



northside

MONTESSORI SCHOOL

EARLY LEARNING PRIMARY SECONDARY

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



"Free the child's  
potential and you will  
transform him  
into the world."

MARIA MONTESSORI



"We must clearly understand that when we give the child freedom and independence, we are giving freedom to a worker already braced for action, who cannot live without working and being active."  
Maria Montessori

# CONTENTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020  
NORTHSIDE

MONTESSORI SCHOOL

**4** REPORTING AREA 1  
Message from Key  
School Bodies

**8** REPORTING AREA 2  
Contextual Information  
about the School

**10** REPORTING AREA 3  
Student Outcomes  
in National Testing

**11** REPORTING AREA 5  
Teacher Professional  
Learning, Accreditation  
and Qualifications

**13** REPORTING AREA  
6 Workforce Composition

**14** REPORTING AREA 7  
Student Attendance and  
Management of  
Non-Attendance

**15** REPORTING AREA  
8 Enrolment Policy

**21** REPORTING AREA  
9 School Policies

**25** REPORTING AREA 10  
School Determined Priority  
Areas for Improvement

**27** REPORTING AREA 11  
Initiatives promoting Respect  
and Responsibility

**29** REPORTING AREA 12  
Parent, Student and Teacher  
Satisfaction

**21** REPORTING AREA 13  
Financial Summary

**Back Cover**  
Contact Information

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

by Sharon Bowman

Reflecting on the year that was 2020, it is impossible not to begin with the significant impact of the Covid-19 crisis. This pandemic has had far reaching implications for our society. For Northside Montessori, as for many others, it meant we had to find new ways to do things. We were concerned at times about the ongoing financial sustainability of the school - some of the Board have been around long enough to remember the significant fall-out from the global financial crisis which impacted the school's enrolments and finances for many years.

I'm delighted to be able to say that we not only survived, but as a school we thrived following the first wave of cases and lockdown in NSW. The resilience shown by our staff, students and families to adjust to the 'new normal' of social distancing and other restrictions, has been admirable.

Our first concern, as always, is for the continued provision of authentic and high-quality Montessori education and care to children. As difficult as that was during the Covid-19 'shutdown', our always amazing staff responded quickly to deliver as many aspects as possible via remote learning.

Financially, we were fortunate that our Government provided significant support to assist businesses in keeping staff employed, and some funding to compensate for the 'free childcare' offered to parents, which allowed us to maintain strong financial results while also supporting our families through discounts and additional financial support where required.

We were able to not only maintain but grow our enrolments over the course of the year, and to finish the year with the promise of higher enrolment numbers for 2021 than we've had in a very long time.

Our principal, Adam Scotney, and his executive team did a remarkable job of responding to the unprecedented, rapidly evolving situation that faced us in 2020. We thank them for their ongoing commitment to the school.

Remarkably, despite the 'curve ball' of Covid, the executive team also managed to progress some key strategic projects, including the development of the Hall, which we hope to complete in 2021, and the establishment of an adolescent program. We look forward to opening our High School in 2022.

I extend particular thanks to all our teachers who worked tirelessly to deliver the best possible education under the most difficult of circumstances. Montessori education isn't something that's particularly easy to deliver via remote learning, but our team worked very hard to make it work as best they could, and have been working ever since to make sure experiences that were missed are 'caught up' as much as possible.

And finally, I want to thank my fellow Directors for their commitment to the School in their volunteer role. We had an interesting year, making some big decisions via remote meetings.

We look forward to another successful year.



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

by Adam Scotney

No one expected to experience a year like 2020. Due to the pandemic it has presented us with a multitude of challenges and difficulties, yet despite this, it has been a time when we have seen our creativity and resilience as a community come to the fore.

Throughout this year we have been very fortunate as a community to have been able to do some great things. While a challenge, we have managed to celebrate together as a community, albeit on fewer occasions than normal. Major events such as the Term 1 Bush Dance and the Primary Production in Term 4 which were able to go ahead were two significant features of 2020 intermingled with a strange period of constant change throughout the middle of the year.

As a learning community we have grown throughout 2020. It has been a real delight to see our whole school community grow and develop over the past couple of years and continue during this difficult year. We now have 4 very dynamic and vibrant primary classes. Our 6-9 classes of Gunyah and Cooina have been going wonderfully and in 2021 we will see both classes have the full 3 years of students and both classes will be at capacity. Our 9-12 classes are in a similar situation with the Amaroo class growing year upon year and the Orana class continuing at its capacity. We are so blessed to have such wonderful staff in this section of our school.



Our Pre-primary classes and Toddler/ Transition classes have also continued to grow and develop into an exciting section of our school. Despite the challenges of the pandemic we see these young children do extraordinary things, and as Maria Montessori said, "These very children reveal to us the most vital need of their development, saying : 'Help me to do it alone!'" (From Childhood to Adolescence). The preparation and experience that our beautiful classroom environments provide, entices the children to engage with the world around them as they are guided by our supportive staff. We continually see that the preparation in 0-3 and 3-6 establishes a perfect foundation for the continuation of Montessori education in 6-12.

As our school grows, we identified the need to improve some of our learning spaces to better meet the needs of the school. In 2020 we have seen the commencement of the Multi-Purpose Hall project which will provide two classrooms spaces that can easily be transformed into one large open space for whole school events or gatherings. This project will be completed in mid 2021 and it will be a wonderful addition to our already beautiful facilities.

Growth at Northside is not limited to the existing Pre-primary and Primary sections of our school. We were excited to announce that we are moving ahead with establishing a Montessori Adolescent program (High School) at Northside in 2022. Soon after this announcement we have received a lot of interest in the program. It is a wonderful opportunity for Northside to be able to establish a program such as this in Sydney, The preparation for this program picked up pace in 2020 and will continue for years to come to ensure that what we offer is both uniquely Montessori, as well as a vibrant and engaging educational program suited to the developmental needs of the adolescent learner.



During this year our school also completed and distributed the 2020 - 2024 Northside Montessori Society Strategic Plan. This plan began development in mid 2019, in collaboration with the School Board, Executive and Staff. The structure of the new Strategic Plan follows five Strategic Pillars which form the basis of the plan, and should guide our school in the coming years. These Strategic pillars are :-

- **School Environment** - To ensure that we continue to develop the environment of the school and early learning centre in a planned and sustainable way which meets the needs of the community and provide for growth.
- **Teaching and Learning** - To maintain a Montessori approach to teaching and learning that provides authentic opportunities for students and supports staff in their ongoing professional development.
- **Student Wellbeing** - To ensure that the child is at the centre of what we do and to promote the physical and mental well-being of all students in our care.
- **Leadership & Governance** - To promote engagement with the school community to ensure a healthy and active Board, and to maintain and support quality school leadership with a focus on ensuring the ethos and vision of the school and early learning centre are maintained.
- **Community** - To ensure a high level of engagement with parents and the community to promote growth and active participation and support at the school and early learning centre; promoting the value of Montessori education.

As we move into 2021 we look forward to many more amazing opportunities for our students and our school community. Thank you for the support that all members of our community have shown the school and early learning centre throughout 2020.

Kind regards  
Adam Scotney  
Principal

## REPORTING AREA 2 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Northside Montessori School seeks to fulfil the potential of each child by being a best practice Montessori school. Best practice emphasizes the development of the whole child from 0 years onwards, being a centre of Montessori educational excellence, providing leadership within the Australian Montessori community and operating within a sustainable framework which includes financial, social and environmental aspects of the school.

Northside Montessori School offers Montessori education for Pre-Primary (from age 3) and Primary aged children through to Year 6. The teaching methods and curriculum, whilst based on the methods, insights, materials and discoveries of Maria Montessori, also meet the EYLF and the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) guidelines and requirements in all key learning areas. Our teachers are accredited through NESA as well as having extensive Montessori training. The curriculum is designed and delivered in way that helps each child in the development of their sensory-motor skills, discrimination and judgment, socialisation and independence, creative intelligence and imagination. The School is committed to providing a holistic, caring and nurturing educational environment that fosters self-confidence and inner security to learn independently, to build a habit of concentration, initiative and perseverance and to foster curiosity and a sense of order.

The Montessori philosophy and methodology creates a non-competitive environment, with students striving to reach their personal best and helping their peers to do the same. Our approach places the student at the centre of their learning experience. Lessons are conducted one on one or in small groups. We follow the individual; nurturing their interests and designing work to meet each individual student's needs. Students are introduced to many of the syllabi concepts through concrete materials and hands-on exploration. They can choose work independently, which consolidates their understanding of the lessons presented and develops their sense of responsibility for, and ownership of their learning. Research skills are important to Montessori work and the introduction of these skills begins in early Primary. The classrooms are comprised of multi-age groups. The younger students learn from the older students, who in turn, role model appropriate behavior, work habits and instruction for the younger students.



Younger students are inspired to reach new goals, and peer teaching and sharing of research and knowledge is encouraged. Learning in the Montessori setting is not considered competitive but is a collaborative and rewarding endeavour. Students are motivated to do their personal best and to encourage others.

The Montessori Method is ideally suited to our time; developing qualities that are highly sought after in today's society. We enable students to have experiences that shape their lives. Northside students graduate with the self-esteem and inner motivation they need to think and act both independently and responsibly.

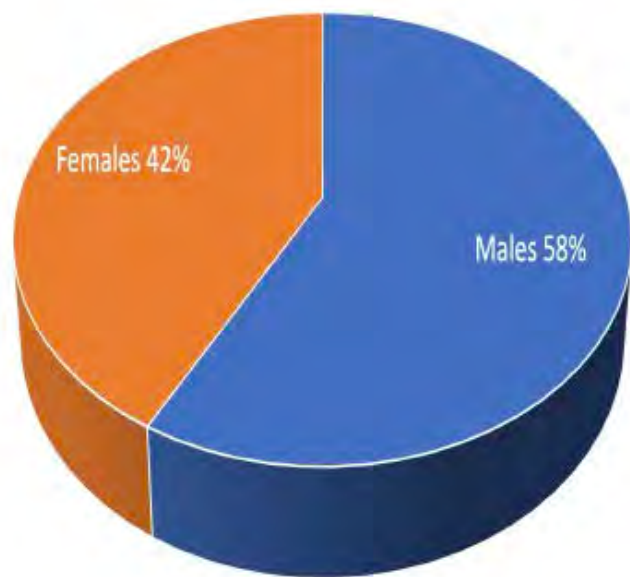


# CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

Northside Montessori School is a co-education Pre and K-6 school providing education underpinned by the philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori. Our school also fulfils the educational requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). All applications are processed in order of receipt and consideration is given to the applicants' support for the values and philosophy of the School, siblings already attending the School and other criteria determined by the School. Northside offers a 3-6 aged Pre-Primary / Kindergarten program 5 days per week. Which is preparation for the Montessori Primary program, split into 6-9 and 9-12 age group classes. Commencement at Primary (Cycle 2) is roughly equivalent to commencement in Year 1 of a traditional School. In 2020 the total enrolments across the school were 143. There were 43 Students in pre-primary and 100 students in primary K-6.

Enrollments K-6 :- 100  
Student population by gender, K-6

Student Population by Gender K-6



## REPORTING AREA 3 STUDENT OUTCOMES IN NATIONAL TESTING

As NAPLAN assessments were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19, the most recent information relates to 2019 NAPLAN results which are summarised below and available on My School (<https://www.myschool.edu.au/>)

In the 2019 NAPLAN Assessment Northside had 100% participation from its Year 3 student cohort for Grammar, Spelling and Numeracy, with one student absent for the Reading assessment. (Total Year 3 students = 16)

### Percentages of students from Band 4 onwards

YEAR 3	BAND 4	BAND 5	BAND 6 & ABOVE
Reading	14%	26%	46%
Spelling	25%	19%	25%
Grammar	19%	12%	57%
Numeracy	32%	38%	12%

In the 2019 NAPLAN Assessment Northside had 100% participation from its Year 5 student cohort for Writing, with one student missing the other assessments. (Total Year 5 students = 6)

### Percentages of students from Band 5 onwards

YEAR 5	BAND 5	BAND 6	BAND 7	BAND 8
Reading	0%	0%	20%	60%
Writing	34%	34%	17%	0%
Spelling	40%	40%	0%	20%
Grammar	0%	20%	0%	60%
Numeracy	0%	0%	60%	20%



## REPORTING AREA 5

### TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, ACCREDITATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Throughout 2020 the school sought to continue to provide quality professional learning opportunities for staff in order to maintain continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning standards across the school. Due to COVID-19 many previously available opportunities were not available. The impact to the number of professional learning opportunities for staff was greatly impacted by the pandemic.

Summary of conferences, workshops, seminars and training attended in 2020 by Northside Montessori Teaching and non-teaching staff, and Board Directors.

Subject	Course Provider/Details	In Attendance
Updates to the NSW Child Protection Legislation	NSW Association of Independent Schools	1 Staff
Supervising Teachers Progressing to Proficient teacher	NSW Association of Independent Schools	1 Staff
Opening a New Independent School in NSW	NSW Association of Independent Schools	1 Board member
Human Resources Professionals	NSW Association of Independent Schools	1 Staff
AIS Annual Briefing 2020	Montessori Australia Foundation	1 Board member
Creating Your Experienced <u>teacher</u> Digital Portfolio	NSW Association of Independent Schools	1 Staff
<u>Head to Head</u> Principal conference	MSCA Online	1 Staff
Meeting in the Middle – Montessori Adolescent program Conference	MSCA Online	1 Staff
CPR Course	Allen's First Aid Training	All Staff
First Aid Course	Allen's First Aid Training	All Staff



## Teacher Qualifications

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	14
Teachers having a <u>bachelor</u> 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

## Teacher Accreditation

Level of Accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	0
Provisional	2
Proficient	12
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	14

"Since it has been seen to be necessary to give so much to the child, let us give him a vision of the whole universe. The universe is an imposing reality, and an answer to all questions."

Maria Montessori

REPORTING AREA 6  
WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

## SCHOOL STAFF

Teaching staff 14

Full-time equivalent teaching staff 10.9

Non-teaching staff 16

Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff 13.6



## REPORTING AREA 7

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

#### Overall average attendance – 94.5 %

Gender	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Male	96%	94%	95%	92%	96%	95%	96%
Female	94%	96%	97%	95%	98%	93%	90%

The attendance rates provided above cover each cohort for the entire school year. While our attendance rates are generally good, it is important to note that given our small cohort sizes, one or two students absent for a prolonged period can significantly impact how these rates appear.

#### Management of Non - Attendance

At Northside Montessori School the regular attendance at school is considered to be vital in achieving the best possible learning outcomes. The School has developed the Student Attendance Policy and Guidelines which manages recording attendance and the manner in which non-attendance is dealt with.

#### 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 is referred to the relevant authority.

## REPORTING AREA 8 ENROLMENT POLICY

It is the policy of Northside Montessori School ("NMS") to have a fair and transparent Enrolment Process capable of attracting enrolments from families that support the Montessori Method in sufficient number for the viable and quality operation of the School. The School provides clear guidelines for the administrative staff in this area and the School Board delegates ultimate responsibility to the Principal for this process.

### **PURPOSE**

Enrolment and orientation is an exciting and emotional time for children and families. It is important to manage this time with sensitivity and support, building partnerships between families and the School. Such partnerships enable the School and families to work toward the common goal of promoting consistent quality outcomes for individual children and the Service.

REQUIRED BY: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Centre / School.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Child Safety School statement


Northside Montessori School seeks to provide a child safe environment. Our school actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of our students, and our school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in accordance with their legal and ethical obligations. Northside's policies and procedures around Safe and Supportive School Environments, and our staff code of conduct form part of this commitment.

Procedures

- Process all applications are processed within the School's enrolment policy.
- Consider each applicant's supporting statement/interview responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the School ethos.
- Consider each applicant's educational needs. To do this the School will gather information and consult with the parents/family and other relevant persons.
- Identify any strategies which need to be put in place to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding the enrolment is made.
- Inform the applicant of the outcome.

Subject to availability, offers of place will be made according to whether there are siblings of the students already at the School, the order of application, and the suitability of the applicant.

Continuing enrolment is subject to the student and parent's adherence to school guidelines, policies and procedures. Detail can be found in the student's enrolment contract, the School's pastoral care and behavioral guidance policy & guidelines. The withdrawal of a student's enrolment will be considered if a family does not adhere to their instalment plan or fall behind in the payment of the tuition fees.



"The child seeks for independence  
by means of work; an independence  
of body and mind."  
Maria Montessori

## REPORTING AREA 8

### ENROLMENT POLICY

The above policies are presented to parents upon the letter of offer of enrolment and can then be found in the School's policy manuals available at each campus and the School office. This policy is publicly disclosed on the School's website.

#### Pre-primary - 3-6 program

To apply for admission to the School and to have the child considered for a current of future position at the school, a parent must complete and application and pay a non-refundable application fee. A parent would either prior to or soon after attend a school tour.

#### Selection criteria

The Principal offers places based on the following selection criteria:

- Sibling status (with conditions as set out further in the document).
- Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander children, at risk, or disability (pre-primary).
- Currently enrolled at Stepping Stones
- Position on the waitlist.
- The age of the child when entered on the waitlist.
- Commitment to the 3-6 pre-primary program, 6-9 and 9-12 primary educational programs.
- Montessori overseas or interstate school transfer.
- Northside's Montessori Under 3s attendance
- Commitment of parents to the Montessori ethos.
- School must also comply with current regulations in regard to immunisation standards.

When all other factors are equal, the date of registration determines priority. However, the School retains the right to consider specific enrolments on an individual basis. Offers for older children are subject to availability and dependent on a successful interview and orientation period.

Once an offer of place is accepted parents are required to pay the Placement Fee as determined by the Board. This fee is refundable only upon completion of Year 6 at the school.

#### Primary 6-12

It is expected that all children in the 3-6 program will continue through to primary at Northside.

To apply for admission to the School in Primary or to have the child considered for a current of future position at the school, a parent must complete and application and pay a non-refundable application fee. A parent would either, prior to or soon after attend a school tour.

There is no application or fee required for children who are already enrolled in pre primary program at the School.

The School follows the standards as determined by the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Standards).





#### Selection criteria:

An offer of place is made based on the following criteria:

- Northside Montessori School pre-primary student priority.
- The child's readiness, both academically and psychologically.
- Sibling priority (please note that generally priority is only given if a sibling has completed pre-primary).
- Montessori overseas or interstate school transfer.
- Commitment of parents to the Montessori ethos.

#### Offers of place

Offers are made throughout the year prior to student commencing. Parents of children on the waitlist are required to attend an interview with the Principal before an offer of place is made. During the year places may become available and are offered to the next child on the waitlist.

Once an offer of place is accepted parents are required to pay the Placement Fee as determined by the Board. This fee is non-refundable, unless the child has commenced in the 3-6 section of the school.

Students from pre-primary transitioning to primary will be given a transition experience which involves three full day visits at the end of the term prior to commencing in primary.

## REPORTING AREA 8 ENROLMENT POLICY

### Conditions of Acceptance:

First child entering the school

Offers of place must be accepted within 14 days by returning the Letter of Offer which lists the following conditions:

- A non-refundable placement fee\* is payable on acceptance of the offer.  
(\*refundable is the child completes Year 6 and has commenced in 3-6)  
Placement fee for students transferring from Stepping Stones will be less the bond already paid at SSLDC.
- It is expected that the child will attend the School for the entire three-year pre-primary program OR entire nine-year program (pre-primary to primary). Withdrawing a child before the completion of the program may upset the child's educational development and disturb the balance in the class, creating a gap which is often impossible to fill.
- Parents agree to observe the School's policies and procedures.
- If parents have concerns about their child's readiness or the parents wish to change the start date the Enrolment Registrar must be notified at least 4 weeks prior to the start date.
- All students who are attending pre-primary and Kindergarten are to provide proof of immunisation before enrolment by submitting an approved immunisation form that shows that the student is:
  - o fully immunised for their age, or
  - o Has a medical reason to not be vaccinated, or
  - o Is on a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their immunisation.
- All students who are attending Primary school are to provide proof of immunisation before enrolment by submitting an approved immunisation form that shows that the student is:
  - o Is fully immunised for their age;
  - o Not fully immunised for their age; or
  - o Has a medical reason to not be vaccinated, or
  - o Is on a recognised catch-up schedule.
- There is a probationary period of one school term for the child and the School. If either the parents or the School considers that at the end of one term that the child should not continue at the School, the placement fee will be refunded.
- Parents intending to withdraw their child from the School are required to provide one full term's notice, in writing, to the Principal. Where one full term's notice is not provided, the parents will be charged a full-term fee in lieu of notice.
- In the event that circumstances change after acceptance of a place and the payment of the placement fee the School requires written notice of four full weeks excluding school holidays, of intention to relinquish the place. In this case the placement fee less, an administration fee of 50% of the total placement fee will be returned. If this notice is not received within this period, then the placement fee will not be returned. This provision provides some protection to the School against financial loss from non-starters and the subsequent revision of the class plan.

## REPORTING AREA 8 ENROLMENT POLICY

- Northside Montessori Society membership must be kept current for the duration of the child's attendance at the School. Non-compliance to membership could mean withdrawal of enrolment. Membership ensure voting at the School's AGM as per the School's constitution.
- Parents are requested to support and participate in the school community in a variety of ways and are encouraged to attend parent education evenings to deepen their knowledge of Montessori education at Northside Montessori School.

### Siblings

Conditions of acceptance for siblings are similar to those for the first child. Siblings are given priority on enrolment.

### Priority of Access

All pre-primary enrolments endeavour to comply with the Priority of Access Guidelines issued by the NSW State Government for state funded preschools to ensure equity and consistency for the community. In no particular order, these are:

- Children who are at risk of harm
- Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from low income families
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with disabilities
- Children in their year before school (with highest priority given to children closest to school entry).

### Timing of Entry - Pre-primary

The School follows the Montessori principle of staggered entry to enable maximum attention to be given to each new child in the class and to assist each child in adjusting to their new environment. Commencement dates in any one term are determined and notified by the Enrolment Registrar after places have been offered in collaboration with the Principal.

### Timing of Entry - Primary

The child may transition to Primary by attending transition visits of the term prior to the term they commence, typically in Weeks 6,7 & 8. Primary families are to encouraged to attend a meeting with the Primary teacher in addition to the Principal's interview.

### Transfers

There is no automatic right to transfer between Montessori schools, but every attempt is made to offer a place to a transfer, subject to the enrolment criteria being met.

Once children have commenced in a class at the School, they will not be transferred to another class except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Principal.

## REPORTING AREA 8 ENROLMENT POLICY

### Confidentiality and Privacy

The School respects the privacy of the families and staff who make up the School community. It is the School policy to ensure that all information obtained by the School in relation to personal circumstances of children and their families will be kept confidential unless:

- The family concerned authorises disclosure of the information; or
- The School is obliged to disclose the information pursuant to health regulations or other Commonwealth, State or Local Government laws or regulations.

### Fee Policy

#### Payment of Fees

Tuition fees are set annually for all children in the School, with discounts available for younger siblings.

Payment of fees is typically by direct debit in 10, monthly payments.

Invoices are sent to families in relation to fees.

#### Fees determined by School Board

School Fees are determined by the School Board, considering:

- Northside Montessori School's status as a non-profit organisation.
- Compliance with government funding and other regulatory requirements.
- The financial needs of the School.
- Application and enrolment levels.
- Other relevant criteria.

#### Notification of fees and conditions

School fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change.

The fees are all inclusive for excursions and camps. Occasionally additional payment is required for 'Going-Out's in the primary section of the school.

#### Bursary and Fee relief

The School Board have provided provisions for Bursaries and some financial assistance to families with Primary aged children.

Bursaries applications are sought at the end of each year, with determination of applications being made by the Bursary Committee prior to the end of the school year.

Families are notified of their bursary status before the end of the year.

The Board have allocated additional funds to be used for short term financial support.

Families who have concerns about fees should approach the Principal and the Principal will meet with the family to ascertain the family's financial situation. The Principal will consider the appropriateness of fee relief having regard to:

- The length and nature of the family's involvement with the School, including the degree to which the family participates in and supports the School community.
- The financial affairs of the family.
- The availability of funds remaining from the fee relief allocation
- Other relevant criteria.

Bursary arrangements are made for periods of 12 months only. Families are required to re-apply each year for bursary support.

All fee relief arrangements must be documented by way of a letter signed by the Principal. Fee relief can only be granted by the principal for a period of no more than 6 months.

## REPORTING AREA 9 SCHOOL POLICIES

### Student Welfare and Child protection

Northside Montessori School takes the welfare of students very seriously and as such have policies and procedures that guide the school in meeting its obligations in the area of Child protection.

Our child protection policy states that:

The safety, protection and well-being of all students are of fundamental importance to the Northside Montessori School.

All staff and the School have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and welfare of students including:

- a) duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students;
- b) obligations under child protection legislation; and
- c) obligations under work health and safety legislation.

The purpose of this Policy is to summarise the obligations imposed by child protection legislation on the School and on employees, contractors and volunteers (collectively referred to in this Policy as employees unless the context requires otherwise) at the School and to provide guidelines as to how the School will deal with certain matters. Child protection is a community responsibility.

The School's policy on Child Protection clearly details the responsibility that the school has in the areas of Mandatory reporting obligations, The identification and reporting of reportable conduct and the requirements for all employees to have clearance in the area of Working With Children Checks.

Complete copies of this policy is available for download at [northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au](http://northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au) or from the School Office.



## REPORTING AREA 9 SCHOOL POLICIES

### Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is anti-social behaviour that can affect anyone. It is unacceptable at Northside Montessori School because every student has the right to a safe, caring and supportive school environment.

The aim of the Policy is to ensure that Northside Montessori School is a supportive and safe environment. Every member of the Northside Montessori Community has the right to feel safe and protected. They also have the right to experience positive and respectful relationships between all members of the school community. The promotion of this environment is the responsibility of all members of the Northside community. Adults in this community need to be especially aware of their behaviour, as they are the role models for our children. By empowering members of our community, we hope to achieve a safe learning environment that respects and values individual differences.

This policy applies to interactions between:

- Child to child
- Parent to parent
- Parents to child
- Staff member to parent
- Parent to staff member
- Board to parent etc.

Details of the full Policy are available from the School Office



## REPORTING AREA 9 SCHOOL POLICIES

### Discipline Policy

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 precept of the supportive triangle, an integral part of the school's Montessori philosophy.

The School prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the school. Such punishment has no place in the consequences for negative behaviours or breaches of the School's behaviour expectations of children.

Details of the full Policy are available from the School Office



## REPORTING AREA 9 SCHOOL POLICIES

### Complaints Management Policy

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 to participate, if required, in the Appeals Process.

Details of the full Policy are available from the School Office





## REPORTING AREA 10

### SCHOOL DETERMINED PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

During 2020 the school commenced implementation of the 2020 - 2024 Northside Montessori Society Strategic Plan. The structure of the new Strategic Plan follows five Strategic Pillars which form the basis of the plan, and should guide our school in the coming years. These Strategic pillars are :-

- School Environment - To ensure that we continue to develop the environment of the school and early learning centre in a planned and sustainable way which meets the needs of the community and provide for growth.
- Teaching and Learning - To maintain a Montessori approach to teaching and learning that provides authentic opportunities for students and supports staff in their ongoing professional development.
- Student Wellbeing - To ensure that the child is at the centre of what we do and to promote the physical and mental well-being of all students in our care.
- Leadership & Governance - To promote engagement with the school community to ensure a healthy and active Board, and to maintain and support quality school leadership with a focus on ensuring the ethos and vision of the school and early learning centre are maintained.
- Community - To ensure a high level of engagement with parents and the community to promote growth and active participation and support at the school and early learning centre; promoting the value of Montessori education.



## REPORTING AREA 10

### SCHOOL DETERMINED PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There was significant progress in the Priority Areas identified in 2020.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

The teaching staff worked tirelessly throughout 2020 to provide for a continuum of learning experiences despite the challenges of Covid-19 and the need to undertake remote learning for a period. Staff provided Montessori experiences for students in the home, while also running live classes at the school. Northside was never closed throughout the pandemic, providing educational experiences for student of essential workers while also providing for those working remotely.

#### **Governance**

In 2020 we continued to maintain a strong and active School Board with vacancies being filled as they became available. The active participation of parents in the school as part of the Society has provided for this strength and involvement at Board level.

#### **Leadership**

The Executive team of Adam Scotney, Deborah Soler, Janene Johnson and Belinda De Santi have continued to work effectively throughout the difficulties of the Pandemic in 2020. The school community greatly appreciated the continual delivery of the educational program throughout 2020 despite the challenges of Covid-19 and some periods of remote learning. Communication of the changes to restrictions were provided in a clear and timely manner.

#### **Professional Development**

All staff and Board participated in a number of professional learning opportunities provided through The Association of Independent Schools NSW. The pandemic significantly limited the opportunities for staff due to the cancellation of many professional learning programs. Marketing and Communications

The school continued to undertake regular marketing programs and initiatives to promote not only the school but Montessori education more generally.

#### **Community**

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that occurred across the community, our community continued to remain strong and connected via electronic means. During periods when the government permitted parents on school grounds we were able to provide some opportunities for events such as our school production presented outdoors as well as a Covid safe afternoon tea to provide our community with the social connections that they craved during the periods of restrictions.

#### **Facilities**

Work commenced on the planned expansion of the music room to provide for a modest Multi-Purpose Hall which can also be configured as two classroom spaces. This project is scheduled for completion in 2021 and will provide our school with much needed spaces for events such as our musical productions and soirees.

## REPORTING AREA 11

### INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Inherent in the Montessori system of education is peace and the promotion of respect. This focus manifests itself in our classrooms and across the school environment in a number of very tangible ways. In all the programs that run at Northside, Grace and Courtesy and Respect for the environment are key features. These elements and understandings underpin the manner in which students interact with their teachers, assistants and peers. Encouraged from a very young age, an understanding of these principles can be clearly seen through the behaviour and interactions of students.

Alongside Grace and Courtesy, the students as early as pre-primary are indirectly introduced to the concept of responsibility. Students are free to select their own work from the materials they have been introduced to by the teacher. This free choice however 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.





"We must help the child to act for himself, will for himself, think for himself; this is the art of those who aspire to serve the spirit."

MARIA MONTESSORI

## REPORTING AREA 12

### PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

#### Parent Satisfaction

As a small school with a Parent Board, there is a high level of parent involvement across the whole school. Our school Board and Parent and Community Committee have all positions filled with parents working in a voluntary capacity. Engagement with the parent body is constant and there is an open line of communication between parents, staff and management,

To provide for a further involvement of parents across the school, we operate a parent support program which encourages parents to participate across a wide range of activities and events both within the classroom and wider school community.

As a school we regularly seek feed parent feedback through communication with class parents as well as the parent representatives on the P & C and Board.

#### Student Satisfaction

The child centred nature of a Montessori School promotes engagement and satisfaction amongst the student cohort. Students provide a lot of the input into how classes operate and as the children become older, this level of responsibility and engagement increases.

The school continues to operate a Peer Support Program which is run by our older 9-12 classes and 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.



## REPORTING AREA 12 PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

### Staff Satisfaction

As a Montessori school which has been established for over 40 years, there is a strong connection that exists between the school and the wider Montessori community. Through a focus on authentic Montessori pedagogy, staff who are committed to this methodology feel supported by the community.

Over recent years, some staff who had previously left Northside have returned to teach at the school as numbers have grown and classes added. As an authentic Montessori School we have also been able to attract new staff to the school who seek to work in an environment where this methodology is strongly supported. It is wonderful to see staff, who are committed to authentic Montessori education joining the Northside staff. Throughout 2020 staff retention was 100%, with staff numbers growing during this period.



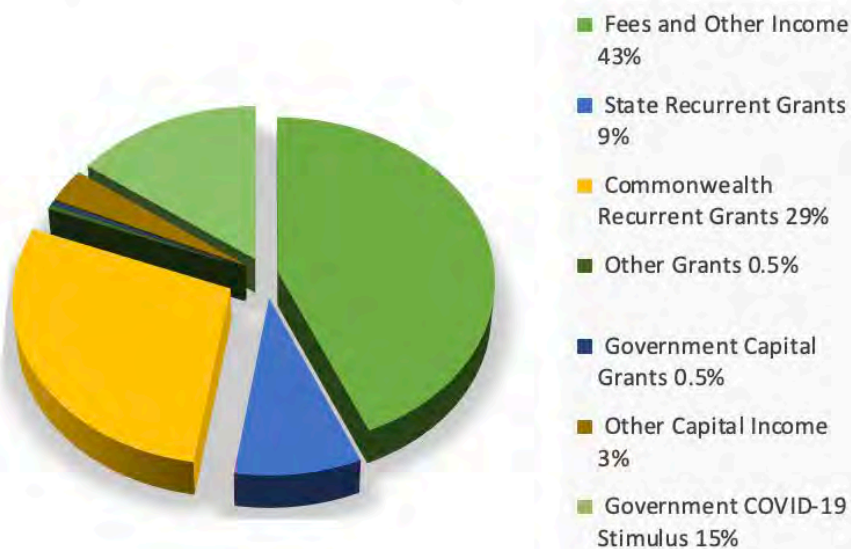
## REPORTING AREA 13 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In 2020 we were able to not only maintain but grow our school enrolments through what was an otherwise challenging year.

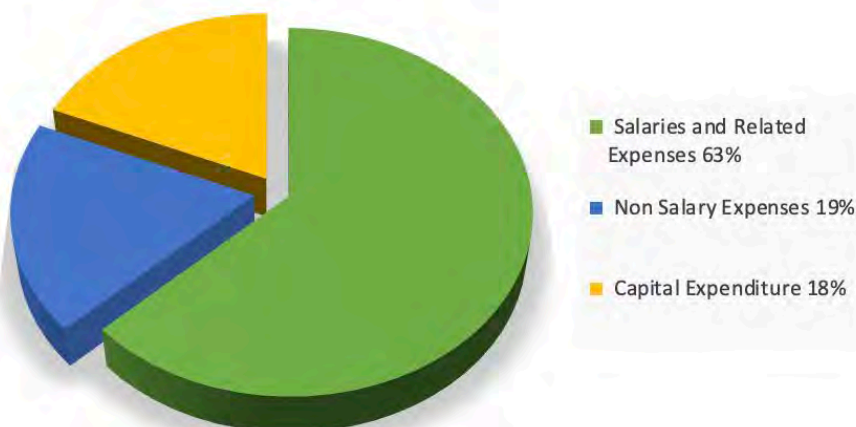
Funding received for the year, from the Commonwealth Government and State Government, totalled \$1.07 million. Funding for 2021 is expected to remain at similar levels under the government new funding model based on the direct measure of income methodology. We also received support from the Government's COVID-19 Stimulus package, providing cashflow assistance and employment cost relief. Our most significant expenditure is employee expenses representing 63% of total expenditure. Increases in salary and on-costs were in accordance with the applicable Multi-Enterprise Agreements 2017. Overhead costs remained within budget and overall working capital was strong.

We were able to continue with some of our planned capital projects including improvements to the school kitchen facilities, refurbishment and improvements to some of our learning spaces. We also commenced the building of our new multi-purpose Hall, expected to be completed towards the end of 2021.

### Recurrent / Capital Income 2020



### Recurrent / Capital Expenditure 2020











## Contact us

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