



Annual Report 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REPORTING AREA 1.	4
Messages From Key School Bodies	
REPORTING AREA 2.	8
Contextual Information about the School & Student Body	
REPORTING AREA 3	15
Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy & Numeracy	
REPORTING AREA 4 N/A	N/A
REPORTING AREAS 5 & 6	15
Teacher Professional Learning, Accreditation & Qualifications	
REPORTING AREA 7.	18
Student Attendance & Management of Non-attendance	
REPORTING AREAS 8 & 9.	19
Enrolment & Other Policies	
REPORTING AREA 10.	21
School determined priority areas for improvement	
REPORTING AREA 11	22
Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility	
REPORTING AREA 12	20
Parent, Teacher & Student Satisfaction	
REPORTING AREA 13.	24
Summary Financial Information	
Appendices	

REPORTING AREA 1. Messages From Key School Bodies

From the Principal

What an extraordinary year 2020 has been! Probably not since World War 2 has the country suffered such upheaval and uncertainty. 2020 began with terrible fires, then continued with COVID 19, which still threatens our community. Sadly that uncertainty remains. However, these challenges have enabled our community to show its strength and care. We have banded together to ensure all of us got through. This was so wonderfully demonstrated in the April Fundraiser to support vulnerable families in our community that raised over \$100,000! These funds have kept children in school. I want to thank Kathryn Wyer for her exceptional support in my first year here as Principal. Coming to the school from the UK meant that I had to rely heavily on Kathryn. I also want to thank Bill Conway, whose handover was excellent. It is no easy act to hand over the reins of a school in which you have invested so much of yourself. I am grateful to Bill's graciousness and generosity of spirit. I also have appreciated the support and consistent dedication given to our school by the ESMA board and especially its president, Sara Hofman. I feel fortunate indeed to be surrounded by such talented, grounded individuals whose motives are entirely based on what is good for not only our school but for the broader society in which we live. Their lack of ego is one of the school leadership team's most valuable attributes.

In my first term at ME (April 2020), we faced the challenge of temporarily closing the school and offering online education. The staff adapted to this with professionalism, good humour and resilience. Each teacher was determined to maintain as authentic Montessori provision as possible to our students in lockdown. I am in awe of their devotion to the children of ME and their consistently strong work ethic.

In January of 2020, KIN Montessori Education Centre was moved from Bondi Junction to the school campus, offering a permanent setting for Parent / Infant and Parent / Toddler programs throughout the week. This centralised location has fostered a strong interest in our preschool and primary programs resulting in a healthy waitlist confined by our limited space in our current setting. The Future Proof Project, established in 2018, has not been as prominent due to the restrictions placed on the school with COVID 19. However, the desire to develop a High school is being pursued as we continue our search for a site that will enable Montessori East to grow beyond its current confines and establish a school community that runs from 0-18 years. Transparent Classroom's embedding has allowed teachers to demonstrate the solid Montessori Pedagogy we firmly established throughout our school. It has been observed in 2020 how the Transparent Classroom has provided parents with valuable information and thus given them greater confidence to see more clearly what their child is doing in the classroom each day. ME continues its tradition in seeking out talented and experienced Montessori trained educators. We continue to recognise the outstanding dedication of our educators and continue to encourage individuals interested in obtaining the Montessori teacher qualifications.

2020 was a year of significant change and challenge both for the school and as individuals. This year showed us just how resilient, adaptable and loving we can be. Steve Maraboli said, "Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving. We get stronger and more resilient." This is very apt for the experience this community has come through in the past 12 months. I am so excited for our future. For we have demonstrated, we can bend in a storm and stand firm as a community. In the year ahead, we can look forward to strengthening our community connection, working in close partnership with parents, all of us working toward the goal of continuous improvement and excellence in education as we journey forward into a strong future for Montessori East.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bruce Russell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bruce" and last name "Russell" clearly distinguishable.

Bruce Russell
Principal

From the ME Board President

After the uncertainty of this time last year, I am pleased to report to the Annual General Meeting that the Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association (ESMA) has had a stable year. We have been fortunate that, in Bondi, we have been able to remain open for school since my last report. The school continues to run smoothly with a high student demand and strong student retention across the Cycles.

Initially, it was unclear what the financial impact of the COVID 19 pandemic might be on our community and our school. While some of our families have been significantly impacted by the circumstances surrounding the virus, fortunately, a combination of the Government's "Job Keeper" support and the ME Foundation's fundraising has allowed the school to remain financially stable over this period, for our community of students to remain largely intact and for student retention to be fairly consistent, though we have understandably seen more student movement than in other recent years.

I acknowledge that as a community, we are all impacted by the virus in some way, whether financially, due to managing life with the risk of an outbreak or because we have family living overseas whom we are unable to spend time with. This is sadly the case with a number of our school families.

Though we have been fortunate so far to have avoided a COVID 19 outbreak that impacts our school directly, Montessori East continues to have in place a COVID 19 safety plan and to update it as the Government mandates change to reflect current circumstances. We are grateful that the community has been supportive of these efforts to keep us all safe and to allow the school to abide by the rules.

We continue to live in uncertain times and we don't take the above matters for granted. The Board continues to monitor them.

Apart from running the school in the midst of a global pandemic, the biggest development of 2020 was that our new Principal, Bruce Russell commenced in his role in March when Bill Conway retired. Despite the challenging circumstances of last year Bruce is now well settled in his role and the school is humming along under his leadership. Bruce has embraced the community and culture of Montessori East wholeheartedly and has partnered with the staff and Board to continue to enhance the school. Bruce has welcomed the opportunity to get to know the parent body and the students and demonstrates genuine alignment with the school's values. of the school.

It has been a pleasure for all of us to get to know Bruce and to learn from his experience in the education sector. The Board continues to support Bruce as he implements the school's Management and Strategic Plans.

An example of Bruce's passion for the school and can-do attitude related to the Journey of Service last year. Shortly after Bruce arrived, it became apparent that our usual Journey of Service to Thailand would not be possible so Bruce invited the graduates and teachers to visit his family farm in Wally's Plains to learn about koala habitat and regenerative planting. The trip was arranged to satisfy the, then quite restrictive, COVID 19 regulations and a wonderful opportunity was greatly appreciated by the graduates, their families and also the Board. The students may well have otherwise missed out on this important milestone due to the challenges of operating in the pandemic.

Another benefit of the changing circumstances was that ME has been able to forge a connection with the Dalaigur Preschool and representatives of the local indigenous community in Kempsey, which affords such meaningful opportunities for learning, service and mutual benefits.

The Board has continued over the past year to be intensely focused on progressing plans to find a new home for our school and realise the Future Proof Project. The Future Proof Project is a vision shared by the school's management, ESMA and the Montessori East Foundation Board to relocate and expand Montessori East (ME) in order to secure its long-term future after our current lease at Wellington St, Bondi comes to an end, currently in December 2024.

Unfortunately, last year proved to be very frustrating on this project as long negotiations over the key property identified for our future school were ultimately unsuccessful. This was due to various reasons including complexities relating to the site and the project economics, which proved too challenging for the key project partners.

It is no small task to find and access an appropriate home for an independent school in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney and to fund a relocation, particularly for a small community school. An ambitious project has become even more challenging following the impact of COVID19 on the school and local community. The Board is committed to reviewing its strategy and continuing to take all possible steps to protect the long term sustainability of the school. A number of sites are under current consideration.

The ESMA Board and the Relocation Committee, which is charged with direct responsibility for the execution of the project, welcome any assistance or suggestions that other interested parents feel they may be able to offer at any time.

Finally, as always, the Board would like to thank the wonderful staff of Montessori East. At the heart of our special school really are the dedicated, creative, highly skilled and empathetic staff who work here. In particular, this year, Raji Sivapalan as Education Leader and Kathryn Wyer as Director of Operations and Chair of the Relocation Committee have each provided invaluable support to Bruce as ME's new Principal. All staff have been supportive through this important change of leadership. 2021 also marks significant milestones for some of our long-standing staff. The Board would like to acknowledge that Phil Macken, Jeni Peterson and Sylvie Baudoin celebrate their 20 year anniversaries at ME this year and Sharon Tan, Franny Flynn, Kathryn Wyer, Leon Cohen and Sue Honey celebrate their 10 year anniversaries at ME. We thank all these staff for their loyalty and service. We would like all staff to know how much they are appreciated by the Board, particularly after a year like this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Hofman', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sara Hofman
President
Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association

REPORTING AREA 2. Contextual Information about the School & Student Body

About Montessori East

Montessori East is a non-denominational and co-educational primary and pre-school for children aged 3–12 years plus a program for children under 3 with their parent/carer. Montessori East follows the educational methods and principles developed by Dr Maria Montessori. We believe each child should have the opportunity to learn in a beautiful, creative, compassionate setting. Montessori East provides an environment with flexibility to explore, boundaries to work within, and the guidance of highly skilled teachers attuned to the unique abilities of every student.

The school is registered with the National Education Standards Authority (NESA) and approved as a centre-based preschool. Montessori East is a member of the Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA), Montessori Australia (MA) and the NSW Association of Independent Schools (AIS).

Montessori East is an independent school and primarily funded through student fees and the support of the parent body and community.

OUR GOAL

We put the child at the heart of everything we do.

At Montessori East, our goal is to prepare each child with the skills and attitudes they need to become life-long learners as they reach their individual potential. Our school is committed to providing a supportive environment where children are able to continue the natural process of their growth and development.

FUTURE PLANS

A community campus for the 21st century.

The school is embarking on a journey for its future growth and expansion. Called the Future-Proof Project, by 2024 there will be a new community campus in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, serving children aged 0-18 years and their families. It will be an extension of Montessori East's existing primary and pre school with additional programs serving parents, teachers and adolescents.

OUR VALUES

A deep regard for the whole human being.

Our values are enduring, shape the school's culture and reflect the Montessori philosophy that underpins all that we do. The values permeate our holistic approach to education.

Discovery & Curiosity	A place where curiosity and exploration are given time and space, enabling natural and purposeful discovery.
Independence	Independence grows and sustains by offering appropriate choices within an environment of freedom and responsibility.
Choice	Through choice, with appropriate limits, comes self determination, motivation and responsibility.
Care & Service	We respect the innate capability of each child to be themselves; to develop in such a way that is true to their character, respectful of themselves, others and the world around them.
Balance	Equal weight is given to the importance of academic learning, and the skills of thinking, creativity, communication and social and emotional development.



OUR PEOPLE

We are fortunate to have a team of long standing and talented staff who share in our vision and values for the school. Our class teachers are highly qualified with AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) and university degree qualifications.

Our teachers and assistant teachers represent a wide range of cultural, educational, and experiential backgrounds, providing the students with a rich environment in which to learn.

Bruce Russell has been principal of the school since 2020 and has an international career spanning 30 years in education as a teacher and principal. His background has included experience in a vast array of education environments around the world. In seeking a better alternative to the way society educates children, he was drawn to Montessori and is committed to the philosophy.

OUR STUDENTS

Students are drawn from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, with 8% living in homes where English is not the primary language. Most live in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. Financial assistance is provided to a small number of families through our Scholarship Fund and Fee Assistance programs. Two students are identified with a significant “disability” and receive special assistance to access our learning program.

OUR FAMILIES

Montessori East is very much a community school. It's a place where parents, children and the staff feel a part of a community network drawn together by a shared belief in the values of the school. There are plenty of formal and informal ways in which we connect with each other and parents in school life. We believe when a child joins the school this includes the whole family. Our Class Parents do an amazing job ensuring new families who join us are welcomed and included. Examples include bush walks, cooking and aromatherapy workshops and numerous play dates!

Every year we program a variety of **parent education events** that cover a range of topics from parenting support to curriculum understanding, Montessori philosophy and child development. Due to COVID -19 we were forced to pause these events. However we are re launching 'parent circles' where a teacher simply guides a discussion on a topic that parents either need help with or are interested in. Other formats include 'short talks' of 45 minutes on weekday mornings, or longer evening sessions each term. Topics covered include various curriculum areas, child development, ideas for supporting children, project updates and learning at home.



Formal **Parent-Teacher** or **Child-Parent-Teacher** interviews are organised twice a year for all children. **Semester reports** are issued in June and December each year for children 5 years and older. **Open mornings** provide for parents to spend some time as their child's “invited guest” during the morning work cycle. And importantly, open two-way communication between the school and home is encouraged by phone, email or by arranging a face to face meeting.

Services such as after school clubs and care are provided for the enjoyment of the children and convenience of parents.



ME ALUMNI

Maintaining connections with our families after they leave Montessori East has enriched our community by following the journeys of our students through high school and into adulthood. We frequently have students return to visit school and alumni parents are involved in the ME Foundation, for example. We are proud to have an Alumni serving as a Foundation Board member. The bi-annual alumni newsletter and social media keep the community informed and connected with each other. We've had many wonderful stories of people reconnecting with friends they made 20 years ago as preschoolers, and some are

now returning to our 0-3 program as parents themselves. It makes our project to expand the school even more urgent so that we can have enrolment places for this next generation of Montessori children.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Although Bondi is a very busy urban location, it still has a strong sense of community, and we are conscious of being actively visible and a participant in the community. Our students frequently visit local businesses to research projects, or to purchase cooking or art supplies for examples. This is a process in Montessori that we call 'going out', ie. the children go out into society, broadening the walls of the classroom. This is a different concept to an excursion, many of which also take place throughout the year. We also like to participate in various activities promoted by Waverley Council such as Clean Up Australia Day or Ride to School Day.

Beyond our immediate community, we support charities and other worthwhile causes, often initiated by the interests of the primary school students. Some years ago students initiated a fruit and vegetable co-op business (Green Grads) to raise money for an orphanage in Thailand. The money raised pays one salary for a teacher in a Montessori-based toddler program at the orphanage. We have been able to expand our philanthropic endeavors to now support a Kempsey based Indigenous community, Dalaigur preSchool. This year the Graduates will be spending a week working with this community as part of Our Journey of Service programme (JOS).

THE CLASSROOMS

The primary and pre school provides children with a fluid, responsive and relevant education. Children learn best when they feel secure and happy in their environment, without stress, and with independence. To achieve this, there are key differences in our classrooms and approach.

- Children are grouped in **multi-age** classes of three years with the same teachers for the duration of each three year stage. The teacher gains a deep understanding of each child and their needs. This provides a very stable environment where balance across emotional, social and academic development can be achieved.
- The mixed age groups provide a **life-like social model**. The children lead by example and learn from each other. Mentoring is an enjoyable part of each child's classroom experience.
- Children are given many opportunities to make **choices** in their day and they are expected to show appropriate independence. They explore topics that interest them within the curriculum. This teaches them to be self-disciplined and self-directed with their school work.
- **Teachers guide learning.** Lessons are given individually or in small groups and according to the progress of each child. To illustrate this, the classroom is like a collaborative workplace with people working on different things at the same time, and the teacher moving from group to group.
- The daily routine provides blocks of **uninterrupted work time** of two to three hours each, giving children the opportunity to spend time delving into subjects and promoting concentration skills.

Through the unique Montessori environment, the children receive a rich academic experience and the program can be extended to meet the needs of each individual child.



OUR PROGRAMS & CURRICULUM

We're proud to be a small school where everybody knows your name – more like a big extended family than traditional school. Demand for enrolment places at the school outstrips capacity and hence our intention to expand the school.

Enrolment Profile (as at December 2020)

Cycle 1 (3 – 6 years)	53
Cycle 2 (6 – 9 years)	44
Cycle 3 (9 – 12 years)	40
Total	137

The Montessori curriculum is recognised internationally and by the Australian government. It is approved as an alternative national curriculum framework by ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority).

The preschool is approved and accredited under the NSW Department of Education and Community, the regulatory body of ACECQA. The rich and comprehensive Montessori curriculum incorporates all outcomes from the National Education Standards Authority (NESA). We are recognised as a Registered Independent Primary School by NESA.

0-3 program

More than 100 families have served each term in this incredibly successful program, which combines an education program for parents and an environment for their children to learn and enjoy. Our 0-3 program opened in early 2020 on the school campus on Wellington Street.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Our location in Bondi provides so many great opportunities for getting outdoors and extending learning outside the classroom. Our co-curricular activities and extra-curricular activities give the children exposure to a broad range of activities as well as the opportunity to get involved in community orientated activities.

Sports programs

The primary school children enjoy a different PE focus each term including ball sports at the local Margaret Whitlam Recreation Centre and swimming, beach volleyball and surfing in Term 4. Other activities include gymnastics, athletics, team sports, ball skills, aerobic exercises and dance.

Our preschool children have a weekly sports program delivered by a trained teacher from Playball.

Music

Music lessons are a part of the Montessori curriculum delivered by the classroom teachers. This comprehensive curriculum has received more attention this year and will be the focus of further development. For example, Cycles 2 and 3 and our Kindergarten children from Cycles 1 are currently involved in a school musical. With help from “The House that Dan Built” the children are writing, producing, staging and performing in their own musical.

After School Programs

After School Clubs provide opportunities for activities, such as drama, leggo and sport; and the after school care program provides an important service to the community between 3-6pm.



Journey of Service

Montessori East's Journey of Service project is an opportunity for students in their last year of primary school to make a significant and real connection to the world they have been learning about.

Sadly COVID -19 put a halt to our plans to travel to Thailand. Instead Year 6 students travelled to Spring Ridge, Liverpool plains, NSW with their teacher Bob Koelsch, along with the principal Bruce Russell and Raji Sivapalan to spend a week on an eco-friendly farm. It was their task to plant Koala corridors so that Koalas could get safely from the forest to the nearby watering hole.

The Journey of Service project was established by Montessori East in 2013, recognising that pre-adolescent children naturally seek to understand their place in society and seek opportunities to contribute in real ways.

The children prepare for this journey during the year by learning how they can be of service to others – what they can contribute and offer to others. The Graduates had to order the materials needed, research what and how to design a koala corridor.



REPORTING AREA 3

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy & Numeracy

Performance in Statewide/ National Tests

Montessori East's students in Years 3 and 5 participate in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This Government program assesses the literacy and numeracy learning of students in all Australian schools. It's important to note that the Montessori method provides individualised and self directed learning programs and progress is measured in a number of ways however standardised testing is not a significant form of assessment.

NAPLAN RESULTS

Montessori East uses NAPLAN results as one of many sources used to inform teaching and learning. As one of the few measures that provide a general academic comparison, NAPLAN results are viewed to give us general insights on how our students perform on a national standardised test. Although our participation numbers are low, due to being a small school, we are pleased to see a trend in consistently strong results in NAPLAN, especially in reading. Nonetheless, we recommend to our parents to not use individual student results as a point of comparison with other students nor to draw sweeping conclusions from their child's results.

NAPLAN was canceled in 2020, the results below are our 2019 results.

2019	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3	547	434	426	508	453
Similar	507	454	456	512	463
State	432	423	419	440	408

No Y5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 5					
Similar					
State					

NAPLAN results are available on the My School website: www.myschool.edu.au

REPORTING AREAS 5 & 6

Teacher Professional Learning, Accreditation & Qualifications

Professional Learning

Professional development for staff is an important part of the School program. In 2019 there were a number of new opportunities for professional development especially within the school. An adjustment in the school day hours has allowed for weekly professional development sessions for staff, at times led by our own teachers and targeting specific needs identified by the staff. There were two themes visited regularly in our professional development in 2019: Freedom and Discipline and Observation. In addition to this, staff attended the following workshops and seminars in 2019.

Description of the Professional Learning Activity	No of Staff participating
Indigenous Cultural Awareness Foundations at work courses Purchase; National Excellence in School Leadership Purchase; Julie Berg Psychology Identify and Respond to children and young people at risk Castaway Complex forecasts Castaway Dashboard and Publishing Castaway Simple forecasts Castaway Advanced Techniques Castaway Actuals Variances and rolling forecasts Purchase; CPR First Aid Happy Mama - Mama Rising Grow Your Mind Teacher Resilience Course and Implementation support - School Staff Training AMI Admin Course Head to Head Forum	

Two staff members are completing Montessori teacher training and one teacher is completing her Masters in Teaching. The school is supporting two additional teachers to complete the Montessori training and will be available to fill future needs at Montessori East if required.

Teacher Standards

As of December 2020, Montessori East employed 6 teachers who are responsible for delivering the curriculum. There are additional teachers serving as assistants who also hold qualifications, but are not included in this total.

The following table provides a breakdown of the qualifications and experience of Montessori East teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum:

Level of qualification	Number of staff
a. Have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines	6
b. Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	0
c. Do not have qualifications as described in a) or b) above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context	0
d. No qualifications or teaching experience	0

MONTESSORI QUALIFICATIONS

Most teachers hold the internationally recognised Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) teaching qualifications in addition to their mainstream university qualifications. Three assistant teachers also hold this dual qualification.

COMPOSITION OF STAFF

The teaching staff at Montessori East is composed of well-qualified Montessori teachers. In the Montessori classroom teachers and assistants work together to guide the children's learning. Our assistants who have the Montessori teacher training provide lesson presentations and work closely with the teachers assisting in delivering the curriculum.

Our academic staff of 17 teachers and assistant teachers are individuals from a wide range of educational and cultural backgrounds, including 12 cultural groups.

STAFF RETENTION

We have a loyal and committed team of people and as a result, staff retention is high. Three teachers celebrated 20 years service and a further 7 completed 10 year service. Two new teachers were employed in Cycle 1 replacing two teachers who reigned in term 2 2020. One support teacher resigned at the end of 2020.

REPORTING AREA 7. Student Attendance & Management of Non-attendance

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

In 2020 our overall yearly attendance rate across the school was 92%. (calculated on the student attendance collection data for Semester 1 and Term 3). This was slightly above last year.

The yearly attendance rate for the school by year group was:

Year	% Attendance
Kindergarten	92
Year 1	91
Year 2	95
Year 3	92
Year 4	92
Year 5	91
Year 6	93
Total	92

Non-Attendance procedures:

Montessori East adheres to the requirements for recording attendance data as set by the NSW Minister of Education and ACARA's National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting.

Parents report planned absences to the school in advance. Classroom attendance roles are recorded online and an automatic text message from the school is sent to parents for any unexplained or unplanned absences. This process is an embedded practice and works well to keep track of the children's presence at school and safety of the children. The school's clear procedure for late and non-attendance is periodically featured in our weekly bulletin to remind parents of the importance of children being at school and on time.

Student Retention

Our retention rates are healthy and reflect general parent satisfaction with the education provided. The school is near capacity and we have long waiting lists, particularly for the preschool program. Retention rates in 2020 were over 90%, a marked improvement from previous years.

Regular feedback from current parents and the families of children who complete Year 6 and move onto high school, helps to ensure that we are meeting the academic and other development needs of the children. Generally there is a high level of satisfaction expressed by parents with the education their children received at Montessori East. Our 2020 graduating class of 5 students moved on to the following secondary schools: **SCEGGS Darlinghurst, Kambala and Rose Bay Secondary College.**

REPORTING AREAS 8 & 9. Enrolment & Other Policies

Enrolment Policy & Process

Montessori East School offers a three-year Pre-Primary Montessori program commencing at age 3 years. The Pre-Primary program (including Year K) progresses towards the Primary program which is divided into 6-9 year and 9-12 year age group classes. Commencement at the Primary level at age 6 years is similar to commencement in Year 1 of a mainstream school.

We also offer Under 3 programs for parents and children aged 0-3 years. The groups meet each week to learn about the child's growing and changing needs. Enrolments into the program are on a first come first served basis and is done online, however priority is given to current participants.

Montessori East is a non-denominational and co-educational school.

The school Enrolment Officer processes all enrolments for the primary and pre school in consultation with the Principal. Applications are processed in order of receipt, with the exception of current siblings and transfers from other Montessori schools. Further considerations are given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, the applicant's desire to enrol in both pre-primary and primary, participation in our Nido and Toddler Programme, and other criteria such as the sex and age balance of the classrooms, alumni families, and children with additional needs. Children with additional needs are considered on an individual basis keeping in mind the standards of the *Disability Standards for Education Act 2005*.

The process of enrolment is outlined in Appendix 2 and a full Enrolment Policy is contained within the school's Policy Manual. A copy of the Policy Manual is available by contacting the school. Montessori East regularly reviews its policies.

Once enrolled, students and parents are expected to support the school's ethos, comply with the school rules and pay fees regularly to remain enrolled.

Safe & Supportive Environment

At Montessori East, the aim is to nurture in children their natural love of learning and their desire to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually. The school is committed to providing a nurturing and supportive environment where children are able to continue the natural process of their growth and development.

Policies for Student Welfare

To protect the welfare of the students, Montessori East has a series of comprehensive policies in relation to:

- Student Welfare
- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Anti Bullying & Harassment

Policies are reviewed regularly and updated as required. All policies were updated in 2020:

Student Discipline

Our goal is to develop in students self-discipline and an understanding that each individual carries a responsibility to their class community and the school, to assure it is an environment where all feel safe and secure.

This is achieved through the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy, which includes the prepared environment, Montessori trained teachers and practicing an education approach supporting grace, courtesy and peace. Guidance on good behaviour is given to students by teachers and peers. Lessons are regularly given to establish an understanding of the virtues which form the foundation of a harmonious community. Peer group activities also provide a practical application of self-discipline within group settings, a feature of our school that has seen very positive results and few behaviour

issues. Students gain skills in self-discipline and conflict resolution. The three-year mixed age range in each class provides the opportunity for the older child to display leadership by setting good behaviour models which in turn encourages younger children to emulate the more mature behaviour of the older student.

The Discipline Policy is included in the Appendix and is made available to parents each year through our Parent Handbook as well as on the website.

Policies for Complaints and Grievances Resolution

The school's current Complaints and Grievances policy, which is contained in the school's Policy Manual, provides set procedures for all community members to follow in the case of a grievance or complaint. The Grievance Policy is included in the Appendix and the parent handbook illustrates the line of communication to follow in the event a parent has a question or grievance.



REPORTING AREA 10.

School determined priority areas for improvement

Below is a summary of the *goals* established from the beginning of 2020. These goals represent a portion of the goals set out in the school's management plan. The management plan is used to guide initiatives for the year and is created in collaboration with staff, the principal and board.

Child Development & Pedagogy

- *Develop a blueprint for pedagogical practices* – Staff worked on defining Montessori principles and ways to implement fully into the classroom. Work to continue in 2020.
- Develop further the use of Transparent Classroom as a mechanism for attracting parent support for student's learning
- Ensure lessons are driven through observation of the child

Growth

- To embed the new principal (develop positive relationships) to the school so that strong, cohesive and effective leadership with a clear direction is developed
- Ensure enrolments and retention rates are commensurate with the school/class capacity

People

- Conduct thorough professional reviews for all staff with clearly determined professional goals for each
- *Assure and support the accreditation process for all teachers (TAA)* – All teachers are registered in the Institute of Teachers with NESa and logging professional development hours.
- *Support strategies to attract staff to ME* - Support has been given to training through sponsoring qualified teachers to train.

Community & Outreach

- *Communication* – A new website has been created and went live in early 2020. A Prospectus was published to assist the community in understanding the Future Proof Project and the scope of Montessori education
- *Parent Education* - Adapt to COVID -19 restrictions by offering online Parent education/ support programmes for ME parents and the wider community - Parent eds have been well attended at ME and KIN.

Environment

- *Establish our school as a more environmentally conscious community* - A student-led Environment Club was established.
- *Maintain the presentation of the campus* -General maintenance has improved the look of the campus.

REPORTING AREA 11

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Our Ethos states that 'we believe that the adult (staff and parent) recognises and respects the dignity of the child' and it is from this position of respect that the culture of the school stems. See Appendix 1 for the Ethos Statement.

The Montessori philosophy and pedagogy is founded on promoting respect and responsibility amongst students, staff and parents. Respect and responsibility are inherent in all daily activities whether they are classroom teaching and learning activities, staff interactions, student and parent interactions or expected student, staff and parent behaviours.

Activities that promote respect and responsibility include

- **Grace and Courtesy** lessons which model the intricacies of everyday community living, where we are required to work together, share, and care for self and others.
- **Values and Virtues Education** to build character by understanding and practicing our moral behaviours.
- **The Prepared Environment** of the Montessori classroom emphasises how we care for the space and environment around us.
- **Multi-age grouping and peer groups** emulate society and the home with younger and older children learning from and with each other.
- **The three-year age range** in each class promotes respect and responsibility. Older students
- **Events** such as Mother's Day, Harmony Day and Reconciliation Week celebrate our culture, family and interconnectedness.

Student Leadership

At both the preprimary and primary level students have significant involvement in the decision-making regarding their learning and classroom code of conduct. For example, at the primary level, children aged 6-12 years participate with teachers in making the class rules at the beginning of each year and are responsible for seeing that they are adhered to. Weekly class meetings enable students to raise issues for redress, air grievances and if necessary rewrite a rule that is not working. These meetings are conducted by the students themselves under teacher supervision. All Primary (6-12) students are involved.

Students also have many opportunities to develop their understanding of the world and their ability to impact it in a positive way. The integrated Montessori curriculum and 'Great Lessons' show our interdependency and many children become impassioned by particular causes such as

- Save the Tiger Foundation
- Taronga Zoo Conservation
- WWF – Australia
- 'Say No to Plastic' campaign

A culture of service is fostered through the programs such as the [Journey of Service](#) program described on Page 10 where the Year 6 children raise money for and directly serve in a Thai orphanage and now expanded to service for the Dalaigur indigenous community of Kempsey NSW.

REPORTING AREA 12

Parent, Teacher & Student Satisfaction

Our school has a relaxed, family atmosphere which we encourage so that parents, students and teachers feel that they can easily share their opinions and concerns. We foster a variety of different opportunities and avenues for our community to provide feedback to the school and to be involved.

Parent satisfaction:

Covid-19 disrupted normal operations such that we invited parent feedback via short surveys and contact with the teachers via Zoom for example. Short surveys to gather feedback on how parents were finding the online learning environment allowed us to adjust the content and delivery. Overall, parents were very satisfied with the delivery of our online classes and support during Covid restrictions.

Student satisfaction:

Students at Montessori East enjoy many opportunities to be a part of the decision making in their classrooms and the school. Regular "Primary Parliament" meetings (involving students Year 1-6) provide a forum for students to discuss issues and seek solutions to problems that may arise from time to time. Students lead these meetings with minimal adult intervention. Some outcomes of these meetings have included playground activities, acquisition of animals, standards of cleanliness, fundraising for charities, gardening and dealing with conflicts. The principal attends all meetings.

Teacher Satisfaction:

Teachers have regular opportunities to provide feedback via staff meetings and annual review meetings with the principal. In addition to this we have commenced a more formal feedback process via the AMI Global accreditation process and we expect this to continue and develop further.

Indicators of Community Satisfaction:

- Results of the Parent Satisfaction Survey
- Strong participation in Parent Education events.
- Parents regularly initiate events and or volunteer to assist
- Enrolment demand is very strong, with a healthy waitlist and significant interest from the community.

REPORTING AREA 13.

Summary Financial Information

For the year ended 31 December 2020, Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association Limited generated total revenue of \$4,369,796 which after total expenditure of \$3,540,064 resulted in a surplus of \$829,732. The financial year operates from 1 January to 31 December inclusive.

Income

School fees	61%
Excursions	1%
Other receipts from students	2%
Other private income	3%
State Government Grants	9%
Commonwealth Grants	16%
Trading Activities	7%
Other Capital Income	0%
	100%

Expenditure

Teaching Salaries	27%
Other staff salaries	27%
Superannuation	5%
Long Service Leave	3%
Other salary on-costs	2%
Operating expenses	12%
Buildings & grounds	9%
Interest	0%
Finance Lease	0%
Depreciation	5%
Bad Debts	1%
Trading Activities	9%
	100%

APPENDIX 1: *OUR ETHOS*

the Child

We aim to nurture in each child:

- a natural love of learning
- intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development as whole human beings.
- We cater to children's individual needs.
- We support children's education for life.
- We place children in the unique position of making choices and taking responsibility for their own learning.

the Adult

We believe that the adult (staff and parent) recognises and respects the dignity of the child.

Our task is to:

- respect the child's individuality
- inspire and guide the child to realise their potential
- observe and guide the child according to the sensitive periods of development
- be positive in our communication
- be flexible and responsive to the needs of the child
- be open to learning by taking part in ongoing personal and professional development
- embrace the humility Maria Montessori felt towards the child.

the Environment

We believe that learning:

- is a joyous and spontaneous experience that happens within the child
- allows the child to follow his natural pace and rhythm
- occurs within an ordered environment, allowing the child to exercise freedom with responsibility
- provides a concrete foundation leading towards abstraction.
- We believe that the environment, which is prepared and organised according to Montessori ideals:
- inspires wonder and admiration for the world in which we live
- is a microcosm of society, where children learn to work together.
- We believe that the curriculum must:
- reflect our commitment to Montessori philosophy
- integrate the NSW Board of Studies Syllabus
- be presented over three year cycles
- prepare the children for schooling and life after Montessori East.

We believe that the Montessori materials and activities:

- help develop and foster concentration
- allow children to discover concepts independently
- have a sequence and order and build on a child's previous knowledge
- are tailored to the individual rather than the class.

Appendix 2: Enrolment Policy

Montessori East offers an education program for children from the age of 3 through the age of 12, or Year 6 in Primary schooling. There is a three-year (twelve terms) pre-primary Montessori program with a full day component for children 4 years old and up. This progresses towards the Montessori Primary program, split into 6-9 and 9-12 age group classes. Commencement at Primary is roughly equivalent to commencement in Year 1 of a traditional school.

The school's enrolment officer processes all enrolments. The Principal has the responsibility of reviewing applications for enrolment in line with the principles expressed in policies and procedures. Once a child is enrolled, records are kept in a secure place within the school's office. Parents may view their own child's records by requesting permission from the principal.

The procedure to enrol a child at Montessori is complex and lengthy, resulting in the need to assess the individual application carefully.

When considering the acceptance of a child to our school we consider the family's understanding and attitude to the Montessori philosophy and the criteria we set for enrolment. Decisions on enrolment are primarily made in consideration of the date an application was completed and submitted, however there are other factors that weigh in at the time of an enrolment decision with the school reserving the right to consider the needs of the school as a whole. For example, the school may favour an application over another in order to achieve reasonable age or gender balance.

The procedures below are in constant review and subject to change from time to time. We endeavour to present the most common scenario tracking an enrolment application from start to finish.

Key Roles in the Application procedure

Role of the Enrolment Officer

- Provide accurate information about the school
- Arrange for school tours and/or class observations
- Make no promises of accepting a child until enrolment procedures have been followed.
- Disperse printed information and forms

Role of the Teaching Staff

- Discuss philosophy and functioning of the classroom with family
- Accommodate observers when required

For Prospective Families

- Complete an enrolment application
- Observe the classroom
- Attend an interview with the Principal
- Attend a general information session
- For Primary enrolments, the child is invited to visit the classroom for 1-3 days

Role of Principal

- Conduct interviews with all prospective families being considered for enrolment
- Cover the following points in the interview:
 - Understanding of Montessori
 - Intentions for primary schooling
 - Fee schedule
 - Parental involvement in the school
 - Qualities and characteristics of the child

Role of the Class Parent

- The enrolment officer will inform the class parents of new families starting school.

- The class parent will contact the new family the week the child commences school to see if they have any questions.
- Organise a coffee morning early in the term, to which all parents are invited. New families are invited personally by the class parent as this is an opportunity to get to know other families.
- Follow up from time to time.

The role of the Class Parent is to assist the new families to become part of the school community.

Application Procedures (non-transfer)

Step 1: Enrolment Application Form

The initial step is to complete an Enrolment Application Form which puts the family in our database. Parents are informed in writing that their form has been received and they are now on our active wait list.

Step 2: Assessment of Places

At this stage an applicant from the active wait list is being considered for enrolment into available places

- The active wait list is consulted to choose applications for possible placement. Priority is given to applications received earliest, activated earliest or siblings of current students.
- Parents are contacted and asked to meet for an **interview** with the principal and asked to observe in the classrooms before the interview.
- Following the interview a **recommendation** is made by the principal to the enrolment officer whether to accept or reject the application.
- If the application is accepted, consideration of other criteria is weighed against other applications in order to achieve age/gender balance.
- A **final decision** on the application is made by the principal in consultation with the enrolment officer.
- At this point the family will receive invitations to school events such as parent education evenings.

Stage 4 : Enrolment Contract and Orientation

At this stage, the application is successful and preparation is made for the child to start school.

- The parents of the successful applicant are sent an **enrolment contract** and **Parent Handbook**.
- The parents must sign and return the contract along with the payment of the Placement Fee.
- Upon receipt of the contract the child is entered into the **database** as a Placed Enrolment.
- The parents are invited to an **orientation information session**, usually held at the beginning of each semester.
- The teachers are given access to the file of information on the child **6 weeks or more before** the child starts school. The **teachers meet with the family** between 2-6 weeks before the start date and welcome them to their class. At this point the parents should start to receive our weekly bulletin.
- The child is oriented to the class by the teacher on the **day before** they officially start school.
- The child starts school. The office **updates the database**, informs **class parent representatives** to welcome the family, and informs the rest of the parents /staff through the bulletin and email.

Note: For **unsuccessful applications** a letter is sent informing them that they have been unsuccessful. Parents are offered to have their child waitlisted should a place become available. Parents must complete an attached waitlist form and send back to school.

If a parent considers they have been unfairly or improperly treated in the enrolment process, they have a right to lodge a grievance with the Principal as outlined in the school's Grievance Policy.

Transfers from other schools

Montessori East may consider enrolments of children who are attending other schools. The procedure for a student transfer follows a similar procedure as above, with the additional considerations of the individual child's 'fit' with the Montessori classroom.

Prior to a transfer application being considered, a report regarding TRANSFER CHILDREN from their current school (both preprimary and primary) is required and is to be viewed by a directress.

A child is accepted on a three month probationary basis (both preprimary and primary).

Transfer Enrolment Procedure:

Applications from other Montessori schools or non-Montessori schools are only considered in accordance with procedures outlined below.

Transfer procedure Stage 1 – Parent Enquiry

At the initial stage of this procedure, the family is advised of the limitations inherent in accepting children from other schools. Places are limited in every age group and generally the school does not accept children in the 2nd or 3rd year of each cycle. Enquirers must be informed of our policy on accepting students from a non-Montessori school (see below) and, in the case of transfers from other Montessori schools, the need to assess the standard of the other school's Montessori program. While we don't intend to discourage transfer applications, we must be up front about these limitations.

- An application for enrolment is requested after the initial enquiry and if it seems the above requirements can be met.
- A report from the previous school must be submitted.
- Parents must observe classes in all 3 cycles.
- Parents must attend an interview with the principal. The child may be interviewed at this time at the discretion of the principal.

Transfer Procedure Stage 2 – Trial

- If there is an agreement by the Principal and the family that there is a reasonable chance the child will experience success at Montessori East, the child will attend school for 1-3 days on a trial basis. Exceptions to this step may be appropriate, such as in the case of overseas transfers from Montessori schools.
- Following the trial a decision on enrolment is made after discussion with the teacher about the child's experience.
- The decision about enrolling a transfer student is made by the principal in collaboration with the coordinator.

Transfer Procedure Stage 3 – Enrolment Contract

Parents meet with the principal and coordinator to learn of the school's decision. A 3 month conditional enrolment contract is offered. The conditions of this contract allow the school or the family to terminate the enrolment within the prescribed time.

Policy on accepting students from a non-Montessori school

Generally we do not accept students from a non-Montessori school to enter any other age level other than 3 year olds. Exceptions may be considered based on the following guidelines:

- There is a space and need for students in a particular age group (to achieve social and gender equity)
- The number of students from non Montessori backgrounds must not exceed a maximum of 10% of the group.
- The child must demonstrate a general fit with the Montessori methods of learning, such as independent learning skills
- The school must review reports from the other school(s)
- In most cases, the child must have a 1 – 3 day trial in the classroom prior to being accepted
- All transfers are given a 3 month probationary enrolment period

Priority for enrolment

The following list is the order in which an application is considered

- Applicant is a sibling of a current Montessori East student
- Family have indicated a commitment to the Primary program and Montessori education
- Application Date
- Age and sex (see "Class Balance"*)
- Suitability (fit into the class community)

The transition of students from Cycle to cycle does not require a new application process. Contracts are carried over to the next cycle.

Class Balance

The multi-age Montessori classroom environment is created and maintained for the benefit of all students in the class. Class balance is achieved through careful consideration at the time of enrolment. The school may limit enrolments based on this need to create an optimum learning environment by:

- Favouring an application based on gender, when required
- Limiting an age group to 40% of the total class population (in a typical 3 year cycle group)

- No more than 10% of primary students from a non-Montessori pre-school.

Classroom Observations

Classroom Observations form an important part of understanding the student and Montessori education. It provides prospective parents with a glimpse at Montessori education as part of their decision to enrol and provides teachers with an opportunity to assess a child. Children also observe each other as part of their process of learning.

Observation guidelines exist for prospective parents and current parents. These guidelines are kept at reception and given to parents prior to their observation. Observations must be booked through the office and occur at the agreed-upon times only. Observers are asked to adhere to the rules on the guideline document, including:

- Observations should not exceed 30 minutes
- Observer must remain in the observers chair while observing
- Observer must not engage in conversation with children unless the child approaches the observer
- Photos or recordings (video/audio) are not permitted

Enrolling Special Needs Children

Special Needs include:

- intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, giftedness, behaviour/emotional disorders, multiple disabilities, physical disabilities, blindness, deafness/hard of hearing, autism
 - families at risk
 - Other, as defined by the Special Needs funding criteria
1. Parent follows the enrolment process up to the interview stage.
 2. At the interview the parent is asked to provide details of the child's characteristics that may warrant additional attention or resource, as well as any assessment reports from other involved professionals. These are viewed by the Principal and possibly by the teacher.
 3. The Principal and the Teacher discuss the child's application.
 4. The Principal and Teacher observe the child in their present placement if possible. If the child is not in a school the teacher visits the child at home.
 5. When the child starts at the school all relevant staff members collaborate to draw up an Individual Education Plan.
 6. The school can recommend Educational and/or Health Professionals if required.

Meeting the Needs of a Child with Special Needs

1. When a child with Special Needs enrolls at the school, it is undertaken with the full understanding that the school believes the Montessori environment will be of benefit to the child.
2. It is recommended by the school that parents and staff work collaboratively. We have established a Student Services Program to structure the services we deliver to students with special needs. A description of this program exists in a separate document.
3. The child will be observed by all relevant staff members upon entry. When planning and evaluating an Individual Education Plan (IEP) all relevant parties will be included in meetings to discuss the outcomes of the program and follow up plans. Parents will be kept informed at all times.
4. We welcome Educational and/or Health Professionals to continue their program with the child at school.
5. A child who has special needs is an integral part of the school community. Therefore, we encourage involvement in extra curricula activities.
6. Our aim is to assist the child with reaching their full potential.

Note: if a child is observed and appears to be having difficulties of any kind following the initial enrolment, the teacher will inform parents as soon as possible.

Regarding TRANSFER CHILDREN both pre-primary and primary directresses require a report from the previous school before the child is accepted. A child is accepted on a three month probationary basis (both pre-primary and primary).

Integration of new families

Role of Principal & Enrolment Officer

The Principal/Enrolment Officer is responsible for:

- Informing the parents of the child's acceptance
- Sending contract and receiving deposit
- Sending Parent Handbook (classroom rules and policies)
- Advising start date
- Answering any questions regarding fees
- Informing the teacher of the start date
- Informing the Class Parents

Orientation to School

- Parents are invited to a general information session about the school. These sessions occur twice a year at the beginning of a semester.
- Once the child is placed, the teacher contacts the family for an initial meeting without the child present to go over pertinent information about the classroom and to learn about the family.
- Parents are asked to bring their child in on the afternoon of the day prior to their start date to enjoy time in their prospective classroom, allowing the child to meet their teacher and to familiarise themselves with their classroom.

Role of the Directress/Teacher

- Meet with parents and child prior to the child starting (see above). Check to see if the parents have any question after having read the parent handbook.
- Find out if the parent may have anything they may offer the class, such as talents or abilities that may be relevant to the class.
- Make sure the Class Parent Representative has the relevant information about the new family
- Connect the child with other children
- Tell new and established parents about the new child (encourage reciprocal invitations) through class newsletter and class parent meetings

All questions regarding the Montessori education and philosophy should be directed to the teachers.

Role of the Class Parent

- The enrolment officer will inform the class parents of new families starting school.
- Arrange for a support parent for each family and give them the new family's telephone number. This lasts for the period of one term
- Organise a coffee morning early in the term, to which all parents are invited. The date should be checked with the Directress and Administrator to ensure no double bookings.
- Follow up that all is fine with the support parent.

The role of the Class Parent is to assist the new families to become part of the group.

Storing and Maintaining Records

Records are stored on each currently enrolled student and maintained after the child leaves Montessori East for a period of seven years. Student records are stored in two distinct formats: digital and hard copy. The Permanent Record File (PRF) contains the child's enrolment information and other pertinent information in hard copy. The digital record contains records that require constant updating, such as attendance information. Below is a summary of the records stored and maintained at Montessori East:

Permanent Record File:

- Enrolment application
- Medical information form
- Personal information form
- Authorisations (excursion, permissions, etc.)
- Vaccination record
- Semester Reports
- Letters of significance
- Reports from professional practitioners

Digital Record (Engage)

- Attendance record
- Authorisation to collect

- Family data
- Medical information
- Incident, Injury, trauma and illness reports
- Destination school/education program after withdrawal/graduation.

Records are kept securely under lock and key or password protected. Staff members may not remove the PRF from the office, however copies may be made of specific documents with the understanding of the confidential nature of a student's record. Parents may access their child's record only after receiving the express permission from the principal. Parents may view at any time their child's digital record through the parent portal. This information is password protected for each child.

Appendix 3: Discipline Policy

General expectations of student behaviour in the Montessori school

The ultimate goal of Montessori East education is the development of inner or self-discipline in the child. Achieving this goal requires several fundamental characteristics which support the child's ability to achieve this goal. They include; a) the prepared learning environment, b) appropriate preparation of the teacher, and c) clear class procedures, all of which help to foster self-discipline and positive behaviour in children. One must consider the day to day practices which empower the child and allow for the development of responsible behaviour within a degree of freedom. Educators give guidance to the child where appropriate and children learn that their behaviour always carries consequences. Fortunately this occurs as part of the child's learning methodology in the classroom; where the child may make choices, is given responsibility to monitor many aspects of her/his own learning, and teachers support the learning model. The result is that disciplinary matters are rare and infrequent, procedures are clear in the event a student's behaviour falls outside the boundaries of expected community practice, and the child is always expected to assume responsibility for the initial steps to correct behaviour. Parents are drawn into any matters where a student regularly struggles with their behaviour or commits a serious offense.

General Policies

- Students are required to abide by the School's Rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the School.
- Where a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm, inconvenience or embarrassment to the School, staff members or other students, the students may be subject to disciplinary action.
- The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the school will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence; however will always be based on principles of procedural fairness. (Procedural fairness is defined by the NSW Board of Studies and Teacher Education Commission and includes a right of review of a decision made in response to allegations.) When advised of the allegation the student and parents will be informed of the procedural steps to be followed in dealing with a disciplinary matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, students will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- The disciplinary consequences will vary according to the behaviour and the prior record of the student. At the lower end of the scale, an admonition or detention may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale, the behaviour could result in suspension or expulsion. Corporal Punishment is not permitted under any circumstance.
- Montessori East does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

'Practice Society' in the Primary Classroom

There is a time in their development when children given the opportunity, form a mini *Practice Society* in which they choose the rules and elect leaders. Dr Montessori stated: *"the child likes to mix with others in a group wherein each has a different status. A leader is chosen, and is obeyed, and a strong group is formed."*

Primary aged children are capable of making the 'ground rules' for their class particularly if they have had a Montessori pre primary background. They also discuss the breaking of the rules and the consequences. The rules are modified if they are found to be not working well. In the pre primary classes the rules are established by the teachers and are minimal to ensure they can be carried out by the children. Grace and Courtesy lessons are given and practiced to give the children the skills to obey the rules.

The Montessori disciplinary model encourages self-discipline and positive approaches to inappropriate behaviour, including redirection of behaviour and natural consequences rather than punishment. Misbehaviour is managed in a variety of ways:

- Discussion about the behaviour and its inappropriateness
- Grace and Courtesy lessons to provide the skills to behave correctly
- Peer group influence to follow the class rules established by the class as a whole
- Respect for the children and opportunity for them to express and define their feelings
- Age appropriate conflict resolution techniques as relevant to manage student to student conflict
- The negative behaviour of the student is referred to but not the personality of the student
- Teachers set the tone by avoiding harsh words and sudden reprimands

- Careful physical restraint (bear hugs) may be used if a student is out of control. Corporal punishment is not permitted.

Minor Misbehaviour

This is a behaviour that interferes with the orderly educational process within the school and infringes on others' rights to partake in this educational process. Examples include interfering with the work of other students, disturbing concentration, inappropriate social interactions, minor deliberate damage to class materials/books.

Disciplinary procedures for minor misbehaviour may include:

- Diversion of the student to work which challenges and engages interest
- Discussion with the student to work out an acceptable solution to prevent the misbehaviour recurring
- Application of conflict resolution techniques
- Grace and Courtesy lessons and practice
- Recording of misbehaviour and seeking advice from a colleague
- Contacting parents in the case of repeating or serious misbehaviour
- Student taking responsibility for the consequences of his actions and repairing any damage for example
- A management plan to direct the student towards positive behaviour

Serious Misbehaviour

This is behaviour which can result in property destruction, willful defiance or injury to others. Examples include refusal to work, hitting and kicking, throwing dangerous objects, damaging property, stealing, using abusive language.

The Disciplinary Procedure may include:

- Immediate intervention by staff member to stop the behaviour and student is given appropriate consequences
- A meeting with the class teacher and Principal if the behaviour recurs and appropriate consequences decided
- Written notification to parents detailing behaviour and a meeting with the parents, teacher and Principal
- Parents may be directed to seek professional assessment and counselling for the student
- Management plan developed which may involve moving the student to another class or providing them with a fixed place of work.
- Suspension from school until behaviour improves
- In the most severe case, expulsion from the school.

Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness is a basic right of all when dealing with authorities. Procedural fairness, as defined in the *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual*, refers to what is sometimes described as the 'hearing rule' and the 'right to an unbiased decision'. Where the offending behaviour is of such a nature that it may result in suspension, expulsion, or exclusion (see Manual, page 33, for definitions) the student will be:

- Informed of the alleged infringement
- Informed as to who will make the decision on the penalty
- Informed of the procedures to be followed which will include an opportunity to have a parent or guardian present when responding to the allegation; and
- Afforded a right of review or appeal.

Montessori East will not act to prevent a student's admission to any other school, however in extreme circumstances the principal may make a submission to an appropriate authority recommending exclusion from other schools. (refer to *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual*, Section 3.7.1)

Review Procedure

The Principal will reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation and any penalty to be imposed and advise the student (and parent/s) of the view. The student (and parents) would be advised that if they wish this preliminary decision to be reviewed they may make application for a review to the Principal and submit any

information they want to be considered during the review process. The Principal will then either confirm the preliminary decision as final or amend the preliminary decision based on the additional information provided.

Community Awareness

The Discipline Policy is distributed to parents annually and is included in the Parent Handbook. Parents are asked to review its contents regularly.

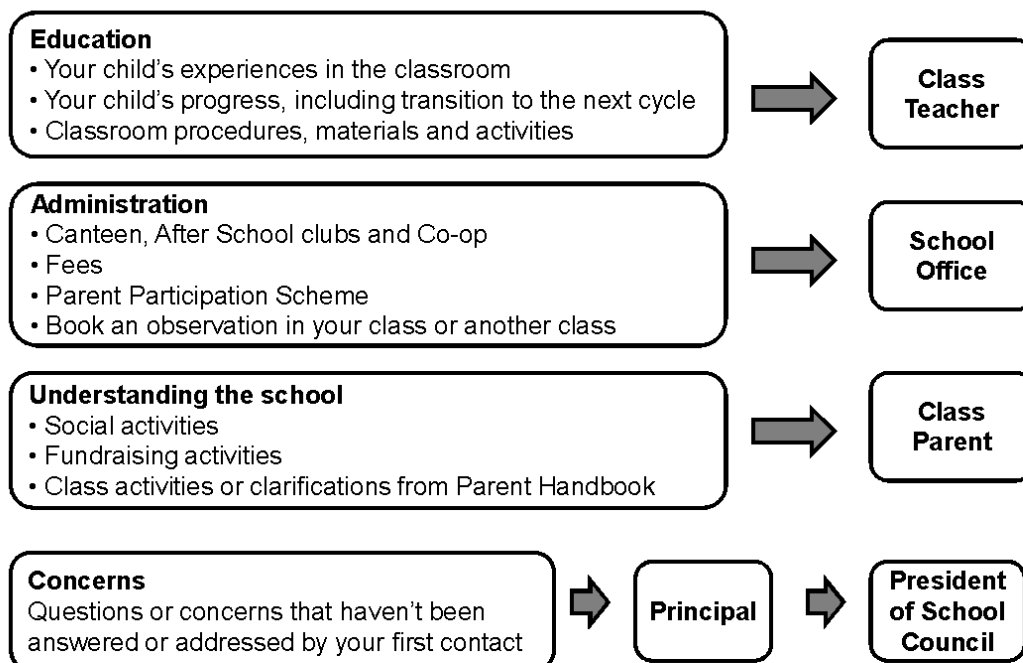


Appendix 4: Complaints and Grievances Policy

Grievances or complaints may arise from time to time and it is important that they are not ignored. An unexpressed or unresolved grievance can often escalate unnecessarily. Montessori East has in place procedures designed to support parents, teachers and students in having issues dealt with in a professional manner to the best advantage of the child and school. Grievance will be handled in an unbiased manner, taking into account the principles of procedural fairness.

Communication Structure for parents to follow (prior to following the Complaints and Grievances Procedure that follows)

Where to go if you have questions about your child and ME



Other resources: The parent handbook and our school website are also full of useful information so please have a look there to see if your questions can be answered

The following procedures are designed to achieve the best possible outcome for the party who is most likely to lose out in any disagreement: the child.

Procedures

In the following procedures wherever it says that a summary of the meeting is made, the summary should at least contain the following:

- A brief description of the disagreement.
- The decisions that are made at the meeting.
- Any further actions expected to be taken.
- If the disagreement is satisfactorily resolved the summary should clearly state this.
- If the disagreement was not resolved an expected time in which to follow-up is set.
- The date of the meeting.
- The signatures of the people involved confirming that the summary is a true.
- Representation of the meeting.

This summary is then kept in the file of the child concerned and a copy is kept in the file of the Principal.

Procedural Fairness

Grievance will be handled in an unbiased manner and taking into account the principles of procedural fairness

Disagreement between a Parent and a Teacher/Assistant in Pre Primary

1. The parent should discuss the disagreement with the Teacher in a meeting held specifically for that purpose. If the disagreement involves a Class Assistant then he/she should attend this meeting as well. The Teacher makes a summary of the meeting.
2. If either the parent or the Teacher is unhappy with the outcome of the first meeting, the Teacher or the parent asks the Principal to sit in on a second meeting. The role of the Principal will be to try to resolve the disagreement in the child's and the School's best interest. The Principal will make a summary of the meeting.
3. In the event that the parent is still unhappy with the state of affairs, they should raise the matter in writing addressed to the Principal. The Principal will request the School Board President along with the parents to help resolve the matter. Copies of the letter and any comments from the principal will be filed in the file of the child and the Principal.
4. If the matter is resolved the President will report that a grievance was addressed and resolved. The school keeps a record of all grievances for a period of 7 years. If the matter is not resolved then the President will bring the matter to the Board's attention and the Board will need to decide how to resolve the matter and record this at the next meeting. The minutes of this Board meeting will be filed in the file of the child and the file of the Principal. The President will notify the parent(s) of the decision of the Board. The decision is also recorded in the record of grievances.
5. If the decision from the Board is not acceptable to the parent(s) at the final meeting, the parent can raise the issue with the Department of Education and Communities (if preschool), and with NSW Board of Studies and Teacher Education Standards (if school age). Any correspondence with DEC or BOSTES should be filed in duplicate, as well as in the file of the child and the Principal. Any meetings that the Principal or members of the Board have with DEC or BOSTES should be summarised and filed in duplicate.
6. If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, the DEC Advisor will proceed to the Department of Education and Community Services Commission. (preschool)

Disagreement between a Parent and a Teacher/Assistant in Primary

1. The parent should discuss the disagreement with the Teacher in a meeting held specifically for that purpose. If the disagreement involves a Class Assistant then he/she should attend this meeting as well. The Teacher makes a summary of the meeting.
2. If either the parent or the Class Teacher is unhappy with the outcome of the first meeting, the Teacher or the parent asks the Principal to sit in on a second meeting. The role of the Principal will be to try to resolve the disagreement in the child's and the school's best interest. The Principal will make a summary of the meeting.
3. In the event that the parent is still unhappy with the state of affairs, they should raise the matter in writing addressed to the Principal. The Principal will request the School Board President and/or the Human Resource councillor along with the parents to help her resolve the matter. Copies of the letter and any comments from the Principal will be filed in the file of the child and the Principal.
4. If the matter is resolved the President will report that a grievance was addressed and resolved. If the matter is not resolved then the President will bring the matter to the Board's attention and the Board will need to decide how to resolve the matter and record this at the next meeting. The minutes of this Board meeting will be filed in the file of the child and the file of the Principal. The President will notify the parent(s) of the decision of the Board.
5. The decision of the Board is final and the contractual agreements between the parent(s) and the School are honoured.

Disagreement between a Parent and a Member of the Administration Staff

1. The parent should discuss the disagreement with the staff member in a meeting held specifically for that purpose. The staff member makes a summary of the meeting.
2. If either the parent or the staff member is unhappy with the outcome of the first meeting, the staff member or the parent requests that the Principal attends a second meeting. The role of the principal will be to try to resolve the disagreement in the best interest of both parties. The principal will make a summary of the meeting.
3. In the event that the parent is still unhappy with the state of affairs, they should raise the matter in writing addressed to the Principal. The Principal will request for a school board member or mediator to attend the next meeting to assist in resolving the matter. Copies of the letter and any comments from the principal will be filed in the file of the child and the principal.
4. If the matter is resolved the President will report that a grievance was addressed and resolved. If the matter is not resolved then the President will bring the matter to the Board's attention and the Board will need to decide how to resolve the matter and record this at the next meeting. The minutes of this

Board meeting will be filed in the file of the child and the file of the Principal. The President will notify the parent(s) of the decision of the Board. The details of this decision are filed in the Grievances file and maintained for 7 years.

5. The decision of the Board is final and the contractual agreements between the Parent(s) and the School are honoured.

Disagreement between staff members

1. The staff members should discuss the issue in a meeting held specifically for that purpose. A staff member makes a summary of the meeting.
2. If either staff member is unhappy with the outcome of the first meeting, they will ask the Principal to sit in on a second meeting. The role of the Principal will be to try to resolve the disagreement in the parties' best interest. The Principal will make a summary of the meeting.
3. In the event that either staff member is still unhappy with the state of affairs, they should raise the matter in writing addressed to the Principal. The Principal will request that a school board member or mediator attend along with the staff members to assist in resolving the matter. Copies of the letter and any comments from the principal will be filed in staff files and with the Principal.
4. If the matter is resolved the Principal will report that a grievance was addressed and resolved. If the matter is not resolved then the Principal will bring the matter to the Board's attention and the Board will assist in finding a solution. The minutes of this Board meeting will be filed in the file of the staff members and the file of the Principal. The President and Principal will notify the staff members of the decision of the Board.
5. The decision of the Board is final and the contractual agreements between the staff and the School are honoured.

Considerations

All the documentation that is produced while resolving a disagreement is kept in the file of the child/staff member as well as in the file of the Principal. It is now a requirement to maintain a school grievance record, which will be filed and maintained for 7 years. Because these documents can contain confidential material these files should not be accessible to everyone.

The child's file may only be accessed by:

- The Principal
- The Class Teacher of the class the child currently attends can get access after asking the Principal.
- The parents of the child can get access after asking the Principal.
- The Principal and the parents together can give someone else permission to look in the file.

The file of the Principal may only be accessed by:

- The Principal
- The staff member who the file concerns after asking the Principal.
- The Principal and the staff member together can give someone else permission to look in the file concerning the staff member.

Grievances Records are kept by the school and accessed by:

- The Principal
- The Board President
- BOSTES

It is important to keep good documentation for the following reasons:

- People often have different recollections of discussions and meetings.
- If there is a change of staff, the new staff member must be able to see the history of an unresolved dispute.

Appendix 5: Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy

Aim

To ensure that all families [children, parents and carers] and staff attending/working at Montessori East understand that any type of conduct or action that is not asked for and not wanted; and that might be reasonably expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation is considered harassment.

Rationale

Montessori East endeavours to provide a safe and caring environment for all members of the school community – an environment where learning, working, personal growth and the development of positive self-esteem can be maximized.

Harassment, which can include bullying in any form or combination of physical, verbal, visual, social or psychological, interferes with this environment and will not be tolerated.

Procedure

Clear Definitions

- Bullying: Intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure on individuals.
- Physical harassment: Fighting, pushing, shoving, hitting, gestures, touching
- Verbal harassment: Name calling, teasing, offensive language
- Visual harassment: offensive notes, pictures or drawings
- Social exclusion: excluding from groups, racism and sexism
- Psychological harassment: making someone feel sad, belittled or alone, spreading of rumours

School responsibilities

- Montessori East will take all reports of bullying and harassment seriously
- Montessori East Staff will initially promote a positive resolution for all children involved
- Montessori East staff will contact all those involved if further resolution is required

Procedural Fairness Statement

Procedural fairness must be observed in all aspects of the grievance handling process. In practice, procedural fairness involves:

- Ensuring that there is proper investigation of the facts;
- Informing relevant parties of any allegations made against them, as appropriate;
- Ensuring that all parties are informed of the procedures under which the grievance is being handled and are given a copy of the relevant policy and guidelines;
- Ensuring that all parties are heard and those who have had complaints made against them are given an opportunity to respond;
- Ensuring that all relevant submissions and any mitigating factors are given due and proper consideration before any conclusions are reached or any action is taken;
- Advising all parties that if the grievance is of such a serious nature that disciplinary action may result, then the facts revealed during an investigation into the grievance may be used in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings;
- Impartiality on the part of the investigator and/or decision, which means the investigator/decision maker, must exclude themselves if there is any bias or conflict of interest.

These procedures usually require that the person raising a grievance must be willing to be identified, unless the facts of the matter are not in dispute, or the matter involves allegations of corruption, mal-administration or serious waste or child abuse. If in doubt about the requirements of procedural fairness, advice should be sought from the Principal.

School Operations

On any occasion when the grievance is to be discussed, staff (both grievant and/or respondent) may choose to be accompanied by a colleague from the School. If the allegations have been made in writing, a copy will be given to the parties against whom the allegations have been made.



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