.

How many staff per group?

2

The minimum staff: child ratio for a sessional service is 1:11, whereas we provide a reduced ratio of 1:6 to ensure each child gets the individual attention and care they deserve.

Enrollment

What is the ECCE Scheme?

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme provides Early Childhood Care and Education for children of pre-school age. The scheme is offered in Dandelions Montessori for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week, 38 weeks of the year. All children in Ireland are entitled to 2 full academic years on the ECCE scheme. Children are eligible to start the ECCE scheme in the September of the year that they turn 3 years old. ie. a child turning 3 years old between January 1st and December 31st 2020 can be registered on the ECCE scheme in September 2020.

How do I apply for the ECCE Scheme?

Complete the ECCE Registration Form provided in your Enrollment Pack, information needed includes Child's Name, D.O.B and PPSN. Dandelions will input this information into "The Hive" to be registered.

What if my child is not yet eligible for the ECCE Scheme?

The minimum age to attend Dandelions Montessori and all Sessional Services is 2.5 years old. Fees will apply if not yet eligible, an invoice will be provided to be paid each month via Bank Transfer/PayPal.

Do I need to provide any documentation for enrollment?

Yes. Prior to beginning you will receive an Enrollment Pack which will contain all relevant forms to be completed, signed and submitted online. Forms such as ECCE Registration/Consent Forms/All About Me etc. will be provided.

Can my child attend both the Morning and Afternoon Session?

No. Dandelions Montessori is registered as a Sessional Service and is restricted to regulations stating children may only attend our service for maximum 3.5 hours per day.

Does my child need to be toilet trained to enroll?

No. Being toilet trained is preferable but not compulsory as we understand that all children learn and develop at a different rate.

What if my circumstances change and I can no longer enroll at Dandelions?

If for any reason you wish to cancel your child's place, one months' notice must be given in advance.

Where can I access Dandelions Montessori's Policies and Procedures?

Digital Files are accessible via our communications App, Teachkloud.

Printed Files are accessible via our Handbook located in the Entrance Porch.

First Day Preparation

What can I do to prepare my child before starting at Dandelions Montessori?

Children pick up on the reactions of the trusted adults in their lives. If you show that you're excited, positive and upbeat about what fun things they can do at Dandelions, they will pick up on that positivity and will enter excitedly. On the first day try not to look worried or sad, say a quick upbeat goodbye and reassure them that you will be back soon and they will have a great time.

What do I need to bring on the first day?

Our first 3 days (August 24th-26th) will be our settling in days. Each session will last 90 minutes and there will be no snack break, therefore no lunch needs to be brought.

Please provide the following, clearly marked with child's name:

- Just Incase Clothes: X2 underwear, X2 socks, X2 trousers, X2 tops
- X5 nappies/pull-ups, wipes, creams and/or powders (if applicable)

Can I come inside the classroom on the first day?

No. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 under the guidelines of the HSE and TUSLA it is advised that only children and staff may enter the building. Therefore it has been organised that an optional 15 minute Private Visit be arranged for each child and a parent to come visit and explore their new environment with a parent present to help ease them into Dandelions. A link to the booking system has been provided.

Can I take photos of my child at Dandelions Montessori on their first day?

Yes. Outdoors Only due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Staff will take photos and record videos of each child daily on our service tablets which will be shared with parents on a regular basis via our communication app, Teachkloud.

What if my child is unsettled on the first day?

Our staff are fully trained and experienced in the art of turning tears into laughter. Entering a new environment/ meeting new faces can be daunting for a preschooler and generally they just need some comfort and reassurance that it's not a scary place after all. By being positive and calm your child will pick up on those cues. Having a goodbye routine provides comfort and familiarity, so your child knows what's to come. This could be anything you and your child decide on, such as a special hug or handshake followed by a "See you later, alligator!" Once you've said your goodbyes, it's best to skedaddle so that your child doesn't become preoccupied by your presence. A long farewell scene might only serve to reinforce a child's sense that preschool is a bad place. Staff will insure that they get plenty of hugs and cuddles and introduced to a fun activity.

Arrival/Departure

What are your opening hours?

Morning Session 09:00-12:00pm *Afternoon Session* 12:45-3:45pm

Where can I park?

Parking is available within Donabate Town Centre Carpark (Supervalu). Walking is encouraged where possible.

Is attendance taken?

Yes. Please send a text message/WhatsApp to notify staff if child will be absent. Please note that each child's arrival and departure time will be recorded electronically and submitted to Pobal (Government Body) weekly. If non attendance and tardiness is of a regular occurrence (absent for over 3 weeks in a row with no valid reason), Pobal will take note of this and may remove your child from the ECCE Scheme and you will be subject to fees.

What should I do if I am running late?

Please send a text message/WhatsApp to notify staff if running late and ring doorbell on arrival.

What are your contact details?

(085) 270 6615

DandelionsMontessori@gmail.com

Can a relative/friend/neighbour drop off or collect my child?

Yes. The entrance to Dandelions is at the rear of the Parish Hall. Please accompany your child to the door on entering and leaving. Only names noted on the Consent to Collect form have permission to collect child from premises. Collectees must be over 18 years old. Due to insurance reasons siblings under the age of 18 are not permitted to collect child from Dandelions without an accompanying adult at the door. Please send a text message/WhatsApp to notify staff if you would like to add further names to the Consent to Collect list throughout the enrollment year.

Can I leave my child's bike/scooter/buggy/car seat at Dandelions?

No. Unfortunately due to the blockage of Fire Emergency Doors and Escape Routes, Dandelions does not have the facilities to store children's bicycles/scooters/buggies etc.

AIM Support

My child is diagnosed or is awaiting assessment for a learning disability/additional need, can they attend Dandelions Montessori?

Yes. Dandelions Montessori promotes equality, diversity and inclusion and believes all children should have equal opportunities for learning and enjoyment in the context of childcare. The principle of inclusion involves access to Dandelions Montessori in addition to respect and support for all children and their families.

What is AIM Support?

The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with additional needs can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Its goal is to empower pre-school providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience, ensuring that every eligible child can meaningfully participate in the ECCE Programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education.

How do I apply?

If you feel that your child may need extra support in their Early Years eg. Speech and Language, Motor Skills etc. Please feel free to discuss this in private with Management and we will work together with you to see if we can receive AIM support from the DCYA/Pobal. Successful AIMS can include an additional Staff Member to be hired as a Support Team Member to assist your child in settling in with Dandelions.

The AIMS application form consists of a number of questions to assess the level of abilities in a number of areas: Physical, Communication, Social Skills, Behaviour, Health. Statements such as "Can stack blocks independently" are asked with the options being; Never, Occasionally, Regularly and Frequently. The application form will be completed by a parent and returned to Dandelions where it will then be submitted to "The Hive" for assessment. An AIMS support worker from Pobal will then schedule a time to come visit Dandelions to observe the child and will determine based on their observation and application form if they feel it would benefit the child to have AIM Support.

To Note: this will not be a diagnosis assessment, AIMS is a support system to aid in your child's early years

How much does it cost if successful?

Application for AIMS is free of charge to parents.

My child may benefit from having support with their speech and language, am I eligible to apply for AIMS?

Yes. AIM support is accessible to all children whom may benefit from extra support while in Dandelions. Applications are not limited to only those with a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis, it is available to any child whom may need extra support in anyone one or more of these areas: Physical, Communication, Social Skills, Behaviour, Health.

If I am unsure if my child may qualify for AIMS what should I do?

Arrange a private and confidential meeting with Management either in person or via phone where it can be discussed further.

Food/Miscellaneous**What should I give my child for their lunch?**

Each child should bring a small snack to include at least 1 piece of fruit and a drink, e.g. water, milk, orange or apple juice. Snacks can include a healthy filled sandwich (no chocolate spread) crackers, cheese, yoghurt etc. We are a healthy eating preschool therefore treats such as biscuits, chocolate, sweets, crisps, pastries or any other high sugary foods will not be allowed during our service and will be returned home. NB. Grapes to be cut in half (long way down) to avoid a choking hazard.

Dandelions is a strict **NUT FREE** service therefore no nuts are permitted on site. In the event that a child brings a food item which contains nuts it will be placed in their bag and will not be consumed on site.

What happens if my child has a food allergy?

Please list any allergies your child may have on their enrollment form to inform staff. I would ask the parents of children with food allergies not to give new food types for the first time whilst attending Dandelions and to pack any items such as medication/epipens necessary if prescribed by GP in their child's bag each day whilst attending Dandelions. Parents will be notified of ingredients used prior to baking and allergen content.

Are lunchboxes allowed?

Yes. Lunchboxes/Large Ziploc Bags are permitted. According to Preschool Regulations, children's lunches must be stored in a fridge upon arrival. Therefore as all lunches need to fit inside the fridge we would request that the size of the lunchbox is of an adequate size with the child's name clearly visible on both lunchbox and drink bottle

Are schoolbags allowed?

Yes. School bags are permitted however these will be stored on each child's coat rack therefore please only provide a bag of adequate size and no large suitcase style bags.

Do I provide cake/party treats when it's my child's birthday?

No. Part of the fun of birthdays at Dandelions is that the children bake their own cupcakes from scratch and have it as a birthday treat. Gluten Free/Dairy Free/Egg Free cake options will be provided to those with food allergies. We also make the day extra special by having a mini party filled with games, songs and cheer.

Health/Hygiene

Can my child attend Dandelions if they feel unwell?

No. **A child should NOT attend Dandelions if they are feeling unwell.** If a child has suffered from vomiting or diarrhoea the previous evening, please do NOT send him/her to Dandelions for at least 48 hours (in accordance to Tusla health & safety regulations) as germs will spread to both staff and other children. Medication will only be given to a child on written consent of his/her parent. Any major cuts, bumps, etc. should be mentioned to the Dandelions Manager/Assistant when your child is dropped in.

What if my child feels unwell during their session at Dandelions?

Child will be assessed and cared for by a member of staff while another member of the team contacts a parent. Collection of child will be organised with permission sought to give Calpol to reduce temperature if above 38 degrees.

Do staff know First Aid?

Yes.

Do I need to provide a change of clothes?

Yes. Please provide a full set of change of clothes in a large ziploc bag to include x2 socks, x2 underwear, x2 trousers and x2 tops. These will be stored in your child's individual cubby hole to be used in case of an accident/getting too wet or dirty. The clothes you provide will be used for only your child, they will not be shared with another child.

What shoes can my child wear?

At Dandelions we encourage independence and aid the children in learning how to dress themselves. A way to help both children and staff is to have the children wear non laced shoes ie. slip on, velcro or zipped etc. The children will be continuously taking their shoes off for dress up and changing into wellingtons for outdoor play and by not having laces it will allow the children to do this independently/and or with guidance from staff or peers.

Can my child bring in their own toy?

No. To avoid any child's personal toy getting lost or damaged; we have a vast selection of toys and equipment that will be sure to keep them entertained.

Outdoor Play Area

Do you have an outdoor play area?

Yes.

How often do the children play outside?

Everyday! Outdoor Play is extremely important for child development and is a major part of the ethos of Dandelions Montessori. There are vast benefits to outdoor play from sensory exploration at our mud kitchen to enhancing health and mental performance through greater exposure to bright light and fresh air.

Our Outdoor Area recently underwent a major makeover in Summer 2021 where Dandelions collaborated with the very talented Garden Designer, Brian Burke, who is a Multiple Bloom Award Winner, an RTE's Supergarden Winner (2015) & Current Judge.

The space was designed and created so that each area had an intention that focused on all areas of child development; Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Social. Areas include: Sandpit, Mud Kitchen, Water Play, Balancing Beams, Tree house, Climbing, Planting, Construction, Reading Corner, Art/Activities Table, Zen Zone etc.

Do I need to provide outdoor gear or boots for my child?

No. Dandelions provides all outdoor gear for all the children. There are 2 sets of outdoor gear worn throughout the year;

1. Spring/Summer Gear: Waterproof Overalls, Hooded Waterproof Jacket and Boots
2. Autumn/Winter Gear: Waterproof Fleece Lined Hooded Jumpsuit, Woolly Insulated Hat, Waterproof/Fleece Lined Mittens and Boots.

The children will wear the outdoor gear each time they are outside which will allow them to get as dirty or wet as they wish without harming or soiling their own clothes.

What happens if it's raining?

As each child is supplied with a full set of waterproof outdoor gear they will remain warm and dry.

Our Outdoor Area is also equipped with 4 mature trees which aid as a covered shelter to deflect any heavy rain.

What happens during the winter months when it's cold?

Our winter outdoor gear is fully lined and insulated to keep the children warm with hats and gloves also provided.

Behaviour

Do you have a 'naughty step' or equivalent for challenging behaviour?

No. At Dandelions we do not use corporal punishment or isolate a child for presenting challenging behaviour. We address and discuss the behaviour with the child and use the Highscope Method for problem solving. Teaching a child how to self regulate is an important process we implement throughout the day and we do this by incorporating the use of our sandtimers. In each room we have a zen zone where a child can self regulate with their sandtimer and bring their aggression levels back down. Communication skills is an area we focus on largely at Dandelions where we teach and encourage each child how to use their words to express their feelings and emotions.

At Dandelions we address challenging behaviour through the use of positive reinforcement-praising and giving attention to positive behaviour rather than negative.

How do you address conflict resolution?

At Dandelions we use the Highscope 6 steps to Conflict Resolution:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions. Place yourself between the children, on their level.
2. Acknowledge children's feelings. Say something simple such as "You look really upset." Let children know you need to hold any object in question.
3. Gather information. Ask "What's the problem?" Do not ask "Why" questions.
4. Restate the problem. "So the problem is..."
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together. "What can we do to solve this problem?"
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support. Acknowledge their accomplishments (e.g., "You solved the problem!") Stay nearby in case anyone is not happy with the solution and the process needs repeating.

My child at times finds it difficult to share, any tips?

Aswell as incorporating the Highscope Method we also implement the sandtimers as visuals for turn taking. Depending on the toy/activity the 1 minute or 3 minute sandtimer would be used. Part of the conflict resolution would be to suggest and to agree on using this method. To implement it the egg timer would be turned and when it reaches the end the toy/activity is swapped to the next child and the process is repeated. This is always a huge success with the children as they can hold and see the time descending and the visuals of this is very effective.

Inclusion

My family have a different cultural/religious background and we celebrate different cultures/events/holidays through the year, is that ok?

Yes. At Dandelions Montessori we encourage Diversity and Inclusion. We understand that everyone has their own cultural/religious backgrounds and we would like to explore/discuss and educate ourselves on these subjects. If there are any particular cultural/religious custom/event/celebration that you would like Dandelions Montessori to incorporate into our yearly events we would love for you to share these with us. We would also like for you to mention if you give consent on whether you would be happy for us at Dandelions to ask further questions in regards to gaining more knowledge in areas that we may not know a lot about.

I have a free morning/afternoon, is there any way I can get involved at Dandelions?

Yes. If you have a free morning/afternoon and you would be willing to come in to visit us to discuss either your job (current/previous) your hobby or nationality with the children during circle time please let us know! We will be learning about our community near and far throughout the year and we would love to incorporate visitors during this time to add another realm of learning.

Does Dandelions have a Family Tree?

Yes. To encourage Identity and Belonging and for an added comfort we at Dandelions Montessori request either a digital copy or physical copy of a recent family photo or a selection of separate photos to include all immediate family and/or pets. These photos will be printed and placed in our Family Photo Album displayed on our low level shelf. The photo album will be within reach for all children to pick up and to sit on the couch and get comfort from looking at the photo in their hands or discussing their family with their new friends.

An Average Day at Dandelions Montessori

The ethos of Dandelions Montessori is built on the natural development and organic growth of the Dandelion plant. Our teaching methods are built to support, encourage and guide your child to learn socially, intellectually and physically from the beginning, at their own natural pace.

We provide a consistently high level of commitment and attention to each child supporting their individual, emotional development in a gentle and caring way. This builds their confidence in learning and social skills, creating all round confidence and happiness as they graduate through to their next important steps in life. Dandelions Montessori is committed to each child and provides nurturing and care on an individual basis. We provide complete preparation for your child's transition to Primary School in a stimulating and fun environment.

What does an average day look like?

At Dandelions we follow the Aistear/Siolta Curriculum. Aistear is designed to support parents, early childhood practitioners and teachers in planning for and providing enriching, challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities for children.

The aim of Aistear is to help every child to grow and develop as a competent and confident learner. Ultimately, according to Aistear, early childhood care and education must support a child's sense of:

- Well-being
- Identity and Belonging
- Exploring and Thinking
- Communicating

Daily Activities are to include but are not limited to:

Theme of the Week

Each week we will have a new theme based around the children's interests/yearly calendar. The theme will be incorporated into the weekly curriculum where we will base our arts n crafts around, circle time discussions, songs and rhymes and even organise guest speakers to come in to add another realm of learning for the children.

Table Top Activity

Each table will have a different fine motor skill activity set up such as Lego, block building, pegs, lacing etc with small group games incorporated to introduce numbers, colour, shape and letter recognition.

Every child will have the freedom to explore each table at their own pace and interest and will not be restricted to just one table top activity. During this time staff can conduct 1:1 or small group work with the children to help develop their fine motor skills.

Circle Time

Here the children are invited to sit in a circle where we will discuss our theme of the week. This can involve teaching the children some facts or stories about the theme, learning new songs or rhymes, playing musical instruments, group games to introduce numbers, shapes, colours, letters etc.

Circle Time is primarily based around practicing our communication skills teaching turn taking, listening and speaking. Each child will also be given the opportunity to discuss or tell a story during this time.

Art

Being creative and exploring materials and textures is an important part of child development. At Dandelions we encourage each child to participate in our art activities where they will be given the opportunity to express themselves through the use of our vast materials and supplies.

Music and Movement

When children take part in music and movement activities, they are allowed to have fun, be creative and dance around and burn off some energy. When in a group they develop and refine their social skills, they learn to work as a team, to share and learn how to be creative in a group environment.

Outdoor Play

Exposure to fresh air and natural sunlight are essential for everyone's health and wellbeing. Our outdoor area is fully equipped with an array of activities for the children to enjoy and engage with all while aiding in their 5 areas of child development; Physical, Intellectual, Language, Emotional and Social.

Freeplay

Free play involves any kind of unstructured activity that encourages children to use their imagination, such as playing with blocks, dolls, and toy cars.

During this time we introduce our dramatic play areas also to include our shop, kitchen, construction area, hairdressers, beautician, doctors, dentist and home area. A large selection of costumes are provided to allow the children to explore and heighten their imaginative play.

Storytime

Not only does reading enhance a child's vocabulary, and to help them understand how to read and write, but reading aloud to children also helps them to understand different topics about the world and every day life. At Dandelions our bookshelf is constantly available to the children and they are free to interact with them at any stage in the day. Staff are always available to read a story aloud to a single or group of children.

Lunch

Midway through the session we will have our snack break to re energise and practise our social skills.

Do you visit Newbridge Park?

Yes. Throughout the year we will organise additional staff to join us for the day to take a trip to the park where we will walk from Dandelions Montessori to Newbridge for an adventure! High Vis Jackets and a Walking Rope Train is used for the Health & Safety of the children while on our Outing.

Do you provide any Gymboree classes?

Yes. Enhancing children's development and love of music through song, dance, movement games and instruments. It is an important factor in our weekly activities with an array of musical styles, Gymboree classes help children explore the power of rhythm, melody, tonality and beat while nurturing their key physical social and intellectual skills.

Do you host a Winter Show/Graduation?

Yes. Each year we prepare and host a show for all parents to attend on our last day before Winter Break/Graduation filled with songs, rhymes and cheer from all the children with each participating even if just with a smile.

A parents coffee/tea morning is organised on these days also to give the opportunity for parents to mingle and chat before being entertained by their amazingly talented children.

A special guest plus gift is also organised for these events.

Do you provide any other extras?

Yes. Our weekly activities are jam packed with as much variety and stimuli as possible to create a fun and enjoyable learning experience for all the children attending Dandelions. We are constantly researching and implementing new ideas and activities throughout the year with our main areas being:

1. Baking (this includes foods for children attending service with allergies)
2. Exercise/Fitness and Dance Programme/Gymboree
3. Sports Day/ Family Day Out
4. Culture Events Chinese/ Portuguese/ Spanish etc. (Food and Entertainment Provided)
5. Celebrations (Food and Entertainment Provided)- Birthdays, Halloween, Christmas, Gifts, St. Patrick's Day, Brazilian Carnival, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Graduation etc.
6. Educational Speakers and Visitors come to add another level of learning towards the theme of the week.
7. Planting, Seeding and Garden Activities to include our Vegetable Patch
8. STEM studies (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

9. Breakfast Mornings (Food Supplied)
10. Outings
11. Outdoor Gear Rental
12. Creating Individual Developmental Portfolio/ Learning Journal and Photos
13. Pedagogical Documentation
14. Teachkloud App

What is Teachkloud?

Teachkloud is an app that is used as a communication tool between parents/families and Dandelions Montessori to upload photos/videos and general snippets of each child's day while attending Dandelions for parents/families to view and have as keepsakes.

Each child will have their own individual profile and only those connected to the profile (parents) will have access to it. It will also allow parents to leave comments and create communication between themselves and their child's teacher to discuss and view their child's learning stories/observations/developmental checklist etc.

Further information can be found on www.Teachkloud.com

Yes! I'm interested. How much does it cost?

For your child to participate in all the additional extras it will cost €60 per month.

How do I pay?

Cashless Options Only;

A PayPal subscription link will be provided. Visa/Debit/Credit Card and PayPal accounts are accepted through this link.

The link is powered by PayPal and can be set up using your PayPal/Debit/Credit Card. The subscription is automatically set up for 10 months (September-June) and once signed up will automatically charge the account on the same day each month until the 10th month when the subscription will automatically expire.

Others

What should I do if I have any suggestions or feedback?

Dandelions Montessori is for you and your child and if you have any suggestions they will always be welcomed. It is hoped that you and your child will enjoy and have fond memories of the Dandelion years.

What should I do if I have further questions?

You can contact us via email DandelionsMontessori@gmail.com

or via WhatsApp/Call (085) 270 6615 where we are glad to assist you in any way we can.

Kind Regards,

Aine Byrne
Owner/ Manager
Dandelions Montessori