

NORTHSIDE
Montessori School



ANNUAL REPORT

2013

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Introduction:

I welcome readers to Northside Montessori School through its 2013 Annual Report.

Northside Montessori is a member of the NSW Association of Independent Schools and a School Subscriber to the Montessori Australia Foundation (MAF). The Pre Primary classes deliver an education based on the Early Years Learning Framework and complies with ACECQA. The school also 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. This is done so whilst maintaining the Montessori methodology and curriculum which goes beyond the confines 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 is now being transformed into a Montessori Long Day Care service 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 several classes for 3 – 6 year old children along with classes for 6 – 9 and 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 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 Education and Financial Reporting Policy for Northside Montessori School

In accordance with the reporting requirements of the NSW Minister for Education and the Australian Government Department of Education, 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 (Finance Officer, Director of Business Services, Principal and Level 1 Coordinator)
- Providing requests to staff for input in their reporting areas
- Staff members listed collect, analyse and present data for inclusion in the report
- All documentation collated by a central person (Principal)
- 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, Teaching & Educational Standards (BOSTES), and to the School community.

The Northside Montessori Annual Report will be provided in an on-line or appropriate electronic format to the BOSTES 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 appoints the Principal to the role of co-ordinating the School's response. The Principal is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to the BOSTES in an appropriate electronic form.

Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire

The School appoints the Director of Business Services as responsible for completing the questionnaire. This person is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to Department of Education in an appropriate form.

Reporting Area 1: A Message from Key School Bodies

From Chairman of the Board

2013 was a year of consolidation for Northside Montessori School. The school's student numbers stabilized, an excellent financial result was achieved and staff have been focused on the core business of delivering an excellent Montessori education. In the background however some larger strategic changes were commenced, ones that in the Board's view prepare Northside Montessori to operate more successfully in the current private education market.

The Board has given a lot of thought the school's client base, where families are coming from and what they desire from a school. From this, two distinct populations emerge. There are parents for whom the Montessori experience is critical for their children's schooling, and parents for whom Montessori is somewhat incidental and who have the intention of leaving for another school once their children are of primary school age.

It is our challenge to take the latter group, and through exposure to the excellent Montessori educational work in the classroom, and engagement with our Montessori community, turn them into members of the former. We recognize that there will be parents that we will not "convert" and for them, the school must provide the best educational experience possible for their children's formative years. But we wish to ensure that we make space available for as many passionate Montessorians as possible. Practically, the Board is considering how many classes are required in the 3-6 years to provide for healthy numbers for the 6-9 and 9-12 classes, and the best approach to manage our transition to that model.

It is this and some of the key characteristics of the Montessori method itself that create some of the logistical hurdles for management. The school can only rarely accept non-Montessori children out of the mainstream education system and this means that the school can control its numbers only through the acceptances at the beginning of the 3-6 cycle. Any students lost – for whatever reason – are almost impossible to replace. The three-year cycle itself makes the management of staffing enormously more complex; other schools have the ability to reset staffing allocations annually – something that cannot be contemplated at Northside.

During 2013, the decision was made to move the remaining class from the Stepping Stones campus to the main Northside campus. Parents at the Stepping Stones campus were not eligible for the Federal Government's childcare benefit and the school was seeing a preference from commencing parents for the Northside campus. Perhaps more importantly there was a drive to realize the benefits from having, for the first time in decades, the entire school together as one community: benefits for all the school's parents in being part of a larger community; benefits in reducing the isolation for the small numbers of Stepping Stones staff; and the logistical benefits of scale in managing student placements. Northside Montessori is simply not big enough at the moment to support two campuses within five minutes' drive of one another – campuses essentially serving the same market. The Board acknowledges that many of the families from Stepping Stones valued its intimacy and "small-community-feel" and that there will be some sense of loss associated with the "end of an era".

The final benefit of the class move is a strategic one. In 2014, the School plans to open a Montessori long day care centre at Stepping Stones to act as a feeder for the school-at-large. Montessori long day care is *the* growth area in the Montessori movement within Australia and the upper North Shore is notoriously short of long day care places. The Board believes that this will represent a filling out of Northside's market and an opportunity to greatly increase the exposure of Montessori into the community.

The School continued to run its out-of-school-hours (OOSH) programs in 2013 (principally after-school-care and vacation-care) and believes that they are a key element of the offerings for any private primary school today. Changing regulatory requirements are making these programs more difficult and expensive

to run, but out-of-school-hours care is considered by the Board to be a critical part of the school's offerings and will continue to be offered for the foreseeable future.

2013 was rich with community events with the hugely successful Pink Tower trivia night, multiple "Breakfasts with Barbara", and the "Silent Journey" – a program targeted at immersing adults in the Montessori experience.

The school also made great strides in its communication and marketing with the new-look Chronicle and the production of a highly professional school promotional video, which is currently showing at Roseville Cinema.

From an educational perspective, and amongst other things, 2013 saw the commencement of a program of staff observations: both internally with staff observing one another's classes as well as externally with visits to other schools. This is a program that will be continued in 2014 and subject to resources, expanded.

The co-curricular program was also expanded in 2013 with the school offering computer workshops, dalcroze, tae kwon do, orchestra, choir, French, Mandarin, Japanese, origami, cooking, jewellery making and dance.

All of this has been achieved together with an encouraging financial outcome. The school is significantly smaller than it was several years ago, but with a disciplined approach to expenditure, management has demonstrated the ability to generate a good surplus. Clearly the school retains significant debt and surpluses such as that generated in 2013 are a step towards creating a more secure financial foundation for the Montessori families that follow us.

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 2013 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 have grown professionally as I have continued in my learning and understanding of the Montessori method. Our children are very fortunate to be part of a Montessori school where the learning approach promotes independence, self-direction and self-discipline.

2013 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, Dance, Choir, Orchestra, Dalcroze, Art, Origami, 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 2013.

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 Early Childhood Education and Care Services licensed premises as well as a full NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards 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 2013. Performance on NAPLAN is documented on the My School website:

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

Whilst Montessori schools do not carry out routine tests like most other schools Northside Montessori School still takes part in, and values, the national testing in Literacy and Numeracy that is available through NAPLAN.

We acknowledge that NAPLAN tests are but one assessment tool which provides a small snapshot of a child's ability in literacy and numeracy but we utilize the NAPLAN test results thoroughly as they provide a detailed analysis for the school's use, which can help us identify individual student's strengths and weaknesses; and that the analysis can also inform our teaching practices.

The very small student numbers sitting for the NAPLAN tests in Years 3 and 5 at our school can mean that making assumptions about the overarching performance trends of the school is limited. The individual performance of just one or two students can skew the statistical data which can lead to assumptions about either high or low performance that may not be a true reflection of the group.

Regardless, NAPLAN testing provides important information related to literacy and numeracy that is helpful to the school and to our families. Further NAPLAN testing does not measure: creativity, critical thinking, resilience, motivation, persistence, curiosity, questioning, humour, endurance, reliability, enthusiasm, self-awareness, self-discipline, leadership, compassion, courage, sense of beauty, sense of wonder, resourcefulness, spontaneity, humility or civic mindedness. These qualities can be equally important to a child's future success and they are central to everyday practice at Northside Montessori School.

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
Agreement Interpretation Workshop – Multi Enterprise Agreements	AIS	2 staff
Supporting children with additional needs	AIS	all staff
Planning and Programming for New Science and Technology Syllabus	AIS	2 staff
Registration and Accreditation Briefing	AIS + BOSTES	2 staff
MiniLit Training	Multi-lit PTY LTD	2 staff
Delegating with Influence	AIS	1 staff
Leadership Coaching for Principals	AIS Workshop	1 staff
Principal Stakeholders Forum	MAF	1 staff
First Aid Training	Allens Training	20 staff
Schools and the Law	AIS	3 staff
New English Syllabus Familiarisation	AIS	2 staff
Newly Appointed Council Members	AIS	1 staff
Suctioning Training	Westmead Hospital	8 staff
Creating Safer Independent Schools	AIS	staff
Master Class Financial Management Questionnaire	AIS	1 staff
AIS Annual Briefing	AIS	2 staff
Customer Service Skills	AIS	2 staff
Business Managers Course	AIS	1 staff

Music Workshop	Kodaly Music Education Institute	1 staff
Guiding Children's Behaviours	SCAN	3 staff
Anti Bullying Workshop	Peer Support Australia	2 staff
Implementation Workshop	Peer Support Australia	2 staff
Nominated Supervisor Training	CS Centre Support	1 staff
Inclusive Montessori Education Workshop	MAF	2 staff
Centenary Montessori Conference	MAF	4 staff
Work Health and Safety Consultation	AIS	1 staff
Principal Appraisal Workshop	AIS	2 staff
Centre for Excellence Workshop	AIS	1 staff
Proactive Approaches to Performance Management	AIS	1 staff
Managing Change in Schools	AIS	1 staff
AIS Annual Conference: Tapestry of leading in schools	AIS	1 staff
Implementing Teaching Performance	AIS	1 staff
Supporting School Success	AIS	1 staff
Non-Teaching Staff Appraisal Workshop	The People Department	5 staff
Creating Safer Independent School, film	AIS, in School	20 staff
Governance Review	AIS	9 Directors
Finance Review	AIS	2 staff
Spelling Workshop	AIS	8 staff
AMI Assistant Course	MAF	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 2013 the average spent on Professional Development was approximately \$984 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	9
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	1
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 2013 the workforce composition of the School was as follows:

2013	
Teaching Staff	10
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	8.2
Non-teaching staff	11

There were no Indigenous Staff employed at the school in 2013.

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	92.59
Year 1	95.45
Year 2	94.57
Year 3	96.83
Year 4	93.82
Year 5	92.86
Year 6	97.05

In 2013, the average attendance of children from K-6 for the whole year was 94.71. This rate is the same as the average attendance for the whole year in 2012 (95%).

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 each 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. This is initially done by the classroom teacher.
- 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 be referred to the relevant authority.

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:

Policy	Changes in 2013	Access to Full Text
Child Protection Policy encompassing : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions and concepts • Legislative requirements • Preventative strategies • Reporting and investigating reportable conduct 	Regular reminders about roles and responsibilities	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"> • Procedure for the security of the grounds and buildings • Use of grounds and facilities • Emergency procedures • Travel on school related activities 	Updated Emergency Procedures	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"> • Duty of care and risk management • Levels of supervision for on –site and off-site activities • Guidelines for supervisors 	Nil	Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144-2835
Codes of Conduct Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of conduct for staff and students • Behaviour management 	Nil	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"> • Health care procedures • Behaviour management • Bullying 	Nil	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	Website continued to be updated and upgraded. Surveys conducted to ascertain understanding by parents of our care, safety and education of	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Also in Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook Parents may request a copy by contacting the

and those with an interest in the student's educational well-being	children in this area.	Office at 9144 2835
Attendance	New procedures in place for roll checking and follow up	School Policies and Procedures Handbook

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 2012 Annual Report for 2013

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and Learning	Introduce adjusted Appraisal model for teaching staff. Introduction of mandatory peer observation for teachers within the school and across other Montessori Schools.	Appraisals provided helpful feedback to teachers and new teaching and learning goals were established. Observations reinforced good practice and most teachers found the experience refreshing.
Governance	Provide extensive training and workshops for the School Board through the Empowering Local Schools program. Board Appraisal	Board Appraisal took place and improved approaches have taken place as a result. Delegation Protocols being developed with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities.
Leadership	Set role statement for Coordinator Role Leadership Coaching for Principal Literacy Leadership (PALL Program) Training and development for Director of Business Services in Finance and Business operations	Coordinator position developed and person is taking responsibility to learning support, NAPLAN and BOSTES issues. Director of Business Services and Finance Office have taken on further training and this has improved operations related to finances and reporting to the Board. Literacy leadership program commenced with plans for 2014 set. Ongoing PALL involvement for year ahead
Administration	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	Used external company (The People Department) to develop appraisal model. Included review of role descriptions. Effective process. Review by AIS of financial services and operations undertaken with a number of recommendations implemented. This will be ongoing in 2014 as new systems are introduced.
Enrolment	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	Closer scrutiny and mapping has led to a stabilisation in enrolments.
Professional Development	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"> a) Negotiating skills b) Customer Service Solutions c) Leadership Coaching d) Foundation Leadership Programs for Middle Leaders e) Literacy improvement f) Multi-Lit 	PD took place in all areas below.
Marketing	Upgrade Website Include school video on website	Website greatly improved but still room for improvement. Editorials and local magazine advertising is yet to

	<p>Explore more opportunities for media attention in relation to Montessori methodology</p> <p>Promote Montessori in local media</p> <p>Respond to invitations for editorials in media</p>	<p>contribute to enrolment boosts according to data collected. Looking at new areas of social media and cinema advertising too.</p>
Community	<p>Provide greater communication to the community</p> <p>Ongoing review and updating of Website content</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>Provide opportunities for children to contribute to community projects</p>	<p>2013 saw a decrease in parent involvement with just a handful of key parents playing a role in major events and projects. Ongoing monitoring of appropriate events to unite the community is required.</p>
Facilities	<p>Review of facilities management and development of action plan to ensure allocation of resources is efficient and effective</p>	<p>This task has not been given the attention that it needs. A full facilities costing and action plan is now needed. Ongoing allocation of resources for classrooms has been effective and the decision to relocate on class to the main campus was part of the 2013 review of facilities. The preparation of a third Pre Primary classroom at the main campus was a major task taking place at the end of 2013 and into the new year.</p>

2014 Priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities
Teaching and Learning	<p>Testing of all children twice in the school year including at the beginning of the school year in Numeracy and Literacy to take place with the aim of targeting children requiring additional attention and support.</p> <p>Training of four staff in Minilit so that earlier intervention for Literacy can take place.</p> <p>Further training in Special Education for Coordinator</p> <p>Attendance at workshops to develop skills in observation to inform teaching practice.</p> <p>Workshops on the use of BOSTES program builder</p> <p>Allocation of time to develop scope and sequence and programs for new syllabuses in English, Mathematics and Science & Technology.</p> <p>Mandatory Peer Observation to continue.</p> <p>New Appraisal model to be developed.</p>
Governance	<p>Ensure governance training for all new Board Members. Create additional sub-committees to support management. Finance Committee, Risk Review Committee. Finalise and implement Delegation Protocol Document.</p>
Leadership	<p>Principal to further develop leadership through sharing of leadership with others eg shadowing and coaching peers. Further PD for Principal as relevant.</p> <p>Participation in AIS Independent Schools Centre of Excellence (ISCE) reference group.</p>
Administration	<p>Fine tuning systems remains the focus for the year ahead. Detailed recording of organisation and procedures to assist in consistent and effective operations.</p> <p>Introduction of attendance recording systems in PCSchool to be introduced in line with mandatory requirements.</p> <p>Student files to be transferred from classrooms to central location in office. Greater use of scanning to be introduced to reduce issues of storage.</p>
Enrolment	<p>Promoting enrolments will continue to be a focus in the year ahead. Re-building bonds with 'feeder' Montessori Preschools will be explored. Working at retaining children from Kindergarten into Primary remains an important part of building enrolments. Keeping school fees at an affordable level will be a challenge given reduction in funding. Introduction of possible Long Day Care Centre to build enrolments from the bottom up is on the plans.</p>
Professional Development	<p>Montessori refresher workshop, special education, compliance (WHS) are areas of focus in the year ahead. Principal to continue with completion of Montessori Diploma Audit.</p>
Marketing	<p>Some re-branding and development of new flyers will occur. Further cinema advertising to be explored. Ensuring quality editorials in the local magazines will take place along with exploring new social media options and online groups.</p>
Community	<p>Class parents utilised more fully to promote social events with families.</p>
Facilities	<p>Completion of new Pre Primary classroom early in the year to ensure operations can start in 2014.</p> <p>Clearing out and set-up of new rooms to cater for classes in 2014.</p> <p>Storage and labelling of items.</p>

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
- ✓ Gardening and garden projects
- ✓ Caring for animals (and babysitting them in holidays)
- ✓ Administrative tasks
- ✓ Board membership
- ✓ Reading: including listening to students read
- ✓ MultiLit program
- ✓ Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts
- ✓ Fundraising events (Pink Tower Trivia Night)
- ✓ Working Bees
- ✓ Open Mornings – tour guides
- ✓ 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. The Finance Committee meets quarterly.

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:

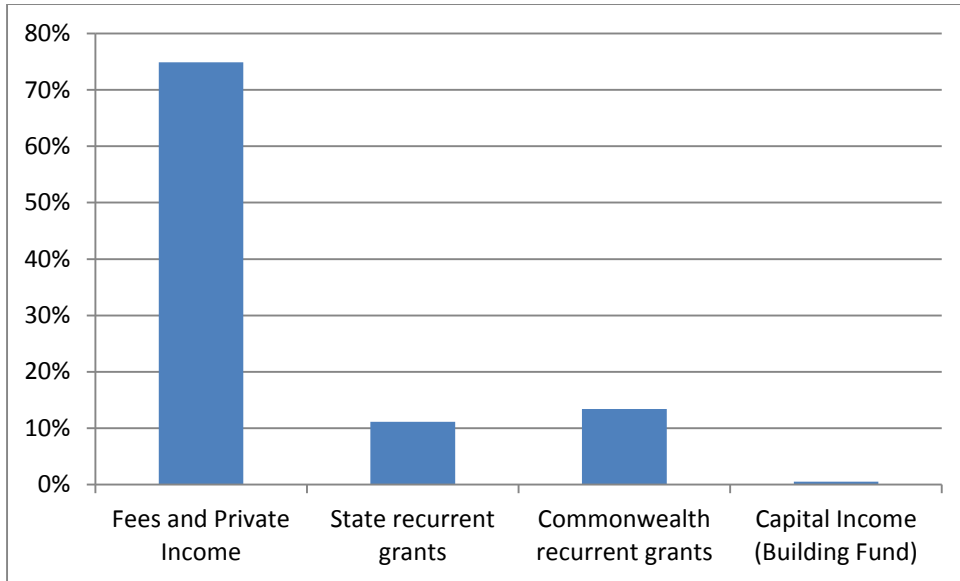
- We have the best teachers; they really care about us
- I hate weekends! They're so boring.
- I have freedom to choose my work
- I don't understand how kids could hate going to school.
- It's great that we can mix with the older kids
- Long division is so cool
- Checkerboard...I get it now
- I like the new green lawn

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. Our teaching staff remained unchanged in 2013 and minor adjustments were made in relation to classroom assistants. Our Afterschool Care staff are mostly made up of casual staff, mostly ex-students and university students, and at the end of 2013 those positions ceased so that ongoing provision of OOSH services were compliant with ACECQA. We had some retirements in our administration office which has led to new positions. A great office team has emerged with a new enrolments officer, receptionist, IT support person and Finance Officer in place during 2013. Teachers and staff 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 2013



Northside Montessori Recurrent and Capital Expenditure for 2013

