

Policy created: 2010

Reviewed: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 03/2023

Monitoring, evaluation and reviews: occurs annually, overseen by the principal.

Fees and charges Policy (Payment of fees/provision of a statement of fees charged) Quality Area 7

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place in relation to payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170).

Under NESAs requirements we renew registration through our setting demonstrating that we continue to satisfy requirements for registration under section 47 of Education Act 1990 No 8 (NSW).

Policy Statement:

Montessori East bases its pedagogical approach on the principles initially developed by Dr Maria Montessori. We believe the principles and standards are responsive to the varied and changing needs of the child. The high regard for the individual child is reflected in our practices and policies, with special focus on the inclusion of children with additional needs. As an authentic Montessori setting, we are committed to providing all families the opportunity to enrol their children with us, with a clear, transparent, fair and inclusive fee structure.

General background:

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require the approved provider to ensure our settings have policies and procedures in place in relation to payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged.

NESA compliance is ensured through adherence to the 'NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual 2019: 3.10 Educational and financial reporting' which states that we must participate in annual reporting to publicly disclose educational/financial performance measures/policies of the school. Additionally, annual financial statements audited/certified by an external independent auditor and financial viability must be carried out.

Legislative requirements

Our policy is consistent with, and refers to, legislative requirements for staffing:

Regulation	Description
Regulation 111	Administrative space for the purposes of conducting the administrative functions and consulting with parents of children; and conducting private conversations.
Regulation 168	Our education setting has policies and procedures as detailed in 'Policies and Procedures Policy' (Policy Folder – office/Google Drive).
Regulation 170	We take reasonable steps to ensure that all staff and volunteers follow the policies and procedures of our settings. We manage this by initial induction on employment, annual training, and staff manual.
Regulation 171	Our settings policies and procedures are kept available/accessible for the educational setting community and for inspection in the office.
Regulation 172	We notify parents within 14 days of change to policies or procedures relating to settings provisions, family ability to utilise setting, fees charged, fees collected.

Principles that inform our policy

All decision-making should be carried out in accordance with the principles of our payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged policy.

- To enable our setting to provide high quality early education and care for children we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Our financial health and access to our setting will be maximised by ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.
- We aim for our fees structure to be fair and as affordable as possible. We accommodate payment plans for families requiring greater flexibility.
- We provide at least two weeks' notice of any changes to the fee structure.
- We prioritise good governance and quality management. Our fee structure is clear and transparent, and our systems and practices ensure that payments are processed correctly and receipts and statements are provided to families.
- When families apply for a place at our setting they pay the following fees which are detailed below (refer to the annual fee schedule for current fee amounts).
 - On application – application fee
 - On acceptance of offer - Membership/ Placement/ Enrolment Deposit
 - Annual fees and charges - Tuition fees/ Other
 - Donations
 - Parent Participation

Key terms

We provide definitions of our key terms that may not be used every day to help with ease of access:

Term	Meaning
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
Approved Provider	Board – Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association
NESA	NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales. NESA is responsible for accrediting registered non-government schools in school years for a period of time corresponding to period of registration of school.
Registration renewal	Registration is a non-government school’s licence to operate. Registration is to ensure requirements of the Education Act are being, or will be, met.
Responsible Person (must have written consent)	Approved provider/person with management control, nominated supervisor, a person in day-to-day charge and is present at a centre-based setting at all times. An approved provider does not have to appoint a person in day-to-day charge if a nominated supervisor/s is to be the Responsible Person.
Nominated Supervisor (must have written consent)	Person nominated by the Approved Provider. They are responsible for day-to-day management of a service, have responsibilities including educational programs (section 168); supervision/safety of children (sections 165–167); entry to/exit from premises (section 170; reg 99), nutrition, food, beverages (regs 77–80), admin of medication (regs 93–96), drugs and alcohol (regs 82 –83), sleep/rest (regs 81), excursions (regs 100– 102) transportation (regs 102B–102D), staffing ratios/ qualifications (regs 123–128)
Educational Leader (must have written offer/consent)	Person/persons appointed by the Approved Provider
Notice period (fees)	The length of time stipulated by a service to notify families before making any changes that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. The notice period must be at least 14 days.

Links to other policies

Related policies and procedures include:

- Enrolment and orientation
- Governance and management

Induction and ongoing training

We manage this through an induction and training system; New Employee Induction Checklist, Staff Handbook containing key policies and procedures and Induction training by existing employees to new employees. Reviewed and updated policies are discussed during whole staff meetings which are minuted.

Induction training is carried out as needed. To ensure and assist managers, coordinators, educators and other staff to fulfil their roles effectively our settings provide clear procedures for implementation.

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Monitoring, evaluation and reviews: occurs annually, overseen by the principal.

Fees and Charges Procedures

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, we have a Payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged policy and a statement of our philosophy and evidence-based practices for Payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged

Procedures

The way we implement our Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy is through the following:

Application fee

This is a non-refundable fee paid on submission of an application form. The fee covers the administration costs of checking and processing the application

Acceptance of Offer

When a place is available, and a successful interview has occurred a starting date will be offered via letter. A family may confirm their acceptance of the offer by returning within 14 days the signed acceptance letter plus payment of the following:

- **Non-refundable membership fee**

In accordance with the ESMA Constitution, in order to be given a place the parents of the prospective student must be members of the Association. Members of the Association are able to attend general meetings and vote on matters pertaining to school business. Members also accept limited liability of \$50 should the company be wound up.

The membership fee is paid upon acceptance of a place and then annually on the 1st Friday of the student's first term. Note that for students commencing mid-year or mid-term the fee is not prorated.

Across calendar years: Membership fees paid in the calendar year prior to the child commencing will apply to the first year of the child's enrolment.

- **Non-refundable placement fee**

This is a non-refundable fee paid together with the submission of the offer acceptance form. The payment confirms the family's commitment to ESMA and is a positive acceptance of the offer of a place.

In order to be assured that families can meet fees as they fall due ESMA must receive full

payment of placement fee in order to confirm a student's place at the school.

Sibling discounts:

Siblings enrolled at the same time are eligible for a sibling discount on tuition fees. See schedule of fees.

Refunds: Non-refundable in all circumstances, including not taking up the place.

- Transferees from other national and international Montessori pre/pre-primary school
- Transferees are still required to pay the non-refundable placement fee as there is no reciprocal agreement with the school. In special circumstances the principal may use their discretion to reduce or waive the placement fee.
- Returning ESMA students to the school.
- Former ESMA students that left the school *with no pre-agreed arrangement to return but are now returning*. Placement fee is payable regardless of the length of time since departure.
- *ESMA students that have left the school on a temporary basis and are now returning with prior agreement*: no additional placement fee is payable.

Annual fees and charges

Fees are set annually by the Board to recover the net operating and capital purchase costs of running the school and providing Montessori education to the students.

Tuition fees

Tuition Fees include tuition, all Montessori educational materials, co-curricular subjects, such as sport, music, dance, drama and languages performed on campus during school hours. Students are not required to supply any textbooks or stationery.

Tuition fees are a fixed amount per term and may only be increased with one full term's notice to parents.

An additional levy may be charged for curricular activities occurring off campus such as swimming, overnight camps and surfing due to the higher costs incurred.

The School takes out insurance covering injuries sustained to full-time students while engaged in school or organised sporting activities.

Pre-primary and primary fee level

Currently set at the same level but is dependent on the net costs of providing each service and market forces.

At this date pre-primary fees include the provision of tuition as follows:

- 8.30am to 12 noon daily
- 4 and 5 year olds - 9am to 3pm (gradual increase in full days between 4 and 4 ½)

Primary fees for 5 years and above includes tuition 8.30am to 3pm daily

Paying fees

- Due date - Fees are due on the first Friday of each term.
- Overdue accounts - Chasing late fees occupies time and energy which could be better spent contributing to the smooth administration of the School. Therefore, unless prior arrangements are made, overdue fee accounts will be charged 3% of the outstanding debtor balance.

Payment Options

Families can elect to pay either:

- annually and receive a 3% discount.
- termly – does not attract a discount nor charge
- payment plan - must be approved by the School and may incur an administration charge of 3%

Payment Methods

- cheque, cash or internet transfer
- credit card (VISA, Mastercard and Amex only) and EFTPOS - credit card payments incur a 1% transaction fee. These payments can be made by phone, in person or through your bank.
- monthly direct debits - Ten (10) monthly direct debits are made from 12 February to 15 November. Contact the School's office to set up a payment system.

Pro rata Starts

In order to increase the ratio of new starters into the Montessori classroom gradually (thus benefiting all students) we stagger new starters. A pre-primary and primary student commencing part way through term pays pro rata fees in accordance with attendance.

Extended absence / Temporary withdrawal of a child

The school requires as much notice as possible in writing of the parent's intention to withdraw their child temporarily from school. Applies to all classes.

- Absence for one term - If a parent wishes to take their child(ren) out of school for a term (e.g. overseas) then they will be asked to pay one half (50%) of the tuition fee for the term of absence. This will keep the child enrolled at School and a place held in their current class for the term of absence. In the event of non-payment, the place in the class becomes vacant and re-enrolment would be necessary upon return. Generally, non-attendance of less than one term will not result in a reduction of tuition fees payable for that term.
- Absence for more than one term - pre-primary and primary: In order to guarantee a student's place in the school, the school requires payment of 25% of tuition fees for the absent terms to hold the place. However, with the prior agreement of the principal and board, the student may be withdrawn from the school and payment of fees is not required. The parents will then re-apply without incurring further application and placement fees for the students placed on their return. There is no guarantee of a place being available.

Permanent withdrawal of a child

A full term's notice is required in writing of a parent's intention to withdraw their child from school. This applies to both pre-primary and primary classes.

Should this notice not be received within the specified period, then an amount of one additional term's fees are payable. If we receive notice part way through a term (i.e. Week 5) of intention to withdraw, the following term's fees are to be paid in full.

Temporary enrolments policy

Occasionally the nature of a family's work situation will mean that a student attends on an ongoing temporary basis.

Such families are billed in accordance with normal policies and procedures as outlined above. In all circumstances the family must inform us at the earliest possible date of the next anticipated withdrawal period.

If a student has to be withdrawn suddenly and unavoidably part way through a term, the school will retain the proportion of the prepaid fees relating to non-attendance. These prepaid fees will then be offset against future fees on the student's return.

If the student fails to return the prepaid fees will not be refunded.

Financial Assistance

The school has an approved tax deductible scholarship fund. The School funds a limited number of bursaries each year for families in financial difficulties. Guidelines and application forms are available from the Business Manager.

Start Strong for Families - Fee Relief

NSW Government Fee Relief will continue into 2024. Families may save up to \$4,220 a year for eligible 3-5 year old children in eligible community and mobile preschools in 2024.

Eligible families must complete required Fee Declaration and Consent Forms.

Other fees and charges

Certain expenditure is incurred in order to improve and expand the service we offer to our parents and students, although not directly associated with the provision of Montessori education.

Such expenditure is recharged at cost plus an administration percentage (approx 5%) to our parents on the basis of their child's participation and includes but not limited to;

- Overnight excursions and camp costs
- After School Clubs
- Co-curricula incursions

Our aim is not to charge for other curricular activities; sporting, drama, calligraphy but to include them within tuition fees, however the school in its discretion may charge for such activities if deemed necessary.

Timing: Recharges are included on invoices usually termly in arrears. We try to avoid raising more than one invoice per family per term. Exceptions are when families are withdrawing.

Charges for late Pick Up

Collection of students must be up to 15 mins after school closure and/or the finishing of an after-school club. Parents who fail to collect students by the stipulated times will be fined at a rate of \$2 per minute. This charge will be added to their account. Consistently late parents will also be asked to meet with the Principal.

Donations

Tax deductible donations

ESMA has been approved by the Australian Taxation Office to receive tax deductible donations to a Building Fund, Library Fund and Scholarship Fund.

We rely on all families making a minimum donation per student per year to the funds in order to keep our fees as low as possible. The donations are incorporated into our fee structure and our annual budgets.

Building Fund

The primary objective of the ESMA Building Fund is to provide funding for capital expenditure and maintenance of the school's buildings. Maintaining and improving the school's buildings is vital in

providing a comfortable, safe and pleasant school environment for our students and we encourage all parents to donate to the Fund.

Library Fund

The primary objective of the ESMA Library Fund is to provide funding for expenditure related to operating, maintaining and improving the school's library. As the library is an integral part of the school curriculum we encourage all parents to donate to the Fund.

Scholarship Fund

The primary objective of the ESMA Scholarship Fund is to provide scholarships and bursaries to students experiencing socio-economic disadvantage or hardship or suffering disabilities. Scholarships may also be granted for other reasons including special needs flowing from age, gender, ethnicity or geographical location.

From time to time the Scholarship Fund may also provide scholarships, bursaries or prizes on the basis of merit.

ESMA can only award scholarships if contributions have been made to the Fund.

Parent Participation Scheme

Since 2004 our setting has operated a Parent Participation Scheme in order to encourage all families to participate in the school. Since 2007 we require families to donate 4 hours a term of their time to specific activities at the school.

The activities include Board positions and advisors to the Board, Fundraising and Social committee, class parents, canteen management, maintenance days, open days and material making or any other advertised activities or on as needed basis.

Any family failing to donate 4 hours a term is charged a fee of \$150 for that term.

New parents of students starting in weeks 1 to 5 are expected to donate 4 hours in the term of enrolment. Parents of students starting in week 6 or later will not incur a fee if they do not donate 4 hours in the term of enrolment.

Any additional time that parents invest in our setting is greatly appreciated and is on a voluntary basis consistent with other schools.

Role and responsibilities for payment of fees

Approved provider

- ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- set fees for children to enrol at the service and ensure policies and procedures are in place relating to the fee schedule and payment options
- take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy and procedures
- ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers, families, available to inspect.
- notify families at least 14 days before changing policy or procedures if changes will:
 - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or
 - significantly impact the service's education and care of children or
 - significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

Nominated supervisor

- ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to payment of fees
- maintaining all relevant information stored as required in accord with regulatory requirements.

Educators

- support families to approach administration with any fee-related questions

Families

- ensure they understand the fee requirements and expectations at enrolment and any ongoing changes
- meet the fee requirements
- raise any fee-related questions with the person responsible for fee collection.