

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021









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ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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# THEME 1

## MESSAGE FROM KEY BODIES

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

by Sharon Bowman

2021 was, as we all know, another year marked by the impacts of Covid-19. Once again, as we reported last year, Northside was managed admirably throughout another difficult year.

As you all know, we had 2 years of disruption to our lives, and this from time to time impacted the school's ability to provide face to face teaching, conduct community events, and undertake our usual marketing activities.

Despite this, we're pleased to note that there was a minimal impact on our financial results. Pleasingly, our enrolments remain strong. Our pre-primary program continues to operate near capacity, with lower primary at capacity and upper primary (which relies heavily on students coming through from earlier stages) now approaching that level.

We also finished 2021 ready to kick-off the adolescent program this year. Our first year 7 cohort is now in place, and they're having some wonderful learning opportunities and experiences. We look forward to continuing to develop and grow the adolescent program in coming years.

The Board and executive have begun to plan for the additional site capacity that will be required as the adolescent program continues to grow. One major project was the development of the hall, which opened in late 2021 and has already been well used! We'll continue to update you on other projects as our plans firm up.

Once again, our principal, Adam Scotney, and his executive team have done a remarkable job of managing the school through another difficult and disrupted year, while also delivering those major projects. We thank them for their ongoing commitment to the school.

I also extend particular thanks to all our teachers who continued to provide a high standard of education and learning opportunities to our students through the disruption.

And finally, I want to thank my fellow Directors for their commitment to the School in their volunteer role.

I am stepping down tonight from the Chair, and from the Board after more than 10 years. I know I leave the Board and the school in very good hands - with a fantastic executive team managing the school, an excellent Principal at the helm, and a great team on the Board.

Sharon Bowman

Board Chair







# MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



2021 was another exciting year in the life of Northside Montessori School. The year began with an easing of restrictions around the Covid pandemic from 2020, so we began the year with great anticipation for what could have been a more normal year with less cancelled events and more community engagement. In Term 1 we were so pleased to be able to welcome families back on site and share with them the wonderful experience of our Montessori communities.

Across our school Term 1 allowed us to see the benefits of eased restrictions, with Going-Outs, incursions and excursions occurring across the school. Throughout Term 1 our students enjoyed a visit from an Antarctic Explorer, visited the newly refurbished Australian Museum, participated in an afternoon of football with Forestville Montessori School, attended Taronga Zoo for the Zoo Snooze experience, had a science incursion, and enjoyed the sights and sounds of Harmony Day celebrations.

These opportunities in Term highlight that Montessori education goes well beyond the classroom, and we are so thrilled that our students can explore curriculum through this framework. Our classes provide so many opportunities for students to look outward and explore their world.

Term 2 also began as quite a busy term with students being able to enjoy events such as Mother's Day, the Second North of the Bridge Combined Montessori Schools Athletics Carnival, our Northside Montessori Model United Nations event and a number of excursions and 9-12 Camp.

With the inability to travel overseas, we took the initiative to hold our own Northside Model United Nations (NMUN) event at The Crowne Plaza in Terrigal. This was in response to the cancellation of MMUN events in Rome in 2020. This activity allowed us to maintain the momentum in preparation for returning to trips overseas once restriction ease.

Towards the end of Term 2 and throughout Term 3 students returned to remote learning due to the restrictions and locks downs which came as a second wave of Covid 19 began spreading across the country. While our school was always open to students who required to attend due to parents being essential workers. We had the majority of students and many staff working remotely. Term 3 was a very disruptive term in regards to our students education, and despite best efforts, nothing could replace the benefits of face to face classes.

Term 4 began with some restrictions, but as the term went along restrictions began to ease which allowed us to introduce some final events into the school calendar. With the disruption that occurred, we made the decision in term 3 to extend the October holiday period, and add an additional week to the end of Term 4.

Our classes recommenced in line with the Governments scheduled return to school plan. It took some time for students to settle back into the routines of school life and reconnect with their teachers and friends. Through careful planning, the return to school meant that Term 4 was an exceptionally busy time, with many special school events moved from Term 3 into Term 4. It was lovely to be able to provide our students the opportunity to do production, Healthy Harold, Extraordinary Ordinaries, Interrelate, and all of our end of year events in this term. It was also wonderful to see our students engaging again in authentic Montessori education again after a term of remote learning.

Adam Scotney  
Principal







## THEME 2

### CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

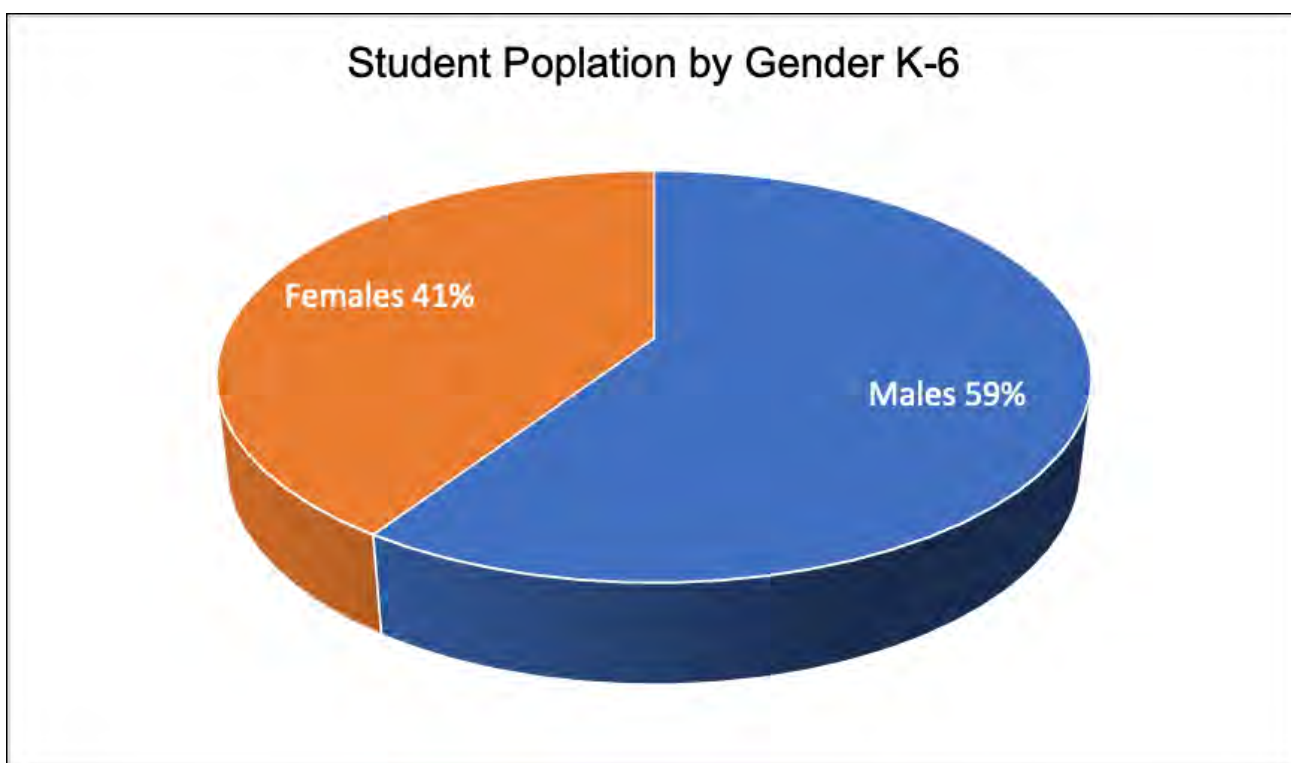
### ABOUT THE SCHOOL & CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

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 2021 the total enrolments across the school were 171. There were 55 Students in pre-primary and 116 students in Primary K-6.



Boys 59 % (69)

Girls 41% (47)

Full-time equivalent enrolments: 116



## THEME 3

### STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

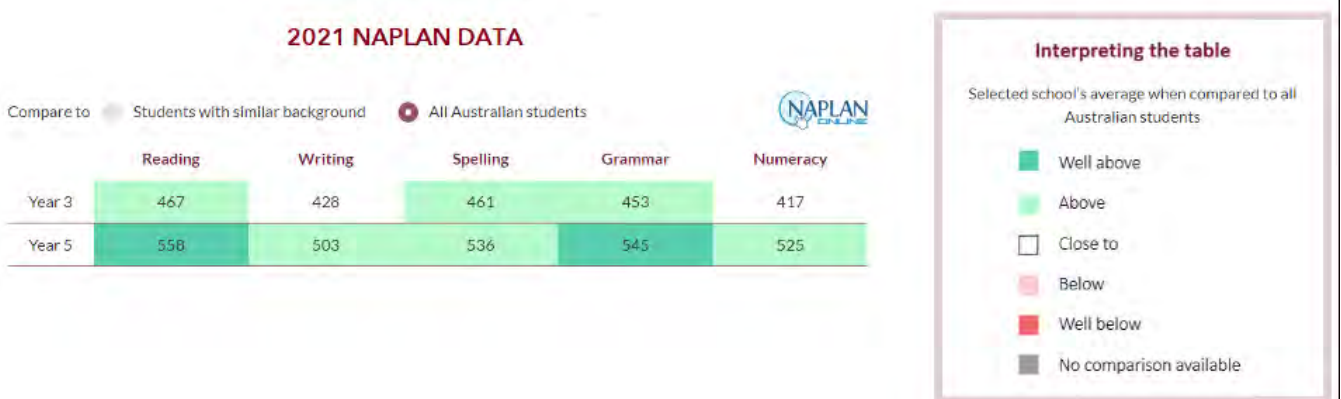
In the Montessori School setting regular formal assessments of students such as written tests are not common place. Despite this, Northside Montessori students still participate in the national testing in Literacy and Numeracy that is available through NAPLAN. Our school has been undertaking NAPLAN Online since it commenced

As a school we see that NAPLAN tests are one assessment tool which provides a snapshot of a child's ability in literacy and numeracy which can help us identify individual student's strengths and weaknesses; and in part serve to inform our teaching practices.

The small number of students 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 significantly alter the statistical data which might lead to assumptions about either high or low performance that may not be a true reflection of the cohort.

While our school community recognises the need to undertake NAPLAN and uses the results to inform teaching practice, we also acknowledge that there are many other values in Montessori Education that are not measured by this tool. Attributes highly valued in Montessori Education such as creativity, critical thinking, resilience, motivation, persistence, curiosity, questioning, humour, endurance, reliability, enthusiasm, self-awareness, self-discipline, leadership, compassion, courage, sense of wonder, resourcefulness, spontaneity, humility or civic mindedness cannot be measured in this way. These qualities are globally valued and can be equally important to a child's future success. In the 2021 NAPLAN Assessment Northside had 89% participation

The table identified the results for Year 3 and Year 5 students across the 5 areas of assessment. (Graph taken from <https://www.myschool.edu.au/>)



## THEME 5

# TEACHER / STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, ACCREDITATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

During the 2021 school year, Northside continued 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, opportunities for professional development were limited, however, staff were expected to attend staff meetings when possible, as well as undertake curriculum and pedagogically based Professional Development sessions.

Individual Professional Development was undertaken by staff with the aim of enhancing the teaching and learning outcomes and for their own 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 Teacher Accreditation.

Summary of conferences, workshops, seminars and training attended in 2021 by Northside Montessori Teaching and non-teaching staff, and Board Directors.

<b>Description of Professional Learning Activity</b>	<b>No of Staff Participating</b>
Allen's First Aid Refresher and CPR HLTAID001	24
Autism Spectrum Disorder: Universal Supports - Self-paced Learning Experience	1
Governance Online Module 1 - An introduction to independent schools	4
Governance Online Module 10 - Reputational Risk	1
Governance Online Module 11 - Financial Governance A	2
Governance Online Module 12 - Financial Governance - B	2
Governance Online Module 14 - NESA Registration and Accreditation	1
Governance Online Module 2 - Critical priorities of the board	4
Governance Online Module 3 - An introduction to legal compliance	4
Governance Online Module 4 - Financial Compliance	3
Governance Online Module 5 - Executive Supervision	3
Governance Online Module 6 - Risk management	3
Governance Online Module 9 - Strategic thinking in schools	1
Disability Legislation - Self-paced Learning Experience	1
Sexting and the Law Webinar	2
Virtual Breakfast Briefing: Human Resource Professionals	1
Supporting Children's Friendship with Social and Emotional Competencies	1
Live Life Well @ School: Starting the Journey	1
AHISA Conference	1



<b>Description of Professional Learning Activity</b>	<b>No of Staff Participating</b>
Montessori Principals <u>Head to Head</u> forum	1
The AIS Annual Briefing 2021	2
Marketing in Montessori	1
Youth Mental Health first Aid Training	2
Learning Difficulties PD	2
AMI 6-12 refresher Course	2
Peer Support Workshop	2
Spelling in the Context of Montessori	1
Communication in the First Plane	1
Inclusive Mental health Workshop - Head to Toe First Aid	14

## TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
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.	13
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

## TEACHER ACCREDITATION

<b>Level of Accreditation</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
Conditional	2
Provisional	0
Proficient	11
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	13







## THEME 6

### WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

#### SCHOOL STAFF

Teaching staff 13

Full-time equivalent teaching staff 11.1

Non-teaching staff 16

Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff 12.8





## THEME 7

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE, AND RETENTION RATES

K	1	2	3	4	5	6
94%	95.5%	95.7%	93%	98.1%	94.2%	97.4%

OVERALL BOYS 93.7%

OVERALL GIRLS 95.2%

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.

# THEME 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.

EQUIRED 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 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 or future position at the school, a parent must complete an 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 (preprimary).
- Currently enrolled at Northside Early Learning Centre
- Position on the waitlist.
- The age of the child when entered on the waitlist.
- Commitment to the 3-6 pre-primary program, 6-9, 9-12 primary educational programs and Adolescent Program 7-12
- 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 or future position at the school, a parent must complete an 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.

## **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.
- 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 preprimary 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 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.

## **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.



# THEME 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) 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.





# THEME 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*



# THEME 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*

### **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*



# THEME 1 0

## SCHOOL DETERMINED PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In 2020 the school commenced implementation of the 2020 - 2024 Northside Montessori Society Strategic Plan. The structure of this Strategic Plan follows five Strategic Pillars which form the basis of the plan. Since this time these pillars have shaped the determined priority areas for improvement within our school. The five pillars are as follows:

- **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 on identified priorities for 2021

Throughout 2021 we continued to work at addressing the key objectives within our school strategic plan. Progress has been achieved in the following areas:

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 provides for growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Multi-purpose Hall completed</li><li>- New kitchen space in <a href="#">Multi Purpose</a> Hall for OOSH</li><li>- New Staff room at NMS completed</li><li>- New Kitchen at NMS adjacent to toddler for High School</li><li>- Development of High School (Riverside) outdoor courtyard</li><li>- Relocation of Gunyah class in Term 3 2021</li><li>- Modifications to outdoor areas adjacent to BER 3 – Deck and stairs completed</li><li>- Development of the High School learning spaces. – Science Lab complete</li><li>- Roll-out of LED lights across NMS campus – new building and replacement of lights in BER bathrooms and common areas.</li><li>- Continue Indigenous Garden</li><li>- Planning for future capital works</li></ul>

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to employ Montessori qualified staff.</li> <li>- Support all existing staff, at both NMS and NMELC, to undertake Montessori training at a range of levels.</li> <li>- Supporting prospective High School educators in undertaking Montessori training. (Staff undertaken Great Work training – Adolescent Introduction and Adolescent Orientation)</li> <li>- Continue to provide staff with PD opportunities for NESA and other requirements.</li> <li>- Actively promoting and celebrate our students learning and opportunities within the Community e.g., via Chronicle, Newsletters, end of year productions, StoryPark, etc.</li> <li>- Implementation and continuation of goal driven staff appraisal process.</li> <li>- Access to training opportunities through membership with MSCA, AISNSW and MA.</li> <li>- Assist 4 staff with their NESA maintenance of accreditation.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All cycle 3 staff have undertaken training to maintain our Peer Support program.</li> <li>- Implementation of Bounce Back program – 2020.</li> <li>- Maintain educational programs for student's well-being e.g., Health Harold, Protective Behaviours, Interrelate</li> <li>- Staff have undertaken training around Depression and Anxiety in children (July)</li> <li>- Provide a diverse range of co-curricular opportunities.</li> <li>- Expand the provision of learning support for students.</li> </ul>

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote opportunity on the Board based on the skills of current parent community.</li> <li>- Executives are up to date on all governance, compliance, and procedures in accordance with regulations, guidelines, best practices.</li> <li>- Ensure Board member maintain their required PD.</li> <li>- Adhering to Society delegation authority, financial management practices and be held accountable.</li> <li>- Provide learning opportunities and PD for Executives, prospective leaders, and key staff members.</li> <li>- Formalise a process for staff feedback.</li> </ul>



## 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.

- Maintain parent involvement in the school via P&C, Class Parents, School Support Hours program.
- Encourage parents to provide feedback to the school and maintain and refine the formal process for community feedback.
- Ensure that all events and details are assessable via the SkoolBag calendar, Newsletters.
- Continue providing Parent Education events across all sections of the community.
- Continue to promote Montessori education and both the school and early learning centre in the wider community through marketing initiatives e.g., expos, market days, Westfield, open days, fares, etc.
- Provide students with community engagement via planned events and going outs e.g., nursing home visit, debating, MMUN, excursions, incursions, etc.
- Provide parents with opportunities to participate in classroom life.
- Promote strong collaboration with other Montessori schools.



# THEME 1 1

## INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Northside Montessori School desires that all students recognise that they are valuable and important 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, and the uniqueness of every individual are actively encouraged and promoted through the day to day interactions and activities across the school.

Students from the age of 3 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.

Respect and Responsibility are promoted in various ways, both directly and indirectly across the Montessori Environment.

### **Multi-age grouping**

All classes are made up of three ages, 0-3, 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12. The later two encompassing the majority of Primary school. In this setting the younger students look up to the older students, older students help the younger students. This can take the form of helping with work, navigating the school environment or assisting with the expectations or goals.

### **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 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



# THEME 1 2

## PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

### Parent Satisfaction

A key feature of Northside Montessori School is to involve families in the education of their children. Across the school parent involvement across a range of areas is strong and the nature of Montessori education suggests that parents desire to have a significant level of involvement in their child's education and nurture. Parents participate in the life in a variety of ways :

- Class Parents
- Education Events
- Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts
- Parent and Community Committee
- Working Bees
- Tuckshop Day
- Excursions and Incursions
- Gardening and Premises projects
- Caring for animals (and babysitting them in holidays)
- School Board Membership
- Cooking or Craft workshops with children

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

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 regular conversations with parents.

### Student Satisfaction

Positive attendance levels suggest that the children enjoy coming to school and that our parents value and support learning at Northside Montessori School. Our students generally would rather be at school than on extended holiday periods.

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.

### Staff Satisfaction

Within the Montessori community there is a strong connection which exists between staff which is based on the commitment to this method of education. Northside staff are extremely dedicated providing a wealth of positive learning experiences for the students in a supportive and nurturing environment. The classroom assistants provide a vital support to the classroom operations. Consistently over the past 5 years the school has grown and staffing has increased over this period with high retention of existing staff. In 2021, two staff left the school, one member of the teaching staff and one support staff member. Staff feel supported and participate actively in the life of the school as part of the Northside Community.

# THEME 13

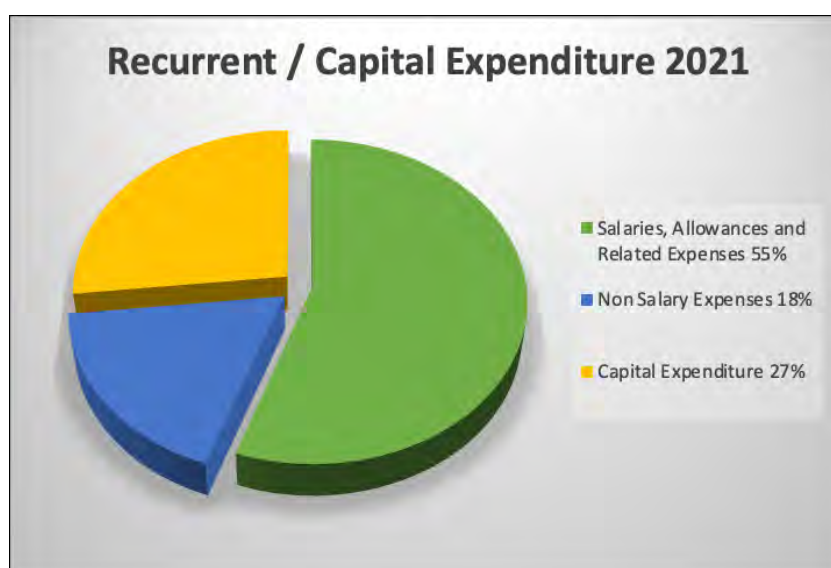
## SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In 2021, our income streams remained strong, reflective of our growth in student numbers at the School Pymble campus.

Funding received for the year, from the Commonwealth Government and State Government, totalled \$1.108 million, representing 41% of total income. This is based on the Federal Government's new funding model and the schools Capacity to Contribute score of 113.

Our most significant expenditure is employee expenses representing 55% of total expenditure (including capital 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.

The major capital projects and improvements completed during 2021 included the completion of a new multi-purpose hall and establishing the infrastructure for the adolescent program, due to commence in 2022.









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