



Policy Area:	Lost items and responsibility		
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Last reviewed:	January 2022	Reviewed by:	Esma Izzidien
Next review:	January 2023	<i>(For all review dates see end of document)</i>	

At CMS we want to work with parents to help raise children to be responsible. Learning to be responsible is an important skill that sets children up for future success. It is not a skill that comes overnight and to truly foster a responsible child they must have the freedom to make their own decisions and a chance to try and fail in order to learn how to make responsible choices. Our role as adults is to provide guidance and clear limits to help children make choices safely.

Responsibility is taught through every aspect of the child’s day at CMS. They are shown how to be responsible for their selves, from learning how to blow their own nose, put on their own shoes to preparing their own snacks. They are also given responsibility to manage their time productively and by the age of 6 have regular meetings with their class teacher where they present the evidence they have logged of their work in their planners. When conflicts arise teachers guide the children how to solve problems and try to step back and allow them to reach solutions. Children must always feel they can approach an adult for help or if they feel uncomfortable with a situation. Adults will always intervene where there is an issue of safety but it is important for adults too not to over interfere and prevent the child from learning how to manage situations. The level of adult intervention will typically be very high in the toddler community. By the time a child is in the 3-6 staff are modelling how to resolve conflicts and encouraging children to take action themselves. In 6-12 strategies such as group discussions and peace circles are also used to enable children to resolve issues as a community.

Community is a big aspect of any Montessori school. Great emphasis is put on social responsibility and the needs of the group. Children clean their classrooms, prepare flower arrangements for the good of the class and care for class plants. In elementary they also must consider the needs of the group when deciding how to spend going out money.

In our classrooms there is only ever one of every material. Materials are often delicate and breakable, and children learn to be responsible in their use of them. If they drop a glass and it smashes they can directly see the consequence of their action and next time remember to handle the object with more care. A plastic cup falling will not give them the same feedback and therefore provides no impetus to change their actions.

Children equally are taught the importance of caring for their personal belongings. At school this is in general their uniforms and lunchboxes and water bottles. We ask parents to help their children clearly label their items. Labelling with your child enables them to know where to look for their label. Everything in the classrooms has a place- shoes and pegs are identifiable to children and when they begin they are shown where to store their items. We encourage children to be independent and if a child chooses to take off an item of clothing they may store it in these areas. When a child can not find their items teachers will ask the child where they put it and try to help them remember and look for it. The teachers will be

clear that it is the child's responsibility to return things to their rightful place otherwise things can become lost.

As all parents will know it is often easier and quicker to do things for children. In the short-term plastic cups that don't break and helping to dress children and store their items for them is much easier for the adult and causes less disruption and work. However, at our centre we do what is right for the child and not what is easy for the adult. We choose to take the route that will enable children to reach their fullest potential and to develop life skills that are becoming more difficult for children to develop in our ever over-controlled and risk averse society. Without risk and responsibility children cannot develop into confident self-sufficient adults.

CMS Policy on lost items

- Please remember that it is developmentally appropriate for children to lose, break and get items of clothing stained and dirty. We therefore ask parents not to send valuable items to school.
- Please ensure all items are clearly labelled.
- If your child loses an item, please talk to your child about the importance of placing their items in the correct place and explain that loss is a consequence of not doing so. This helps the child to take personal responsibility and modify their behaviour in future.
- Please regularly check your child has not mistakenly taken another child's items home.
- In the same way that we do not charge parents for items their children break at school as we accept that this is the way they learn responsibility; we do not accept liability for the loss of items children misplace at school. In the unlikely event that a member of staff were to lose a child's items for example if they were on a trip and the teacher had taken the items, the school would accept liability for these items. Such situations are unlikely to arise as on trips teachers give children the responsibility of taking care of their own belongings.
- We accept that at times labels may come off items and where we find unclaimed items parents will be notified and at the end of each term will gather any such items for parents to check. In the event that items are not claimed they will be donated to charity.
- We understand the frustration and cost implications lost items can have on parents. Please contact the school administrator in the event of an item being lost so that they can raise it with the class teacher and school cleaner and help try and locate it.

Review of policy dates:

Date of review	Reviewed by	Notes
09/2019	Esma Izzidien	
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