

NORTHSIDE  
*Montessori School*



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

# **2012**

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## Introduction:

I welcome readers to Northside Montessori School through its 2012 Annual Report.

Northside Montessori is a member of the NSW Association of Independent Schools and a School Subscriber to the Montessori Australia Foundation (MAF). It delivers the NSW Board of Studies Curriculum to primary age students, and as the new National Curriculum is introduced over time this too will be delivered, whilst maintaining the Montessori methodology and outcomes that go beyond those of the traditional school curriculum. The School meets all requirements in order to be registered with the NSW Board of Studies and simultaneously prides itself on its Montessori educational delivery which surpasses the restricted standards of other schools. Development of self-esteem, creativity, acceptance, mutual respect and concern for others are traits that are nurtured in the Montessori environment.

Northside Montessori is a two-campus School in a beautiful, leafy region of northern Sydney. The Stepping Stones Campus which has one classes of 3 – 6 year old children and is situated at North Turramurra. Close-by is the main Northside Campus at Pymble where the main office operates. At this campus, there are a further two classes of 3 – 6 year old children along with classes for 6 – 9 and a class for 9 – 12 year olds. There is also a Montessori class for the parents of Toddler children at the Northside Campus.

Northside Montessori enjoys its strong links to families and their active involvement at the School contributes demonstrates how much they value education, and particularly that of a Montessori education.

Barbara Maxfield – M Ed, Dip Religion, B Ed (Mathematics), Dip Performance, Dip Business: School Compliance, AMI Montessori Certificate

Principal

## Education and Financial Reporting

### Annual Report Policy for Northside Montessori School

In accordance with the reporting requirements of the NSW Minister for Education and Training and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Northside Montessori School will maintain relevant and current data and will comply with reporting requirements. This reporting will include public disclosure of the educational and financial performance measures and policies of the School as required from time to time.

#### Procedures for implementing the policy include:

- Identifying relevant staff to co-ordinate input into the annual report
- Providing requests to staff for input in their reporting areas
- Staff members collect, analyse and present data for inclusion in the report
- All documentation collated by a central person
- Determination of the content and ensuring compliance and relevance
- Preparation and distribution of the annual report to the School Board for final approval
- Further editing, preparation and publication of the report in an appropriate format to send to the Board of Studies, and to the School community.

The Northside Montessori Annual Report will be provided in an on-line or appropriate electronic format to the Board of Studies and the Annual Report will relate to each school year and be provided no later than 30 June in the year following the report.

#### Requests for additional data from the NSW Minister for Education and Training

To ensure that any requests from the Minister for additional data are dealt with appropriately, the School will identify the staff member responsible for co-ordinating the School's response. This person is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to the Board of Studies in an appropriate electronic form.

#### DEST Annual Financial Return

The School will identify the staff member responsible for completing the questionnaire. This person is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to DEST in an appropriate form.

## **Reporting Area 1: A Message from Key School Bodies**

### **From Chairman of the Board**

The School Board proudly governs Northside Montessori School, steering its future direction and ensuring the school delivers a Montessori education that meets its stakeholders' expectations and aspirations. The Board is also responsible for school policy and in ensuring compliance with both State and Federal legislation. It is a great pleasure to have been elected Chairman of the Board in 2012. Its members are enthusiastic and committed people who serve the School generously and with expertise. The volunteers who comprise our Board give their time to ensure that the school's Montessori philosophy and vision is upheld and that the financial strength of the school is maintained.

2012 was characterised by considerable change for Northside Montessori School – changes in the operations, and changes in the environment. Through all of this, the school has remained in a strong financial position, in part because of the legacy of previous school generations and the investments that they made for our community and in part due to the responsiveness of the school leadership in adjusting to these new conditions.

Of particular note has been the recruitment of Barbara Maxfield as the school's Permanent Principal in May 2012. The principal is the single most important hire for a school as they play a critical role in setting the direction and culture for the organisation. Whilst Barbara had not had any formal Montessori training at the time of her appointment she did have very strong experience in school leadership. Having been Interim Principal for the first half of the year Barbara hit the ground running and has already made an enormous contribution to the school.

One of the critical focuses for the school in 2012 was on quality. It forms a significant part of the strategic plan and this work will be continued in 2013, through the commencement of a staff observation and mentoring program as well as participation in the Montessori Australia Foundation's quality assurance program. The school was a beneficiary in 2012 of a program "Empowering Local Schools" which is targeted at supporting schools to improve their decision-making and to review its governance, leadership, facilities and the quality of its service to the community.

Child care to support working parents was extended in 2012 to include, not only after-school care, but also before-school and vacation care. An additional benefit of this program is that the school now meets the criteria set by the State Government and is approved for Child Care Benefit, thereby allowing a subsidy of parent's fees.

It goes without saying that a school such as Northside Montessori is dependent on having dedicated leadership and staff as well as a community of volunteers that support their great work. Fortunately, we have this in Barbara and her team and I thank them for their passion and hard work.

Eric Heyde  
Chairman

## **From the Principal**

The 2012 Annual Report provides a mere snapshot of the School which is based on the Montessori philosophy. This is an approach to education that acknowledges the child's natural love of learning. That love is obvious in the way children, teachers, parents, carers and the broader Montessori community interact with each other, in the care they show for the child, and for the passion they have about their school.

The School delivers the NSW Board of Studies Curriculum to primary age students, and as the new National Curriculum is introduced over time this too will be delivered, whilst maintaining the Montessori methodology and outcomes that go beyond that of the traditional school curriculum. The School meets all requirements in order to be registered with the NSW Board of Studies and simultaneously prides itself on the Montessori educational delivery which surpasses the restricted standards of other schools.

I am so fortunate to have joined this wonderful school that provides a very special and powerful education, enriching and inspiring children in their learning, growth and development. Following many years in a range of schools, initially as a secondary mathematics teacher and then eventually as a school leader, I feel privileged to be part of a learning environment that is based on the Montessori philosophy. This is an approach to education that acknowledges the child's natural love of learning. For me, it is a compelling and convincing educational method. Joining the school in January 2012 I feel renewed and excited to be part of a Montessori educational environment where there is a genuine sharing of the love of learning. That love is obvious in the way children, teachers, parents, carers and the broader Montessori community interacts with each other, in the care they show for the child, and for the passion they have about their school and learning.

2012 saw the continued growth and delivery of the co-curricular programs at the school, allowing for the individual talents and interests of our students. Mandarin, Japanese, French, Music, Dalcroze, Art, Tae Kwon Do and other activities which supplement the regular Board of Studies and Montessori outcomes at the School were well attended by children during 2012.

It is refreshing to see the acceptance and respect for difference that exists at the School. Self-esteem, creativity, mutual respect and concern for others are also traits nurtured in the school environment at Northside Montessori. Positive relationships with peers, staff and the wider community are important features witnessed on a daily basis at the School.

I take this opportunity to thank the Chairman, Eric Heyde, and the Board for their support and guidance as I lead this wonderful school.

**Barbara Maxfield** – M Ed, Dip Religion, B Ed (Mathematics), Dip Performance, Dip Business: School Compliance, AMI Montessori Certificate  
Principal

## **Reporting Area 2: Contextual Information about the School**

The Northside Montessori Society is the governing body of Northside Montessori School. It was established in 1978 by a small group of parents who wanted a high quality of education for their children. Since then the School has developed to become one of the largest schools of its type in Australia.

Northside Montessori School offers Montessori education for pre-primary and primary aged children. It has pre-primary classes for 3-6 year olds in NSW Community Services licensed premises as well as a full NSW Board of Studies registered program for 6-9 and 9-12 year olds which is the Year 1 to Year 6 equivalent. The School also provides a Toddler Montessori education for children aged between 18months and 3 years old and their parents and carers.

Northside Montessori School is situated at two sites called "Stepping Stones" and "Northside", both in Bobbin Head Road and respectively in the suburbs of Turrumurra and Pymble. Each site has extensive outdoor play areas where children can play and explore using creative play equipment. Separate areas cater for the educational needs of the children grouped into classes of 3-6 year olds, 6-9 year olds and 9-12 year olds. Spacious open-plan classrooms are furnished with Montessori materials and equipment. The specialised classroom equipment and materials are carefully designed to support the educational programs and the needs of the children according to their level of development. The activities are planned in a detailed and deliberate manner to help each child in developing their sensory-motor skills, discrimination and judgement, socialisation, creative intelligence and their imagination.

The teaching methods and curriculum, whilst based firmly on the methods, insights, materials and discoveries of Maria Montessori, meet the Board of Studies guidelines and requirements in all key learning areas. The educational approach differs significantly from more traditional methods, and particularly in the way that it stresses the individuality of the child.

The School is committed to providing a holistic, caring and nurturing educational environment. It aims to develop in each child the self-confidence and inner security to learn independently, cultivate a habit of concentration, initiative and perseverance and foster curiosity and sense of order.

The Montessori motto is "Help me to help myself."

Further, and in line with the natural inclination, children at Northside Montessori School have a genuine interest and appetite for learning, and it is a truly rewarding experience for teachers to see the response of their students as they gain confidence and enthusiasm for learning and in their own ability.

Please refer to the My School Website for further information including the ACARA statement.

<http://www.myschool.edu.au>

**Reporting Area 3: *Student Performance in National and Statewide Tests and Examinations***

Northside Montessori School did not have students sitting for the School Certificate or Higher School Certificate in 2012. Performance on NAPLAN is documented on the My School website:

<http://www.myschool.edu.au>



**Reporting Area 4: *Senior Secondary Outcomes***

Northside Montessori School did not have students studying courses in Stages 4 – 6 or involving Senior Secondary Outcomes.

## Reporting Area 5: Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

### Professional Learning

As part of the school's commitment to improve the quality of teaching and learning standards across both campuses at the Northside Montessori School, staff were expected to attend regular staff meetings, as well as curriculum and pedagogically based Professional Development sessions, including that of Montessori methodology.

In addition to staff meetings, teachers also attended whole-school and individual Professional Development conferences with the aim of enhancing the teaching and learning outcomes and for developing pedagogical practices. Staff participated in a range of Professional Development conferences held by the AIS (Association of Independent Schools) and other independent providers in an aim to target whole school initiatives, including focus on the educational needs and outcomes, child protection regulations and discipline. Considerable in-house Professional Development took place using the experience and skills of presenters from the AIS, and utilising the School's senior staff, particularly when they had taken part in externally delivered Professional Development. Using the School's own staff on such occasions made the Professional Development more 'real' to others, knowing that their peers were applying what they had learned in our own school environment.

Summary of conferences, workshops, seminars and training attended by Northside Montessori staff and Board members.

Subject	Course Provider/Details	Staff in Attendance
Workplace Health and Safety	AIS update of information re new legislation to replace OHS	2 staff
Evidence Based Assessment & Intervention for Reading Difficulties	Learning Difficulties Australia	1 staff
Assistants to Infancy Workshop	AMI	1 staff
So now you are a nominated supervisor	CCC Shortside	1 staff
Multi-lit Training	Multi-lit PTY LTD	1 staff
School Bursars Conference	AIS	1 staff
NAPLAN Analysis	AIS Workshop	1 staff
Principal Stakeholders Forum	MAF	1 staff
First Aid Training	Medilife	20 staff
Managing Conflict and Difficult Conversations	AIS	1 staff
Conflict Resolution for Students	AIS	20 staff
Complying with EYLF and NQS in Montessori Schools	MAF	3 staff
Suctioning Training	Westmead Hospital	8 staff
Foundation Literacy	AIS	10 staff
Using SMART DATA	AIS	10 staff
AEDI Data Collection	AIS	2 staff
AIS Leadership Coaching Course	AIS	1 staff
Managing Change	AIS	1 staff

Negotiating Skills	AIS	4 staff
Foundation Leadership Course	AIS	3 staff
Implementing National Curriculum	AIS	1 staff

Further opportunities are afforded to staff to develop their professional knowledge and expertise. This included:

- Peer observations within the School
- Peer observations across schools
- Consultation and collaboration with other schools
- Trialling methods and reporting back to staff meetings.

Staff are encouraged to make full use of the budget allocated for professional development. In 2012 the average spent on Professional Development was approximately \$937 per full-time person.

## Teaching Standards

Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEINOOSR) guidelines	11
Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI- NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	3
Teachers not having qualifications as described in (i) and (ii) but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. Such teachers must have been employed to 'teach' in NSW before 1 October 2004 (either on a permanent, casual or temporary basis) and worked as a 'teacher' during the last five (5) years in a permanent, casual or temporary capacity.	0

## Reporting Area 6: *Workforce Composition*

Refer to the My Schools website for Northside Montessori School Workforce:

<http://www.myschool.edu.au>

In 2012 the workforce composition of the School was as follows:

2012	
Teaching Staff	14
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	8.6
Non-teaching staff	11

There were no Indigenous Staff employed at the school in 2012.

## Reporting Area 7: *Student Attendance and Management of Non Attendance, Secondary Retention*

For whole-school student attendance rates please refer to the My Schools website:

<http://www.myschool.edu.au>

Year Level	% Attendance Rate
Kindergarten	94.5
Year 1	92.5
Year 2	97
Year 3	94
Year 4	97
Year 5	94
Year 6	95.5

In 2012, the average attendance of children from K-6 for the whole year was 95%. This is same as the average attendance for the whole year in 2011.

### Management of Non Attendance

Regular attendance at school is considered to be vital in achieving the best possible learning outcomes. The Northside Montessori School has developed the Student Attendance Policy and Guidelines which manages Non-Attendance.

### POLICY

- Northside Montessori School maintains a register of enrolments.
- Northside Montessori School monitors the daily attendance and absence of students in the School by maintaining a daily register for each class
- Student absences from the School are identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the staff member responsible for the roll class.
- Unexplained absences from school are followed up in an appropriate manner with the child's parent or carer.
- Northside Montessori School notifies parents and/or carers in an appropriate and timely manner where a student has a poor record of school attendance.
- Where unsatisfactory school attendance is identified, the attendance issue and any action taken are recorded, as appropriate, on the child's file.

Unexplained absences that cause concern are followed up in an appropriate manner with the parent or carer by:-

1. Class teacher or administration staff telephones the parent of an absent child to confirm that the child is absent from school
2. Teachers report to the Principal (or delegate) the names and number of days absent of children with unexplained absences
3. Unexplained absence letters are sent home by the administration staff to parents stating date/s of absence and requesting a written or verbal explanation
4. Where necessary, parent meetings will be held to investigate reasons of non-attendance and referrals to appropriate support services implemented.

Results of unsatisfactory attendance are recorded by the Principal or delegate and collected and filed in the child's record file

For prolonged absences and if the parents remain unreachable, the School then sends a registered letter to the address as shown in the student's records. If no response is forthcoming, the matter may then be referred to the relevant authority.

### **Secondary Retention**

As the School only goes to Year 6 Secondary Retention is not relevant to Northside Montessori School.

**Reporting Area 8: *Post School Destinations***

Post school destinations does not apply to Northside Montessori School as all children continue with school education when they leave the School.



## **Reporting Area 9: Enrolment Policies and Characteristics of Student Body**

### **Enrolment Policy**

Northside Montessori School is open to enrol girls and boys and there is no reason in principle that children with disabilities cannot be eligible to enrol. The School is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the law and, as such, adheres to the Legislative Framework that applies to the school. This includes:

- *Disability Discrimination Act*
- *Disability Standards for Education*
- *Race Discrimination Act*
- *Anti Discrimination Act*

All applications are processed in order of receipt and consideration is given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the School, siblings already attending the School, and other criteria determined by the School from time to time.

Applications for enrolment to Northside Montessori School can be made at any time and should be submitted for all levels of entry whenever families are considering enrolment at the School. Applications are processed promptly and prospective parents are offered a class observation and interview. These usually occur during terms two and three of the school year. The whole observation and interview process is a very valuable and informative one and takes approximately one hour. Both parents should attend if possible.

### **Waiting Lists**

Waiting lists are maintained for all levels of entry into the School once all places have been offered. Due to the international make-up of our School Community, children occasionally leave the School unexpectedly when their parents are transferred overseas. To take advantage of these opportunities, it is worthwhile placing a child's name on the waiting list even after offers of place have closed for any particular year.

A child's name can only be placed on the waiting list after an enrolment application has been received and processed and the required observation and interview have been completed.

### **Placement in Pre-Primary and Primary**

Enrolments are considered throughout the school year. Transfers from interstate and overseas Montessori schools will always be considered for the primary classes

To secure a place, or to be placed on the waiting list, parents should phone the office and book in for an observation in a classroom and an interview with the Principal. Applications are considered as they are submitted.

Careful observation of the child is the most important tool in knowing how to help the child's development and serve the needs of the child, for both the Montessori teacher and parent. For this reason, parents must observe in a classroom before their enrolment can be processed and once each year, while their child is enrolled. The design of both the Montessori classroom and the Montessori educational philosophy are based firmly on observation of children.

The Enrolment Application Form and Package is available on the School's website or by phoning the School.

## The Enrolment Process

The School shall adhere as closely as possible to the following process although the discretion of the Principal may be applied at any time. After an application form is submitted, all prospective parents *must attend a compulsory observation*, followed by an *interview with the Principal or a primary teacher* and followed by a tour of the school.

Parents observe the Montessori Method in action and observe how the Montessori lower primary school is process-oriented with a large proportion of hands on work with the didactic material. The Method moves towards abstraction and product orientation in the later primary stage. As a non-denominational school that teaches evolutionary history, prospective families with strong religious beliefs can be informed about our educational philosophy in this area.

After the observation and interview, applications are processed and children are placed on the Enrolments Waitlist from which offers of place are made. Students are placed on the Enrolment Waitlist with the following priority order:

- a. Students who have siblings who have completed or still attending primary
- b. Students who are transferring from another Montessori school (from overseas or out of the area) who also commit to completing the current cycle where they are enrolled
- c. Students who are booked in to primary Montessori
- d. Students whose siblings completed the 3-6 cycle
- e. Students whose siblings have failed to complete the 3 - 6, 6 – 9 or 9 - 12 cycle

The Offer of Place is made and Accepted by a family with acknowledgement of the cycles of Montessori education. The school expects a minimum three-year commitment in pre-primary and a three year commitment in each of the 6 – 9 and 9 – 12 cycles of the primary school as detailed in the Enrolment Conditions.

## Reporting Area 10: School Policies

### A. POLICIES FOR STUDENT WELFARE

Northside Montessori School actively seeks to provide students with a stimulating learning environment that is safe. It is a fundamental right of everyone in our community to feel safe.

We believe in developing the wonder of the child and the need to encourage opportunities for self-awareness and independence. We strive to provide a learning environment which promotes a love of learning, stimulates the imagination and encourages exploration of their world. The School aims to provide opportunities for students to discover and make connections with themselves, within a stimulating, engaging, safe and purposeful learning environment.

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare are implemented, the following policies and procedures are in place:

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Changes in 2012</b>	<b>Access to Full Text</b>
Child Protection Policy encompassing : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions and concepts</li> <li>• Legislative requirements</li> <li>• Preventative strategies</li> <li>• Reporting and investigating reportable conduct</li> </ul>	Inclusion of Keep them Safe	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144-2835
Security Policy encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure for the security of the grounds and buildings</li> <li>• Use of grounds and facilities</li> <li>• Emergency procedure s</li> <li>• Travel on school related activities</li> </ul>	Adjustment to written procedures to reflect WHS requirements	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Drawings of new fire exits posted in all classrooms Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144-2835
Supervision Policy encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty of care and risk management</li> <li>• Levels of supervision for on-site and off-site activities</li> <li>• Guidelines for supervisors</li> </ul>	Nil	Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144-2835
Codes of Conduct Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of conduct for staff and students</li> <li>• Behaviour management</li> </ul>	new version 2012	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144 2835
Pastoral Care Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care procedures</li> <li>• Behaviour management</li> <li>• Bullying</li> </ul>	Bullying included in 2012	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Parent and Staff Handbooks Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144 2835
Pastoral Care Communication encompassing: Formal and informal mechanisms in place for facilitating communication between the school and those with an interest in the student's educational well-being	Website continued to be updated and upgraded. Surveys conducted to ascertain understanding by parents of our care, safety and education of children in this area.	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Also in Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144 2835

## B. POLICIES FOR STUDENT DISCIPLINE

### Discipline Guidelines

Northside Montessori School supports the development of self-discipline as the true form of discipline that fosters self-control and self-knowledge.

Northside Montessori School requires all students to abide by the School's rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the School.

Where disciplinary action is required, penalties imposed vary according to the nature of the breach of discipline and a student's prior behaviour following meetings with the student and their parents.

The School places the highest possible emphasis on the full co-operation of the parents during a breach of appropriate behaviour. Full co-operation in seeking solution with the parents, student and school working together is a basic principle of the supportive triangle, an integral part of the School's Montessori philosophy.

There are many and varied reasons why a student is disruptive in class and in order to help a student function as a responsible member of society, it is necessary to understand why this is happening.

Firstly, it is of utmost importance to observe the student (using common sense) and intervene if the student is endangering himself or others:

- Look for a pattern of behaviour.
- Is there a particular time or subject or group of students present when self-discipline breaks down?
- Is this a reaction to other students?
- Is this a newly emerged behaviour?
- Anticipate rather than react to situations.

If a student is involved in a minor incident, remove the student from the situation and ask him/her if he/she thinks his/her response was appropriate.

If a number of students were involved, ask each to state what has happened and encourage them to brainstorm a solution.

A violent response to any situation is unacceptable and the student should sit down beside an adult and when the student has calmed down then the incident can be discussed and a suitable resolution and/or consequence discussed.

Each student is expected to complete a minimum focused amount of work. If a student is not working, remind him/her that this is work time and if he/she chooses not to work then he/she will miss out on playtime. The student can then make a decision. However, it is important that if he/she does not return to work that he/she misses out on playtime.

If a student is disruptive during group time, he/she should be asked to move away from the group and can only return when he/she is able to co-operate with the group.

If a student is showing a pattern of disruptive behaviours or he/she is not responding to sitting out, the parents need to attend a meeting with the teacher. Depending on the age of the student, this meeting may or may not involve the student. At this meeting, possible reasons for this behaviour and ways of solving this problem can be discussed. The Principal is available to sit on this meeting following request from the teacher or parents.

When a course of action has been agreed, with the parents and teacher monitoring, meetings will take place at four weeks intervals until both sides are satisfied that there is an improvement in behaviour.

In the event of an extreme behaviour problem, the teacher and/or Principal may ask for the child to undergo psychological assessment and/or attend an anger management or social behaviour classes.

Should any student display an extremely violent reaction towards staff, or a student, the parents will be called and asked to remove their child from school until a meeting with the Principal, class teacher, parents and student can take place. The student returns to school once a course of action has been agreed.

The aim of the School is to work together with the parents to help the student develop self-discipline. If there is no co-operation on the part of the parents, the 'supportive triangle' is compromised and not working, therefore the Principal will approach the Board to ask the family permanently withdraw the student from the School.

At all times, the interviews and discussions are conducted with courtesy and diplomacy. Raised voices and abusive language have no place at interviews and in the unlikely event of this occurring; the meeting will be terminated and reconvened at a later date when everyone is calm.

All disciplinary action that may result in any sanction against the student including suspension or exclusion provides processes based on procedural fairness.

Northside Montessori School does not permit corporal punishment of students attending the School. "This does not include, however, the application of force only to prevent personal injury to, or damage to or the destruction of property of, any person (including the student)." [Education Reform Amendment Act (School Discipline), 1995].

Information regarding Student Discipline is available in Parent Handbook, and on site in the Staff Rooms. Parents may access this at the front office.

## C. POLICIES FOR COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION

### Policy Statement

Northside Montessori School is committed to providing a safe and supportive work and learning environment for all employees and students. The principles of early intervention, procedural fairness, consistency, respect and confidentiality underpin the School's approach to complaints resolution at the School.

Complaints are managed by the Principal under the authority delegated from the Board to investigate and act in the resolution of complaints and other issues as they arise from time to time at the School. The Principal has the requisite experience and knowledge of the school and of the interpersonal relationships between parents, children and staff to manage the complaints resolution process.

The process for resolution of complaint put in place by the Board shall be adhered to by all parties to the complaint. The role of the Board in this process is to ensure the Principal has the resources needed to implement this policy and participate, if required, in the Appeals Process.

Issues or complaints covered by this policy include:

- Learning and teaching
- Child protection
- "Reportable Conduct" by employee
- Child "at risk of harm"
- Student discipline procedures

- Bullying and harassment
- Occupational health and safety
- Duty of care
- Employee conduct
- Parental conduct
- Facilities and equipment
- Any conduct which may bring the school into disrepute

Who can use this policy and its procedures to have an issue addressed?

- All employees
- Students attending the school
- Parents of students at the school
- Members of the wider community

### Background

#### The Supportive Triangle

As a Montessori School, the essential element of all relationships at school is the Supportive Triangle between the child, the parent and the School. The Board and Principal place extremely high value on this relationship. The Principal and Staff clearly understand their role as part of the supportive triangle and are readily accessible to parents to discuss issues of concern. The parents of a child at the school agree to maintain this supportive triangle as a condition of a child's continued enrolment at the school.

Why have a complaints handling procedure?

We acknowledge that employees, students, parents and members of the wider community can sometimes feel aggrieved about something happening at the school from time to time and it is important that they are not ignored. An unexpressed or unresolved grievance can often escalate unnecessarily.

Parents are advised to utilise the processes in place for addressing complaints or issues. Parents are warned against approaching other families regarding a school-related complaint. This is often a sensitive area and in order to protect all the parties, it is advisable to work through the issue with the relevant teacher or the Principal. Discussing concerns in the car-park for instance may violate provisions in the Privacy Act protecting the rights of parties involved in a complaint. Further it does not resolve the issue and weakens the school community.

For a copy of the full text, please call the office so that a copy could be sent to you. A copy is available from the school's office.

## Reporting Area 11: School Determined Improvement Targets

### Achievement of priorities identified in the school's 2011 Annual Report for 2012

Area	Priorities	Achievements
<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	<p>Review the appraisal system of staff</p> <p>Introduce and apply New Scheme Teacher Policy and Procedures</p> <p>Enhance Literacy outcomes through PD that is relevant and can be applied directly to teaching practices</p> <p>Monitor, counsel, and provide modelling to staff who are still developing skills as new or inexperienced teachers</p>	<p>New teacher appraisal procedures introduced and carried out in 2012.</p> <p>NST Policy and Procedures used and distributed to relevant staff. Literacy PD is still ongoing.</p> <p>Monitoring, counselling and modelling for developing staff took place.</p>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<p>Use in-house teacher expertise and experience to work with staff</p> <p>Target PD that will benefit teachers</p> <p>Conduct performance review of both teaching and non-teaching staff</p> <p>Target staff to take part in courses on:</p> <p>a) Negotiating skills</p> <p>b) Foundation Leadership Programs for Middle Leaders</p> <p>c) Dealing with Conflict</p>	<p>Considerable growth in teacher expertise resulted from the professional development opportunities that took place.</p> <p>Middle leaders particularly benefited from the Foundation Leadership Program.</p>
<b>Community</b>	<p>Provide greater communication to the community</p> <p>Review Website content and update this</p> <p>Introduce working groups with representation by the Board and parents to support the school's operations</p> <p>Improve the school's Newsletter to include more widespread information and articles that are relevant, interesting and which are well-worded and grammatically correct.</p> <p>Elicit more parental involvement in events.</p> <p>Explore further opportunities for fund-raising that simultaneously provide social opportunities for parents and carers</p>	<p>Website greatly improved but ongoing.</p> <p>Quality articles and communication is occurring in Newsletter.</p> <p>Still requiring more parental involvement in events and in taking responsibility for events. Large tasks are still being taken on by just a few parents.</p>
<b>Facilities and Premises</b>	<p>Review of facilities management and development of action plan to ensure allocation of resources is efficient and effective</p>	<p>This is still pending.</p>
<b>Enrolment</b>	<p>Review processes and map out a schedule for the timing of events to support the enrolment process.</p> <p>Target parents at traditional exit points for interview</p> <p>Conduct surveys to explore reasons for departures</p>	<p>Fine-tuning processes and the timing of these took place to better inform practices.</p> <p>Exit point targeting did occur but there are still parents leaving to take their children to traditional school.</p> <p>Exit surveys show satisfaction with our product but still seeking traditional schooling, particularly for upper primary.</p>
<b>Governance</b>	<p>Provide training and workshops for the School Board</p> <p>Board Appraisal</p>	<p>Limited in 2012</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p>Appoint new permanent Principal for the School (following the resignation of former Principal)</p> <p>Expand the leadership responsibilities of current staff through training and/or mentoring</p> <p>Provide PD to new Principal to further enhance the head-ship at the school.</p> <p>Explore Montessori training for new Principal</p>	<p>Permanent Principal appointed.</p> <p>Principal afforded opportunities for PD in relation to Montessori methodology.</p> <p>Training of other middle managers took place but there is some reluctance for some of them to take</p>

		on additional duties.
<b>Student Welfare</b>	Introduce the new Anti-Bullying Policy Build the Peer Support Programme	This was successfully introduced.
<b>Compliance</b>	Adjust policies and procedures to reflect new Work Health Safety legislation and the recording of Non-Attendance	Completed and ongoing.



## 2013 Priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities
<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	
<b>Governance</b>	Provide extensive training and workshops for the School Board through the Empowering Local Schools program. Board Appraisal
<b>Leadership</b>	Set role statement for Coordinator Role Leadership Coaching for Principal Literacy Leadership Training and development for Director of Business Services in Finance and Business operations
<b>Administration</b>	Develop clear role descriptions and introduce and carry out appraisal of all admin staff Consider our Customer Service effectiveness and provide PD as required. Review financial services and operations at the school
<b>Enrolment</b>	Review processes and map out a schedule for the timing of events to support the enrolment process. Target parents at traditional exit points for interview Conduct surveys to explore reasons for departures
<b>Professional Development</b>	Use in-house teacher expertise and experience to work with staff Target PD that will benefit teachers Conduct performance review of both teaching and non-teaching staff Target staff to take part in courses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Negotiating skills</li> <li>c) Customer Service Solutions</li> <li>d) Leadership Coaching</li> <li>e) Foundation Leadership Programs for Middle Leaders</li> <li>f) Literacy improvement</li> <li>g) Multi-Lit</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>	Upgrade Website Include school video on website Explore more opportunities for media attention in relation to Montessori methodology Promote Montessori in local media Respond to invitations for editorials in media
<b>Community</b>	Provide greater communication to the community Ongoing review and updating of Website content Elicit more parental involvement in events. Explore further opportunities for fund-raising that simultaneously provide social opportunities for parents and carers Provide opportunities for children to contribute to community projects
<b>Facilities</b>	Review of facilities management and development of action plan to ensure allocation of resources is efficient and effective

## Reporting Area 12: *Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility*

Northside Montessori School wants all students to recognise that they are valued and integral parts of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

Inherent in the Montessori environment is the promotion and development of respect amongst the students, staff and parents. Respect for the environment, values held by others and the uniqueness of every individual are actively encouraged and promoted through the day to day interactions and activities that the students, staff and parents experience and do.

The students as early as pre-primary are indirectly introduced to the concept of responsibility. They are able to select their own materials from the work they have been introduced to by the teacher. The free choice does not come “free” as the students realise that they are entrusted to use these materials properly and return them all ready for the next student to use.

Respect and Responsibility are promoted in various ways, both directly and indirectly.

### Multi-age grouping

All classes are made up of three ages, 0-3 for Assistance to Infancy, 3-6 for pre-primary until kindergarten, 6-9 corresponding to years 1 to 3 and 9-12 corresponding to years 4 to 6. The younger students look up to the older students. The older students help the younger students to fit in and feel secure in their new environment. This can take the form of helping them in their work, finding their way around the school or knowing the expectations and goals. As they progress in grade and age, the mantle of responsibility is being taken in stages. While the older students pass this mantle to the younger ones, the older students themselves are taking on new responsibilities.

### Group Decision Making

At the beginning of the year, classes, especially from year 1 onwards, meet and discuss the class rules and routines. Each child’s role in the decision making process is emphasised. Class or small group meetings are conducted whenever needed to discuss and resolve concerns, issues or conflicts.

### Grace and Courtesy

Lessons in grace and courtesy start in pre-primary and continue to be given, either indirectly or directly, throughout the students’ educational experience at Northside Montessori School. The mutual respect amongst the students, staff and parent body are manifested in the way they treat each other.

Respect is earned and responsibility learnt through deeds. Students are not told but are shown through examples the importance of respect and what it means to respect each other and responsibility is practised by doing the right thing irrespective of external rewards.

Students participated in raising money for their nominated charity (Monika’s Doggie Rescue, Cancer Research, Starlight Foundation, etc.). The older children actively took part in delivering meals through ‘Meals on Wheels’. Recycling of paper was continued with the children in the older classes in charge of collection and sorting. The Peer Support Programme, with the years 5 and 6 students leading, continued to be a success. The students in the older groups take turns to coordinate bus list – list of students who would be taking the bus after school. Students take turns in taking care of class pets, worm farms, composting, recycling and cultivating the vegetable gardens.

In summary, respect and responsibility are fostered through the day to day activities and experiences of the students. The following are the areas of respect and responsibility the School encourages, nurtures, promotes and hopes to instil in our students:

- Respect for one-self
- Respect for others
- Respect and acceptance of the individuality and uniqueness of each person
- Respect for the environment
- Respect for the accomplishments of others (past and present)
- Respect and gratitude for the contributions of the people in the past
- Respect for the ideas and opinions of others
- Responsibility for oneself and one's actions
- Responsibility as a member of a group, community and society
- Responsibility for the future (the important role that each person plays in the betterment of the future and the positive contributions each can make)

## Reporting Area 13: *Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction*

### Parent Satisfaction

A significant aim of Northside Montessori School is to involve families in the education of our children. To be fair and true to that aim is to have an 'open-door' approach so that parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged. We have a pleasing level of parent volunteering who assist the School in a range of ways, including:

- ✓ Classroom Assistance
- ✓ Canteen duties
- ✓ Excursions
- ✓ Library help
- ✓ Administrative tasks
- ✓ Board membership
- ✓ Reading: including listening to students read
- ✓ Multi-lit
- ✓ Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts
- ✓ Fundraising events (Pink Tower Ball)
- ✓ Other activities

This level of support, along with the attendance and activity of our various committees is a positive affirmation of our school.

The School Board meets on the second Tuesday of the month during term time. Parents are welcome to attend the non-confidential part of the meeting. The regular Parent Forums, Breakfast with the Principal and Classroom Open Events also provide ongoing opportunities for parents to provide the school with feedback. It is through this involvement and the feedback from our committees that our evidence of parent satisfaction is confirmed.

### Student Satisfaction

The school operates a Peer Support Program which provides students with opportunities to develop skills for life, including those to coping with difficult situations, resilience, effective communication, risk taking and conflict resolution. This program also allows the children with the opportunity to voice their opinions and a strong sense of satisfaction and happiness are obvious responses by the children.

High attendance levels suggests that the children enjoy coming to school and that our parents value and support learning at Northside Montessori School. Parents often report that their children don't like school holidays because they prefer to be at school!

The comments made by children at Northside Montessori School range in style and depth across the chronological age groups. Positive comments by children include:

- I really enjoy the animals and science
- I love coming to school
- I have freedom to choose my work
- It's much more fun than my old school
- I love the puzzle maps
- I can work at my own pace
- I love the materials
- I like our trees, and big space

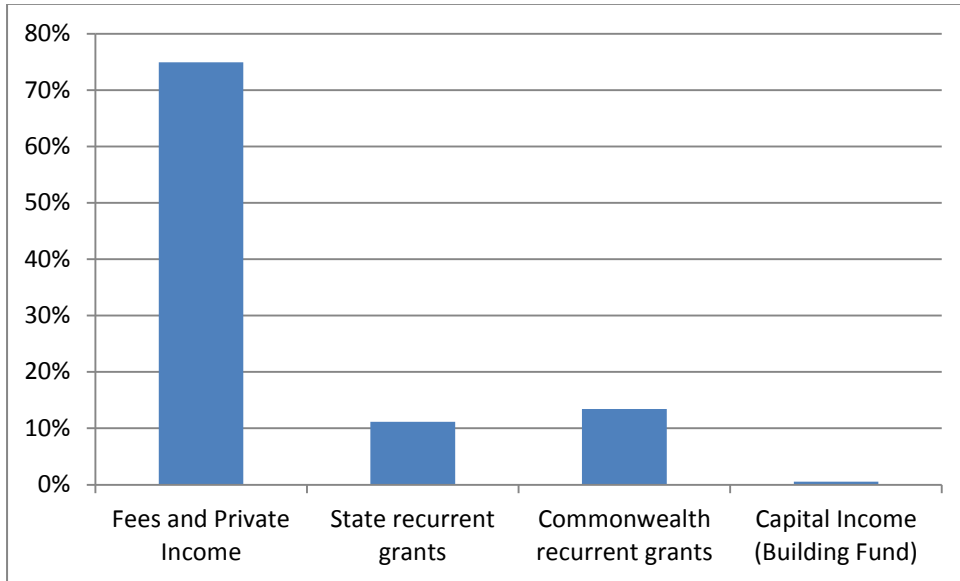
### Teacher Satisfaction

There is a special bond that exists amongst staff which is based on the commitment to Montessori education. They are a dedicated staff with great experiencing at facilitating the learning experiences of the children in a supportive and nurturing environment. Unfortunately, due to a decline in enrolment numbers there were 3 teaching and 1 non-teaching staff member whose positions were made redundant in 2012. This did have an impact on morale. The staff realised the need to remain

united and are committed resurrecting strong student numbers into the future. Teachers are encouraged to further their training and to support each other in their professional development as well. Camaraderie amongst the teachers is based on respect, friendship and the common goal of providing the best Montessori practice they can for the children in their care.

**Reporting Area 14: Summary Financial Information**

**Northside Montessori Recurrent and Capital Income for 2012**



**Northside Montessori Recurrent and Capital Expenditure for 2012**

