



NORTHSIDE
Montessori School



ANNUAL REPORT

2015

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Introduction:

I welcome readers to Northside Montessori School through its 2015 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 of Northside operates as a Montessori Long Day Care service and is situated at North Turramurra. The main Northside Campus at Pymble is where the main office and the school 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, AMI Montessori 3-6 Diploma Audit, Justice of Peace

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, Business Manager, Principal)
- 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.

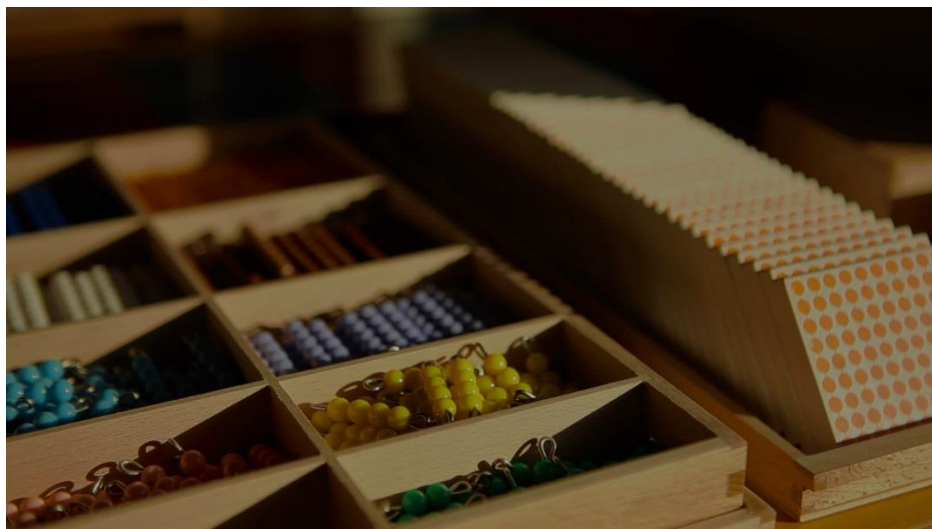
The Northside Montessori Annual Report will be provided in an on-line or appropriate electronic format to the BOSTES and the Annual Report will relate to each school year and be provided no later than 30 June in the year following the report.

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 Business Manager 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 the Chair of the Board

Northside Montessori School continues to deliver an authentic Montessori and high quality educational experience to our students almost 40 years after its founding.

We provide a rigorous, caring and holistic Montessori education, delivered by highly qualified and professional staff in an outstanding learning environment that supports the needs of the whole child. We strive to keep alive the love of learning in every child and equip them with the skills they will need to meet the challenges of life, and of tomorrow. While learning occurs in a Montessori environment, each student has the opportunity to meet or exceed the educational requirements of the NSW Board of Studies.

Working together the Board and Executive have moved our school into a very strong financial position over the last 4 years and have now also begun to see sustained growth in student enrolments.

During 2015 the Board reviewed our Strategic Plan with input from the School's Executive, the teaching and non-teaching staff, and the parent body. We have jointly determined that our focus for 2016 -2019 will be in three key areas:

Learning – delivering excellent student outcomes through a quality Montessori education where our focus is on building teacher capability and measuring and communicating outcomes

Community – fostering positive relationships with all members of our community, leading to an increase in engagement with and regard for the school

Sustainability – maintaining the existing strong management, governance, financial and environmental base of the school, with a clear focus on attracting and retaining families

This planning process was very valuable and allows us to now work towards a vision for 2019 with a clear plan to guide our decision-making. A key focus continues to be the re-building of student numbers which, in a Montessori school, must be built from the ground up. We took the difficult decision to consolidate our two middle primary classes (the '6-9 Cycle' for Years 1 – 3) to one at the end of 2015. However, our projections suggest that this is likely to be of short duration. This was balanced by a bold change in strategic direction to establish a Montessori Long Day Care Centre at our satellite campus, Stepping Stones, one suburb away.

This endeavour took more from us, and the school's executive in particular, than we ever expected, however, the centre began to operate in surplus within 8 months of launch and is already feeding enrolments to the Northside campus. We owe a debt of gratitude to our Principal, Barbara Maxfield, and Director of Business Services, Sue Smedley, for their outstanding commitment and resilience in this undertaking.

I wish to acknowledge my fellow Directors on the Board. We are very fortunate to have access to their deep and varied professional experience, coupled with an unwavering commitment to both the Montessori method and our school. Thanks must also go to Barbara Maxfield who, as Principal, has managed to juggle the competing demands of the Board driven by the Strategic Plan and an increasingly complex education environment, as well as staff and parent needs and expectations, with grace and professionalism. This is no easy role, and in Barbara we have a Principal who is an exemplary educational leader with the foresight and determination to make a difference and drive results. I would also like to thank the staff and parents who have contributed in so many ways to sustain Northside throughout the year. It is only with the cooperation and contribution of many that we are able to continue to provide an exceptional education for our children.

Samantha Baker
Chair

From the Principal

The 2015 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 also 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 Board of Studies, Teaching & Educational Standards (BOSTES) Curriculum to primary age students, and as the new National Curriculum is introduced over time we will continue to introduce this. The School meets all requirements in order to be registered with the BOSTES and simultaneously prides itself on the Montessori educational delivery which surpasses the restricted standards of other schools.

I am so fortunate to be part of this wonderful school. It 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.

The delivery of our curriculum continues to be compliant with BOSTES with the inclusion of the new Australian curriculum. This is achieved whilst maintaining the true essence of Montessori methodology.

2015 saw the continued delivery of the co-curricular programs at the school, allowing for the individual talents and interests of our students. Mandarin, Japanese, French, Choir, Orchestra, Dance, Origami, Tae Kwon Do, Sport, camps and other activities which supplement the regular BOSTES and Montessori outcomes at the School were well attended by children during 2015.

Community events, including parent education events are popular with parents, many of whom rely on our school community for their friendships and networking.

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 outgoing Chairman, Eric Heyde, and the 2015 Board for their support and guidance. I also look forward to working closely with the newly appointed Chair, Samantha Baker, and Board of Directors as I lead this wonderful school into the 2016 school year.

Barbara Maxfield – M Ed, Dip Religion, B Ed (Mathematics), Dip Performance, Dip Business: School Compliance, AMI Montessori Certificate, AMI Montessori 3-6 Diploma Audit, Justice of Peace

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 in its Early Childhood Education and Care Services licensed premises as well as a full NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards registered program for older children. The BOSTES programs are delivered to children in the final year of the 3 – 6 Pre Primary Program which is the Kindergarten equivalent and in programs for 6-9 and 9-12 year olds which are the Year 1 to Year 6 equivalent. The School also provides a Toddler Montessori education for children aged between 18 months 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 Turramurra 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 from 6 months to 5 years at Stepping Stones Montessori Long Day Care and also for the classes of 3-6 year olds, 6-9 year olds and 9-12 year olds. Spacious open-plan learning areas 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, Teaching & Educational Standards 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 2015. 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. Administration personnel also took part in training to ensure that all facilities, human resources and operational services are current and effective.

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 Association of Independent Schools (AIS) 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 in 2015 by Northside Montessori teaching and non-teaching staff, and Board Directors.

Subject	Course Provider/Details	Staff in Attendance
AIS Governance Symposium 2015	The Association of Independent Schools	2
PCSCHOOL Com-Assist Solutions Pty	PCSchools	1
BANSW PD	BURSARS ASSOC Bursars' Association NSW	1
AMI 3-6 Diploma	AUST MONT Australian Centre for Montessori Studies	1
Montessori ECEC Workshop	Montessori Australia Foundation Ltd	2
Montessori Consultation forum	Montessori Australia Foundation Ltd	1
AIS Multi Enterprise agreements interpretation	The Association of Independent Schools	2
Qikkids training	Qikkids	2
Montessori Business Managers Forum	Montessori Australia Foundation Limited	1
Vimeo – webinar Leading learning	Vimeo	1
Building better learning space	The Association of Independent Schools	1
Analysing Business Performance	The Association of Independent Schools	1
VDF Query Training	PCSCHOOL Com-Assist Solutions Pty Ltd	1
CPR and First aid course	Hills First Aid Training	All staff working directly with children
Understanding Self as leader course	The Association of Independent Schools	1
Workshop Alison Awes	Montessori Australia Foundation Limited	2

ASBANSW PD Day BURS ASSOC	Bursars' Association of New South Wales	1
Montessori Whole School Refresher	MONTESSORI Montessori Australia Foundation Limited	3
Dalcroze workshop	DALCROZE Dalcroze Australia	1
Vimeo –Webinar Parenting skills	Vimeo	1
Identifying and responding to Children at Risk of Harm	The Association of Independent Schools	11
Early Childhood training - language course	Spalding Education Australia	1
Cert III in Early childhood education	Open Colleges Pty Ltd	1
Emergency training and planning	Workplace Emergency Management	All school staff
Fire training	Workplace Emergency Management	All school staff
Manual Handling presentation ASAP	ASAP Physiotherapy	10
Delivery of emergency training	Workplace Emergency Management	10
Emergency management services	Workplace Emergency Management	10

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 2015 the average spent on Professional Development was approximately \$800 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	0
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 2015 the workforce composition of the School was as follows:

2015	
Teaching Staff	9
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	6.6
Non-teaching staff	11

There were no Indigenous Staff employed at the school in 2015.

Reporting Area 7: *Student Attendance and Management of Non Attendance*

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

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

Year level	Semester 1	Semester 2	% Attendance rate
K	91.40	94.23	92.82
1	93.28	93.86	93.47
2	97.04	95.59	96.32
3	92.33	92.60	92.47
4	97.54	95.92	96.73
5	96.42	91.23	93.83
6	95.52	95.67	95.60

In 2015, the average attendance of children from K-6 for the whole year was 95.5%. This rate is slightly higher than the average attendance for the whole year in 2014 (94%).

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*
- *Privacy Act 1988 & Privacy Amendment Act 2012*

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 materials. 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 2015	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 	Nil	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 Updated Staff Handbook Emphasised procedures in Parent Handbook	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 and those with an interest in the student's educational well-being	Website continued to be updated and upgraded. Correspondence to families and provision of workshops that pertain to approaches in place in our classrooms.	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Also in Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144 2835

Attendance	Nil	School Policies and Procedures Handbook
Medication Policy	Nil	School Policies and Procedures Handbook Parents may request a copy by contacting the Office at 9144 2835 Policy document distributed to families of children with a Medical Action Plan

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.
- Consider if there is a particular time or subject or group of students present when self-discipline breaks down
- Consider relationships with peers and whether the behaviour is a reaction to other students
- Consider whether this is a newly emerged behaviour and consider the triggers including outside factors
- 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 in 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 a 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
- Work, 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

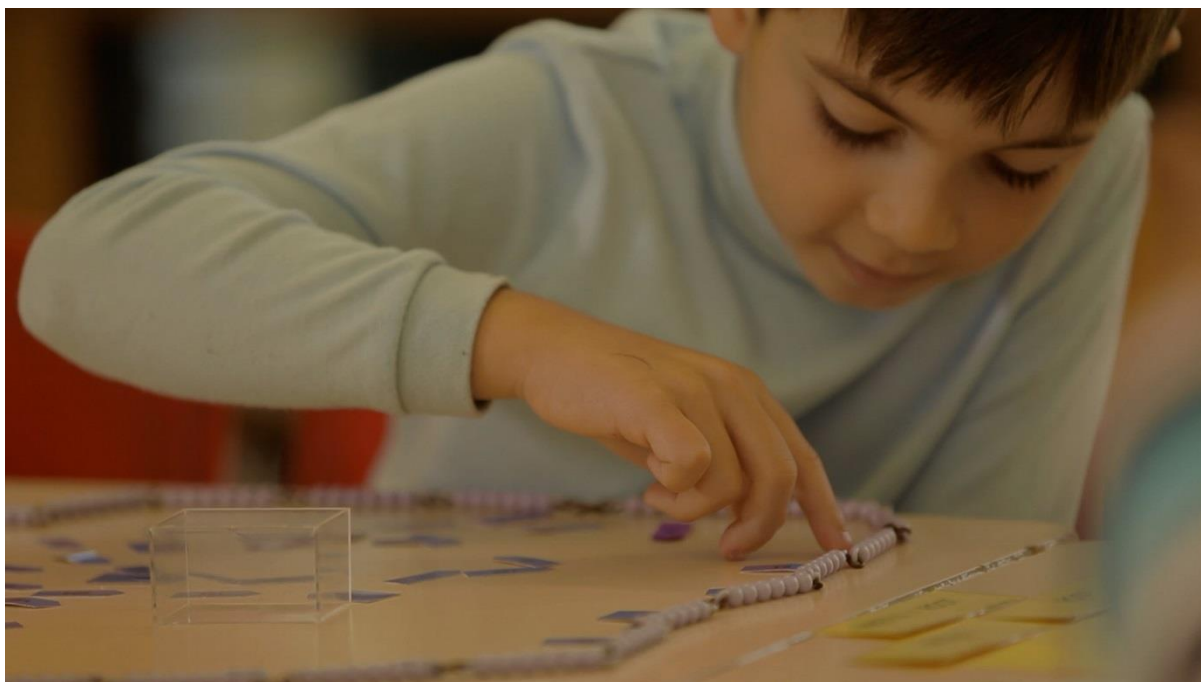
As a Montessori School, the essential element of all relationships at school is the Supportive Triangle between the child, the parent and the School. The Board and Principal place extremely high value on this relationship. The Principal and Staff clearly understand their role as part of the supportive 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 2014 Annual Report for 2015 Annual Report

Area	Priorities 2015	Achievements
Teaching and Learning	Put in place staffing to allow 3 teachers to take Long Service Leave for one term each. Appoint new teacher and support staff to accommodate changes in student numbers as well as staff changes. Bring all Kindergarten children together each afternoon with dedicated BOSTES curriculum work undertaken. Closer scrutiny of 6 – 9 literacy teaching. Aim to raise standards in relation to literacy particularly but also numeracy in 6 – 9.	Three class teachers took one term of LSL in each of terms 1 – 3. The merging of all Kindergarten children was successful in light of numbers across the 3 classes. Standards in the 6 – 9 classes were monitored closely.
Governance	Pursue a non-parent Director to serve on the Board. Change auditors. Ensure all new Directors undertake an orientation. Undertake Governance training – four hours per Director per annum. Risk Committee to develop reporting schedule and meet quarterly.	The Board was successful in attracting a non-parent to the Board at the AGM in April. Orientation was conducted for new Board members and improvements in formalising this process will continue. The hours of training took place at a workshop conducted by the Association of Independent Schools. The Risk Committee was formed and met 4 times during 2015. At the 2015 AGM the decision was made to have 'closed' Board meetings which meant that no parent was able to attend regular Board Meetings unless invited.
Leadership	Principal to continue serving on Independent Schools Centre for Excellence with AIS. Provide opportunity for Pre Primary teacher to develop leadership skills.	The Principal not only served on the ISCE council at the AIS but also took part in the leadership program which included coaching a newly appointed Principal. The development of a suitable Pre Primary Teacher to take a leadership role for the team did not eventuate but is still a consideration for 2016.
Administration	Appoint Premises Officer and IT support to complement, support and broaden administration operations.	A part-time Premises Officer and an IT Support person were appointed and their contribution have made a marked improvement on monitoring, reviewing, supporting and the delivery a better quality of service and provision for the school community. This also took considerable burden off the Business Manager.
Enrolments	Strategies to boost enrolments into primary classes include further the pursuit of further enrolments from 'feeder' Montessori schools, bringing all Kindergarten children together every day to promote cohesion so that there is less likelihood of exiting at the end of the 3 year cycle, conducting more regular Open Tours with greater one-to-one opportunities for discussion, and promoting more opportunities for parents to take part in Parent Education events. Retention continues to be a key priority and so promoting the links between cycles continues to be important Showcasing the learning and passion for it in the older children will be important.	The Parent Education sessions were more targeted to educate families about the merit of an ongoing Montessori Education into Level 1 – 6. The retention of children from K to Level 1 at the end of 2015 was acceptable and we would like to see our retention at that point improved each year. The efforts of the teaching staff to promote the school through the showcasing of learning in the primary classes was commendable with staff presenting out of school hours. The school has

		had a number of families transition to Northside from other Montessori pre-schools. This is very pleasing.
Professional Development	Training staff in the area of Autism is one focus area due to the number of children identified with this disability. Middle management training for one of the pre-primary teachers is also to be arranged. One of the primary teachers demonstrated an interest in PD in creative writing and numeracy. Participation in the Montessori Refresher Conference will be promoted to staff. Peer observation continue to be a focus with both teaching and non-teaching staff as a means to promote good practice and cohesion in a non-threatening way.	The training proved invaluable to teachers who found that some of the strategies were also helpful for other children. The middle management training took place. Teachers found the Refresher Course invigorating and motivating. The peer observation program led to building closer relations and professional dialogue with signs of enhanced teaching practice in the classrooms. Other individual or group PD were largely generic or designed to meet compliance requirements and as such not worthy of note for the purpose of this report.
Marketing	Media editorials, advertising, flyers, and the expansion of social media to be the focus. Introduce Northside Montessori School facebook. Renew the school website still a key priority. Conduct OPEN DAY in addition to Open Tours.	We experienced pleasing media coverage regarding NAPLAN in the Sydney Morning Herald and our advertising appears to having a positive impact on our enrolments and perception of our school. The OPEN DAY did not prove to have a significant impact to justify this taking place each year. As an alternative we retain the Open Tours. The Open Tours continue to be well-attended. The facebook is working well and keeping the current community well informed and 'talking'!
Community	Introduce Support Hours program for dual purposes – one being to promote parent cohesion and community spirit. Provide additional Parent Education events.	The program certainly achieved productive contributions to the school but parents perceived the number of hours to being burdensome. There were some high quality events as a result of the program so a review is needed to ensure it is ongoing but maybe less demanding. The Parent Education and Social events were very positive.
Facilities	Refurbish classroom to accommodate larger class (from 20 to 30 children). Relocate stored boxes to different classroom and sort. Move Pre Primary Library out of PPN classroom to create better space for Kindergarten group sessions. Use funding for ramp access to classroom. Develop facilities plan that includes longer term maintenance in addition to the annual facilities plan.	The refurbishment was a success and resulted in good learning spaces being created. The Pre Primary Library is now purposeful and well organised and has been a good outcome from the changes. The challenge to have a facilities plan that includes longer term maintenance in addition to the annual facilities plan is still ahead of us but the appointment of the Facilities Officer should remedy this.

2016 Priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities
Teaching and Learning	Enhancing relationships of educators (ie teachers and their assistants) to ensure that the school is getting the best out of the staff Data analysis of NAPLAN to have more of a priority Tackling Literacy in Kindergarten to ensure that children are ready and reaching benchmarks for Stage 1
Governance	More effective Induction Program for newly appointed Board Directors. All new Directors to complete online modules with AIS so that they are well-educated about governance and their responsibilities. All other Directors to take part in Governance Symposium. Ensure better run meetings – reports in advance, reports read in advance and consider review of meeting at closed meeting times.
Leadership	Principal to continue serving on the Independent Schools Centre for Excellence with AIS as well as providing Coaching for newly appointed principals. Create a new role at the school to support current principal eg Deputy Principal role or similar. Still consider need for Pre Primary leadership
Administration/Non-teaching positions	Build skills and define roles of admin team. Develop manuals that include all role details of personnel in the admin team. Consider employing Grounds person to take on regular maintenance and facilities tasks in lieu of contracting works for tasks that do not require a qualified trades' person.
Enrolments	Strategies to boost enrolments into primary classes include further the pursuit of further enrolments from 'feeder' Montessori schools, bringing all Kindergarten children together every day to promote cohesion so that there is less likelihood of exiting at the end of the 3 year cycle, conducting more regular Open Tours with greater one-to-one opportunities for discussion, and promoting more opportunities for parents to take part in Parent Education events. Retention continues to be a key priority and so promoting the links between cycles continues to be important Showcasing the learning and passion for it in the older children will be important.
Professional Development	Ensuring educators keep abreast of significant teaching and learning initiatives is a priority for 2016 as is the important area of literacy. The relationships between educators is also vital and so emphasis will be placed on this. We aim to train newly appointed staff in the admin team to ensure they have the skills and knowledge suited to their roles. Ensure all directors complete 4 hours of mandatory training in governance. Develop skills and knowledge of Operations Manager across school management issues (IR, compliance, leadership)
Marketing and Communications	New School video to be produced for Website and Cinema Advertising. New Marketing Strategy to be developed. Ensuring that Facebook is reaching capacity will take place as will greater focus on media and marketing generally. Newly appointed Operations Manager to take carriage of marketing as part of role. Re-branding, or refreshing existing marketing tools, handbooks, fliers etc to take place.

Community	<p>The introduction of a School APP is designed to keep our community connected and informed about what is taking place. We anticipate that any complaints or concerns may be quickly raised and addressed through this communication.</p> <p>Regular meetings with Class Parents to ensure they are positive and well-informed conduits for communication between management, teachers and parents. Consideration for new social events for families as well as greater engagement of families in educational showcasing.</p>
Facilities	<p>Review Consider employing Grounds person to take on regular maintenance and facilities tasks in lieu of contracting works for tasks that do not require a qualified trades' person.</p> <p>Extending the current Music Room so that it can facilitate larger audiences is a goal for 2016. The new Function Room will have a capacity for about 100 people and will be used for a range of activities including co-curricular, parent meetings and forums, soirees, indoor sport and so on.</p> <p>Depending on enrolments it is envisaged that one current Pre Primary classroom will not reconfiguration so that it can accommodate more children (up to 40 rather than the current 30).</p>
Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019	<p>Address the goals and targets within the Strategic Priorities: Learning, Community and Sustainability. This will be an ongoing task over the next four years.</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
- ✓ Parent Education Events
- ✓ Montessori Training
- ✓ Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts
- ✓ Grandparents Open Morning
- ✓ Fundraising events (Pink Tower Trivia Night)
- ✓ Working Bees
- ✓ Sharing drop-offs and pick-ups with others
- ✓ Tuckshop Day
- ✓ Excursions and Incursions
- ✓ Library help
- ✓ Newsletter (Chronicle) editing and publishing
- ✓ Gardening and garden projects
- ✓ Caring for animals (and babysitting them in holidays)
- ✓ Administrative tasks
- ✓ Board membership
- ✓ Reading: including listening to students read
- ✓ Cooking or Craft workshops with children
- ✓ Open Mornings – tour guides
- ✓ Children's Discos
- ✓ Adult Only events (Welcome Event, etc)
- ✓ Other activities

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

Class Parents are allocated to each class and meetings of this group take place throughout the year. The regular Parent Education Forums and Classroom Open Events also provide ongoing opportunities for parents to provide the school with feedback.

Exit surveys are conducted with families leaving the school at the end of Year 6 or if they are moving to other schools before graduating at which time reasons are sought to ensure that any issues or conflicts are quickly addressed. The School App also provides parents with the opportunity to give us feedback in the "Compliments and Complaints" section. Any concerns are followed up in a timely fashion.

The school has ongoing communication with parents through parent teacher interviews which are held regularly throughout the year. In addition to this, letters, phone calls, emails and an open door policy encourages parent involvement in the school. Staff are frequently available for quick conversations with parents. Staff enjoy working at St Peter's and as such there is high interest in any vacant positions. Staff who left during 2014 left for varied reasons including promotion, relocation, retirement and new opportunities. Staff are always afforded the right to an exit interview if des

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!

Student satisfaction is regularly measured through conversations with classroom teachers who also monitor any dissatisfaction.

Staff Satisfaction

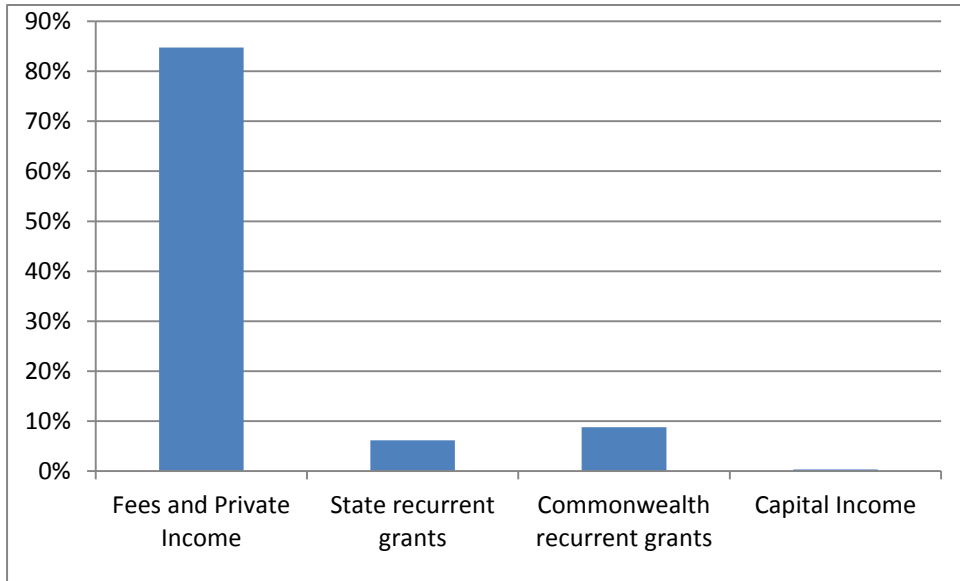
There is a special bond that exists amongst staff which is based on the commitment to Montessori education. They are a dedicated staff with great experiencing at facilitating the learning experiences of the children in a supportive and nurturing environment. We had a new Pre Primary teacher join us at the start for 2015 following the departure of a teacher who took a role as Principal in another Montessori School, Later in the year (Term 4) we one staff redundancy but otherwise our teaching staff remained unchanged in 2015. There were minor adjustments made in relation to classroom assistants. The classroom assistants provide a vital support to the classroom operations both in relation to that of the classroom environment itself but also in assisting children in their learning through one-to-one and small group support. In 2015 we fully utilised the services of OSHClub to provide care for our children in our Afterschool Care program and Vacation Care programs.

We have a strong and cohesive office team who work collaboratively and productively to support the schools administrative operations. 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 2015



Northside Montessori Recurrent and Capital Expenditure for 2015

