



Annual Report 2019

Montessori East Primary & Pre School



Montessori East
Primary & Pre School

Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association Pty Limited
8 Wellington Street Bondi NSW 2026
montessori.nsw.edu.au

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REPORTING AREA 1. Messages From Key School Bodies

From the Principal

I don't recall a year in which we did more to define our school's pedagogy and values than we did during the course of 2019. Montessori East has not only provided a strong education program for more than 40 years, we have also created a community of students, families, and educators who embrace a common set of values and principles. We are also never complacent in these endeavours as I will demonstrate in this report, sharing the many activities and achievements made during this year.

The strength of our school is a result of consistent efforts from the group of professional educators that make up the staff at ME. These individuals arrive each day with a sense of purpose and dedication to support the learning and development of our cohort of students. Here are some examples from this year's work:

- Our Lead Teachers this year participated in a professional development program designed to assist each to establish their own professional goals through a process of self assessment and input from other professionals as well as their own students.
- The staff enjoyed a 2 day retreat in the beautiful Blue Mountains in March, learning how to be more supportive of each other and how to better support our students in appreciating nature, music, and themselves.
- The school supported three teachers in completing their Montessori teacher training. We congratulate Siobhan O'Gorman, Adelaide Jones and Tess Rosenberg for completing the rigorous AMI training courses.
- The staff worked together through a process of self study and assessment as part of our school's participation in the Global Schools Accreditation by AMI (Association Montessori Internationale). Our school was one of 3 outside North America invited to participate as a pilot project.

Keeping our community vibrant and well connected also takes a great deal of effort. I have been so impressed with the work from our administrative team, especially Andreina Amato and Kathryn Wyer, in completing two important projects this year. As part of our Future Proof Project we developed a "Prospectus" to define the school going forward, introducing into the context of Montessori East the inclusion of a secondary program. The result was more than the attractive document published and distributed to our community. It involved defining our aims in each of the school's cycles and generating approaches that establish quality teaching and learning for our students. If you haven't seen a copy of the Prospectus, please request one from the school. The other project, which we finally unveiled in January 2020, was the new website. This platform for connecting with the community is now a means for efficient interactions between the school and community. Features on the website will enable parents and the community to easily and efficiently complete business with the school.

Complementing these two projects was our 40th Anniversary celebration, resulting in the beautiful display of our school's history all wrapped up in an attractive commemorative book. The book was launched at our celebratory event this year at which parents and alumni from the past 40 years gathered for an evening of reminiscing. Again, the administrative team worked so hard on this event, and I also wish to recognise the tremendous amount of work done by Raji Sivapalan and Mimmette Roldan to create the 40th Anniversary book.

Our KIN Education Program operating out of a facility in Bondi Junction was located onto our Wellington Street site in an effort to reduce the heavy financial burden incurred from the Bondi Junction site costs. The KIN staff have once again risen to the challenge of moving their program to a new site and I cannot thank them enough for doing this work without a complaint. The new facility on

our campus will draw the KIN program for parents and their under 3's children into the physical and symbolic hub of Montessori East.

This report is my last as principal of Montessori East. As I hand over the reigns to Bruce Russell in 2020 I wish to express to the school community my deepest appreciation for the opportunity I've been given to lead the school over the past 13 years. I have never doubted the potential of Montessori East to become a beacon for other schools, to deliver the highest standard of education, and to support a vibrant community. I look forward to keeping my association with the school community well into the future while continuing my work on the Future Proof Project. I also look forward to spending more time on the many other projects that I'm eager to complete as well as the opportunity to have a closer connection with my family.

I don't doubt the school will continue to go from strength to strength. The leadership is inherent in so many aspects of our school, especially in our school board and president Sara Hofman, as well as our ME Foundation board and board president, Nick Tobias. Supportive leadership is found in our amazing team of teachers and the administrative team, as well as the group of volunteer Class Parent Representatives who regularly support their class groups.

Finally I wish to acknowledge the children of Montessori East who have consistently given my work purpose and meaning. Their work, smiles and joy fill me with such hope and optimism for the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Conway', written in a cursive style.

Bill Conway
Principal

From the ME Board President

This is my second report as President of the Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association (ESMA). It has been quite a year!

I would firstly like to offer a very sincere thanks from the Board to all of the wonderful staff of Montessori East. The dedication, creativity, skill and empathy that the staff have demonstrated this year during the COVID19 global pandemic has made me very proud to be associated with Montessori East. The quality of the online learning program offered during the period of school closure was excellent and the return of students to the classrooms this term, first partially and then fully, was carefully planned, successfully implemented and very supportive of the children's needs. I would also like to offer a special thanks to Board Director, Suan Yeo who offered his time and significant professional expertise to assist the school to implement online learning.

A key focus of the Board during this past financial year has been the recruitment of our new Principal. After 13 years spent very capably leading the school through a period of growth and stability, Bill Conway retired as Principal this year to create time to pursue other professional interests and be with his family.

Montessori East has much to celebrate and we are grateful to Bill for his dedication as Principal and the passion and vision he has brought to the school. On behalf of the ESMA Board I would like to sincerely thank Bill for the significant contribution that he has made to Montessori East. Bill's dedication as an educator and deep belief in Montessori has ensured that Montessori East is an authentic Montessori school of quality and reputation. His respect for children and belief in the importance of community have been central to creating the collaborative and child-focused culture of our school, which the Board will protect into the future.

The task of finding a new Principal to lead the school through the next phase of its growth and development, including its relocation, and enabling the change of leadership was a significant one and the Board gave it a great deal of focus over the past year.

Working with a leading recruitment firm in the education sector, Smart Leaders, the Board conducted a search locally and internationally. The Board carefully considered the important attributes required of the next Principal at a critical time for ME. The requirement process was rigorous and involved consultation with staff, parent representatives and a collaboration with senior staff members, Kathryn Wyer, Raji Sivapalan and also Bill Conway.

I am delighted to say that Bruce Russell was appointed to the role in December 2019. Bruce is a very talented, passionate and energetic educator with 29 years' experience as a primary school teacher and in various roles in primary school management and leadership in Australia and the UK. Bruce clearly demonstrated the skills and experience required to lead our school and, most importantly, the Board felt confident that Bruce is aligned with the values and culture of Montessori East. The Board was excited to offer Bruce the role and equally excited that he accepted it!

Bruce relocated from London to Sydney and commenced in his new role at Montessori East in March 2020, during the period of forced school closure due to the COVID19 global pandemic. Despite the many challenges that Bruce has faced during these unprecedented times, I can report that it has been a remarkably smooth transition of leadership. Bruce has embraced the community and culture of Montessori East wholeheartedly and is partnering with staff and the Board to enact the school's Strategic Plan.

Bill and Bruce have worked closely together during a period of supported handover and, again, the Board would like to thank Bill for providing this support to ensure the future success of the school.

In addition to recruiting a new Principal, the Board has continued to be focused on progressing the Future Proof Project, which 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 future.

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 but the Board is committed to reviewing its strategy, where necessary, and continuing to focus on protecting the long term sustainability of the school.

One important step taken towards achieving this outcome was the building of the new demountable classroom on the school campus over the Summer holidays 2019-2020, which now houses the KIN 0-3 program. Great benefits have been experienced in bringing the 0-3 program to the main campus and it is also part of a longer-term plan to expand the Cycle 1 offering at the school.

While striving to secure the future, it is equally important that the Board focuses on ensuring there is good governance of ME's current operations. The Board meets monthly to consider detailed reports on the school's finances and operational matters. The school is running smoothly with a high student demand and strong student retention across the Cycles.

ME strives to offer the highest possible standard of Montessori education to its students. This is reflected in all aspects of the school's operations, including teacher recruitment and conditions and the ongoing staff development and support program.

I can report that the school continues to be in excellent hands and the future looks bright.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Hofman', written in a cursive style.

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. All our lead 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.

Bill Conway has been principal of the school since 2007 and has a 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. Bill will be retiring from his position in early 2020, to be replaced by Mr Bruce Russell – an educator with extensive leadership experience.

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. Recently, a group of parents initiated a new program called the ME Village which is a platform for any one to organise events or small workshops that support wellbeing and connection in our community. Examples include bush walks, cooking and aromatherapy workshops and a winter solstice celebration.

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. Last year we introduced ‘parent circles’ where a teacher simply guides a discussion on a topic that parents either need help with or are interested in. The result has been very positive and we continue to offer these circles in 2019. 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 to school and alumni parents are involved in the ME Foundation, for example. 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.

The Annual Alumni Celebration has become an anticipated feature on our calendar. Our event in 2019 celebrated the school's 40 years from its humble beginnings in a church hall in 1978. The event welcomed students and families past and present, and raised \$60,000 towards our Scholarship Fund.

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. For example, students initiated a fruit and vegetable coop business 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.

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 AND 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 2019)

Cycle 1 (3 – 6 years)	56
Cycle 2 (6 – 9 years)	44
Cycle 3 (9 – 12 years)	41
Total	141

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 been 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. In October 2019 the program was forced to move out of its Bondi Junction facility and has 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.

Organic Co-op

A organic fruit and vegetable co-op runs fortnightly to provide students and parents with fresh organic produce. Students in our Cycle 3 class run this co-op as a business and all profits go to a Montessori orphanage in Thailand. (See Journey of Service)

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.

In August, Year 6 students travelled to Thailand with their teacher Bob Koelsch, along with the principal Bill Conway and Raji Sivapalan to spend a week with the children at a Montessori orphanage and school in Thailand.

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 can they contribute and offer to others. They prepare activities to do with the children in Thailand, they raise money to buy materials needed and many more lessons take place that cover Thai culture and virtues such as gratitude and generosity.



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.

In 2019 Montessori East had 15 students in Year 3 and 4 students in Year 5 sit the NAPLAN test. Due to the small cohort of students in Year 5 the results are not displayed this year. The following table outlines Montessori East's results in comparison to similar schools (as defined on the myschools website) and all Australian schools.

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

	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
Feedback Culture Workshop (all staff)	25
Informa Conference (all staff)	25
Aboriginal Cultural studies	25
Staff Development Retreat	25
CPR & First Aid	14
Montessori Australia Foundation Refresher Conference	14
Geometry for Montessori	2
Integrated Listening Australia - Practitioner Training Course	1
Dyslexic Course	1
Seven Steps to Writing	1
Head to Head Leadership Forum	1

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 at December 2019, 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

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

COMPOSITION OF STAFF

The teaching staff at Montessori East is comprised 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 comprised of individuals from a wide range of educational and cultural backgrounds, including 12 cultural groups. There is one Indigenous teacher currently employed as a support teacher.

STAFF RETENTION

We have a loyal and committed team of people and as a result, staff retention is high. A new teacher was employed in Cycle 1 replacing a teacher who had left, and a teacher went on maternity leave in Term 4. One teacher and one support teacher resigned at the end of 2019.

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

In 2019 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	91
Year 1	95
Year 2	97
Year 3	91
Year 4	93
Year 5	90
Year 6	89
Total	93

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 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 very healthy and reflects general parent satisfaction with the education providing. The school is near capacity and we have long waiting lists, particularly for the preschool program. Retention rates in 2019 were over 90%, an 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 2019 graduating class of 12 students moved on to the following secondary schools: SCEGGS Darlinghurst, St Andrew's Cathedral School, St Catherine's School, Reddam House, Cranbrook Boys, and Rose Bay Secondary College, Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School.

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 2017:

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 2019. 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.
- *Self Study and Assessment on Montessori AMI Standards* – As part of our accreditation work to become a Globally Accredited School under AMI, staff determined areas for improvement and incorporated these into a quality improvement plan.

Growth

- *Provide clear leadership structures for the growing school & further develop succession plans for key positions* – Alumni coordination and Communication strategies implemented.
- *Develop plans of growth and expansion* – School strategies to secure new premises and to expand the school's scope has resulted in clearer definitions as expressed in our new prospectus document published in 2019..
- *Securing new premises* - Sites identified, offers being prepared
- *High School* – Progress on the opening of a high school has involved further discussion, and an orientation presentation for parents.

People

- *Staff participate in professional development activities related to their specific goals* – Lead Teachers participated in the Educator Impact tool to identify professional goals and receive valuable input from colleagues and students.
- *Assure and support the accreditation process for all teachers (TAA)* – All teachers are registered in the Institute of Teachers with NESAs 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* - Develop a diverse and robust offering for ME parents and the wider community - Parent eds have been well attended at ME and KIN. We hosted programs for new parents, parents of toddlers and regular events for parents interested in understanding the school and our approach to education.
- *Develop the concept of service to the community* - Engagement with an aged care facility expanded to a weekly visit to Elizabeth Lodge where a Montessori program for the Aged has been established and accredited. The school has also been involved in supporting neighbourhood clean-ups and our Year 6 students provided outreach services through the Vegetable Co-op and their work at the orphanage in Thailand (see Journey of Service).

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, with significant works taking place in January 2020 expanding play spaces for C1.

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, Grandparents’ Day and Harmony Day 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.

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:

The involvement of our parents is essential to the success of the Montessori East and it's something we discuss with parents before enrolment. As a small community school, we actively seek to involve parents in the school and consequently there is a high level of engagement. Parents enjoy getting involved and this supports open communication and feedback at the school.

Parents have a range of formal and informal options available to them to provide feedback. Formal communications include requests for a meeting with a teacher or the principal. Informal communication is regularly channelled through the front office staff, class parent representatives and regular coffee mornings with the principal.

Student satisfaction:

Students at Montessori East enjoy many opportunities to be a part of the decision making in their classrooms and the school. Regular school 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 meeting with minimal adult intervention. Some outcomes of these meetings have included playground activities, acquisition of animals, standards of cleanliness, fund raising for charities, gardening and dealing with conflicts. The principal attends all meetings.

Teacher Satisfaction:

There are two structured forums for determining teacher satisfaction. One is through the annual review meetings with the principal, where the staff member has the opportunity to air any concerns as well as express their level of satisfaction with their employment. The other forum is through regular staff meetings, which include an opportunity to raise concerns in a professional and productive manner.

Indicators of Community Satisfaction:

- Strong participation in Parent Education events.
- Involvement in community events eg. 40th Anniversary Celebration
- Enrolment demand is very strong, with a healthy waitlist and significant interest from the community.
- Staff retention is excellent.



REPORTING AREA 13. Summary Financial Information

For the year ended 31 December 2019, Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association Limited generated total revenue of \$3,643,887 which after total expenditure of \$3,607,790 resulted in small surplus of \$36,097. The financial year operates from 1 January to 31 December inclusive.

Income

School fees	59.9%
Excursions	0.1%
Other receipts from students	2.1%
Other private income	5.2%
State Government Grants	10.5%
Commonwealth Grants	15.7%
Trading Activities	6.0%
Other Capital Income	0.5%
	100%

Expenditure

Teaching Salaries	29.3%
Other staff salaries	25.6%
Superannuation	5.4%
Long Service Leave	1.9%
Other salary on-costs	0.6%
Operating expenses	14.5%
External Management Fees	3.2%
Buildings & grounds	2.3%
Interest	1.8%
Finance Lease	6.0%
Depreciation	0.8%
Bad Debts	-0.3%
Trading Activities	8.9%
	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 in to 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 preprimary 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 preprimary 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.

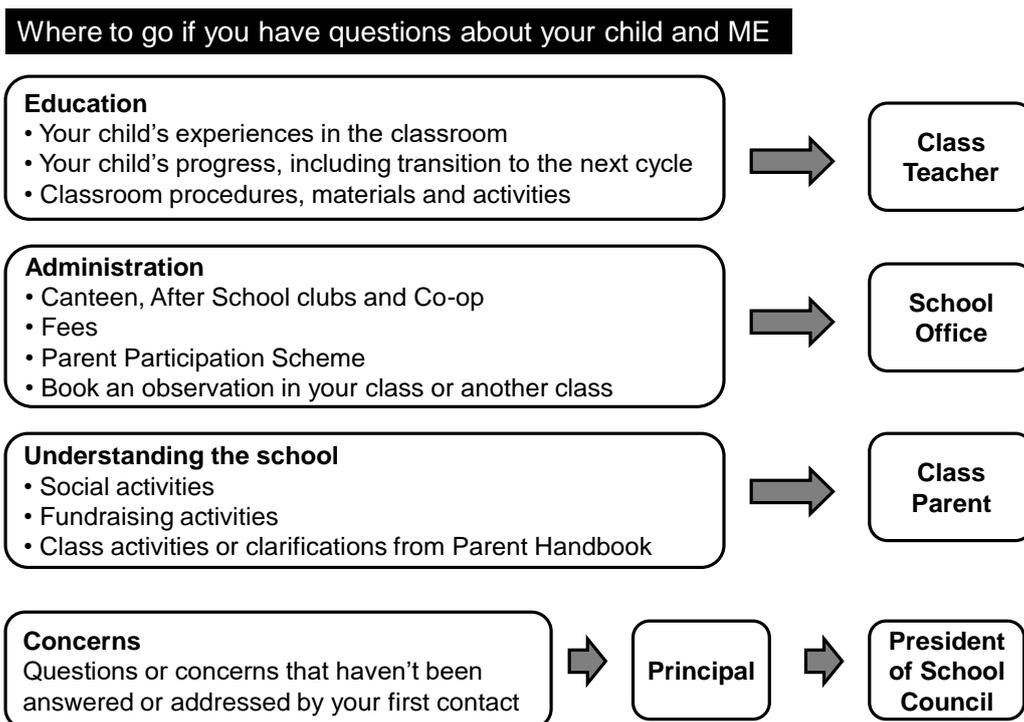
Community Awareness

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)



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 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 detail 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 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 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.

CONTACT DETAILS

For further information please contact:

Contact: Mr Bruce Russell, Principal
Montessori East

Address: 8 Wellington Street
Bondi NSW 2026

Phone: 02 9130 8313

Email: admin@montessori.nsw.edu.au
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