



Annual Report 2022

Education For Life



Message from the President

Looking back at the past year, it is evident that 2022 brought about significant changes to Karuna School, largely influenced by the impact of Covid-19 and subsequent adjustments made to our staff. Navigating through the challenges posed by the pandemic was an arduous task as it affected both our students and the operational aspects of our school. In response, the NSW government implemented a number of policy measures, including vaccine requirements for staff which caused some disruption, however despite the obstacles, we were able to strengthen our finances with government funding support. This funding helped us fix the school fees during this period even as some students transitioned to other schools, impacting our financial situation. The diligent financial management by the board and the government aid enabled Karuna to weather the storm in 2022.

Emerging from the pandemic, the school had to make difficult decisions regarding staffing, particularly in light of the scarcity of qualified Montessori teachers. Given Karuna's size, we sought a Head Teacher and Principal with early childhood experience and the requisite Montessori certifications. Exhausting every available avenue, including the engagement of a third-party recruiting firm, the board faced the unfortunate reality of making less-than-ideal staff replacements. Nonetheless, these decisions were made to ensure our students received the best possible education until suitable replacements could be found. As parents and board members, we acknowledge the impact this has had and the resulting disruption within the school. We recognize that continuity is crucial, and the succession of staff changes was not an ideal situation for our school.

Throughout this transitional period, each member of staff contributed a wealth of expertise, enabling us to bridge important gaps in compliance and regulatory requirements necessary to operate as a Montessori school. Ultimately, we made the necessary decisions and consolidated our staffing model into a joint Principal and Head Teacher role, which has been filled by Sabine Adigun.

Looking ahead to 2023, we are confident that Karuna School is poised for success. With Sabine's team now well-established, we have secured our staffing for the coming year. However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead, particularly in terms of our budget. The board has been diligently exploring various options to ensure the financial sustainability of the school and has concluded fees need to be reviewed. Currently, Karuna's fees are considerably lower than historical levels, thanks to generous government funding that has now concluded. In order to ensure the continued financial viability of the school, an increase in fees is necessary. These fees are currently under review and the board aims to implement these changes from Term 3 onwards. The board will update parents as soon as we have finalised the changes.

On a personal note, I would like to express my immense pride in the collective efforts that have been invested in making Karuna the best place for our children. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the staff, parents, and board members for their unwavering commitment throughout the past year and for their continued dedication.

Dirk De Vos
President

Information about Karuna

Contextual information About the school

For contextual information (our School's philosophy) and the characteristics of our student body, please refer to the My Schools website:

<http://www.myschool.edu.au>

Student outcomes in standardized national literacy and numeracy testing

N/A

Student performance in state-wide tests and examinations

N/A

Teacher professional learning, accreditation, and Qualifications

Staff participated in a range of professional development activities at Karuna which are planned according to specific needs for further learning and professional growth.

Description of the Professional Learning Activity	No of staff Participating
Montessori Theory and Practice	1
First Aid, CPR, and Asthma Management Anaphylaxis Management training	3
Identifying and responding to children and young people at risk	3
QIP review	3
Setting up the Montessori prepared environment	3

Teacher Accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Proficient	1
Provisional	1

Category	Number of teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia.	2
Teachers having a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution within Australia, or one obtained overseas and recognised by NESAS.	2
Teachers not having qualifications as described in (i) and (ii) but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. Such teachers must have been employed to 'teach' in NSW before 1 October 2004 (either on a permanent, casual or temporary basis) and as a 'teacher' during the last five (5) years in a permanent, casual, or temporary capacity.	0

Workforce Composition

Teaching Staff	1
Full-time equivalent Teaching Staff	1
Non-teaching staff	1
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	0.5

Senior secondary outcomes

N/A

Management of student non-Attendance

The school implements policy and procedures for the management of non-attendance. Student absences from the school will be identified and recorded in a consistent manner using the school register. Unexplained absences from classes or school will be followed up in an appropriate manner with the student and /or their parent or guardian.

Average Attendance:

Year level	Attendance rate %
Kindergarten	90%

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12 (where relevant)

N/A

Post-school destinations (secondary schools only)

N/A

Priority of Enrolment Policy

Introduction

Northern Beaches Montessori Association in running Karuna Montessori School accepts and acknowledges that the enrolment procedures followed may be discretionary in nature, giving preference to some individuals while possibly disadvantaging others.

The enrolment process must be, and be seen to be, non-discriminatory on the basis of race, religion, beliefs, social position or sex (other than for the balance described above), and also with regard to physical or mental disabilities.

The procedures in this policy are designed to achieve the above enrolment balance while attempting to achieve placements resulting in a full enrolment.

This policy seeks to make the enrolment process more transparent.

The enrolment will not exceed thirty (30) children per day, being the maximum allowable under the ECEC license.

The following procedures deal with the enrolment issues of:

- Waiting Lists
- Placement Offers
- Open Days
- Parent Information Evenings
- Other Issues

Aim

To ensure a fair and equitable administration of the Enrolment waiting list, and to fill and balance (on gender and age) the student places.

Procedure

Waiting Lists:

- The Enrolments Administrator is responsible for keeping a waiting list of prospective enrolments. In the first instance, this list should be in chronological order, giving preference to potential families who have been on the list the longest and within the above parameters.
- Priority in offering placements go to:
- Children of families that are current or past members of the Association (i.e., they have or have had a child enrolled at the school). If at the time of a placement offer it is known that a previous child of the family did not complete the three-year program at Karuna (as defined in their placement contract), then any preferential treatment is forfeited, and discretion may be exercised against making a subsequent placement offer.
- Children who are currently attending the Karuna Under 3 Program with the same conditions as above.

- The Enrolment Administrator will keep families on the Waiting List and families informed of events at the school through email and other publicity items, including invitations to Open Days, Parent Information Evenings, etc. The Enrolment Administrator is also responsible for communicating with these families for keeping current their contact details.

Placement Offers:

- Placement Offers will be made from time to time to fill vacancies and recruit a new cohort (a year's intake) by the Enrolment Administrator. The Enrolment Administrator should discuss all planned placement offers with the Director to assess the child's suitability and inform the Enrolments Officer when a new child will be attending the school.
- When making placement offers to a cohort, the first-round offers should be made by early May, as other schools make offers in this period and to avoid families on our waiting list accepting earlier offers.
- Offers are to be made with the above goals, priority and preference in mind i.e. age and gender balancing, chronological priority except for any preference given to current/past members. Families not committed to the full three-year cycle will be given a lower priority.
- History has shown (and it is common sense) that some members of a cohort will not complete a full three-year cycle – whether due to the family moving for work, financial difficulties, or other reasons. Thus, with some expected dropouts each year, a new cohort of slightly larger than one-third of the class size can be accommodated.
- Children older than three years will not normally be offered a position, unless they have already been attending a Montessori school, or there is a need for older children. Such enrolments are limited to approximately 10% of the class. Children who have not reached their third birthday cannot be enrolled as per the ECEC license.
- The Agreed School Cycle for a child begins on enrolment (sometime after their 3rd birthday) and continues for approximately 3 years. The minimum time for its completion is determined as follows:
 - a) if the child's birthday falls on or before 30 June, then completion of the cycle means completion of the Term Four in the year of the child's 5th birthday.
 - b) a child whose birthday is in the above category, is encouraged to stay for an additional year, being the end of Term Four in the year of the child's 6th birthday.
 - c) if a child's birthday falls after 30 June, then completion of the cycle means completion of Term Four in the year of the child's 6th birthday.
- A Placement Agreement is to be signed by the child's parents/guardians, the Director and the Enrolment Administrator for each new child. This is to be accompanied by the payment of a non-refundable Placement Fee and a bond of one term's fees. The Agreement also needs to state the first year's membership fees for the Association (i.e. the amount of the fee in the year the child starts, not necessarily the year the agreement is signed). This amount should be checked with the Treasurer.

Open Days:

- One of the most important tasks of the year for the Enrolments Officer is the coordination of the Open Day. The Enrolments Officer in conjunction with the Promotions Officer and the Enrolments Administrator should provide overall coordination and oversight for the preparations for the day.
- A check list for jobs to be done for Open Days is available.

Parent Information Evenings:

- The Enrolments Administrator is responsible for organising one information evening per term in consultation with the principal. This is an opportunity for prospective parents to hear more about Karuna and the Montessori Method. Invitations should be extended to current parents, families who have been offered a placement or are on the waitlist, and other prospective parents seeking information. The Enrolment Officer should also be present at the Parent Information Evening to greet and introduce visitors etc.

Other Issues:

- The Enrolments Administrator is responsible for the distribution of a contact list at the beginning of each new term, showing all enrolments – both ongoing and newly commencing students – together with details the parents/ guardians requested to circulate to the parent body. This information is to be clearly labelled with “This information is for the use of Karuna Montessori families only and is not to be used for any other purpose”. This list must also comply with the Privacy Act. Details of this list should be checked with the parents to notify the school of any change of details.
- The Enrolments Administrator is to liaise with parents and the Director with regard to the pre-commencement interview/s and the coordinating of starting dates.
- The Enrolments Administrator is to liaise with the Director for the arranging of Observation Visits by current and prospective parents, and other members of the public.

Evaluation

Successful orientation and enrolment procedures promote smooth transitions between home and service. Information sharing and the signing of authorizations ensures a safe and secure environment for the child.



Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Introduction

Enrolment orientation procedures form the foundation for strong relationships between families and the school and promote a quality experience of education and care for children. Good procedures include consistent information around service operation and authorizations promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

Aim

Enrolment orientation processes are planned and implemented, incorporating the following points:

- due consideration is given to culture and language in undertaking processes;
- documentation, including authorisations, are completed during the enrolment and orientation process; and
- a thoughtful process is planned in consultation with families, to orient a child and family to the education and care service.

Procedure

Pre-enrolment Observation

Our school welcomes visits from prospective families and children. The principal conducts the observations, answering any questions surrounding:

- Montessori Pedagogy
- Service philosophy and curriculum.
- approaches to documentation, curriculum, and planning.
- the physical environment.
- administrative matters, cost and fee payment methods; and

Offer of Placement

Following a pre-enrolment observation, a family may wish to place their child/ren's name on the waiting list. After consideration of Priority of Enrolment Policy and availability of a position/s by the Enrolment Committee, the child/ren may be offered a position at the school.

The Enrolment Committee will conduct an enrolment based on the Priority of Enrolment Policy and the family will be asked to accept the offer of the position. The placement offer package will include the Placement Agreement, an invoice for the Bond and Placement Fee, and current fee schedule.

Acceptance of Placement

Upon receipt of the signed Placement Agreement and fees, an enrolment package will be given to the family and will include:

- A Student Record Form & Parent Record Form that includes authorisations.
- NBMA Membership Form
- Current fee structure and payment details.
- 1st Day Helpful Hints

The information in the enrolment package is retained by the family for future reference.

Prior to conducting the pre-commencement visit, the Nominated Supervisor should consider the language and cultural needs of the family. A translator may be required along with an alternative venue for the enrolment visit.

Prior to the agreed start date for the child, families will have provided the following:

- a completed Student & Parent Record forms including authorizations and additional needs.
- a signed Placement Agreement with the school.
- a bond payment as outlined in school priority of enrolment policy.
- current immunization records.
- birth certificate, passport, or other identification.
- current contact information for parents and emergency contacts; and,
- information on children's additional needs (including medical conditions, health, and developmental concerns).

This information will be kept at the school premises in accordance with school policies and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Pre-Commencement Visit

During the pre-commencement visit, a process of orientation will be planned in collaboration with families to provide the best possible start for the child at the service.

1. Prior to the child's first day, educators and staff will familiarise themselves with information about the child from the Student Record Form provided. They will ensure they are aware of any medical conditions and how to manage them if required.
2. The Nominated Supervisor will inform the educators and staff of the intended time for the pre-commencement visit.
3. A family member will remain in the premises service during the pre-commencement visit. The family must sign the visitors book/register on arrival and when they leave if they are visiting the school during the hours when children are in attendance. The child cannot be left at the service until they have formally commenced at the service and are therefore not included in the ratios.
4. During the pre-commencement visit, educators and staff will interact with the child and actively encourage them to engage in activities. They will also be available to the family to answer any questions they may have, whilst ensuring they are not compromising the supervision of other children or required ratios.

Upon commencement

An email will be sent which provides registration details to access the Parent Area of Karuna's website which provides the following information:

- First Aid Policy including Anaphylaxis & Nut Awareness Policy
- Sun Policy
- A Karuna Handbook
- Access to Policies including, but not limited to, those required under Regulation 168.
- Information on National Quality Framework, National Quality Standards, and the EYLF.
- Orientation checklist.
- Feedback form.

On the child's first day of attendance, educators and staff will welcome the family and the child, ensuring that there is a space ready for the child's belongings. Educators will reassure the family and assist with separation if required. The educators will contact the family to let them know how their child is settling if necessary.

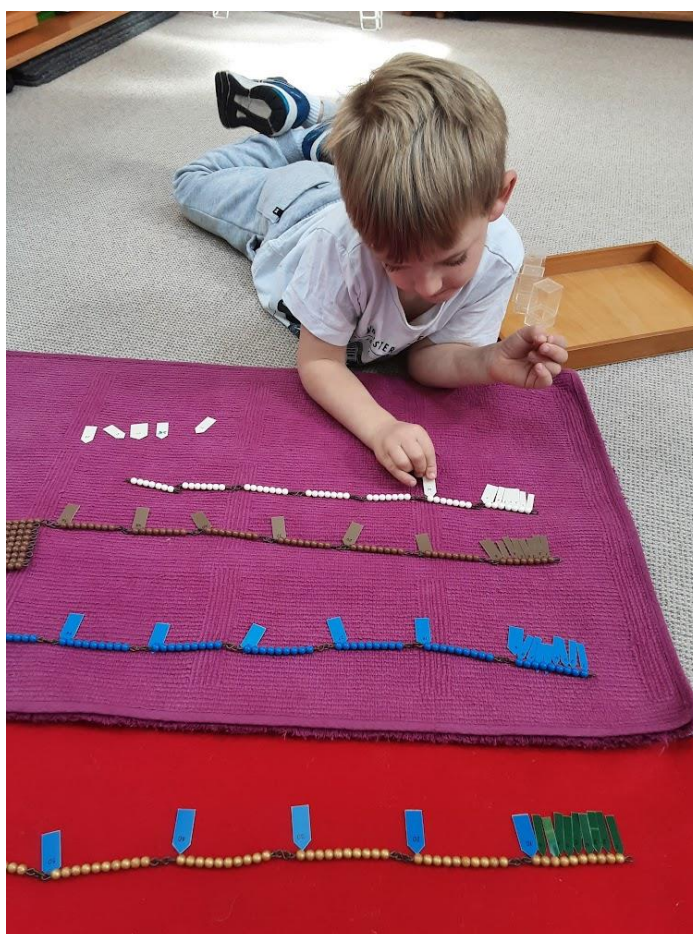
The Administrative Assistant will undertake a final check of enrolment details, authorisations and information updates prior to the family departing the service.

Evaluation

Successful orientation and enrolment procedures promote smooth transitions between home and service. Information Sharing and the signing of authorisations ensures a safe and secure environment for the child.

Characteristics of the Student Body

For details of the characteristics, please refer to the school's data on the My Schools website: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>



Policies for Student welfare

Karuna Montessori School aims to: provide a safe and supportive environment for its students to learn in; respect the philosophy and ethics of Montessori philosophy; provide student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development.

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare are implemented, the following policies and procedures are in place:

Policy	Changes	Access to the full text
Student Welfare Policy encompassing the following procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision & support of students • Code of Conduct for Staff & Students • Pastoral care • Duty of care & Legal Liability • Legislative requirements • Behaviour Management • Anti-bullying • Anti-Bias Statement • Promotion of Respect & Responsibility within the student body 	None	All Staff and members of the school community via the office and website.
Communications encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications – including complaints & grievances • Policy for newsletter and website communications • Procedure of parent and teacher conferences • Parent Information Evenings • Open Days • Family Pockets 	None	All Staff and members of the school community via the office and website. Parent Handbook

Full policy information for all the above can be accessed by the school community via our website as well as view a hardcopy on the premises which is always accessible.

Policies for student discipline

The disciplinary model within the Montessori environment encourages self-discipline and positive approaches to misbehavior.

The Montessori approach alleviates many disciplinary problems by helping the child gain skills in self-discipline and mediation within a controlled environment. The mixed age group of the classroom allows the younger children to emulate mature behaviour in the environment.

Should disciplinary procedures need to be undertaken by the school, they will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence; however, these will always be based on principles of procedural fairness. (Procedural fairness is defined by the NSW Department of Education to include a right of review of the decision made in response to allegations.) A full text of the school's Discipline Policy and associated procedures are accessible by all members of the school community through the school's website and a hardcopy is kept in the office.

Karuna Montessori School expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at school.

Full policy information for all of the above can be accessed by the school community via our website www.karuna.com.au as well as view a hardcopy on the premises which is accessible at all times.

Complaints & Grievances

Karuna Montessori School has in place a policy for dealing with complaints and grievances raised by students and/or parents. These processes will incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

A full text of the school's Grievance Policy and associated procedures are accessible to all members of the school community through our website www.karuna.com and a hard copy is accessible in the office.

2022 Priority areas for improvement:

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Administration & Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sourcing of a comprehensive school management system • Improve record keeping of and student learning & progress. • Digitizing of enrolments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of new school management system (kinderm8) • Student learning and progress are tracked in Kinderm8. • All enrolment information is tracked in Kinderm8.
Communication & Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication to and with families. • Increase social media activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular news updates • Improved social media via Facebook and Instagram
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of a new Montessori principal for 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Montessori qualified principal appointed

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility.

The Montessori method helps children to build self-confidence, inner discipline and a sense of self-worth and guides them towards positive, desirable social behaviors. While encouraging independence, self-reliance, and a questioning mind, it also develops respect for other people and a caring attitude toward the child's environment. All of this is achieved in the orderly, prepared environment unique to the Montessori classroom, under the guidance of specially trained teachers.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Parental involvement in the school is very high with many parents holding a role on the Parent Council. Parents are also involved with the school via working bees, fundraising, maintenance, and marketing and have a number of opportunities during the year to spend time with their children in the classroom observing their work.

Parents are encouraged to provide feedback via email, during parent/teacher meetings, general meetings, and any other parent/school interactions.

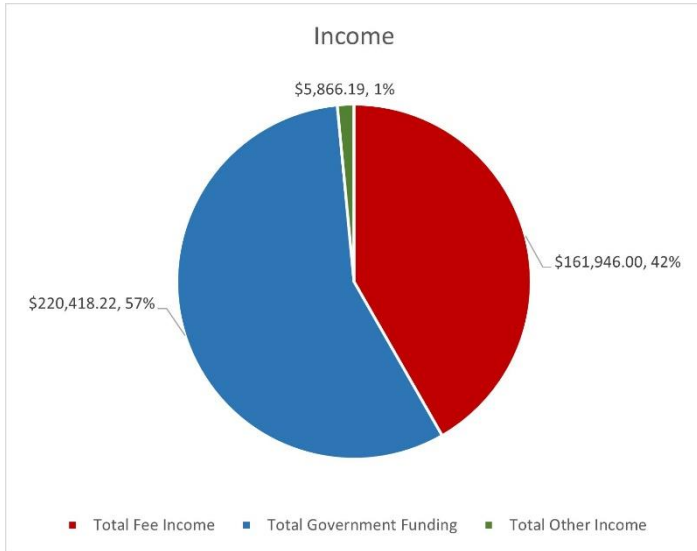
The general feeling is that the required level of parental involvement is quite substantial and not always well understood at the beginning. There were some suggestions for more visibility around what's required i.e. the different roles etc.

Overall, parents indicated that they were very satisfied with the facilities, the quality of the classroom materials and the quality of education.

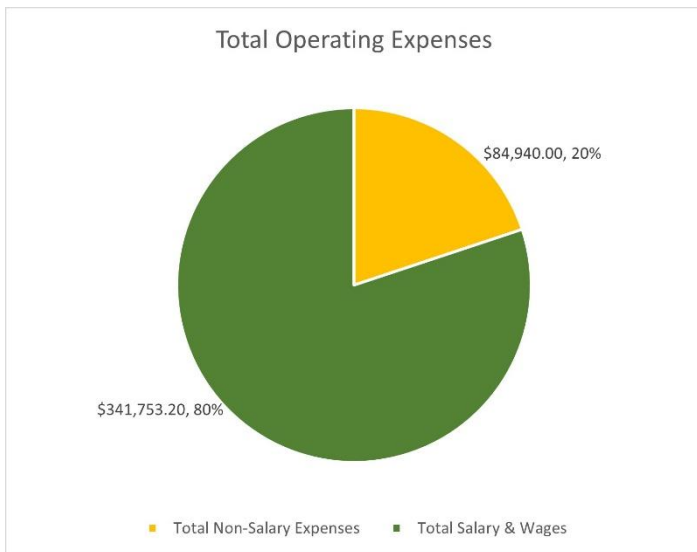
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Summary financial information

Income:



Expenditure:



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