

# Southside Montessori School

## Annual Report

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2016



Southside Montessori Society, 35 Lillian Rd, Riverwood, NSW 2210



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## Vision Statement

Southside Montessori School nurtures the whole child within the Montessori philosophy to become an independent, educated and socially responsible individual.



## Acknowledgement of Country

We pay our respects  
and acknowledge the  
Dharwal People of the Eora Nation,  
the traditional custodians of this land.  
May the great ancestral spirit of the land,  
the waters and the rivers  
protect and guide us as we gather here.

# Introduction

Southside Montessori School seeks to comply with the expectations of the Australian curriculum, in conjunction with the New South Wales Education Standards Authority, (NESA) and the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (NQF)

Southside Montessori School will maintain the relevant data and documentation and will comply with reporting requirements of the NSW Minister for Education and Communities and The Department of Education and Training. This reporting will include public disclosure of the education and financial reporting measures and policies of the School as required.

## Policy and Procedure ensuring the participation in the mandated Annual Reporting process

The Principal of Southside Montessori School is the person responsible for the coordination, collection, final preparation and distribution of the annual report to NESA and other stakeholders as required.

For each reporting area, one of the following persons, Principal, School Accountant and School Office Manager is responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the relevant data and for providing the relevant information to the Principal for inclusion in this report.

Determination of specific content to be included in each section of the report and for reviewing this each year to ensure ongoing compliance, relevance and usefulness is the final responsibility of the Principal.

Preparation of this report is to be in an appropriate online electronic form to provide to NESA under the direction of the Principal by the due date of June 30 of the following year.

Public disclosure of this report will occur 6 months after the end of the reportable year by making it available on the School website and by providing printed copies in the Office.

*'Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.'*

- Dr Maria Montessori

## Request for Additional data from the Minister for Education

To support any request from the Australian Government through the Minister for Education and the NSW Government through the Minister for Education, the School will identify the staff member responsible for coordinating the School's response. This person 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 the Minister through the specified authority (NESA) in an online format by the due date of June 30 2016.

This will be the Principal.

## Australian Government Annual Financial Questionnaire

The Southside Montessori School Accountant is responsible for collecting data and completing the Australian Government Annual Financial Questionnaire return in the appropriate form and returning the questionnaire to the Australian Government after receiving confirmation from the Principal.

## Values

Guided by the Montessori philosophy Southside Montessori School strives to:

- Enrich and inspire the child by integrating innovative teaching practices
- Provide a carefully prepared learning environment that nurtures the developmental needs of each child
- Allow the child to develop a love of learning through active participation, self-discovery and exploration
- Promote independence and self-confidence in the child with a non-competitive approach and self-correcting materials
- Treat each child as an individual and respect their needs and beliefs
- Have staff continually update their professional learning to meet the needs of the students and deliver a comprehensive and ever-improving curriculum
- Embrace the culturally diverse backgrounds of families and foster a community that embraces tolerance and cooperation
- Build strong relationships between home and school
- Promote the Montessori philosophy to the wider community
- Enable children to grow into confident, happy and purposeful individuals.

# Message from the Principal

*Education is a responsibility to self.*

This was a very quiet line delivered in a graduate's farewell speech in 2016. Unobtrusive in delivery, meaningful in pause and unpretentious in context, a 12 year old boy told me more about his shared journey of learning over the past 9 years in a community he cared deeply for, than a barrage of explanations ever could.

We often question what is authentic learning? What is a Montessori education? We ask, we probe; we ponder the meaning, each of us resting on a facet or two of tangible, concrete evidence. Yet, in 5 words a philosopher, an innovator, a risk taker and a learner shared his view- education is a responsibility each of us are charged with, to be independent, self directed learners, social and responsible in our own conduct, nurtured as a whole, not only in the concrete and tangible, but in resilience and grace, courtesy and creativity, through freedom and its limits.

On hearing such words, I am sure Dr Montessori herself would again reiterate her belief- *do not underestimate the learning of a child.*

That afternoon saw three graduates speak with confidence and poise, each recounting in their way, the journey they had made. These alumni moved to a variety of secondary schools in the Sydney region, successful in their transition from the primary component of their learning, and impressive in their various skills and talents.

The school saw physical growth and change in 2016, with the planned renewing and refurbishment of spaces for learning and play, the creation of an accessible Library, additional teaching spaces and enrolment growth.

Our students undertook their first interdisciplinary self-directed projects in the *Festival of Dangerous Ideas*. This saw language and literacy come alive through puppetry, in the entertaining and unfolding drama of *Alphabet Street*- what really happened when the vowels ran away from the alphabet.

History collided with technology, when story and film became the vehicle for exploration and discovery in *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* films by Cycle Three while our youngest learners met their local community, engaging with our Fire Brigade and Police in learning about caring for self and others in *What to do What not to do*.

Ms. Johanna Wilkins Bennett

Principal

2016

# Report of the President of the Southside Montessori Society

To the Annual General Meeting, 2017  
On the Activity of the School for the Year 2016

Underlying Framework of the Report of the President.

This report is an overview of the activity of the school within the strategic goals of the Strategic Plan 2016 and beyond. The highlights reflect the progress of the School in meeting the strategic goals of the Board and School community.

The President's Report offers the Board an opportunity to commend the staff of the School in the way they have enhanced the learning outcomes of the students. The key indicator of the expression of the Montessori philosophy in teaching practices and learning outcomes for students is at the heart of the work. The Board takes seriously its' obligation under the charter of the company to ensure that Southside Montessori School adheres to Montessori principles whilst at the same time meeting standards of teaching and learning.

## Summary of Key Developments in 2016.

In 2016 the Board began a process from the date of the AGM to seek new Directors for the Board. The Board was seeking directors who had particular skills, which had been identified by the Board as needed to create a diverse and professional Board who could look at the direction of the School and give support to the Principal.

The School Board met eight times in 2016. A major task undertaken during the year was the review of long term maintenance and the updating of the three year strategic plan that set renew and refurbish directions for the School.

The creation of an independent School Library, improvements to physical classrooms. Much needed upgrades ensured compliance with safety standards.

*'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.'*

- Nelson Mandela

The introduction of a school app has further supported improved communication to the community through digital newsletters and the ability to send immediate operational messages as the need arises.

The School was welcoming of parents to classroom observations and the tours of the School for new parents gave each staff member and many parents the opportunity to know the School and its philosophy.

This communication goal continues into 2017 and this is a work in progress for the Board and staff working with Ms Wilkins Bennett

#### **Staff Professional Learning.**

The Board values highly the need for all of our staff to be involved in all levels of professional learning. To that end there is provision in the Annual Budget for this and we ask that it is reported on at our meetings by the Principal.

#### **Financial Sustainability**

I would like to thank Gerard Gieseckam as our Treasurer for his resolute determination to ensure that Southside Montessori School meets its obligations; pays its' debts and grows to support the work of the School.

The challenge continues for our School but there have been significant goals met in 2016 to reduce long term debt with a steady focus on capital spending concurrently. The position of the school is positive and 2017 will provide the Board the opportunity to set aside funds for future provisions to pay for improvements.

#### **Conclusion.**

This report has given a snapshot of a complex and ever-changing School with challenges and inspiration.

In summary, 2016 saw an improvement in the key strategic areas mentioned above and we look forward to these continuing in 2017. The School is in a position which is very positive for further growth and will attract new enrolments into the future.

The growth of this School is the motivation for the Board to continue to work for this community. Our time is voluntary and there are many meetings and hours of work which happens without concern for the time away from our own work or family.

It isn't often that a group of people who aren't connected in many if any other ways can work so happily and cohesively. As President I have been supported in making the decisions which were needed to keep our School growing. Throughout this the Board is resolute in its goals and want only the best outcomes for this School.

I would like to thank the Directors who are my inspiration.

Ms Fay Gurr

Chair of Board.

## About Southside Montessori School

Southside Montessori School is an independent non-selective, non-denominational school aligned with the Montessori Australia Foundation's *Montessori National Curriculum*. Students in its co-educational setting range from 1 years to 12 years of age.

Situated 26 kilometers south of the CBD in Sydney, Southside Montessori School is nestled along the edges of the Salt Pan Creek in the Georges River, Riverwood NSW.

Our learning is based on strong relationships between home and school life and the development of self as a shared goal. We work together with our students and their families to discover ideas, foster curiosity and inquiry, and cultivate a learner's identity through their self-direction. We are proud of our culturally and ethically diverse community, and honour the unique journey of all. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of our land and recognise that each learner's story contributes to our shared identity. Our prepared environment encourages action learning, and an understanding that our students are guided through experience to achieve at their own pace, so they fully realise their human potential.

We nurture self-esteem through satisfaction of accomplishment, crucial to a learner gaining autonomous and self-disciplined independence. We empower our students to have a genuine voice and choice in both their learning and the learning environment they share.

The School was established at its present site in 1984. Originally a community Pre- School it now draws students from the rapidly growing southwestern corridor. The School is seeing increased enrolments due to its effective implementation of the Montessori Philosophy and further alignment with the requirements of the New South Wales Education Standards Authority. Southside Montessori Pre and Primary School is an active member of the Association of Independent Schools, which brings together independent schools in NSW, who work together to improve the delivery of education to the sector.

Since 2012, the school has completed significant building and grounds improvement. New classrooms have been constructed, completion of a School Hall and kitchen and landscape gardening. The staff mix combines experienced teachers with a range of recently graduated teachers.

There are a number of staff who have spent in excess of 10 years at the school. In addition to 6 teaching staff, the School has Integration Teacher Assistants in the Pre-School. The School draws on external supports with Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and School Psychological services. The School fosters close links to parents and the broader school community.

Our primary focus will always be the wellbeing and best interests of the students in our care.

# School Facts 2016

## School Census Data

Data includes the Primary chool and BOSTES Stage 1 Kindergarten program

School Sector	Non-government
School Type	Combined
Year range	K-6
Total Enrolments	53
Girls	17
Boys	36
Fulltime Equivalent Enrolments	53
Indigenous Students	2
Location	metropolitan
Student Attendance Rate%	92.75%
Teaching Staff	6
Non Teaching Staff	6

## Early Childhood Programs

An additional 64 students attend early childhood programs: Parent and Toddler Program and Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) pre school program at Southside Montessori School. These students are not included in census statistics.

Parent Toddler Enrolments	35
ACECQA Enrolments	29
Total Early Childhood Enrolments	64

## NAPLAN Results

There are 10 bands of achievement for student performance in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests. The bands provide a common scale for all year levels. Six bands are used for each year level.

Year 3 is reported from Bands 1-6,

Year 5 from bands 3-8,

Year 7 from bands 4-9 and

Year 9 from bands 5-10.

Further information relating to Southside Montessori School performance on the 2016 NAPLAN can be found at: <https://www.myschool.edu.au>

# Teacher Qualifications

Details of teaching staff (as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004) who are responsible for delivering the curriculum in terms of numbers in the following categories:

Category	Number of Teachers
i) Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognized within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOORS) guidelines, or	5
ii) Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognized within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	1
Teachers who do not have qualifications as described above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context	0



## Professional learning

The School Executive participated in courses conducted by the AIS Leadership Centre. All teaching staff participated in professional learning about students with diverse learning needs during a school development day conducted in Term Two to increase staff understanding of effective differentiation and disability standards legislation. In addition the following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2016:

Description of Professional Learning Activities	Number of Staff Participating
First Aid Course- provide training and assesses competency in the skills and knowledge required to provide first aid to a casualty Royal Life Saving HLTAID 003	11
Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation– provide training and requalification in CPR Royal Life Saving HLTAID 001	11
Child Protection and Legislation Module, online workshop AIS Requalification for staff in CP and legal requirements	10
Fire Training Aus standard 3745-2010 Aus Standard 1851-2012 Work Health and Safety, Work Health and Safety Regulations 2001 Elite Fire Training Provide effective training in emergency response training and evacuation exercises Non qualification	12
Montessori AMI Diploma training Teacher training in Montessori education, non qualification	2
Music and Movement workshop Musica Viva Teacher Accreditation	2
BOSTES- Understanding common core grades Introduction for graduate teachers Teacher Accreditation	2
Montessori Australia Foundation Whole School Refresher Non qualification	4
Unpacking the Aboriginal Perspective in History AIS Teacher Accreditation	1

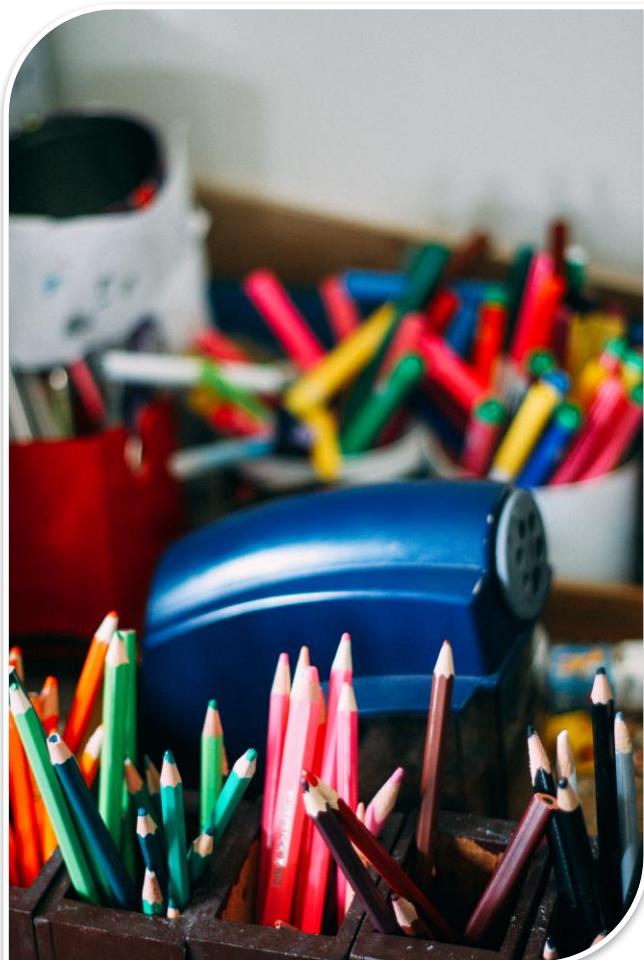
## Workforce composition

Total Staff	numbers
Teaching Staff	6
Teaching Staff- fulltime equivalent	4.6
Non teaching Staff	5
Non teaching Staff- fulltime equivalent	4.5

The Southside Montessori School workforce consists of teachers, support staff, and administration with both traditional tertiary and Montessori qualifications.

Southside Montessori School did not employ or retain staff in 2016 recognised as Indigenous Australian or Torres Strait Islander.

Information taken from: <https://www.myschool.edu.au>



# Student Attendance 2016

Students at Southside Montessori School have an attendance rate of 93% on average across the school year. While there is significant improvement to be had, the School monitors student attendance administratively through their Cycle Classroom Directress. Strategies to improve poor or unsatisfactory attendance include follow up phone calls made to parents by the Cycle Directress and highlighted at Parent, Student, Teacher meetings as well as unsatisfactory attendance information transferred to the student files.

Stage / Year	Attendance %
<b>Stage One</b>	<b>91.26%</b>
Kindergarten	91.26%
<b>Stage Two</b>	<b>90.69%</b>
Year One	92.01%
Year Two	92.56%
Year Three	87.50%
<b>Stage Three</b>	<b>89.86%</b>
Year 4	91.93%
Year 5	90.83%
Year 6	86.81%

*'The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth.'*

-John F. Kennedy

# Management of Non-Attendance

The following is an excerpt from the School's attendance policy.

## Attendance

- The school monitors the daily attendance and absence of students in the school by maintaining a daily register for each class of students.
- Student absences from classes or from the school are identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the staff member responsible for the class using the code approved by the Minister for Education.
- The school will provide clear information to parents regarding attendance requirements.
- Unexplained absences from classes of the school are followed up in an appropriate manner with the student and/or their parent or guardian.
- The school notifies parents and/or guardians in an appropriate manner where a student has a poor record of school or class attendance.
- Where unsatisfactory class or school attendance is identified, the attendance issue and any action taken are recorded, as appropriate, on the student file.

## Parents to notify of child's absence

- Parents must notify the school if their child or children will be absent before school starts on the day they will be absent. They can do this by phone or email directly to the classroom teacher
- Parents must provide absence and late notes within 7 days of the absence, except in the case of leave that has been approved in advance.
- If an absent or late note is not provided by the parent or guardian within 7 days of the absence, the absence will be recorded as unexplained
- Parents are to arrange routine medical and dental appointments for students before or after school.
- The Principal may request a medical certificate as well as explanations from the parents about the cause of a student's illness if the explanation is doubted or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance

## Applying for leave during term time

- Parents must apply for permission from the Principal for taking leave during term time. Where the application for leave is for a holiday or travel, approval must be sought in advance of making travel plans. For other types of leave, approval must be sought at least 3 weeks before the intended leave.
- The Principal has the right to approve or reject an application for leave during term time if the Principal does not believe that the absence is in the student's best interests.

- The Principal may approve an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days for a 12 month period for any student.
- Applications for exemption for school attendance for more than 100 days for a 12 month period must be approved by the Minister's delegate.
- The Principal may grant an exemption due to:
  - exceptional domestic circumstances
  - other exceptional circumstances such as the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate
  - the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991
  - employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events for short periods of time ie for one or two days and at short notice
  - participation in regular training for elite sporting events during school time.
- The Principal has the right to approve or reject an application for exemption if the Principal does not believe that the absence is in the student's best interests.
- Where the Principal is considering refusing to grant an exemption, parents will be given an opportunity to respond to the Principal's concerns before a final decision is made. This opportunity will be offered to the parent in writing
- Parents can appeal the decision not to grant a certificate of exemption. This appeal will be heard by the Minister's delegate. The Principal can cancel a Certificate of Exemption where the conditions attached to the exemption

### Unexplained absences

If a child is absent for three successive days and there has been no explanation from the parent, the classroom teacher will contact the parents by phone.

If there is no response from either parent, and the child does not return to school, the class teacher will contact all people who are listed as emergency contacts for the child to check that the child is safe and find out when they will be returning to school.

If the child has still not returned to school after 5 days, and there has been no response from either the parents or emergency contacts, the Principal will notify the Department of Community Services and follow any advice provided.

### Notifying parents of poor school attendance

If a general pattern of poor attendance has been noted by the child's classroom teacher, the teacher will inform the Nominated Supervisor or the Principal and seek approval to arrange a meeting with the parents.

Once this approval is given, the classroom teacher will contact the parents to arrange a meeting to discuss this issue. During this meeting, the reasons for the absences, the consequences of the absences and any strategies that both the parents and teacher could adopt to help improve attendance will be discussed.

Copies of the student attendance report from MRX will be added to the files of children with poor attendance at the end of each term. This will be done by the classroom teacher.

For all parents, data on partial and full absences is included in the half yearly reports and discussed at the half yearly parent teacher conferences.

## Post- School Destinations

This part of the Annual Report 2016, is not relevant to the School



# Southside Montessori School Policy on Enrolment

No change to this Policy occurred in 2016

The following is the full-text of the school's policy on enrolment.

Southside Montessori School is a comprehensive co-educational school providing Montessori education operating within the policies of the National Quality Framework as well as NSW BOSTES for children ages 3-12. All applications will be processed in order of receipt and consideration will be given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, siblings already attending the school and other criteria determined by the school from time to time. Once enrolled, students are expected to act consistently with the school's Montessori ethos and comply with the school rules to maintain the enrolment. Parents also are expected to be supportive of the Montessori education at school as well as at home.

As a Montessori school, Southside enrolls children for 3 year cycles at the ages of 3, 6 and 9. Priority is given to the siblings of Southside Montessori students and transfers of current Montessori (full time) students. Other factors that may influence the enrolment are availability of spaces for particular age groups or gender. Non standard enrolments may be considered providing there is space available.

## Step 1: Enrolment Enquiry

The initial step is to register to attend a school tour. Tours are conducted every Wednesday from 9.30 – 10:30

Interested families can register via our website  
[www.southsidemontessori.edu.au](http://www.southsidemontessori.edu.au),  
over the phone on 9533 1229 or email  
[office@southsidemontessori.edu.au](mailto:office@southsidemontessori.edu.au).

After the tour, the parents will receive an Enrolment Pack containing enrolment instructions, a fee schedule and enrolment form.

## Step 2: Enrolment Application Form

Once the family has attended our tour, they are now eligible to complete the **Enrolment Application Form**. The office is to make sure all documents requested at the back of the application form are attached and that **both** parents/caregivers sign the form and that there is a photo attached to the application. A \$300 non-refundable administration fee applies

## Step 3: Classroom visit/interview

Once we have received the application we will organize a visit to the school for the family and the child to observe in the classroom and meet the teachers. For Primary school, a visit of at least three days will be organised for the applying child.

The school always considers each applicant's educational needs. To do this, the school may ask for additional information and consult with the parents / family and other relevant persons in case additional information is needed and a collaborative plan needs to be developed to facilitate meeting the needs of the student.

## Step 4: Assessment of Places

In most cases, applications are reviewed approximately a term before places become available.

Enrolment is based on balancing the ages and genders of each classroom. That being equal, priority is given to siblings of children already enrolled, Montessori transfers, and then applications are processed by date of receipt.

Consideration is given to parents who reflect an understanding of the Montessori approach.

If the school does not, at the moment of application, have spaces available the application will be placed on the waiting list.

## Step 5: Offer of a Place

Once we are sure that a place is available for the child, we will send a letter and Parent Agreement offering a place at Southside Montessori. The signed agreement should then be returned with an enrolment fee of \$1,100 within two weeks. If this is not observed, the offer of enrolment will be forfeited.

*Places are only offered to children not currently attending the school when we have been unable to fill all available places from within our membership.*

### Conditions of Acceptance for First Child Entering the School

Offers of place must be accepted within 14 days by returning the Acceptance Form which lists the following conditions:

- a non refundable enrolment fee of \$1,100 needs to be paid on acceptance of the offer of enrolment
- each child is expected to attend the school for the entire programme- three years in the case of Pre-Primary and six years in the case of Primary
- membership must be kept current for the duration of the child's attendance at the school
- parents are expected to attend parent education evenings organised by the school
- parents are expected to participate in parent education offers, organised activities, parent teacher interview events.

### Conditions of Acceptance for Siblings

Conditions of acceptance for siblings are the same as for a first child. The sibling priority is only applied if the elder sibling has completed or has the intention of completing the full program (i.e. pre primary or primary).

### Timing of Entry – Pre-Primary

The school adheres to the Montessori principle of staggered entry to enable maximum attention to be given to each new child in the class and to assist the children to adjust to their new environment.

Commencement dates are determined by the school.

## Timing of Entry – Primary

The child moves to Primary at the sign of readiness as determined by the class teachers.

## Transfers

There is no automatic right to transfer between Montessori schools but every attempt is made to offer a place to a transfer, subject to the above criteria being met.

Once children have commenced in a class at the school, they will not be transferred to another class. (Only exceptional circumstances may be considered at the discretion of the Principal)

## Deferrals

Requests by parents for deferred entry are generally not granted but each case will be considered on its merits. Requests for deferred entry must be made in writing to the school Principal.

On the other hand, the school may advise a deferred start in which case a place will be held without imposition of fees until the entry date given by the Director.

## Confidentiality and Privacy

The School respects the privacy of the families and staff who make up the school community. It is the school's policy to ensure that all information obtained by the School in relation to personal circumstances of children and their families will be kept confidential unless:

- the family concerned authorises disclosure of the information, or
- the School is obliged to disclose the information pursuant to health regulations or other applicable laws.

## Sources

Montessori Australia Foundation  
Association of Independent Schools NSW

## Review

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years. Review will be conducted by management, staff, families and other interested parties.

# Student Welfare Policy

No change to this Policy occurred in 2016

The following is an excerpt from the school's 'safe and supportive environment' policy.

The school wishes to promote a learning environment where all teachers and pupils should be mutually supportive. The school community should respect each other and not engage in conduct which undermines this mutual trust and support, and also respects the philosophy and ethics of the school.

The school encourages consultation between all members of the school community in matters which affect them. The school will provide both formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate communication between those with an interest in the student's education and wellbeing taking into account the limitations as outlined in the Privacy Act. This may include communications between some or all of the following – student, parent or guardian or other significant family member of the student, teacher, Principal, representative of an appropriate government, welfare, health or other authority.

The school has implemented measures designed to promote the safety and wellbeing of students, particularly having regard to its professional judgment as to what is required in such matters as:

- appropriate levels of supervision
- security of buildings
- procedures in case of fire
- use of grounds and facilities
- excursions, travel on school related activities
- other appropriate matters.

School staff ensure that all students are adequately cared for and supervised while undertaking both onsite and offsite activities, bearing in mind the type of activity and age of students involved.

The school has Codes of Conduct for staff, parents and students, which may be supplemented by specific rules and directives. The Codes of Conduct include such matters as:

- the rights and responsibilities of students, parents and staff within the school community
- behaviour management
- the management and reporting of serious incidents.

The school has access to pastoral care resources and can advise parents and the school community of the different options available to them.

The school staff are able to make preliminary identification of students with additional needs and provide families with an option of specialists who can make more detailed assessments. The school and staff can provide appropriate levels of support to assist students with their individual student programs (ISP) and education whilst at school. This is done in consultation with the intervention specialist or team. Students requiring support or medication are supervised and monitored during these times.

# Anti-bullying policy

No change to this policy occurred in 2016

The following is an excerpt from the school's 'behaviour management and discipline' policy.

Our 'Behaviour Management and Discipline' policy outlines a whole of school approach whereby teachers, peers and parents are actively involved in working together to address and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

We define inappropriate behaviour as behaviours that, as a consequence, hurt, threaten, frighten or exclude someone by physical and non-physical means. If these behaviours take place over an extended period of time by a person or group towards another person or group, this constitutes bullying.

Our policy provides examples of what is commonly regarded as inappropriate behaviour. These include:

- continuously interfering with the work of others
- verbally abusing a person or group by calling them unpleasant names or by writing nasty notes and/or messages or by using unpleasant gestures and/or language.

In order to deal with inappropriate behaviour, staff at Southside Montessori School will:

- model positive relationships in their day-to-day dealings with members of the school and model positive ways of resolving disputes
- positively reinforce students for behaving in an appropriate positive manner
- be knowledgeable about and educate students about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the processes that have been set in place to address inappropriate behaviour at this school
- be familiar with our school's behaviour code and management system, including the contents of this policy.
- physically harming a person or group or physically intimidating them by threatening physical harm or by destroying their belongings
- encouraging their friends or people they know to verbally or physically threaten a person or group, or asking them to harass, embarrass, ignore or exclude that person or group from activities
- demonstrating recurring behaviours that result in property destruction, wilful defiance or injury to others.

In order to deal with inappropriate behaviour, staff at Southside Montessori School will:

- model positive relationships in their day to day dealings with members of the school and model positive ways of resolving disputes
- positively reinforce students for behaving in an appropriate positive manner
- be knowledgeable about and educate students about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the processes that have been set in place to address inappropriate behaviour at this school

- be familiar with our school's behaviour code and management system, including the contents of this policy
- respond immediately, decisively and consistently to cases of inappropriate behaviours brought to their attention by student, parents and/or colleagues
- respond to early signs of distress in students. These can include an unusual lack of concentration or inappropriate behaviours such as aggressive behaviour outbursts and poor class or school attendance
- seek advice and support from colleagues when unsure as to how to respond to and address specific incidents  
encourage student to report situations of inappropriate behaviour by listening carefully and avoiding giving judgments when reports are made, and remaining calm and understanding of the student's/parent's/colleague's concern

Our policy also outlines our expectations of students. A clear understanding of appropriate behaviour by students contributes significantly to making the school a safe place. For this reason, our school expects all students to:

- contribute to a safe learning environment by being respectful of others
- positively interact with members of the school community in their day-to-day dealing and resolve disputes in positive ways  
be knowledgeable about the different types of inappropriate behaviour and their causes and consequences. Students are given strategies for preventing and addressing inappropriate behaviour and are made aware of the processes that have been set in place to address these episodes in this school

Appropriate behaviour requires a community approach based on the Montessori philosophy of the school. This is why our school encourages parents to:

- be positive role models in their interactions with other people
- be knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the processes that have been set in place to address such episodes in this school
- encourage children to interact positively with other people in their day to day dealings and enact positive ways of resolving disputes
- positively reinforce children for behaving in an appropriate positive manner
- inform their children about effective strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour (e.g., the need to inform a teacher and seek assistance if they are experiencing antisocial behaviour at school, and the importance of not responding aggressively to such behaviour as this can serve to intensify aggression).
- contact the child's class director as early as possible if they are concerned
- allow the school to investigate and manage the situation and be aware of the importance of working as a community in a cohesive manner.

The school has a comprehensive process for managing serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour. This process is based on the principles of procedural fairness and involves parents in any decision to suspend or expel a student. The key steps in this process are outlined below.

- The child will be asked to leave the group and/or told to sit in a different spot and work by himself/herself.
- The child will lose some privileges as decided by their class teacher, for example, stay in for part of the playtime or miss out on a special classroom activity.
- The child's parents will be notified and the incident will be recorded in the child's records.
- A meeting between the parents and teacher will be held to discuss the child's behaviour and consequences that are to follow.
- If the behaviour continues, then a meeting will be held between the parent, teacher and principal to reach a decision on strategies to modify the child's behaviour. The strategies may include obtaining professional intervention from a specialist, such as a behavioural psychologist. A record of the meeting will be made and signed by all parties.
- If the behaviour still continues, the child will be sent home to reflect on his/her behaviour.
- If the behaviour still continues despite strategies and reasonable goals being set, the child may be suspended or expelled. The decision to expel a child will be made by the Principal having advised the Board.
- At this stage, the parents will be notified in writing, detailing specific inappropriate behaviour and outlining the school's intended follow up actions. This will be agreed upon by all parties before the expulsion is final.

The policy also makes it clear that these processes do not necessarily have to be followed in sequence. The process followed will depend on the seriousness of the behaviour. Some serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour will result in immediate exclusion from the school either on a temporary or permanent basis. The principles of procedural fairness and parental involvement will also apply in these situations.



# Student Discipline

No change to this Policy occurred in 2016

The following is an excerpt from the school's 'behaviour management and discipline' policy

The positive model of behaviour management and discipline within a Montessori environment is based on self-discipline where concentration, focus and independent learning happen without contention or interruption. Children are respected and misbehaviours are handled with the focus on the child and the consequences of their behaviour.

Parents and staff have a responsibility to work together so that children clearly understand the rules and possible consequences of violating rules. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare children to function as social assets. We encourage parents and caregivers to use the positive model of behaviour management in the home and to support its implementation in the school.

The school will establish and implement appropriate behaviour management practices for students that are consistent with the philosophy of the school.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- our school is a secure and safe environment free from threat, harassment and intimidation
- teachers, parents and students are aware of and encouraged to implement positive strategies to prevent and address inappropriate behaviour
- teachers, parents and students are knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the procedures that have been set in place to address episodes of inappropriate behaviour in this school
- teachers, parents and students are committed to collaborate on maintaining a safe and friendly environment
- students are taught appropriate peer interaction skills, conflict resolution skills, and are encouraged to and positively reinforced for interacting with members of the school community in a positive manner
- teachers are aware of their role in fostering the knowledge and attitudes that will be required to achieve the above aims.

In accordance with the Education Reform Amendment (Corporal Punishment) Act 1995, Southside Montessori School does not permit corporal punishment of students attending this school, nor sanction corporal punishment of students by non school persons.

*'We discovered that education is not something that the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being.'*

-Maria Montessori

# Complaints Policy

*This policy was updated in 2016 and replaces the Family- Schools Communication Policy*

*Revisions were made to include further detail and provide clearer structure on how this policy continues onto the Grievance Policy.*

**The following is an excerpt version of the School's Complaints Policy.**

Our school encourages parents to:

- have respectful, direct and informal relationships with staff and other parents
- model the kind of respectful and positive social interactions which are expected of children in a Montessori learning environment
- act respectfully and appropriately towards, and in the presence of, students
- ensure your child/children arrive at school on time
- discuss issues or concerns about the school, staff or students respectfully, using these procedures
- follow school policies as well as any directions from staff.

**What should I do if I have a concern?**

From time to time parents or other members of the school community may need to approach the School in order to:

- discuss the progress or welfare of your own child
- express concern about the actions of other students
- enquire about school policy or practice
- express concern about the actions of staff

When problems or concerns arise, procedures need to be followed so that solutions are reached as soon as possible and a safe and harmonious school environment is maintained. It is always important to organise a time to talk with the staff at the school in an unhurried and confidential atmosphere. The best results usually flow from working together.

The following guidelines aim to:

- provide a guide in order that concerns are dealt with in an open and fair manner
- ensure that the rights of students, staff and parents are respected and upheld
- support sensitivity and confidentiality.

**Related Policy and Guidelines:**

Southside Montessori Pre and Primary School Grievance Policy

Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors

Behaviour Management and Discipline policy

“Dealing with family law related issues in schools and TAFE NSW” Guidelines for staff, NSW Department of Education and Training

Natural justice/procedural fairness fact sheet, Ombudsman NSW

‘Onpsych Starter pack’ for schools and parents

# Grievance Policy

This policy was updated in 2016

Revisions were made to make clearer connections to the preceding policy (Complaints Policy)

Additional information was added to include the introduction of "Onpsych" services to members of the School community.

The following is an excerpt of the School's Grievance Policy.

Southside Montessori School is based on Montessori philosophy which develops an atmosphere of mutual acceptance, respect and support between students, staff, parents and care givers.

The following guidelines aim to:

- deal with complaints in an open and fair manner
- ensure that the rights of students, staff and parents are respected and upheld
- support sensitivity and confidentiality
- help reach an agreed solution.

What is a grievance?

A grievance is generally defined as 'a wrong considered as grounds for complaint, or something believed to cause distress' or 'a complaint or resentment, as against an unjust or unfair act'.

In the context of the School, this means that you have followed the guidelines in the "Complaints policy" but you and the School have not managed to resolve the issue. It is at this point that your complaint is considered to be a grievance.

Exceptions to this policy

This policy does not cover grievances raised by staff of the School. There are separate policies and procedures for these issues. Please see Staff Grievance Procedure

Who can lodge a grievance?

Grievances can be raised by:

- students against students
- students against staff
- parents against staff
- parents against students
- staff against parents
- staff against students

What if I am unhappy with the way the School handled my complaint?

You may write to the Chair of the Board of the School. Your letter must include the steps taken by you to resolve the issue and a suggested solution. You must do this within 10 working days of receiving the School's written response to your formal complaint.

You may email your letter to the Chair of the Board at [board@southsidemontessori.edu.au](mailto:board@southsidemontessori.edu.au). This matter will now be classified as a grievance.

## What action will the Board take to resolve my grievance?

The Board will appoint a Dispute Committee to review the School's handling of your complaint and make sure that the procedure used to investigate the issues was fair.

The results of this review will be discussed by the Board. The decision will be communicated to you, and the person the formal complaint is about, in writing. You will receive this within 10 days of the Board's decision.

## **The Board's decision is final.**

## Is counselling available as part of lodging a complaint or grievance?

Yes. The School has an arrangement Onpsych to provide psychological services to young people and their families.

The School will refer you to Onpsych. If you feel that you or your child needs to use this service, please contact the school office.

## Will I have to pay for the counselling?

No. The services provided by Onpsych are provided free of charge through Medicare. You or your child is entitled to up to a total of 10 sessions each calendar year.

However, to access this service you will need a referral and Mental Health Plan from your GP. This will require a double appointment with your GP.

If your GP does not bulk bill, then you will need to pay for the double consultation. Standard Medicare rebates will be available for the consultation with your GP.

This first referral will entitle you to 6 free sessions. If you feel that further sessions are required, you will need to get another referral from your GP. There may be a cost to this if your GP does not bulk bill.

Under some circumstances, parents or schools request special reports or assessments as part of counselling. These services are not covered by Medicare and are charged to either the parent or school by prior negotiation.

## Will lodging a grievance, complaint or concern affect my child's enrolment?

In some instances concerns, complaints and grievances may arise from time to time and it is important that they are addressed.

Raising a concern, complaint or a grievance may affect your child's enrolment. If the grievance is found to be vexatious or malicious, the School may consider discontinuing your child's enrolment at the School.

## Related Policies and guidelines:

Complaints Policy

Grievance Procedure- Staff

Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying statement for employees, contractors and volunteers 'Natural justice/procedural fairness fact sheet', Ombudsman NSW

'Onpsych Starter pack' for schools and parents

## Public Disclosure of School Policies

The above policies are highlighted as being in place in 2016 to ensure all aspects of the School mission for providing student welfare are implemented. All policies listed have been revised, updated and initiated for the 2016 year. All staff have been briefed on the content of the above policies. Policies listed are available in hard copy in each teaching space and centrally in the School Office for staff and parent access.

Soft copies are also available for staff on the staff intranet.



REPORTING THEME 9: Other School Policies

## Achievement Priorities Identified for 2016

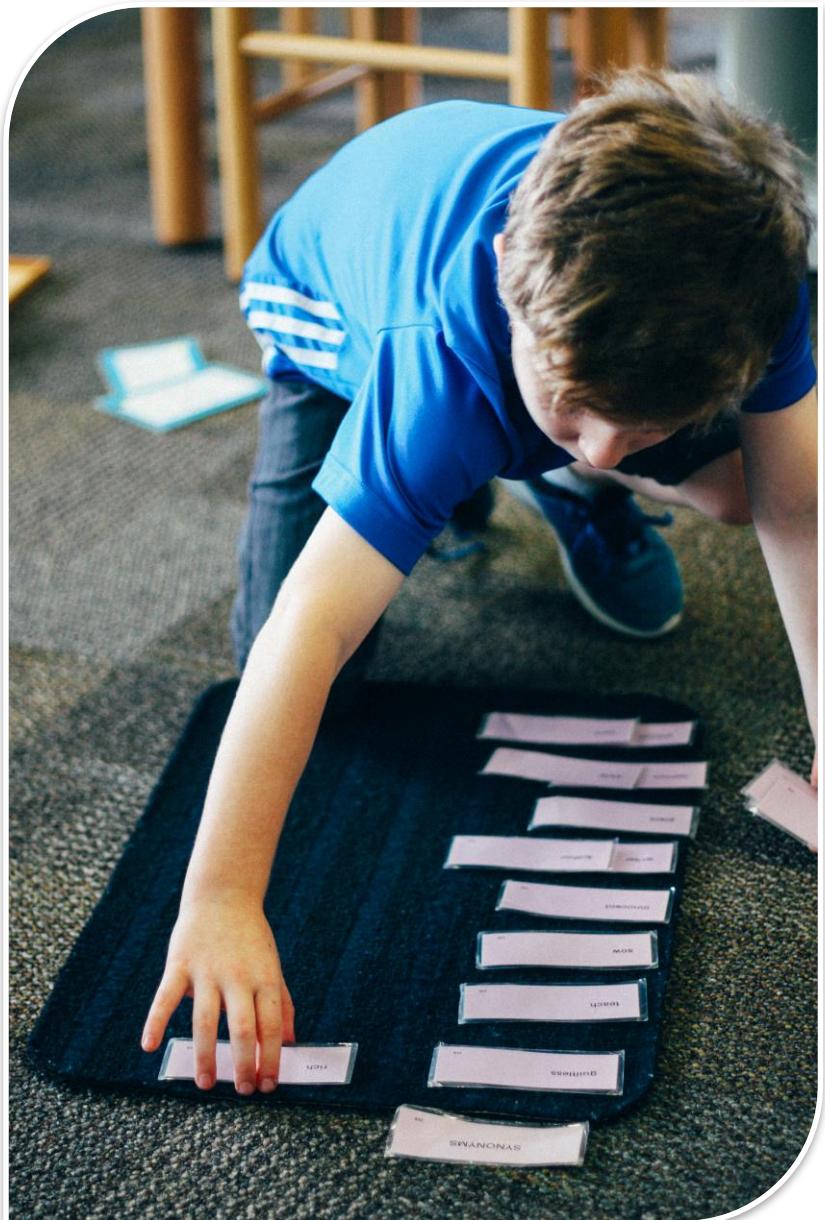
Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and Learning	Connection of EYLF outcomes to student Portfolios.	2 Semester Portfolios were sent home to parents in 2016 for Cycle One and Cycle 2 students. Each with clear ties to the Montessori National Framework, EYLF and BOSTES.
	Review and update reporting for ACECQA and BOSTES outcomes mapped against the Montessori National Framework for Cycle One	A great deal of review has occurred across the whole school to further align required outcomes of the governing bodies
	Improve literacy intervention strategies for BOSTES Cycle One to Three learners. Implement MultiLit and MiniLit programs across the School	Successful implementation of a learning support area and staff. Processes and procedures in place for identifying students in need of literacy intervention. Staff qualified to instruct and deliver the MultiLit and MiniLit programmes.
	Continue and review implementation of differentiation strategies and learning support provisions	
	Review horizontal and vertical mapping for Montessori National Framework curriculum against BOSTES/EYLF requirements for Cycle One to Three	A successful undertaking began in 2016 to template and create clear mapping reviews of curriculum as well as initiating further cross curriculum mapping



Area	Priorities	Achievements
Staff Development	Continue professional development for all staff. Scoping for a whole school approach to Professional Learning	Staff professional learning plans begun, and whole school scoping initiated with set PL requirements met.
	Roll out and train staff in IT platforms, SENTRAL, O365	Administration programs of O365 have been introduced to staff and transitioning from Gsuite begun
Parent Education	Refine parent education opportunities and school based shared social events.	Throughout the year Parent sessions relating to literacy, transitioning, academics and celebratory events, Founders Day, Dad's soccer morning and breakfast, shared lunches, Science Fair afternoons, Olympiads, etc were held.
	Collect data for volunteer WWCC	Further parents were able to apply for WWCC to assist at School events and a full register of these has been created.
Student Achievement	Introduce further co-curricular offerings	2016 saw a more varied and well rounded introduction of cocurricular offerings, including Yoga, Gymnastics, IT, Drama, Athletics, Touch football.
	Create further opportunities for Creative Arts options	<b>The Festival of Dangerous Ideas</b> featured in 2016, a week long interdisciplinary project that saw the Creative Arts take centre stage by offering script writing, videography, costuming, puppetry and story writing.
	Create extenal support mechanisms for student access to: Speech Pathologist, Psychologist (OnPsych) Diagnostic Assessment specialists, Occupational Therapists	2016 saw Southside work collaboratively with a series of external services for parents to access on school premises. Speech Pathologists, Psychological services from OnPsych and OT services

## REPORTING THEME 10: School Determined Priority Areas for Improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Administrative Development	Streamline administrative procedures and practices	2016 saw a great deal of work done to improve administrative practices
	Prepare for ACECQA registration	ACECQA registration achieved.
School Board Development	Undertake compulsory training requirements	This saw the 2016 Board Directors attend the AIS Governance Symposium as well as Directors undertake individual online training



# Montessori Grace and Courtesy

Southside Montessori School actively support and promote the Montessori framework of Grace and Courtesy. This is an integral part of our school culture and the wider philosophy of Montessori education. Respect, responsibility and self-directedness are at the core of our daily teaching.

Southside Montessori School is a non-denominational, non-competitive learning environment inclusive of diverse cultural backgrounds and belief systems.

The School encourages student awareness of local and global community issues and celebrations. Montessori Education fosters an understanding of the interrelationship between man and nature and Southside Montessori School supports the ethos of *Education in harmony with life*.

Southside Montessori students participated in numerous activities in 2016 to support many worthwhile causes, celebrations and events.

These included:

- Reconciliation Week events
- Mothers Day festivities
- Scholastic Book Fairs
- Harmony Day events
- Games Day Olympiads
- Founder's Day Celebrations
- Remembrance Day events
- Assistance Dogs Australia
- Jump Rope for Heart
- Festival of Dangerous Ideas
- School camps
- African Drumming
- Opera Australia performances
- Healthy Harold
- Community services visits- Police/Fire
- Dog safety training
- Writers workshops
- Puppeteering workshops
- End of Year Concert

*'Education's purpose  
is to replace an empty mind  
with an open one.'*

-Malcolm Forbes

## Parent, Student, Teacher Satisfaction 2016

2016 saw the continuation of the Principal's Open Door policy ensuring that all staff, students and community members had the opportunity to discuss personal and educational matters as the need arose.

The School continued the established strong commitment to parent participation. Our Parent and Friends group initiatives throughout the year continued with a focus on *fundraising*, with internal and external events held, including a trivia event, Bunnings BBQ'S and a family movie evening.

*Fun raising* was also an important component of the P&F Groups work in 2016 with student centered events organised to support community building and collegiality. The level of parent attendance at School organised events increased, with many more parents coming to information evenings and meeting with staff at Parent, Student, Teacher conferences. The introduction of events celebrating family and community were exceptionally popular, as was the Father's Day Breakfast and students verses Dad's soccer tournament. Both of which received very positive feedback from Parents and students alike.

Issues raised by some parents related to the facilities and the renew and refurbishment of these. An upgrade to some of the classrooms and the creation of a Library space was undertaken towards the end of 2016 and further work is planned for 2017.

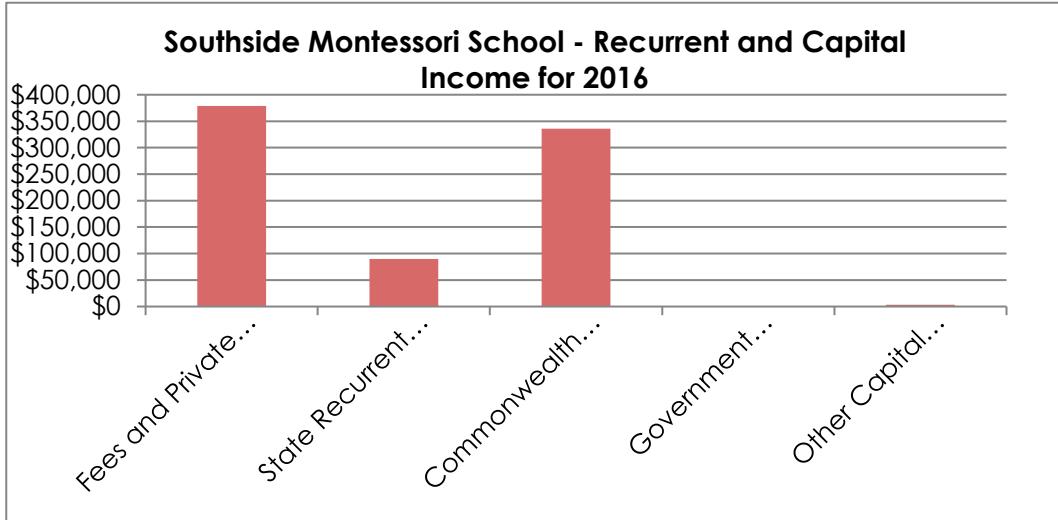
The School operated a more inclusive co-curricular program for students in 2016, with external services conducting yoga sessions, touch football, swimming lessons, gymnastics and movement skills as well as IT and coding classes. Further interdisciplinary opportunities and project based learning was also introduced to the students in the inaugural *Festival of Dangerous ideas*. Data gathered from students around the extension of the co curricular programs undertaken at school and the proposed continuation of these into 2017 showed high student respondent satisfaction with the addition of these and high enjoyment and satisfaction in participation of these events.

Students have open access to informal discussions with all staff of Southside Montessori School. Each morning formal classroom discussions take place to allow students to discuss current topics, set agendas for work cycles and to share relevant information. This open access is inclusive of access to the Principal also.

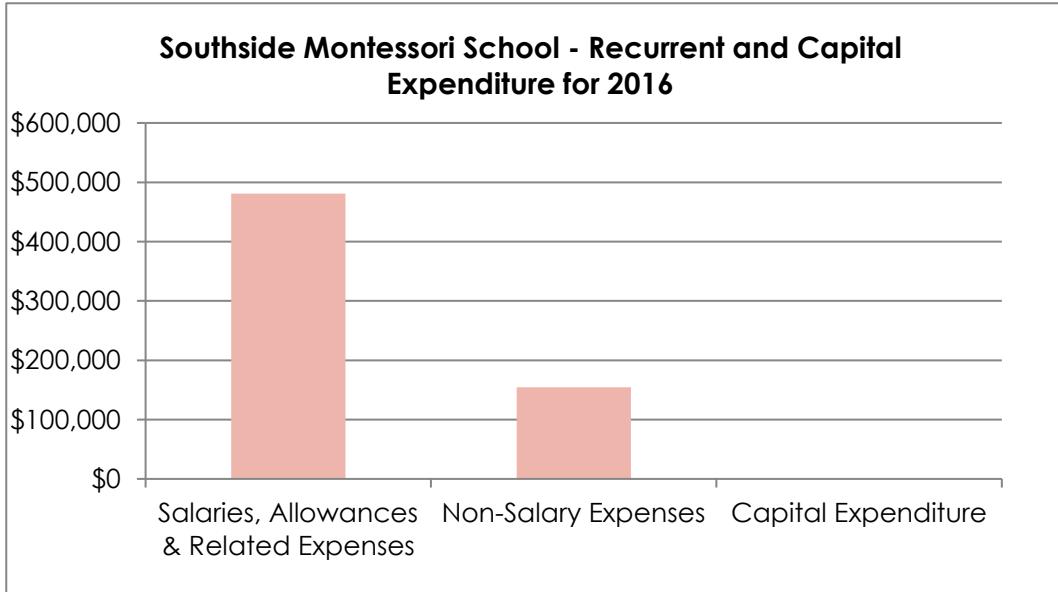
Informal feedback from teaching and administration staff through the regular introduction of staff meetings and open floor discussions indicated that staff were very happy with the introduction of new processes and procedures as well as newly created opportunities for collegiality and collaboration. Staff were generally satisfied with the direction of change in school operations and work roles and showed appreciation for recognition of their work value and opportunities afforded to them in professional development. Staff morale feedback was positive and this was indicated in the attendance at numerous staff social gatherings offered throughout the year.

# Financial Information

## 2016 Recurrent and Capital Income



## 2016 Recurrent and Capital Expenditure



# 2016

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