

Castlecrag Montessori School Annual Report 2016

Castlecrag Montessori School runs one class for 3 to 6 year olds. The morning class operates from 9am until 12 noon with after school care offered until 2:30pm. The children in the Kindergarten program attend school from 9am until 2:30pm.

Rationale

This report is required to meet the educational and financial reporting obligations for the Board of Studies of NSW. The details are recorded in the Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual which regulates Kindergarten through to Year 12.

Application

Only a very small proportion of our students are affected by these regulations. Therefore, in most cases, the information provided relates to the whole school rather than the Kindergarten program.

Period of Report

This report covers the 2016 school year.

Reporting Requirement

A new policy was drafted in 2004 to ensure that the annual report would be written and ready for submission in June. The policy was presented to the management committee in August 2005 for approval and has since been ratified. It is attached as Appendix One.

Theme 1: A message from key school bodies

2016 Presidents Report

Welcome everybody, and thank you for attending.

Castlecrag Montessori School has a proud history in promoting the Montessori philosophy on the lower north shore, and 2016 marked the schools 25th anniversary of delivering excellence in Montessori Education.

In the past year the school experienced a period of stability and maturation following the changes implemented in 2015, and it was extremely pleasing to see our student numbers steadily grow throughout the year. This is largely owed to our incredible teaching staff, who continue to show tremendous dedication and commitment to the education of our children, our tireless Committee members whose disciplined approach to change management and expenditure resulted in a smooth and successful transition, together with our warm and supportive parent community who regularly rise to assist when needed. Together we have strengthened our school greatly over this past year.

We had another great year promoting our school to the local community under the leadership of our Marketing and Enrolments Officer Tessa Adams, and our new Marketing

Co-ordinator Melanie Kowalski. Among this year's many success stories: we enjoyed steady growth in enrolments, a marked increase phone enquiries and observations, and record number of attendees at our Open Days. The school also featured in the Northshore Times, the Crag and the Northbridge 202 highlighting our thriving CMS community in action at the Olympic Family Fun Day celebrating 25 years of service in Castlecrag, and of course our upcoming Open Day. Congratulations to Tessa and Mel, truly amazing result for the school.

We would also like to thank all those parents who have contributed to the many new initiatives introduced this year in the pursuit of full future enrolment. The responsibility for promoting our beautiful little school rests with all of us, and you should all be proud of what we have achieved in 2016.

Congratulations to our Class Liaisons Audrey Yau and Carrie Nammuni for the implementation of the CMS Social Chat Group, this brilliant initiative has been instrumental in supporting and strengthening our CMS community.

In light of our growing student numbers in 2016 we were thrilled to welcome a lovely new Assistant in term 3, Sarah Wheatley. Sarah decided to change careers and began studying for a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood at Macquarie University this year. She has 3 children of her own (17, 15 and 10 years old) and is very interested in Montessori philosophy. Sarah is a warm, nurturing and positive person and a great addition to our community.

Conversely, it was with much sadness that we received Katharine Watts resignation from the school effective from 9 December 2016. For over 5 years Katherine has been a respected and much loved member of staff, we wish her the very best of luck with her new job.

In 2016 the school renegotiated its 'Teaching and Support Staff' & 'Operational Staff' Multi Award Agreements with the help of the Australian Independent Schools Association (AIS). We are very pleased to report that 100% of staff voted yes for their respective Multi Award Agreements, and this process is now concluded for another 4 years.

Congratulations to Cameron Dickman on getting the new 2017 license agreement in place. After a long and complicated negotiation, which included both St John's Parish and the Anglican Church Property Trust, we have agreed to pay a sum of \$32,721 in 2017, which represents an 8.5% increase over the CPI. Furthermore, in recognition of the property improvements the school has made in 2015 and 2016, the Church has agreed to provide financial support in a separate agreement between St John's Parish and the School, reducing the effective fee in 2017 to \$29,943. This is an extremely positive outcome for the school, all other lease conditions remain the same as the 2016 lease agreement. The only downside to this agreement is that its term of the license is again 12 months. Cameron has kindly agreed to stay on until our new Treasurer, Tim Metcalf is brought up to speed with negotiations across 2016/2017 and beyond, and the CMS Facilities Development Plan is agreed upon.

In December 2016 the Exec introduced the CMS strategic plan (2017-2020) to ensure the school continues to differentiate the value in a Montessori Education and remain a respected and elite provider of early childhood education in the community.

From this process two major objectives were identified for 2017, to secure the schools tenancy through a longer term lease agreement, and to continue to seek registration and accreditation from relevant educational regulatory bodies.

In December of 2016 the school recommenced its application for a re-assessment of its rating with ACECQA, and initiated its application with the Montessori Australia Foundation (MAF) for the Montessori Quality Assurance Program. Having these accreditations will support our ethos and reputation for providing a quality early childhood education, and enable the school to return higher on the searches on sites such as www.montessori.org.au, www.careforkids.com.au and www.mychild.com.au.

We are thrilled to advise that in December of 2016 the school was successful in its application for the NSW Governments new educational initiative Start Strong. There are significant operational changes the school will have to implement in order to accept this funding, but on the whole this is a very positive outcome for the school. Details of the implications and benefits for CMS families will be communicated next.

We are very proud and looking forward to celebrating the school's 25th Anniversary with the grand opening of our 25 Year Anniversary Garden Project early in 2017. The outdoor classroom and garden will create a beautiful engaging natural space for our kids to learn about the issues that impact their environment, celebrate sustainability, and understand their own health and wellbeing. I would like to thank Willoughby Council and the Community Small Grants Program, Michael and Andrew Bray from Bray's IGA, Harriet Halmarick from McGraths Northbridge, the Cadbury's Fundraising Grant Program, and the greater Willoughby Community. Without your interest and support this project would not have been possible.

To support this ambitious project our amazing Fundraising Co-ordinator Mary-Ellen Fernandez and has been tirelessly raising funds over the past two years. Fundraising is such an important activity here at CMS, through the amazing generosity of our wonderful parents, donating time or funds, we are able to provide our children with exceptional quality of resources to build on their educational experiences here at the school.

Our major fundraising event for 2016 was The Art Night held at Martha's Restaurant in Castlecrag, where we sold artwork created by each child at the school under the guidance of the super talented An Morrison. We also raised funds by silent and live auction. The prizes were very generously donated by families, An and the local community. This event raised \$13,500- which is a fantastic outcome. During the year we also held several smaller fundraising events: Entertainment Books; Gum Nut Guessing Competition; Northbridge Fireworks Cake Stall; CMS Family Olympic Fun Day and the CMS Bunnings Sausage Sizzle.

Being part of the CMS committee is a great privilege. To work with such a talented, passionate and dedicated group of parents who generously give so much of their time to the

governance of the school. Sadly, this AGM sees us farewell some of our Committee Members, and I wish to extend my thanks to each of them.

Jamie McKay – CMS Treasurer

Tessa Adams – CMS Marketing and Enrolments Officer

Cameron Dickman – CMS Vice President

Thank you all so much for your dedication, and often valiant service.

In finishing I am pleased to report that Castlecrag Montessori School is well positioned to continue to deliver high quality education to many more children in the years to come.

Director's Report

AGM Report 2016

Classroom

We began the year by placing a new range of Montessori materials on the shelves, thanks to the generosity of the parents at our Art Night fundraiser. It is always very exciting receiving new things for the classroom and it makes such a difference handling beautiful objects. We also inherited lovely new cushions for the book corner upstairs and purchased some games for CASA. We changed the layout of the classroom to create more nooks for individual work and blocked paths for running from one end of the classroom to another.

The entrance to the school was beautified with the building and planting of a garden bed by Clive and Pamela. It made a huge difference to the aesthetics of the top area and made the environment so much more welcoming as you enter. Many thanks to Clive and Pamela for your hard labour and gardening expertise. An planted some hanging baskets for the veranda and indoor plants to green and soften the classroom. An and the extended day children also replanted the vegetable garden several times during the year. The plans for the building of a deck to replace the softfall outside the classroom were finalised and each child took home a pot plant to nurture for planting in the new garden beds. Fundraising for the deck continued throughout the year and the deck was completed in December whilst we were on holidays. An amazing achievement, thanks to the hard labour, generosity, optimism and dedication of the parent body.

On International Peace Day (September 21) we participated in a global Montessori event in which Montessori children around the world sang the song "Sing Peace around the World". We sang in our allotted time, as did the children situated in different time zones, creating a 24 hour period focused on the wish for world peace.

The firefighters from Willoughby Fire Station visited in Term 3, which was an exciting event as always. David, Mark and Brian reminded us of what to do in case of fire, and we practiced rolling on the ground if your clothes have caught on fire and getting down low to go, go, go and escape a smoke filled room. Of course the most thrilling parts of the morning were climbing into the back of the fire truck and hosing the imaginary fire in the garden.

It was a highly enjoyable and educative experience for us all.

Our lovely group of extended day children visited the Sydney Bike Track in Term 3. They scootered around the track with great glee, learning to obey the working traffic lights and take note of the zebra crossings. They also slid down the giant slides, enjoyed a picnic lunch and explored other areas of the park. Needless to say all slept well that night, including An and Aliza who led them up hill and down dale.

Staff

An took some of her long service leave in Term 1 to holiday in Portugal and Stephanie was on leave in Term 2 to celebrate her mum's 80th birthday in England. Debra changed her work routine from 4 shorter days to 3 longer days and in Term 2 Katharine reduced her hours to 1 day a week. In Term 4 Sarah joined our staff as an assistant on Friday mornings. We farewelled Katharine with great sadness at the end of the year as she left to take up a full time position with another preschool.

Parent Education

In Term 1 we had a very happy evening with 16 people attending a wine and cheese night. New parents were welcomed and there was much discussion about the key ideas underpinning Montessori philosophy and how we differ from other preschools.

The introductory evening for new parents was held in Term 2 and well attended. In Term 3 we explored the maths materials at the Parent Meeting and in Term 4 parents experienced life in the classroom as they worked with the materials and socialised. We also invited our mums in to observe for Mothers' Day and the Dad's in to observe for Fathers' Day. The observations were particularly successful and we decided to pursue parent education mornings rather than evenings in 2017 in order to boost attendance levels and entice parents to observe the classroom in action on a more regular basis.

Professional Development

As the year progressed we reviewed our quality improvement plan to assess if and how well we were achieving our goals. In Term 4 we wrote the Quality Improvement Plan for 2017, incorporating ongoing goals and formulating new targets for the oncoming year.

An and I attended a workshop on Autism Spectrum Disorders in Term 2 and in Terms 2 and 3 all staff explored the development of emotional self-regulation, temperament and character in children, reviewed Work Health and Safety workplace instructions and the child protection policy, and tested the new mandatory reporter guide.

An, Fiona and I applied for and were granted accreditation as Proficient Teachers with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (now known as NESA). We are now required to complete 100 hours of professional development every 5 years, 50 hours of which must be completed in NESA accredited workshops.

Administration

A new Road Safety Policy was written and the Sun Protection Policy was submitted to SunSmart for reaccreditation, which was granted. The Geography curriculum was revised to fit in with the new syllabus and Safety Data Sheets were updated.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Executive Committee for their tireless work and selflessness. The school depends on your expertise and generosity to continue operating – without your support

the school would cease to function. Thank you for the many hours you give and the dedication you demonstrate on a continual basis. Thanks to all parents for helping out whenever you can and making this such a lovely environment for the children and staff. I am so grateful to be part of such a caring community and look forward to new adventures in 2017.

Theme 2: Contextual Information about the school

Castlecrag Montessori School is a parent-run, non-profit, pre-school and kindergarten for three to six year old children located on Sydney's North Shore, near Middle Harbour. It provides a rich Montessori environment that fosters a love of learning and a sense of community responsibility.

The school is staffed by experienced and committed Montessori Directors who have qualifications in both Montessori teaching and early childhood education.

The fundamental goals of the Montessori philosophy and environment are to develop a love of learning, concern and responsibility for self and others, self-discipline, initiative, independence, and creative intelligence and imagination. Individual programs and lessons promote co-operative rather than competitive learning.

Castlecrag Montessori School is registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority and adheres to the regulations of the NSW Department of Education. The school is a member of the Montessori Australia Foundation. Further information about the school can be found on our website.

The student population consists of children aged from 3 to 6 years of age. The cultural mix of the school includes Chinese, Japanese, Sri Lankan and Caucasian families, almost all of whom are from a high socio-economic status. In 2016 there were 34 children enrolled in the school, 6 of whom were Kindergarten students. There was an even amount of boys and girls (17 girls and 17 boys). Of the 6 children in Kindergarten, we had 2 girls and 5 boys in the class.

Theme 3: Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

This component of the annual report is not applicable to our school as we only provide education for children in kindergarten.

Theme 4: Senior secondary outcomes

This component of the annual report is not applicable to our school as we only provide education for children in kindergarten.

Theme 5: Teacher qualifications and professional learning

Details of all teaching staff

Total number of teachers: 3

Category	Number of Teachers	Qualifications
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<p>Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Teacher 1: Diploma of Teaching (Primary); Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood); Diploma of Montessori Teaching (3-6); Graduate Diploma of Counselling.</p> <p>Teacher 2: Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood); Diploma of Montessori Teaching (3-6)</p> <p>Teacher 3: Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Education; Advanced Diploma of Montessori Education (6-9), Diploma of Montessori Education (3-6)</p>
<p>Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one of the recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications.</p>	<p>0</p>	

Number of Teachers	Professional Learning Activities	Average Expenditure
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Health and Safety - Review of policy, statement and all procedures, rewriting of some procedures. 	<p>\$272.73</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing of Quality Improvement Plan <p>Review of policies and practices in relation to education, leadership, management, children’s health and safety, staffing etc.</p>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of emotional self-regulation, character and temperament in children. 	

<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection: review of indicators of abuse, use of mandatory reporters guide with fictional scenarios, review of child protection policy. • Supporting children with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the classroom. • Cultural competence: awareness of our own world view, developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences, gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, and skills for communication across cultures. • Montessori Australia Leadership Meeting 	
	<p>The members of the Executive Committee completed the 4 online Governance Modules provided by the AIS.</p>	

Theme 6: Workforce composition, including indigenous

School Staff 2015

Teaching Staff: 3

Full time equivalent teaching staff: 2

The full time teacher is the Director.

Classroom assistants: 3

Full time equivalent classroom assistants: 1.6

Non-teaching staff: 1

Full time equivalent non-teaching staff: 0.6

All staff are Caucasian. We have no indigenous staff.

Theme 7: Student attendance and retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools

The average attendance rate for kindergarten this year was 98%. This was higher than the daily attendance rate in 2015 (94%).

Management of Non-attendance

The school implements policy and procedures for the management of student non-attendance. The following information is taken from the Student Attendance Policy.

The school will monitor the daily attendance and absences of students in the School by maintaining daily register for each class of students. Marking the roll each day is the responsibility of the class teacher. Contact from parents advising of absentees, via email or telephone will be provided to the class teacher on arrival.

Student absences from classes or from the School will be identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the staff member responsible. The school will contact the Department of Education in the unlikely event of a child leaving the school without the intention of enrolment at another educational provider.

Unexplained absences from classes or School will be followed up in an appropriate manner with the student and /or their parent or guardian. In the event of no parental advice with regards to absences the class teacher will initially contact by telephone after 1 day and then by email. The parents will need to fill in an absentee form on return. Unexplained absences will be reported to the School Director by the class teacher for her determination on the

follow up required. (This might include, but is not limited to, direct contact with parents or reporting to the Department of Education.)

The school will record the attendance of children and notify a parent or guardian in cases of poor attendance.

Where unsatisfactory class or school attendance is identified the attendance issue and any action taken will be recorded as appropriate on the student file. All absentee forms will be filed in the class roll.

Student Retention Rates and Post School Destinations

This component of the annual report is not applicable to our school as we only provide education for children in kindergarten.

Theme 8: Enrolment policies

Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Preamble

Enrolment and orientation processes procedures form the strong foundation for relationships between families and early education and care settings and promote a quality experienced of education and care for children.

Goals

Enrolment and orientation processes are planned and implemented.

Due consideration is given to culture and language in undertaking processes.

Documentation, including authorisations, is completed during the enrolment and orientation process.

A thoughtful process is planned in consultation with families, to orient a child and family to Castlecrag Montessori School.

Procedure

Castlecrag Montessori School welcomes visits from prospective parents. Parents are invited to complete a classroom observation during their initial enquiry. This provides them the opportunity to view the classroom in action and meet one of the teachers. Questions can be answered and the Montessori philosophy more fully explained.

Following an observation, a family may wish to place their child's name on the waiting list. After consideration of the availability of a position by the Administrator and Class Director,

the child/ren may be offered a place at the school. The family will be asked to accept an offer of the position and sign a bond agreement.

Enrolment

The Administrator will conduct an enrolment process following the acceptance of an offer. An enrolment package will be given to the family and will include:

- New Starter Letter
- A confidential information record that includes authorisations and immunisation record;
- A current fee schedule and payment details
- A definition of the 3 year cycle
- Fee Invoice
- School Calendar
- Arrival and Departure Policy

Prior to conducting the enrolment interview the Nominated Supervisor should consider the language and cultural needs of the family.

Families will provide the following, prior to the agreed start date for the child:

- A completed confidential information record including authorisations
- A bond payment and the enrolment fee as outlined in the fee schedule
- Current immunisation records. It is a requirement of admission at the school that the child's immunisation status is as recommended by the NSW Department of Health. In the event of an outbreak, non-immunised children will be required to withdraw from school for the duration of the outbreak.
- Birth Certificate, Passport or other identification,
- Current contact information for parents and emergency contacts;
- Information on the child's additional needs (including medical conditions, health and developmental concerns).

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

Admission Policy

The Castlecrag Montessori School admits students of any religion, race, colour and national or ethnic origin. In allocating places to children on the waiting list, the following factors are taken into account:

- Department of Education and Communities requirements
- the age and gender balance of children in the School, with age the dominant factor
- the time spent on the waiting list
- whether the child is a sibling (see below for details regarding sibling priority)
- the commitment of the families to the full three-year program
- the commitment of families to the philosophy and policies of the school
- whether the child is transferring from another Montessori school
- the special needs of children with learning difficulties and whether the school can accommodate that child.

Access and accommodation adequacy for disabled persons shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of the DDA, including but not limited to:

- Accessibility of all required teaching and specialist spaces.
- Provision of suitable facilities to suit the needs of disabled persons.
- Provision of non-slip trafficable surfaces.

The Student Population

The student population consists of children aged from 3 to 6 years of age. The cultural mix of the school includes Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Indian and Caucasian families, almost all of whom are from a high socio-economic status.

Sibling and Transferee Priorities

Priority will be given to siblings of children at the school, provided that:

- siblings are entered on the waitlist within 3 months of birth, or where this is not possible (e.g. for transferees), within 3 months of the older sibling joining the waitlist.
- the family has continued to demonstrate support for the School and Montessori education, including commitment to the three year cycle. In the event that an older sibling does not complete the three-year cycle, priority wait-listing for a younger sibling will be forfeited and the younger sibling will revert to the general waitlist based on date of application. (This does not apply to families who have prematurely withdrawn a sibling from the three year program due to extraordinary circumstances as defined in the Bond Agreement).

Priority may also be given to children transferring from other Montessori schools provided a place is available.

Determining Readiness

The decision to admit a child is discretionary and is taken only after there has been a parent interview with a Director and an assessment of the child's readiness. Children should be capable of separating from their parent/carer, be fully toilet trained (as required by Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011) and be able to use the bathroom facilities unaided.

The placement of new children in the class is always done with a view to creating the most harmonious and age/gender balanced groups, in order that the class will function at its maximum potential.

The above guidelines apply at the discretion of the Executive Committee, whose decision is final.

Notice of Placement

Demand often exceeds positions available. Bearing in mind that parents want to know as early as possible whether their child has a place at the school, places may be offered well before the child turns three. Towards the end of the term preceding the proposed start date, an interview involving parent and child is scheduled with the Director. Providing the Director is confident of the child's readiness, a classroom visit is arranged and a place is confirmed. If the Director determines the child is not ready, a more suitable start date will be found.

Very occasionally after commencement, the Director may deem that the child is not settling well, (e.g. acute separation anxiety, ongoing toileting problems). The Director and the Executive Committee may then advise the parents of the following actions:

Request the child's attendance at the school be delayed until a more suitable time, usually no longer than one term's delay.

Request to terminate the child's enrolment. In this situation the Parent Bond would be refunded in full.

Children are admitted to the school in Terms 1, 2 and 3. Children are rarely admitted in Term 4, and then only at the Directors absolute discretion.

Children are admitted usually in the term in which they turn 3 years of age. However, the Director determines the exact date. When several new children are due to commence in one term, the individual start dates are staggered to assist the children in adjusting to their new environment, as well as minimising disruption to the rest of the class. Children will start in the designated term in order of readiness relative to the other children. The start date is dependent on the Directors' assessment of the child *irrespective of whether or not the child*

is a sibling. Older children are admitted only in special circumstances (e.g. transferring from other Montessori schools) and only if a vacancy occurs. Tuition fees for new children to the school will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for the child's first term at school. The fee payable will be based on the number of weeks (or part thereof) that remain in the term at the time the child commences. (Participation levy & Membership fees will not be calculated on a pro rata basis).

It is currently a requirement of admission at the school that the child's immunisation status is as recommended by the NSW Department of Health. The school needs to sight an Immunisation Record for each child. In the event of an outbreak, non-immunised children will be required to withdraw from school for the duration of the outbreak.

In accordance with the changes in legislation to the Public Health Act 2010, effective from January 2014, proof of a child's vaccination status must be provided prior to enrolment. Parents/guardians must provide documents from their GP that show the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or;
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or;
- has a parent who has an objection to vaccination, or;
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations.

The amendment will prevent the school from enrolling a child from 1 January 2014 unless the mandatory documentation is received. An interim vaccination objection form is available for use during 2016 while the Public Health Act undergoes its scheduled review process.

Prior to starting at the school, parents are also required to complete a Confidential Information Form (see Appendix XVI). This form is seen only by the Director and is filed in a locked cabinet.

Definitions and Policies on 'Extended Day'

The Three Year Cycle

The Montessori philosophy works in three year cycles and the Montessori classroom is structured accordingly. When the child commences the cycle he attends school for three hours per day from 9am to 12 pm. When the Director determines the child is ready he will move into the "extended day" part of the program and will attend school from 9am to 2.30pm.

Early withdrawal of a child from this learning cycle is disadvantageous for the child and for the school. The child misses the most fruitful part of the Montessori experience. The final

year in the classroom is the most rewarding in the cycle. It offers the child the opportunity to build on and consolidate skills, to realise the potential of the Montessori materials and to extend and enrich his understanding of the world. If a child is withdrawn prematurely the remaining extended day students lose one of their peers and the younger children lose a potential leader, teacher and role model. The older child cannot simply be replaced with a younger child and hence the age and gender balance of the class is disturbed.

Readiness for Extended Day (Kindergarten)

The Director will determine when a child is ready to commence extended day. This will usually, but not always, be on or around the child’s 5th birthday. In assessing whether a child is ready to commence extended day the Director will take into account a number of factors including the following:

- the child’s social, emotional and learning needs;
- the child’s capacity to remain at school for the longer day;
- the needs of the extended day group;
- the needs of the classroom as a whole.

Completion of the Three Year Cycle

The Director will determine whether a child has completed the three year cycle. Usually, but not always, this will involve completion by the child of between three and seven terms of extended day, with completion occurring at the end of the school year. Extended Day is defined as a minimum of three terms. By then the Director and parents of the child will have consulted regarding the child’s readiness to move into another environment.

The following table illustrates scenarios for start and end dates for completion of extended day as per academic and bond agreement requirements. This table is not a reflection on when a child is eligible to start extended day but simply a reference for the completion of the cycle.

STARTS ED	MAY FINISH	MAY GO TO
2016 Term 1	2016 Term 4 (4 terms)	
2016 Term 2	2016 Term 4 (3 terms)	2017 Term 4 (7 terms)
2016 Term 3	2016 Term 4 (2 terms)	2017 Term 4 (6 terms)

Castlecrag Montessori School has approval from the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards to educate children up to and including the kindergarten year.

Failure to complete the three year cycle will result in a loss of priority on the school's wait list. It will also result in only a 50% refund of the bond paid at the time of accepting an offer of enrolment (assuming correct written notice is given). The only exception to this rule is when exceptional circumstances apply, as outlined in the Bond Agreement.

Prior to formally commencing at the service:

1. Prior to the child's first day of school, educators and staff will familiarise themselves with information about the child from the enrolment information provided. They will ensure they are aware of any medical conditions and how to manage them if required.
2. The teacher will meet with the parent/s and child and complete the new starter checklist. The teacher will engage with the child and provide activities for him/her to complete, should he/she wish to do so, whilst chatting with the parent/s and answering any questions they may have. The teacher conducting the interview will be replaced by another member of staff to ensure required ratios are met.
3. If the parents are concerned about separation difficulty, the child is invited to come for playtime the week prior to commencement. A family member will remain on the premises during these orientation visits. The child cannot be left at the service until they have formally commenced at the service.

Upon Commencement

On the first day of attendance educators and staff will welcome the family and the child, ensuring that the child's locker is ready for their belongings. Educators will reassure the family and assist with separation if required. Parents are welcome to phone and check how their child is settling.

Relevant Legislation

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Act Application) 2010: 175,
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 102, 160, 162, 177, 181, 183, 184
National Quality Standard: 6.1.1, 7.3, 7.3.1, 7.3.5

Definitions:

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) ("the DDA") - Commonwealth legislation which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability, or their associates, in relation to access to, and use of, "premises" that the public (or a section of the public) are entitled to use.

Related Policies

Confidentiality

Privacy

Bond

Fee

Parent Staff Communication

Anti-Bias

Cultural Diversity

Sources

Community Child Care Co-operative

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – www.deewr.gov.au

Theme 9: Other school policies

A. Student Welfare

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

1. Minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
2. Supports the physical, social, academic and emotional development of students
3. Provides student welfare policies and programs that develop self-worth and foster personal development

To ensure that all aspects of the school's aim to provide for a student's welfare are implemented, the following policies and procedures were in place (or developed) during 2015:

POLICY	CHANGES / PROPOSED CHANGES IN 2016	ACCESS TO FULL TEXT
Policies Relating to Student Welfare		
<p>Pastoral Care</p> <p>The school aims to create an atmosphere in which children feel secure, valued and encouraged in their learning, growth and social development. Pastoral care is an approach to education which attempts to value and develop each member of the school community. It addresses the social, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of the students so that each child has the opportunity to reach</p>	<p>No changes were made in 2016.</p>	<p>The full text of the school's pastoral care statement can be accessed in the policy manual that each parent receives via email. Parents may request a hard copy by consulting the office administrator.</p>

<p>his/her potential, and acquire the skills to cope with life.</p> <p>The school aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a safe and healthy environment in which the children feels secure and nurtured; • Promote the development of the whole child; • Help children grow in self-worth, confidence and independence of thought; • To protect children from physical, social, emotional and intellectual harm • To encourage tolerance, empathy and sensitivity to the needs of others; • To promote warm, positive and respectful relationships between children, staff and parents. 		
<p>Child protection policy encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals • Definitions • Strategies • Mandatory Reporting • Documentation • Disclosures of Abuse • Allegations of Abuse against staff etc. • Informing the educator, volunteer, student • Rights of all parties • Confidentiality 	<p>No changes were made in 2016.</p>	<p>Issued to all staff members and members of the Executive committee. Staff sign policy annually. Full text in policy manual. Policy manual issued to all parents via email.</p> <p>Parents may request a hard copy by consulting the office administrator.</p>
<p>Appropriate Behaviour Policy</p>	<p>No changes made.</p>	<p>Policy manual and parent handbook emailed to parents. Hard copies are available in the office.</p>

<p>Work Health and Safety Policy and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General safety procedures • Emergency and evacuation procedures • Cleaning and Maintenance Procedures 	<p>No changes made to the WHS Policy in 2016.</p> <p>WHS guidelines (including procedures and workplace instructions) reviewed.</p>	<p>Full text in WHS guidelines. The WHS guidelines are kept in the office. Parents may request a copy by consulting the office administrator.</p> <p>Policy manual and parent handbook emailed to parents. Hard copies are available in the office.</p>
<p>Risk Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excursion Policy • Sun Protection Policy • Safe and Supportive Environment • Accident Prevention • Supervision Policy 	<p>No changes made.</p> <p>No changes to policies in 2016. Sun Protection Policy resubmitted to NSW Cancer Council for reaccreditation in the SunSmart Program. Policy was approved.</p>	<p>Full text of risk management procedures in WHS Guidelines. Parents may request a copy by consulting with the office administrator.</p> <p>Parents received soft copy of policy manual via email. Parents may request a hard copy by consulting the office administrator.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with Additional Needs • Student Attendance • Arrival and Departure • Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations • Transition to school • Medical Conditions • Nutrition policy • Anti-Bias • Aboriginal awareness • Inclusion/Cultural Diversity • Lockdown Procedure • Immunisation 	<p>No changes made to these policies in 2016.</p>	<p>Full text in policy manual which was issued to all parents via email.</p> <p>Parents may request a hard copy by consulting with the office administrator.</p>

<p>Communication Procedures encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Participation and Communication • Formal interviews • Informal interviews • Observations • Parent Education Evenings and Committee Meetings 	No changes made.	Information available in Parent Handbook
<p>Management and Operation of the School Policies and procedures encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality • Recruitment • Procedural Fairness • Privacy • Educational and Financial Reporting 	No changes made.	Full text in policy manual. Parents may request a hard copy by consulting with the office administrator. Documents in Governance Folder in Office. Parents may request a hard copy by consulting with the Office Administrator.

B. Summary of Anti-Bullying Policy

Castlecrag Montessori School rejects all forms of bullying. All children and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from intimidation, victimisation, harassment, disruption and discrimination.

All members of Castlecrag Montessori School community contribute to preventing bullying by promoting and modelling appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships. The policy

provides a definition of bullying and the responsibilities of the staff and school community in relation to this issue. Full text of the school’s anti-bullying policy is available to all members of the school community through the policies manual via email or in hard copy from the school administrator. No changes were made to this policy in 2016.

C. Summary of Policies for Student Discipline

Students are required to abide by the school’s rules and to follow the directions of teachers. The disciplinary model within the Montessori environment encourages self-discipline and positive approaches to misbehaviour. Conflict resolution techniques are employed to resolve conflict in the classroom and on the playground. In extreme cases contact is made with parents of the student. No changes were made to the policies for student discipline in 2016. Full text of the school’s disciplinary policy and associated procedures is available to all members of the school community through the policies manual.

The 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 the school. All behaviour management actions are based on procedural fairness.

D. Summary of Policies for Complaints and Grievances Resolution

The school’s policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents. All reported complaints remain confidential and are dealt with in an unbiased manner taking into account the principles of procedural fairness. Parents are welcome to call the school, email, or make an appointment to see the teacher to communicate their concerns. If dissatisfied with the outcome from the initial meeting, subsequent meetings are scheduled with the teacher and the Principal (2nd Meeting) and President (3rd Meeting) in attendance. If the matter remains unresolved the parent may make a written request to have the matter discussed by the Executive Committee and Principal. Formal complaints are to be made in writing and will be investigated and acted upon by the Principal and President.

The full text of the school’s policy and processes for complaints and grievances resolution is provided in the school’s parent handbook and school policy manual. The manual was issued to all parents via email. Parents can request a hard copy from the office administrator. No changes were made to these policies and procedures in 2016.

Theme 10: School determined improvement targets

Achievement of Priorities identified in 2015 Annual Report

Area	Priorities	
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Policies	Develop road safety policy.	Achieved
	Review sun protection policy and submit to SunSmart for reaccreditation.	Achieved
Staff Development	Training on Autism Spectrum Disorder for teaching staff.	Achieved for 2 teachers.
	Review EYLF outcomes and indicators.	Achieved
Staff Welfare	Maintain happy, harmonious relationships and relaxed, nurturing, satisfying workplace culture.	Achieved
Work Health and Safety	Update data safety sheets that are more than 5 years old.	Achieved
	Continue WHS training with all staff.	Achieved
	Make an emergency evacuation bag.	Not achieved
Facilities and Resources	Update photocopier	Achieved
	Update office printer	Achieved
	Beautify garden entrance with replanting and new garden beds.	Achieved
	Construction of deck in downstairs area.	Achieved
	Purchase of bigger banners for advertising Open Day in local area.	Achieved
	Continue negotiations with Glенаеon Steiner School to see if they can take 4.5 and 5 year olds for after school care from 2:30pm to 6pm.	Achieved but service not used.
Administrative	Completion of School Improvement Plan.	Not achieved

	<p>Update inventory</p> <p>Post regularly on Facebook</p> <p>Consider use of app such as Whatsapp or Skoolbag to facilitate communication with and amongst parents.</p> <p>Resource and apply for grants to help fund the remainder of the cost of the garden refurbishment.</p> <p>Continue marketing campaign to increase enrolments for the remainder of the year and next year through better promotion of Open Days.</p> <p>Invite a Montessori Primary teacher to speak at a parent evening to encourage parents to stay for extended day and consider primary education at a Montessori school.</p>	<p>Not achieved</p> <p>Occasional postings</p> <p>Achieved and implemented.</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved for 2016</p> <p>Teacher invited but meeting cancelled due to lack of interest.</p>
Parent Involvement	<p>Continue to explore ways to engage parents in the classroom.</p> <p>Continue to explore ways to engage parents in fundraising activities.</p> <p>Hold a purely social evening for the parent community.</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Social/fundraising evening held.</p>
Curriculum		
English	<p>Create 2 'Little Free Libraries' (one for parents, one for children) to encourage reading at home.</p> <p>Greater use of computer for writing name, words and short sentences.</p>	<p>Not achieved</p> <p>Not achieved</p>

Maths	Greater use of Baric tablets, equal arm balance and scales in exploring mass.	Achieved
Science and Technology		
HSIE	Create new continent boxes with updated pictures of animals, houses, food and cultural celebrations. Organise excursions into the community.	Not achieved One excursion organised.
Creative Arts	Greater emphasis on learning about artists and their style of work. Greater emphasis on identifying the instruments of the orchestra, use of iPad apps. Better use of percussion instruments.	Achieved and ongoing Begun, needs building upon. Not achieved
PDHPE	Greater emphasis on safety: road safety, personal safety, water safety.	Ongoing
History	Monitor implementation of the new curriculum	Achieved
Geography	Review writing of new geography curriculum	Achieved

Achievement of Other Priorities for 2016

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Work Health and Safety		
Parental Involvement	Higher levels of parent participation in parent education meetings.	Strong turn out to both Mothers' and Fathers' Day Observation Mornings. Good attendance at Parent Education evenings in Terms 1, 3 and 4.
Administrative	Gaining of Proficient Teacher Accreditation for 3 teaching staff. Writing of 2016 Quality Improvement Plan.	All teachers accredited as Proficient Teachers Plan written with input from all staff.
Facilities and Resources	Purchase of new Montessori materials. Purchase new cushions for upstairs reading area. Beautify veranda and purchase more indoor plants for classroom.	Funds donated through Art Night used to purchase a variety of Montessori materials. 3 cushions donated. Hanging baskets and indoor plants purchased.

2017 Areas for Improvement

Area	Priorities
Policies	Update the Privacy Policy to reflect the changes in legislation in October 2016. Writing of TAA policies and templates. Writing of Fundraising Policy. Review all policies in preparation for Registration with NESAs in 2018.

<p>Staff Development</p>	<p>Staff to attend the Montessori Whole School Refresher.</p> <p>Staff to observe at other Montessori Schools.</p> <p>Staff to complete online child protection training as a refresher.</p> <p>Director to attend AIS Registration workshops.</p> <p>Develop new performance review template.</p>
<p>Staff Welfare</p>	<p>Continue to celebrate birthdays with the community; retain supportive and positive workplace relations and happy classroom environment.</p>
<p>Work Health and Safety</p>	<p>Make an emergency evacuation bag.</p> <p>Review all workplace procedures.</p>
<p>Facilities and Resources</p>	<p>Opening of new deck and incorporation into classroom routine.</p> <p>Extend school hours to create a longer uninterrupted work cycle.</p> <p>Purchase new book and CD sets for the listening post.</p> <p>Purchase new big books.</p> <p>Create a terrarium for the classroom.</p> <p>Purchase new gardening and cleaning tools for maintenance of new garden beds and deck.</p> <p>Purchase new parent pockets for distribution of information.</p> <p>Purchase new set of long chains to replace broken chain (maths).</p>
<p>Administrative</p>	<p>Appoint New President and Vice President to the Executive Committee for 2018.</p>

	<p>New Executive Committee members for 2017 to complete governance training.</p> <p>Completion of School Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Update inventory.</p> <p>Review Parent Handbook</p> <p>Apply for Start Strong Funding</p> <p>Change Bond to non- refundable Placement Fee</p> <p>Increased marketing activities to increase 2018 waitlist.</p> <p>Review sustainability of school in terms of enrolment numbers and staff ratios.</p> <p>Build a positive working relationship with the new Rector and church wardens.</p> <p>Begin preparation for NESA inspection in 2018.</p>
<p>Parent Involvement</p>	<p>Invite a Montessori Primary teacher to speak at a parent evening to encourage parents to stay for extended day and consider primary education at a Montessori school.</p> <p>Trial Parent Education meetings at 9am in the Observation area of the classroom.</p> <p>Trial change in handover and pick up routines to facilitate children's independence and organisational skills.</p> <p>Increase number of parents involved in fundraising.</p>
<p>Curriculum</p>	
<p>English</p>	<p>Better exploration of storytelling components: character, setting, problem, solution etc. Consider intended audience of story.</p>

	Greater use of computer for writing name, words and short sentences.
Maths	Greater emphasis on data collection and display in tables and graphs.
Science and Technology	More detailed exploration of food, meals and nutrition.
HSIE	Organise excursions into the community. Invite members of the community into school to talk to us. Greater emphasis on roles, rights and responsibilities in the classroom, at home and in the community.
Creative Arts	Ongoing learning about composers and their compositions. Use of Fresh Paint and other apps for creating digital artworks.
PDHPE	Greater emphasis on safety: road safety, personal safety, water safety.
History	Greater involvement of family in communicating their family heritage to the class.
Geography	Deeper investigation of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander site, Country or Place and its importance. Increased use of spatial technologies such as google earth and google maps to explore familiar and non-familiar environments. Use of Montessori Puzzle Map apps on iPad.

Theme 11: Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

It is of vital importance that all of the children experience and understand that they are valued and important members of the school community. Staff and parents work together to care and provide support for the children that will foster self-esteem, mutual respect and a sense of responsibility.

The Montessori environment is structured to promote respect and responsibility in the daily life of the classroom. For example, one of each activity in the classroom fosters patience and respect; activities are replaced in the correct position and in the condition in which they were found to enable others to find and use the activities; tables are cleaned and spills dealt with so that no-one slips; chairs are pushed in to prevent others from stumbling; snack plates are washed and dried so that they are ready for use by another; materials are used in an appropriate way because they belong to everyone. The children also care for the classroom by washing windows, watering plants, dusting shelves, sweeping the playground and mopping the floors. The mixed age group (3-6 year olds) provides the kindergarten children with the opportunity to assist and teach their younger peers and take on a leadership role within the community.

Respect for the child is at the heart of Montessori philosophy. The role of the teacher is to model the behaviour desired in the children taught. As the teacher shows respect for others, the environment and self the child learns to respond in a similar way.

Theme 12: Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

As a parent run and funded school, we not only welcome and encourage parent involvement but depend upon the participation of all families for the continued operation of the school.

The Executive Committee is responsible for matters of school management. Members of the executive committee are volunteer parents elected annually by the parent body at the annual general meeting or elected by a majority committee to fill casual vacancies. The executive committee (President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Administrator and Treasurer) is responsible for managing the non-teaching affairs of the school: staffing, finances, enrolments, building and grounds maintenance, school policies (non-teaching) etc. The stability, dedication and regular reports of the Executive Committee indicated a high level of satisfaction with their roles within the school and satisfaction with the school itself.

Parent meetings occur once a term on Wednesday evenings from 7:30pm. All parents are welcome at these informal meetings, which provide an opportunity for parents to have a say in the running of the school. Monthly accounts and correspondence are presented, enrolment levels discussed and any other matters worked through. These meetings were well attended during 2016, and discussions throughout the year indicated that parents were very happy with the school and willing to donate time, expertise, money and resources. Parents' concerns were related to maintaining fee affordability and the decrease in waitlist enquiries and the need to increase enrolments for 2016/2017 to ensure the school's viability into the future.

Parents also participate in working bees, home tasks, bread and laundry rosters and excursions. Parents are also responsible for fundraising. With \$20 382 being raised and the generous donation of Montessori materials, parent satisfaction is obviously good. Feedback from classroom observations and parent interviews continued to be very positive with many parents registering their appreciation and commenting on their child's love of school. Comments from prospective parents during observations have also been positive, with many impressed at the students' level of independence, concentration and high standard of work.

All four Parent Education and Parent Committee meetings were well attended. The Parent Education events included a wine and cheese night with an informal discussion on Montessori philosophy, an Introductory Evening for new parents, Maths in the Classroom and Become your Child for the Evening. Mothers' and Fathers' Day Observations with morning tea were also well attended and enjoyed.

The survey sent to kindergarten parents at the end of the year also demonstrated parental satisfaction with the school. Of the 5 respondents 5 strongly agreed/agreed that teachers demonstrate a clear commitment to improving learning outcomes and are committed to improving teaching practices and classroom resources. All 5 strongly agreed /agreed that the teachers know how the children are progressing and provide feedback in parent interviews. All respondents strongly agreed that students are taught in a respectful manner, that the school places a high priority on student wellbeing and views families as an integral part of the school community. All respondents also strongly agreed/agreed that the teachers have a clear picture of their child and his/her needs and strengths, that class work is appropriately challenging and that their children see themselves as successful learners. It was also agreed that interactions between parents, staff and children are polite, caring and inclusive. Adjectives describing the school included independence, respectful, nurturing, community, loving, friendly, caring and engaging.

The children demonstrated their satisfaction and enjoyment of school through their eagerness to contribute to the classroom community. They maintained order in the environment by cleaning shelves, tables, chairs and windows; washing cloths and dishes, sweeping indoor and outdoor areas and ensuring activities were replaced on the shelves correctly. They also assisted the new children in their transition to school by helping them with activities, turning on taps, locating materials, keeping them company at playtime etc. All of this was done of the children's own accord and initiative. The children's satisfaction was also evident in their happy demeanour, strong work ethic and developing skills and knowledge. Parents regularly commented on the children's enthusiasm for school and devastation if they were unwell and unable to attend.

In response to a survey all of the extended day children agreed that their teachers knew a lot about what they teach, that they help everyone learn, that they kept learning new things, that they learned how to work with their friends, that the teachers listen to what they say about their work and think it is interesting, that they could talk to the teachers and get help if they were worried or upset, that they were good at learning things, that they learned how to solve problems, that they could help other children because they knew what to do and that the classroom was a nice place to work. Adjectives used to describe school

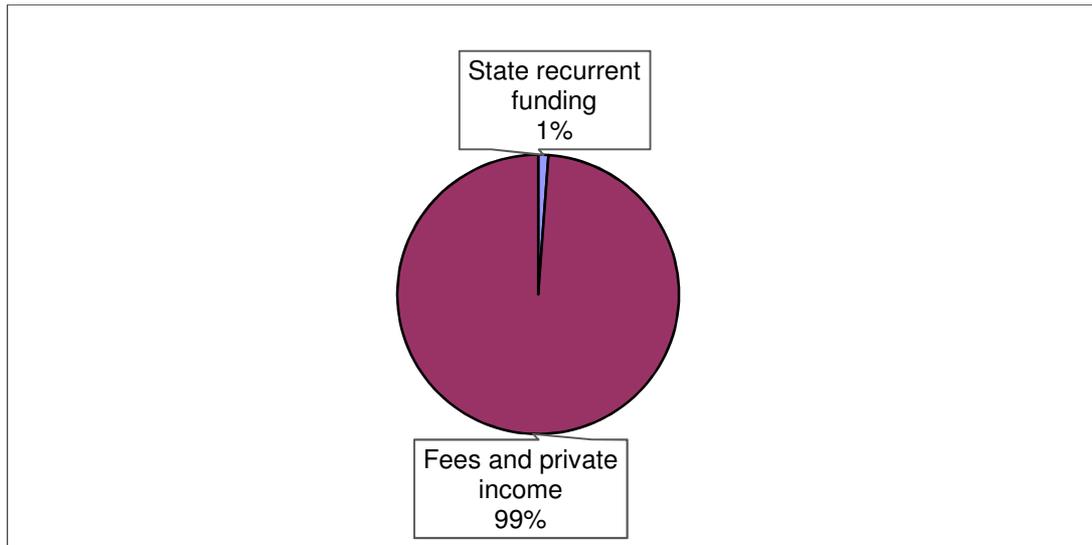
included happy, fun, friends, working, chatting, playing and if you're ever in trouble the teachers will come.

Informal feedback from teachers and assistants indicated a high level of job satisfaction. The staff enjoyed their relationships with each other and believed they worked well as a team. Part time staff were very willing to support each other and the full time colleague whenever the need arose and all staff worked beyond their paid hours each week without being asked to do so. One staff member took extra leave in 2016, and another took 2 weeks of long service leave. The remaining staff happily worked extra hours to ensure staff/child ratios were met and the classroom and office ran smoothly. They noted that they felt well treated and respected by the parent body and particularly the executive committee, who maintained a supportive, understanding and flexible attitude to all. One staff member resigned to take up a full time position at another preschool as we were unable to create a full time position for her. Staff attendance and 86% retention rates for 2016 demonstrated their job satisfaction. One part-time staff member left to take up a full-time position at another pre-school as we could not offer her increased hours.

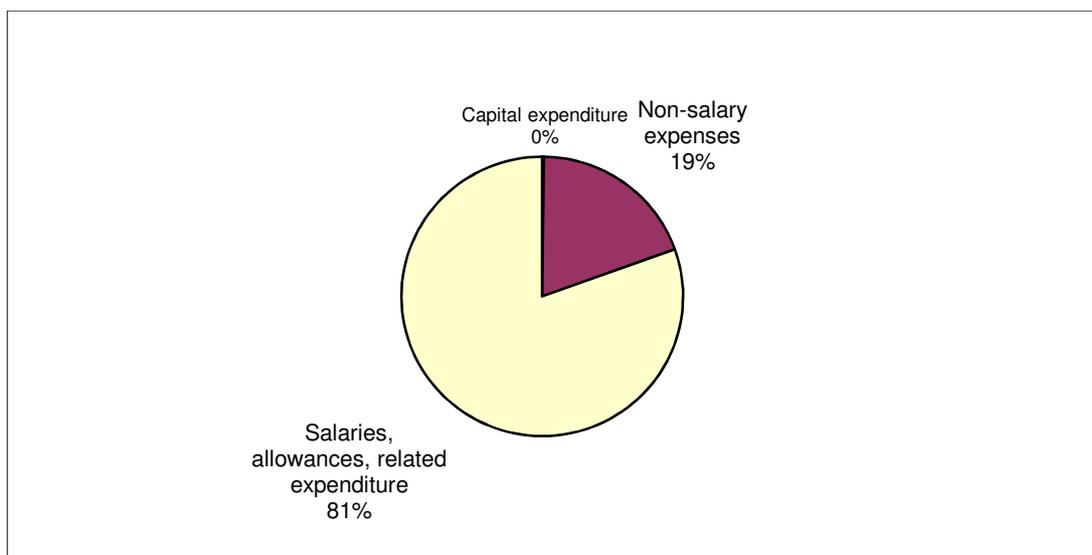
Theme 13: Summary of Financial Information

CASTLECRAIG MONTESSORI SCHOOL SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR END 31 DECEMBER 2016

(a) Recurrent/Capital Income



(b) Recurrent/Capital Expenditure



Appendix A

Educational and Financial Reporting

Policy

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

Procedures

The Director is responsible for coordinating the final preparation and distribution of the annual report to the Board and other stakeholders as required.

The Director is responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of educational data and the Administrator is responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of financial data.

The Director determines the specific content to be included in each section of the report and reviews this each year to ensure ongoing compliance, relevance and usefulness.

The Director ensures the report is prepared in an appropriate form to send to the Board of Studies.

Timetable

Date	Task	Person Accountable
April 1	Review requirements of Annual Report and identify all policies and procedures that need to be revised.	Director (Principal)
May 1	Financial data to be tabled.	Administrator
May 1	Revised policies and procedures to be presented to the Executive Committee.	Director
May 21	Policies and procedures to be signed off.	Executive Committee
June 20	Annual Report to be written.	Director
June 28	Annual Report to be submitted online to NESAs,	Director

	posted on school noticeboard and posted on website.	
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Requests for Additional Data

From time to time the Australian Government, through the Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 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 Director will coordinate the school's response, be responsible for the collection of relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards in an appropriate electronic form.