



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

**OUR MISSION:** To encourage the development of the whole child by providing a comprehensive Montessori education. We will support the establishment of the intellectual and emotional rigor needed to become a confident, self-directed learner, lateral thinker, and creative problem solver. This will cultivate independent thought; an awareness of the environment and empathy for others.

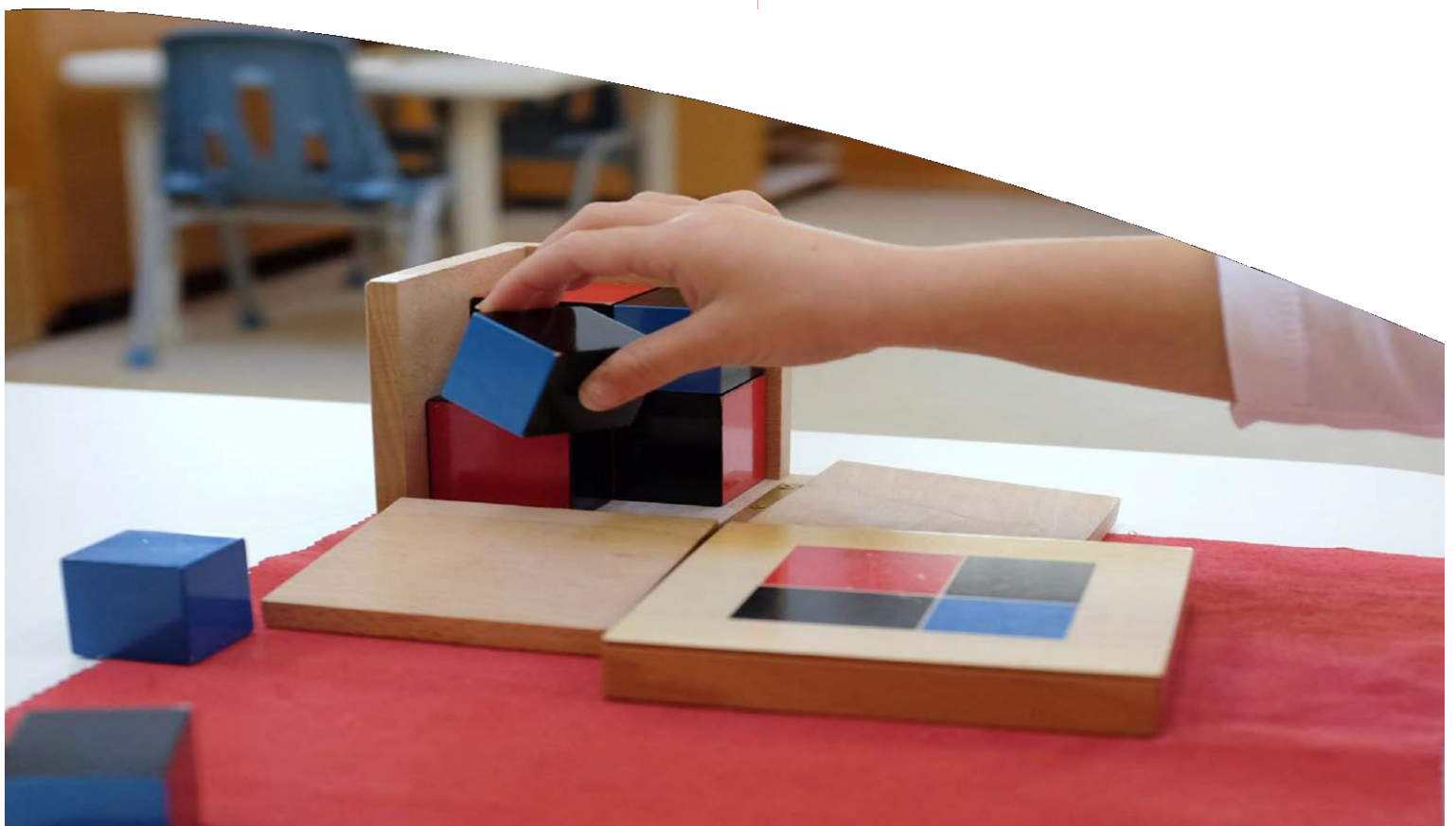
Mary Batterham

**Northern Beaches Montessori Association trading as  
Karuna Montessori Pre-school**

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**OUR VISION**

To support children to become well-rounded individuals ready to take on life’s challenges with verve, compassion, and responsibility.

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Karuna Montessori is a community based, not-for-profit pre-school and Kindergarten that follows the Montessori’s philosophy and Method of Education. The school is administered by an Executive Committee which is elected every year at the Annual General Meeting. At the start of each term the Executive Committee meet with the School Principal to discuss school management and the following week a General Meeting is held and attended by the whole school council along with the entire parent body.

2021 brings the fifth full year with our director Mary Batterham to a close. Karuna has continues to prosper under her management. Despite her best efforts 2021 has been a challenging year for Karuna. However, despite the challenges we continue to service our community through 2020 by remaining opened through the year, enabling our front-line workers to continue with their great work serving our community. Our numbers have declined in 2021. However, with a steady online campaign we hope this will be rectified as we move towards 2022.

Fortunately, Karuna remains in a steady financial position and with the help of financial support from both state and commonwealth governments it has meant we have been able to support our families more affectively through 2021. Karuna continues to strengthen its educational standards through 2021 with the involvement of our committed staff & supportive parent body. Together parents and staff have created a school that offers a nurturing and stimulating environment for young children where core values such as respect, independence and community are emphasised.

All staff and parents will continue to work towards the success of Karuna in 2021 and beyond. Our school is moving from strength to strength based on their efforts.

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**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE**

- Weekly gardening sessions with Karen our educators with a keen interest in gardening continued to work with the children to teach then about sustainability and food sources.
- Weekly music lessons continue to be provided for the children based on the Kodai Solfa methods with a private music teacher.
- We have continued our Spanish lessons in 2021 and this enhanced our already excellent curriculum.
- Unfortunately, Covid -19 restrictions has meant we were not able to attend any excursions or have any incursions in 2021 However, with the use of technology we have been able to bring many exciting experiences to the classroom.



- We are confident we can reintroduce more hands-on experiences as we move forward into 2022 and beyond.

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## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- All pine structures were sealed with oil including new playground, sandpit internal pine and surrounding structure.
- New sandpit equipment was purchased, and new sand was added.
- New storage boxes were added to the garden.
- Large gum tree was pruned, and health checked by an arborist.
- Improving the soils using the produce of the worm-farms.
- Regular maintenance of the gardens and garden beds and new turf was laid.
- Rotted Veranda posts were replaced and painted.
- Classroom was rearranged and storage cupboards were removed from the space to produce a more effective work environment.
- Soft fall was replaced, and height was maintained 4 times during the working bees.
- Parents continued maintenance of gardens, playground, and school overall through regular working bees.

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## ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

- Environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- Encourage walk/ride to school.
- Encourage Waste free lunchboxes.
- Recycling in classrooms.
- Active involvement in vegetable garden.
- Donating to women's shelter old resources/clothing donations/books.
- Composting using fruit scraps from the children's snack time.
- Terra Cycle to collect used oral waste and return for recycling
- Worm farm scraps and using worm waste in garden to enrich the soil.

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## SUPPORTING CHARITY

- Clean up Australia Day with Dee Why Scouts.
- Crazy Hair Day to support Leukemia Foundation.
- Backpack Beds to support Backpack Beds for Homeless Australia.
- Buy a Bale to support drought-stricken farmers.

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## COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

### Communication:



- regular discussions were had between the policies officer and the Executive Committee in the quest to identify areas that could be improved and progress the service.
- Montessori Information Evenings via zoom– held each term on a variety of topics, all families invited.
- Parent participation in according to covid safe practices continued where possible.
- Staff surveys have been an especially useful tool and have provided an additional avenue of communication between staff and the Executive Committee. This has facilitated better staff moral and a more collaborative partnership.
- Parent Surveys have also continued to provide valuable feedback and improve communication. Making changes based on the feedback these surveys provide has significantly improved overall parent satisfaction.
- School Newsletter keeps parents informed of day-to-day developments within the classroom and playground. Constant review of this publication ensures that it is an adequate source of information for the parents.
- Parent Newsletter is published by parents and contains with in it contributions from staff and Executive members as well as the overall parent community. This provides another source of information and strengthens the social fabric of the school across and between staff and parents.
- New Parent Orientation Evening (Via Zoom) was provided in term one and again in term 3. The Information sessions have been designed to:
  - seamlessly integrate new parents into the social fabric of the Karuna community
  - assist new parents navigate their expectations of the school
  - assist understanding of their roles within the Karuna Community; and
  - encourage parent members to take up roles within the committee

Karuna strives to exceed the expectations set out by the Government Departments. The Staff and Parent Committee will continue to work together with the Board of Studies in the quest to maintain the Montessori Pedagogy and the National Standard.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

### CONTEXT ABOUT KARUNA MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL

Karuna Montessori School is a composite 3-year program for Preschool and Kindergarten children for 3-6-year old's with up to 30 children, 5 of which are Early Stage 1. This is a place where children can explore their world, discover new knowledge, and realise their potential - where they really want to come to school each day. Montessori is a brain-based developmental education method that allows children to make creative choices in how they discover the people, places and knowledge of the world. Our emphasises is on hands-on-learning, self-expression, independence and discovery in a beautifully crafted environment of respect, peace and joy.

The Montessori approach is focused on supporting the individual child's potential and nurtures a lifelong love of learning.



Children gain a strong sense of self, creativity, self-motivation, integrity, perseverance, and self-discipline. Leadership, respect, responsibility, and resourcefulness are captivated in a collaborative and specifically designed environment. In the Montessori classroom children are guided in their learning by Montessori trained Teachers using scientifically designed materials appropriate to each developmental stage of the child.

Our staff are passionate about the Montessori philosophy, they facilitate the educational program for the children in our care.

Our staff continually review the activities provided for the children and adapt the teaching style to the individual needs of the child.

The five Key Learning Areas as defined by the Department of School Education Syllabus are each an integral part of the Montessori program for Early Stage 1

- Language
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- HSIE
- PDHPE

## EDUCATION FOR LIFE

2021 began as an exciting and rewarding year for Karuna Montessori Preschool, we had a busy start to the year with a high demand for enrolments. However, the covid restrictions seen many some families decline these offers. Our research indicated this was due to financial pressures, therefore we extended our fee free allowance to our early stage one students. This decision helped to increase enrolments and we hope that the families that joined us will remain for the three-year cycle. Restrictions remained in situ and the enormity of the Covid 19 pandemic was beginning to bite and Karuna like all other schools continues operation in a Covid Safe Model, this had its challenges as parents and community became exhausted by the restrictions. Even though we remained opened to accommodate the childcare and education of our community, attendance did fall, and we adapted an online educational program to support our students. This continued through the year, however during term two and 3 our students had begun to return to full time attendance.

We continued to support both families and staff through this challenge, by reducing the school fees for students. Our aim was to continue to support our community and maintain a high level of education for our students through these challenging times and I am confident we have achieved this goal. Behind the scenes, all our school policies and procedures were reviewed and updated throughout the year, including Governance, Child Protection, Anti-bullying, and Orientation policies.



We emphasize the inclusion of parents in our programs so the children come to see the school as a safe place. The staff and parents also attended several important Montessori education evenings on subjects such as, Language for Brain Development, Mathematics, Montessori in the home and Sensorial.

Our annual Open Day saw children and their parents showcase some of the work they have been doing in class. Prospective families are given a 'tour' of the materials and how they integrate into the curriculum. This event allows future families to have a further understanding of the Montessori method and the pedagogy that can be expected once a child is enrolled.

Professional development for staff allowed teachers and educators to select a variety of courses from the AIS, PEAK training, TAFE and other external providers to bring a rich tapestry of skills into the classroom. Courses on subjects such as Collaborative Learning, Emotional Intelligence, First Aid, Child Protection, allowed our staff to share knowledge and grow the foundations of education throughout the whole school. For proficient teachers, these hours will be added to their accreditation status as they work towards their 5-year maintenance.

## MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

**Montessori Education** is education in harmony with life. It takes a holistic approach and 'follows the child'. It aims to develop children by using their innate capacity to do their own learning. It works to develop qualities and skills, cultivating a child's natural desire to learn, rather than filling them up with pre-selected facts. The qualities which are given highest priority are independence, self-esteem, self-discipline, tolerance, mutual respect, self-motivation, responsibility and to be well organised and adaptable.

**The Montessori Equipment** is prepared to meet developmental needs of the child, both physically and psychologically. Maria Montessori identified periods in children's lives when they show strong spontaneous interest in certain activities. She designed the environment so that children can be free to experience the activities to which they are naturally drawn. The materials are designed to attract the child and encourage activity, concentration, repetition and challenge. The materials are also self-correcting, thus giving children a chance to gauge their performance. They learn to become aware of their capabilities and develop confidence to accept them. The environment also aids the child's ability to absorb knowledge and to undergo the process of self-construction. Activities progress from simple to complex, concrete to abstract.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

Enrolled students	5
Females	0
Males	5
Indigenous	0
LBOTE	0



Additional Needs	1
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**Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing**

Early Stage 1 are not required to undertake standardised testing.

**Student performance in state-wide tests and examinations**

Early Stage 1 are not required to undertake standardised testing.





## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

Karuna Montessori Preschool encourages and supports Professional learning amongst its staff. This is supported through monthly staff meetings where discussions cover Child Protection Communication, Supervision, Work Health and Safety, upcoming events, curriculum and policy development. In addition, staff are required to attend workshops, conferences, seminars and other school observations. Staff are encouraged to choose workshops of interest to them and in order to develop their skills. The average expenditure per staff member on professional learning in 2019 was \$500

Description of the Professional Learning Activity	No of Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montessori Information Workshops for staff. Topics include Practical life activities, Power of Language, Mathematics, Mathematics in the Montessori Classroom.</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AIS Governance workshop (online)</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montessori Curriculum Workshop (Zoom)</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental sustainability Working Bees (Covid safe practices apply)</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kids and Traffic workshop –Technology as a Tool in Road Safety Education</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Protection (Online course)</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building a Better QIP series x 7 Webinar</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing Supportive Relationships with Children (Webinar)</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Munch and Move New program initiatives</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building Child Brain using language</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Aid – Asthma/ Anaphylaxis</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal Forum – head-to-head (Webinar)</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff &amp; Executive Meetings (Zoom)</li> </ul>	5

## WORKFORCE COMPOSITION



Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	1
Teachers having a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications, or	1
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

## TEACHING STANDARDS

All the staff have completed a Working with Children Check upon appointment. This is monitored and updated as required and includes all visitors and performers entering the school.

The number of staff with the following qualifications:

Bachelor of Teaching-Early Childhood	1
Master's in Education (Special Education)	1
Diploma in Early childhood	1
Diploma of Montessori Education (3-6)	1
Child Care Certificate III	2

*"Development is a series of rebirths" Dr Montessori*



## TEACHING COMPOSITION

School staff including administration	4
Teaching staff	1

We are a small school with a maximum of 30 children in the classroom which typically includes a maximum of 10 in the kindergarten year. We have 1 x full-time teacher, 1 x full-time Teaching Assistant, 2 x part-time Teaching Assistants and 1 part-time Administrator.

### Senior secondary outcomes

Early Stage 1 only.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### Estimated Average Attendance:

Year level	Attendance rate %
Early-Stage 1	96%

## MANAGEMENT OF 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, usually via a phone call or email.

**Retention of Year 10 to Year 12 (where relevant) N/A**

**Post-school destinations (secondary schools only) N/A**



*"What the hand does, the mind remembers." Dr Montessori*



## POLICIES FOR ENROLMENT

### INTRODUCTION

In the operation of Karuna Montessori School, it is desirable to achieve a balance on gender and age groups. On gender, an even split is preferable. On age, three even cohorts of three, four- and five-year olds would be optimal. Entry into Early Stage 1 is dependent on completing a minimum of 18 months at the pre-school level. There will be scope for enrolment without this pre-requisite in some situations.

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 based on 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 numbers will not exceed thirty (30) children per day, being the maximum allowable under the ECEC license.

### 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. A non-refundable waiting list fee applies. Current or past members of the Association may add subsequent children to the list at 50% of the Waiting List Fee.
- 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 the Under 3 Program families informed of events at the school through newsletters 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 principal 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- A Placement Agreement is to be signed by the child's parents/guardians, the Principal, 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.

#### 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 wait list, and other prospective parents seeking information.
- The venue needs to be coordinated with the Property Officer and Landlords.

#### 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 on-going 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 to the school of any change of details.
- The Enrolments Administrator is to liaise with parents and the principal with regard to the pre-commencement interview/s and the coordinating of starting dates.
- The Enrolments Administrator is to liaise with the principal for the arranging of Observation Visits by current and prospective parents, and other members of the public.

#### Immunisation:

From 1 January 2018 only children who are fully immunised for their age or have a medical reason not to be immunised or are on a catch-up schedule can be enrolled in childcare. Children who have not been immunised due to their parent’s vaccine conscientious objection cannot be enrolled in childcare.

## **EVALUATION**

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



*“To assist a child, we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely.” Dr Montessori*



# POLICIES FOR ORIENTATION

## INTRODUCTION

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 school operation and authorisations promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

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 school.

## PROCEDURE

### Pre-enrolment Observation

Our school welcomes visits from prospective parents' families and children. Observations are held Tuesday to Thursday at 9.30am for half an hour. Appointments are made in advance by phone or email. Attachment 1 is sent to parents observing prior to their observation.

Observers use the two-way mirror from the staff room to observe the class. After 15 minutes, they will meet with the Enrolment and Office Administrator to ask any questions which may include:

- school philosophy and curriculum;
- the physical environment;
- administrative matters, cost and fee payment methods; and
- waitlist information

### Waitlist

The family will be offered a Waitlist Application Form. Once completed, the Enrolment and Office Administrator will invoice the Waitlist fee to the family. Once paid, this is the date that will be noted as the Waitlist application date.

### Offer of Placement

After consideration of Priority of Enrolment Policy; confirmation of immunisation status and availability of a position/s by the Enrolment and Office Administrator and the Principal, the child/ren may be offered a position at the school. The Enrolment and Office Administrator will initiate an enrolment process and the family will be asked to accept the offer of a place. The placement offer package will include the Placement Agreement, an invoice for the Enrolment Fee and Placement Fee, and current fee schedule. Please see Enrolment Policy for details



regarding Placement, Bond and surrounding requirements.

### **Acceptance of Placement**

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

The information in the enrolment package is retained by the family for future reference and may be accessed from the office or via the website.

Prior to conducting the pre-commencement visit, the Principal 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 authorisations and additional needs;
- a signed Placement Agreement with the school;
- a bond payment as outlined in school priority of enrolment policy;
- current immunisation records;
- birth certificate or other identification;
- current contact information for parents and emergency contacts;
- 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.

### **Orientation Visit**

During the child's orientation, the Principal will meet the family and provide the best possible start for the child at the school.

1. Prior to the child's first day, teachers and teaching assistants will familiarise themselves with information about the child from the New Student Summary Form provided. They will ensure they are aware of any medical conditions and how to manage them if required.
2. The Principal will inform the teachers and teaching assistants of the intended time for the pre-commencement visit.
3. A family member will remain in the school 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 other students are in attendance. The child cannot be left at the school until they have formally commenced at the school and are therefore not included in the ratios.
4. During the pre-commencement visit, teachers and teaching assistants 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 to the new family which provides registration details to access the Parent Area of Karuna's website which provides the following information:

- Nut Awareness Policy;
- Sun Protection Policy;
- Karuna Parent Handbook;
- Karuna First Day Helpful Hints;
- Access to Policies including, but not limited to, those required under Regulation 168.

On the child's first day of attendance, teachers and teaching assistants will welcome the family and the child, ensuring that there is a space ready for the child's belongings. Teachers and teaching assistants will reassure the family and assist with separation if required.

A staggered transition from 1 hour to 3 hours over 3 days allows for the Montessori program to offer the child individual planned learning opportunities in order to:

- Receive a special welcome for a smooth morning transition;
- Receive individual presentations in using the environment efficiently; snack, Practical Life activities, etc
- Receive special attention in regard to the routines and daily practices.

As such, the new child will stay for 1 hour on the first day, 2 hours on the second day and a full morning on the third day (depending on the ease of transition) to give a smooth start to school. The staff will contact the family to let them know how their child is settling if necessary.

The Enrolment and Office Administrator will undertake a final check of enrolment details, authorisations and information updates prior to the family departing the school. The Parent Liaison Enrolment Officer will contact the new families and arrange to meet them and answer any questions.

### EVALUATION

Successful orientation and enrolment procedures promote smooth transitions between home and school. Information sharing and the signing of authorisations ensure a safe and secure environment for the child.



*"Free Choice is one of the highest mental processes." Dr Montessori*

*Education for Life*



## POLICIES FOR STUDENT WELFARE

### INTRODUCTION

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; to provide student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development.

Both staff and the School have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and welfare of students including:

- a duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students;
- obligations under child protection legislation; and
- obligations under work health and safety legislation.

Specific requirements are set out in our Child Protection policy among others. These include

- Ensuring that staff appointed are fit and proper people to occupy those positions through interviews and employment screening;
- requiring staff to commit to a Staff Code of Conduct which is actively monitored.
- training staff in Child Protection and Anti-Harassment measures implementing procedures to identify when a child is at risk of harm and to notify the proper authorities
- implementing procedures to notify and investigate complaints of improper conduct by staff and report to appropriate authorities
- recognising that dealing with harassment is the shared responsibility of parents, staff and students
- establishing procedures which will ensure an effective response to incidents of harassment
- ensuring that all occurrences of harassment are dealt with fairly and consistently
- encouraging openness among students about all forms of harassment
- taking pro-active preventative measures against harassment
- raising awareness about harassment among school staff, students and parents

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 accessible at all times.



## POLICIES FOR ANTI-BULLYING

Karuna Montessori rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the school.

At Karuna Montessori we aim to provide an environment where students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community. We do not tolerate bullying in any form.

Any inappropriate behaviour that hinders teaching and learning at the school and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

All students at Karuna Montessori School have the right to feel safe and be respected as equally as unique human beings.

Karuna Montessori is proactive in its approach to building a happy, safe, friendly climate where all students work towards the common goal of learning and tolerance in a safe environment. This is reflected in the school's 'Student Welfare' policy and the teachers' active and on-going commitment towards thorough supervision, professional development, classroom management and teaching.

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 accessible at all times.

## POLICIES FOR STUDENT DISCIPLINE

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

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



The disciplinary model within the Montessori environment encourages self-discipline and positive approaches to misbehaviour. Refer below to the Positive Guidance Strategies:

## **1 Positive Guidance Strategies**

“Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, intimidating, psychologically damaging or physically harmful to children. This principle has precedence over all other in this code”

NAYEC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment (National Association for the Education of Young Children NAYEC 2006)

Guiding young children is about the processes that adults use to influence children. Our school aims to establish a process in child guiding that is in correlation with NAEYC Standards of Early Childhood Professionals.

Through developmentally appropriate practice, Karuna Montessori aims to adopt an authoritative style of caregiving. The foundation of the school takes its roots in theoretical foundations, which give us knowledge about children’s psychological, emotional, and social learning needs and how children’s behaviours develop in different systems and how children construct ideas.

Karuna Montessori focus’ is on selected facets of child development.

- Memory and perception, the basic building blocks of cognition
- Children’s understanding of other people or social cognition
- Self-control and how to become kind and compassionate

At Karuna Montessori, our teachers and teaching assistants model qualities that help children develop equally positive qualities through a combination of high demandingness and high responsiveness. The demandingness dimension is about boundaries, limits and expectations, monitoring and supervising children, guidance and discipline strategies and style of confrontation. The responsiveness dimension is the degree of being tuned in a child’s development. Several important aspects of responsiveness include warmth, knowledge of child development and using good explanations along with guiding strategies.

A number of positive guidance strategies are reinforced in the classroom in order to meet the individual needs of children. The major strategies used are the following:

### **1. Using limits effectively**

Developing reasonable limits that focus on important things

- Stating limits clearly
- Speaking naturally, but speak slowly enough that the child hears everything you say; using concrete words and short sentences when stating limits
- Telling the child exactly what to rather than what not to do, and be as positive as possible



- Using suggestions whenever possible
- Giving choices whenever possible
- Avoiding giving a choice when the child really has no choice
- Issuing only a few suggestions at a time; avoid giving a chain of limits.

## **2. Teaching helpful or appropriate behaviour**

- help children build self-control by learning some specific behaviours.

For Example:

- How to ask for something
- How to listen when others talk and not interrupt them
- How to join a play or work group
- How to put things away when the work cycle is completed
- How to participate in a group and how to get the teacher's attention

## **3. Giving signals or cues for appropriate behaviour**

Verbal, non-verbal, pictorial and written reminders about limits (class rules) are displayed and review periodically.

## **4. Listen actively**

Active listening is a useful strategy when the child 'owns' the problem. The adult listens actively and reflectively but does not offer solutions and does not criticize. Active listening is the skill that responsible adults use when something is troubling the child; the child is afraid, angry, jealous, cannot do something or is frustrated.

## **5. Identifying problem ownership**

Determine whether an adult or a child has a problem so that appropriate follow up can be used.

## **6. Delivering 'I' messages**

It is a positive, self-responsible strategy useful when the adult 'owns' the problem in a relationship with a child. Some examples, when the child does not clean up after an activity or the child interrupts group time frequently.

## **7. Teaching conflict resolution**

This process includes identifying the problem, inviting children to participate in fixing the problem, generating possible solutions, examining each idea for its merits or drawbacks, deciding which idea to try, working out ways of putting the plan into action and finally following up and evaluating how the plan worked.

## **8. Recognising signs of stress, anxiety or strong emotion; teaching calming techniques**



The purpose of this strategy is to look beyond the visible and detect underlying cause of stress.

## 9. Managing strong emotions responsibly

Support children in recognising and learning responsible ways to manage emotions such as anger.

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

## POLICIES FOR 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.

Communications will always aim to be open, honest and confidential. Our school will offer a variety of ways to communicate and provide feedback including:

- regular class newsletters;
- daily notice board;
- opportunities for verbal interactions;
- formal feedback and comments;
- surveys;
- general meetings.

With permission, teachers and teaching assistants may write comments on behalf of families to help with evaluations of the program and encourage further family input.

Families are provided the service's email address and phone details at orientation. Families will be encouraged to converse with teachers and teaching assistants at pick up and drop off times and may email or call throughout the day.

Feedback from families is encouraged and teachers and teaching assistants and staff will take this feedback into account in ongoing planning and quality improvement.

Families will be informed as to how their feedback has contributed to improvements in the service through information notice board displays, emails, and/or newsletters.

### Complaints:

- 1) The parents are to discuss the matter as soon as possible with the child's Principal by scheduling an appointment through the office. The parents or Principal may request that a record of the interview be prepared signed by both parties. Either party may request that the President or delegate be present.
- 2) If either party (parents or Principal) is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter may be referred to the President within two weeks of the initial discussion, by way of a written submission outlining the problem and proposed solution.



- 3) The President will then mediate a discussion between the two parties. A record of the interview will be made and signed by all parties. This process may continue until a resolution is reached.
- 4) If either the Principal or the parents are still not satisfied with the outcome, the dissatisfied party must make a written submission to the Executive Committee within two weeks of the last mediation discussion. The Executive Committee may appoint a Dispute Committee or a representative to investigate and make a report back to them within two weeks. They will then reach a final decision on the matter as soon as possible. Notification of the Executive Committee's decision will be given in writing to all parties involved within five working days of their decision.

It is expected that Step 4 would be the final step of the Complaints procedure. However, parents with an unresolved grievance are free to contact the relevant external agency (either Department of Education & Communities or the NSW Education Standard Authority).

Under the NSW Children's Services Regulation 2004, if a parent of a child provided with any class of children's service makes a complaint to the licensee about the conduct of the service, the Licensee/Principal must - unless the complaint is of an obviously trivial nature:

1. Communicate information on the process to families through enrolment and orientation processes and information.
  2. Provide contact details for putting forward a complaint.
  3. Ensure every complaint is managed and is an opportunity for quality improvement.
  4. Discuss the process for managing complaints with the educator and staff team.
  5. Provide or arrange training on complaints management.
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1. The complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. Any teacher or staff member involved in handling complaints will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed.
  2. The complaint will be documented and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. This will include the Nominated Supervisor and the approved provider.
  3. Actions to address the complaint will be determined. Once the outcomes or resolutions are agreed on, all persons involved in the original complaint will be notified and informed of any actions for improvement that will take place as a result of the complaint.
  4. The Department of Education and Communities will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation which alleges that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was or is affected, or that the service has broken the Education and Care Services



National Law within 24 hours of the complaint being made. Refer to Child Protection Policy.

## EVALUATION

Continuous improvement of our service occurs where there is reflection and constructive feedback given from the service community which results in positive change and improvement.

Complaints are managed well, lead to quality improvement and are conducted in a safe manner in a secure environment.

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

## SCHOOL POLICY REVIEW

Our policies ensure that all aspects of the schools' mission, in providing for student's welfare, are implemented. Hardcopies of policies are held in the office with copies available for viewing on the school website or on request.

New & Updated Policies and Procedures	
Administration of Medicine	Reviewed and approved
Anti-bullying	Reviewed and approved
Child Protection	Updated
Complaints & Grievance	Updated
Discipline	Reviewed and approved
Enrolment	Updated
Fee Policy	Updated
Governance Management & Admin	Reviewed and approved
Health & Medication	Reviewed and approved
Immunisation	Updated
Incident, Injury & Trauma	Reviewed and approved
Infectious Diseases	Reviewed and approved
Safe sleep and rest time procedure	Implemented
Student Welfare	Reviewed and approved



*"Play is the work of the child." Dr Montessori*



## SCHOOL-DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

2021 Priority areas for improvement:

Area	Priorities
Teaching & learning	<p>1-Continuing implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Quality Framework</li> <li>• Early Years Learning Framework</li> <li>• Australian Early Stage 1 Curriculum</li> </ul> <p>2- Maintaining the Quality Improvement plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify areas of improvement in relation to quality area 6- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</li> </ul> <p>3- Maintaining the Montessori Curriculum by ensuring and maintaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montessori Prepared Learning Environment offering appropriate Montessori materials, resources and activities</li> <li>• Montessori Curriculum Planning, Implementation and Assessment</li> </ul> <p>4- Identifying areas of improvement in the Early Stage 1 Program in relation to addressing the NSW Syllabus outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of new PDHPE syllabus for Early stage 1</li> <li>• Review all areas of the Early Stage 1 Primary Curriculum in preparation for re-registration in 2020</li> </ul>
Premises	<p>To improve the acoustic, acoustic board has be installed on the southern wall and the veranda ceiling has been enclosed with new lighting installed.</p> <p>Replaces the taps in the bathrooms to save water and assist the children to self-manage the use of the taps.</p> <p>Consider renovations to existing bathrooms</p>



Grounds	<p>Continued maintenance of vegetable garden &amp; composting resources, with the addition on new garden beds and herb spiral.</p> <p>We have installed a movable fencing to facilitate better access and availability for the students.</p> <p>New turf has been laid and the soft fall had been topped up.</p>
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## INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY

The Montessori method helps the children to build self-confidence, inner discipline and a sense of self-worth, and guides them towards positive, desirable social behaviour. While encouraging independence, self-reliance and a questioning mind, it also develops a 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.

Karuna Montessori promotes involvement in community services by supporting a number of key charities including World’s Greatest Shave, Buy A Bale, Backpack Beds for Homeless, Clean up Australia Day with local Scouts.

We encourage mutual respect and responsibility in the Montessori classroom with the implantation of our Grace and Courtesy lessons. Grace and courtesy is outwardly about showing consideration and respect for others, while inwardly refining the natural empathy and love of a child, by giving it language and bringing it into conscious thought and effort.

## PARENT & STAFF SATISFACTION

Karuna Montessori seeks parental and staff feedback via survey each year as well as twice yearly interviews, and staff evaluation meetings. Results are tabled for discussion in the Executive Meeting and any action required is taken in collaboration with the stakeholders.



*“The child who concentrates is immensely happy.” Dr Montessori*

**100%** PARTICIPATING

## SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The school maintains the relevant data and will comply with reporting requirements of the NSW Minister for Education and Training and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. This reporting includes public disclosure of the educational and financial performance measures and policies of the school as required from time to time.

## PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Karuna Montessori School has procedures in place to maintain the relevant data and will comply with the Department of Education requirements. This reporting includes participation in annual reporting to publicly disclose the educational and financial performance measures and policies of the school and requirements related to the provision of data to the Minister that is relevant to the Minister's annual report to Parliament on the effectiveness of schooling in the State or data that may be requested by the Minister from time to time.

The Annual Report is compiled by the Principal, President and the Treasurer who are responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the relevant data and to provide the relevant information to the administrator for inclusion in the report. The report must be submitted to the NSW Education Standards Authority Board via RANGS Online by 30 June in the year following the reporting year, within 6 months the Annual Report is made available on the school's website. For families who are unable to access the internet, arrangements will be made to provide the information to them upon request in written format or emailed as a PDF.

## REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL DATA

From time to time the Australian Government, through the Minister for Education, and the NSW Government, through the Minister for Education, may request additional information. To ensure that such requests are dealt with appropriately, the Administrator and Principal will be responsible for the collection of the relevant data/information, coordinating the school's response and for ensuring provision of data/information requested by Minister(s) through the specified authority in an online or appropriate electronic format by the due date.

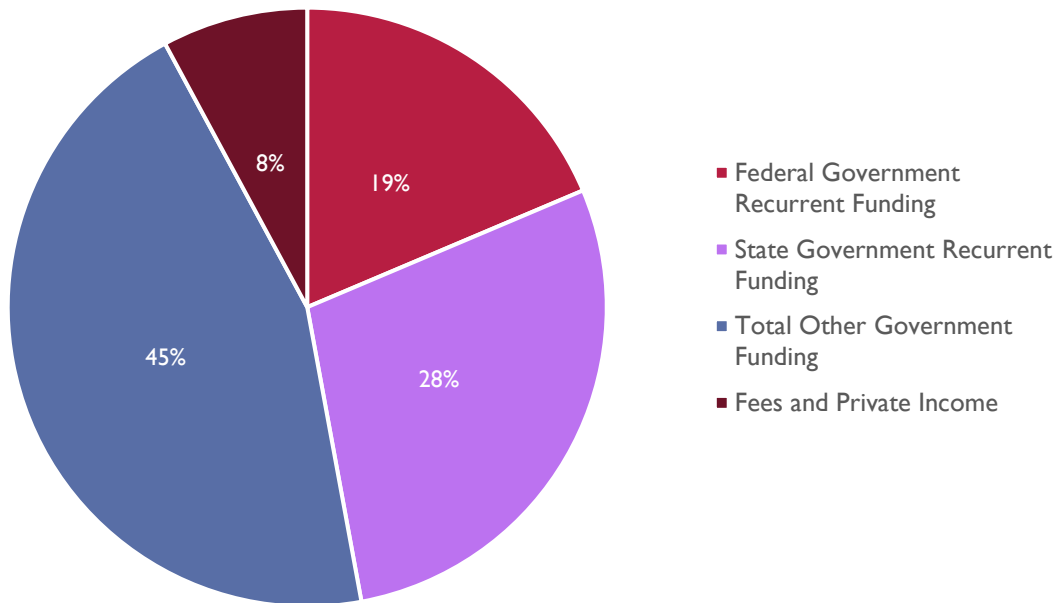
## DET ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN

The Treasurer is responsible for completing the questionnaire. This person is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to DET in an appropriate form.



## PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT

### Income



### Expenditure

