

Message from the President

Karuna Montessori is a community based, not-for-profit pre -school and Kindergarten that follows the Dr Montessori's philosophy. 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.

2017 was the second full year with our new Principal Mary Batterham. The transition has been smooth for staff, students and parents. Our focus is to maintain these high student numbers and continue to grow our waitlist.

We continue to have a full U3 program with a strong waitlist. Our new Under 3 location has been well received by parents and we continue to have a good relationship with the landlord, The Scouts.

All staff and parents continue to work towards the success of Karuna and our school is moving from strength to strength based on their efforts.

Educational program and practice

- Weekly gardening sessions with a volunteer parent.
- Weekly music lessons continue to be provided for the children based on the Kodai Solfa methods.
- Kindergarten Children went on trips to the Wildflower Garden in Ku-ring-gai, and the Eco centre at Kimbriki.
- The children had a series of incursions from-
- Drumbeat; Living Safely with Dogs Program; Fabuloso Feast of Fernanda puppet show;
- Outback Australia Show enriched the children's knowledge of Indigenous culture;
- Parent Participation - weekly program for parent guided groups in the garden
- Anthony Stimpson Australian Rockpool Displays came to service and introduced the children to the concepts of protecting our beaches

Children's health and safety

- In 2017 all primary contact staff regularly employed in the preschool completed courses relevant to their area of responsibility. The Principal participated in the following:
- Governance Symposium
- Child Protection Awareness
- Montessori Curriculum Workshop
- Autism training
- Road Safety Workshop
- Eco House Workshop- Kimbriki

Other staff members participated in the following professional development courses in 2017:Kimbriki Eco house on worm-farming (Kimbriki); Supporting the Dyslexic Child Workshop Alison Awes (MAF); Fundamental Movement Workshop; Autism workshop; QIP webinar; WHS webinar Information Evenings; Working bees.

All Educators at service hold a current First Aid Certificate (including Asthma and Anaphylaxis training) and have completed all relevant checks including Working with Children Check, Mandatory Reporting Declaration and Staff Code of Conduct.

Physical environment:

- All pine structures were sealed with oil including new playground, sandpit internal pine and surrounding structure
- Large gum tree was pruned and health checked by arborist
- Improving the soils using the produce of the worm-farms.
- Sand pit sand was completely removed and replaced with fresh sand
- Regular maintenance of the gardens and garden beds
- Rotted verandah 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
- New carpet was laid throughout the classroom
- Parents continued maintenance of gardens, playground and school overall through regular working bees.

Staffing arrangements: Although the required Educator to Child ratio stands at 1:11, Karuna surpasses at 1:10

Relationships with children

No changes. The existing high standard continues to be upheld.

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** – held each term on a variety of topics, all families invited.
- **Parent participation:** parents are invited into the classroom on a monthly basis to engage in activities with students. Parents decide the activity, examples are reading, cooking, and gardening).
- **Staff surveys** have been a very 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 within 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** 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

Education For Life

Karuna Montessori School is a composite 3-year environment with up to 30 children, 10 of which are Early Stage 1. Imagine 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. It emphasises hands-on-learning, self-expression, independence and discovery in a beautifully crafted environment of respect, peace and joy.

The Montessori approach is focused on 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. Montessori children are guided in their learning by specifically trained adults using scientifically designed materials appropriate to each developmental stage.

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 seven Key Learning Areas as defined by the Department of School Education Syllabus are each an integral part of the Montessori program for 5-6 year olds.

- Language
- Mathematics
- Practical Life
- Sensorial
- Cultural
- Physical
- Social & Emotional

Contextual information about the school

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

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

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

N/A

Student performance in state-wide tests and examinations

N/A

Professional learning and teacher standards

Staff participated in the Annual Montessori Conference day run by the Montessori Australia Foundation.

Description of the Professional Learning Activity	No of Staff Participating
• Montessori Information Workshops. Topics include Practical life activities, Power of Language, Mathematics	2
• AIS Governance Symposium	1
• Eco House Workshop- Kimbriki	1
• Environmental sustainability Working Bee	2
• Kids and Traffic workshop	1
• Autism webinar	1
• QIP Refresher Webinar	1
• Start Strong Funding webinar	1
• Storytelling & Poetry	1
• Munch and Move New program initiatives	1
• Literacies & Drama	1
• Film and discussion 'Most Likely to Succeed'	1
• Writing Tips and Tricks for quality documentation	1

• AIS Montessori Curriculum workshop	1
• Introduction to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) in Early Childhood.	1

The average expenditure per staff member on professional learning in 2017 was \$500.

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 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

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



Workforce composition

For staff composition, please refer to the school's data on the My Schools website:

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

We are a small school of a maximum of 30 children in the classroom which would include a maximum of 12 in the Kindergarten year. We have 1 full-time teacher, 1 x full-time Teacher Assistant, 3 x part-time Teacher Assistants and 1 part-time Administrator; all of whom are non-indigenous.

Senior secondary outcomes

N/A

Student attendance and management of non-attendance

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

Average Attendance:

Year level	Attendance rate %
Kindergarten	92%

Management of Student Non-Attendance

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

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12 (where relevant)

N/A

Post-school destinations (secondary schools only)

N/A

PRIORITY OF ENROLMENT POLICY

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 prerequisite 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 on the basis of race, religion, beliefs, social position or sex (other than for the balance described above), and also with regard to physical or mental disabilities.

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

This policy seeks to make the enrolment process more transparent.

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

The following procedures deal with the enrolment issues of:

- Waiting Lists
- Placement Offers
- Open Days

- Parent Information Evenings
- Other Issues

AIM

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

Procedure

Waiting Lists:

- The Enrolments Administrator is responsible for keeping a waiting list of prospective enrolments. In the first instance, this list should be in chronological order, giving preference to potential families who have been on the list the longest and within the above parameters. 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 drop-outs 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 (some time after their 3rd birthday), and continues for approximately 3 years. The minimum time for its completion is determined as follows:
 - a) if the child's birthday falls on or before 30 June, then completion of the cycle means completion of the Term Four in the year of the child's 5th birthday;
 - b) a child whose birthday is in the above category, is encouraged to stay for an additional year, being the end of Term Four in the year of the child's 6th birthday;
 - c) if a child's birthday falls after 30 June, then completion of the cycle means completion of Term Four in the year of the child's 6th birthday.
- A Placement Agreement is to be signed by the child's parents/guardians, the 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.

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.

ENROLMENT & ORIENTATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

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

AIM

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

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

PROCEDURE

Pre-enrolment Observation

Our school welcomes visits from prospective families and children. The Administrative Assistant makes a time for the visiting family to come for an observation of the class environment. At that time, she will answer questions which may include:

- service philosophy and curriculum;
- approaches to documentation, curriculum and planning;
- the physical environment;
- administrative matters, cost and fee payment methods; and
- how to provide feedback.

Offer of Placement

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

The Enrolment Committee will conduct an enrolment based on the Priority of Enrolment Policy and the family will be asked to

accept the offer of the position. The placement offer package will include the Placement Agreement, an invoice for the Bond and Placement Fee, and current fee schedule.

Acceptance of Placement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pre-Commencement Visit

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

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

Upon commencement

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

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

On the child's first day of attendance, educators and staff will welcome the family and the child, ensuring that there is a space

ready for the child's belongings. Educators will reassure the family and assist with separation if required. The child will stay for approx 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 educators will contact the family to let them know how their child is settling if necessary.

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

Evaluation

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

Characteristics of the Student Body

For details of the characteristics, please refer to the school's data on the My Schools website:

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

Policies for Student Welfare

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

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

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

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 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.

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.

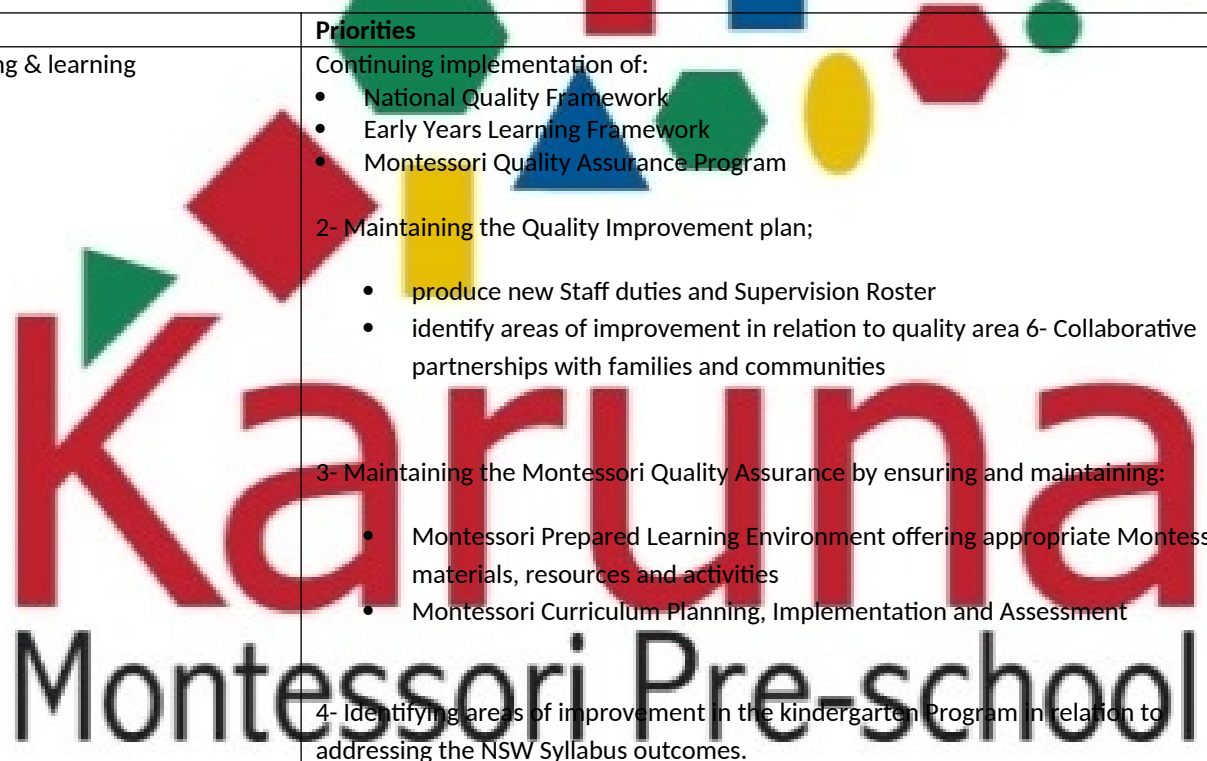
Complaints & Grievances Policy

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

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

School-determined improvement targets

2017 Priority areas for improvement:



Area	Priorities
Teaching & learning	<p>Continuing implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Quality Framework Early Years Learning Framework Montessori Quality Assurance Program <p>2- Maintaining the Quality Improvement plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce new Staff duties and Supervision Roster identify areas of improvement in relation to quality area 6- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities <p>3- Maintaining the Montessori Quality Assurance by ensuring and maintaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montessori Prepared Learning Environment offering appropriate Montessori materials, resources and activities Montessori Curriculum Planning, Implementation and Assessment <p>4- Identifying areas of improvement in the kindergarten Program in relation to addressing the NSW Syllabus outcomes.</p>
Facilities & Resources	<p>Maintenance of vegetable garden & composting resources.</p> <p>Continuing to upgrade resources & furnishings.</p> <p>Upgrade outside fixtures and lawn.</p>
Student Welfare	<p>Staff training in First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis training.</p>

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.

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.

Annual Report

Procedures for implementing the policy include:

- identification of the position of the staff member responsible for co-ordinating the final preparation and distribution of the annual report to the Board and other stakeholders as required
- for each reporting area, identification of the position of the staff member responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the relevant data and for providing the relevant information to the coordinator for inclusion in the report
- determination of the specific content to be included in each section of the report and reviewing this each year to ensure ongoing compliance, relevance and usefulness
- preparation of the report in an appropriate form to send to the Board of Studies
- setting the annual schedule for:
 - delivery of information for each reporting area to the coordinator
 - preparation and publication of the report
 - distribution of the report to the Board of Studies and other stakeholders
- provision of information for My School website, as requested.

Requests for additional data

From time to time the Commonwealth Government, through the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth and the NSW Government, through the Minister for Education and Training, may request additional information. To ensure that such requests are dealt with appropriately, the Treasurer is responsible for coordinating the school's response. This person is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to the Board of Studies in an appropriate electronic form.

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.

Karuna
Montessori Pre-school

Summary financial information

