

# ENROLMENT POLICY



The purpose of the Enrolment Policy is to provide clear guidelines for parents prior to enrolment, the enrolment process and the expectations of parents for continued enrolment at the Farmhouse Montessori School at both the Balgowlah and North Head Campuses.

Our goal at the school to develop and nurture children from the age 2 and to see them graduate at age 12. We have a whole of school approach that unifies our pre-primary and primary communities over two campuses.

## AIM

The Farmhouse Montessori School educates children from Early Childhood to Primary age. This education aims to be consistent with the principles and practices of Dr Maria Montessori. It is important that parents have an understanding of Montessori principles and a desire for their child and family to participate fully in the life of the school. An overview of the philosophy can be found at <http://montessori.org.au/montessori/approach.htm>. The aim of this policy is to ensure that families understand the Montessori principles that underlie the enrolment process.

## STARTING THE ENROLMENT PROCESS

Contact the school via phone or email to ask for an information pack or alternatively the school prospectus waitlist application form and fee schedule are available for download from: [www.farmhousemontessori.nsw.edu.au/how-to-enrol](http://www.farmhousemontessori.nsw.edu.au/how-to-enrol). We encourage applicants to attend a school tour at the relevant campus and bookings can be made on our website. For stage 2 and 3 applicants it is a prerequisite to attend a tour prior to receiving an offer.

1. If you then wish to proceed and put your child's name down for enrolment in the school, you must submit the Enrolment Application form to the school office along with the relevant non-refundable application & Membership fee. All families, even those on the waitlist, must also be current members of the Manly Warringah Montessori Society. This is an annual fee (one membership per family) more information is available on the waitlist application form or from the school office.

You will receive a receipt and a letter of confirmation that your child has been placed on the waiting list. **Please note that being placed on the waiting list does not guarantee that your child will automatically receive a place at the school.**

## THE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR CHILDREN ON THE PRESCHOOL WAITLIST

When allocating places to children the selection criteria takes into consideration, educational policies, Montessori philosophy and DEC guidelines.

The school enrolment policy advises priority is given to children on the waiting list in the following order:

1. Places in the Infant community are prioritised in the following order:
  - Sibling from our waitlist
  - Date of application
- i. Places in Stage 1 (3-6) are prioritised in the following order:
  - children transitioning from the School's infant community if ready.
  - Siblings from our waitlist.
  - Date of application
  - Children transferring from another Montessori School
  - Children transferring from a non-Montessori School
- iii. If places become available in stage 1, an internal waitlist of families wishing to increase or reduce days will be offered to the available places after siblings. However, the total number of 5-day students (including kindergarten) on campus is set at 18. For children who are not in the Board of studies kindergarten class a 5-day a week programme will only be offered on a yearly basis.

Within the Farmhouse Montessori School's criteria for admission the DEC priority intake guidelines are adhered to when making enrolment decisions, in a way that seeks to allocate places to those in the greatest need. The philosophy of Maria Montessori and the makeup of a mixed age group class is also relevant when making these priority decisions.

### DEC PRIORITY GUIDELINES:

- Children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school
- Children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and from low income and/or Aboriginal families
- Children with English language needs.
- Children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective)

Note: During the Coronavirus pandemic priority will also be given to essential service workers.

Priority is on a case by case basis. The priority set out above is always subject to the review and approval of the Principal. As a Montessori school, we must consider the balance of the classroom that are the guiding principles of a Montessori philosophy.

### THE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR CHILDREN ON THE PRIMARY WAITLIST

Offers to the external waitlist are prioritised by siblings of existing students, children transferring from a Montessori school then students applying from a Non-Montessori School. All applications are at the Principal's full and final discretion, following an interview between the Principal, child and parents applying for the place. Upon meeting with the Principal, families must attend an orientation in order to educate the family on the school's philosophy and methodology.

### WHEN WILL I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS A PLACE AT THE SCHOOL?

If you are applying for a place within the next 12 months, the school will update you annually to give you an indication of your current position on the waitlist. However if movement occurs and vacancies arise you will be contacted accordingly.

If you are applying for a place at the school that is not required for a period greater than 12 months, the school will contact you on an annual basis. You are welcome to contact the Enrolment Officer at any time if you have questions regarding your child's place on the waitlist.

### OFFERS OF ENROLMENT

Vacancies generally arise at the beginning of the year, but may occur during the year. If vacancies arise during the year, they will be filled from our waitlist. Offers can only be made to a child of suitable age at the time of the vacancy.

Offers of enrolment for a given year commence in July – August of the previous year. If you are planning to be away during this time, please contact the school, otherwise you may miss the cut-off return date and the place will be given to the next child on the waiting list.

Parents wishing to take up the offered place are required to complete a Conditions of Enrolment form, immunisation history statement stating "Up to Date.", birth certificate, visa & passport details (if necessary) and other child information forms and pay a non-refundable confirmation Enrolment Fee paid into the schools' account and cleared within **14 days** of the receipt of the email to confirm the place. This form is emailed with your letter of offer and includes requests for a current date copy of the child's immunisation record and a copy of the child's birth certificate and passport/visa details if relevant.

Offers of enrolment from the waitlist will be selected by **date-order**. (The date in which the family joined the waitlist) Enrolment is dependent on the school also receiving this critical documentation within **7 days** of receipt of your confirmation email. The school will endeavour to contact the family through various means, however if the family fails to respond to the school within 48 hours, the next family on the waitlist will be contacted and the place may no longer be available.

### THIRD YEAR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

In their last year of the pre-primary class children who are age appropriate and fulfilled their academic milestones have the opportunity of attending the kindergarten class (Extended Day) at the North Balgowlah campus. Children must turn five during the year before the 31<sup>st</sup> July. This class is registered with NESAs and meets the criteria of a Kindergarten curriculum. Child readiness to enter this program is determined by the Principal. Children are required to attend 5 days per week.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SECURE A PLACE FOR MY CHILD?

Depending on the age of your child and the Campus they will be attending, the following induction processes will occur:

### NORTH BALGOWLAH CAMPUS INDUCTION

The school works with families to ensure the best possible transition for children into the school. For many families and children this may be their first experience in an Early Childhood setting. The school is very aware of this. Therefore, the school holds compulsory parent orientation evenings for parents at the end of the year before your child commences at the school. This allows parents to gain more knowledge about the Montessori philosophy and the general running of the whole school.

Child and a parent of the infant community will be invited to attend an orientation morning. New students in the infant community will be offered a shorter day for the first few days when they start. This is especially worthwhile for the child entering the infant community program in order for them to settle. The directress will notify the parent when the child is ready to attend a full session.

### TRANSITION TO PRIMARY INDUCTION

Parents of students entering the Extended Day program will be asked to attend a compulsory parent orientation meeting before your child commences Extended Day. This will give parents insight into the Montessori philosophy and set expectations of a child within a primary setting. You will be notified of your child's readiness to transition to the North Head primary campus through consultation with your child's director/directress.

Following this there will be a compulsory parent information session with the principal where the procedure of transitions and the requirements surrounding this will be clarified. This meeting will give parents an understanding of the transition process and how to support your child moving to the primary school.

### WITHDRAWING AN ENROLLED CHILD

Farmhouse Montessori offers a Montessori education from 2 to 12 years of age. It is our hope and expectation that children entering the school at any age will graduate at the end of stage 3 (equivalent year 6) If you are unable to continue your child's education journey with Farmhouse Montessori School, One academic term's written notice must be given to the School on the anticipated withdrawal of any student. This notice is required by the school to allow for sufficient time to replace the withdrawn child.

As a moral obligation to the smooth running of the school this notice is kindly requested. You may apply to the Principal, if you feel you have extenuating circumstances that prohibit you from giving a full terms notice. However, any change to the policy is at the Principal's discretion and recommendation to the School board for a final decision.

### TERM FEES

As a not-for-profit school, fees are set by the Board to cover the day-to-day running costs of the school and to provide the sustainability of the school. There is an annual compulsory maintenance levy per family. Additional fees for specific curriculum items may be required. For example, school excursions, camps etc.

Fees are charged according to age and the number of days a child attends: 2 year (infant program), 3-6yr (pre-primary), and 6-12 (primary).

Fees for Equity 3 and 4 year old children are set at 75% of the rate for 3 and 4 year old non equity children

If the enrolment of a child occurs later than the last day of week 4 of any given term, the family will be entitled to a pro-rata fee, resulting in the family only being charged for the remaining weeks of the current term.

A schedule of fees is available from the school office or on our website. Late payment will incur a late fee charge. Periodic payments are considered following a written request to the Principal. The School Board reviews the school fees annually in September for the following year

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Community is an important part of the Montessori philosophy. We ask parents to participate in various events and projects throughout the year as part of modelling for our children the commitment to building a community. This might include attending parent information nights, open days, fundraising or community events.

## LEGISLATIVE LINKS

## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 99, 158, 168(2)(f) Child Protection  
 National Quality Standard: 2.3.2

## Source

- Community Child Care Co-operative
- Casa Mia Montessori School

Policy Review Date	Modification	Review Date
Oct 2017		Nov 2018
Nov 2018	New Logo and updated by Board	Feb 2020
March 2020	Pro rata update	Feb 2020
20 November 2020	Fee Equity wording inserted	2022
March 2021	Admission Criteria for children section added and updated around 5 days	2022

## Appendix 1

## National Quality Standard (NQS)

<b>Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships</b>		
6.1	<b>Supportive relationships with families</b>	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.1	<b>Engagement with the service</b>	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in their service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.2	<b>Parent views are respected</b>	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	<b>Families are supported</b>	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2	<b>Collaborative partnerships</b>	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.3	<b>Community and engagement</b>	The service builds relationships and engages with its community

## Education and Care Services National Regulations

<b>Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW</b>	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
80	Weekly menu
88	Infectious diseases
90	Medical conditions policy
92	Medication record
93	Administration of medication
96	Self-administration of medication
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
102	Authorisation for excursions
157	Access for parents
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
173	Prescribed information is to be displayed
177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider
181	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider
183	Storage of records and other documents

## Appendix 2

On 14 September 2017 the NSW Parliament passed an amendment to the Public Health Act 2010 to strengthen vaccination requirements in child care (also known as Early Childhood Education and Care).

The changes mean that from 1 January 2018:

- children who are unvaccinated due to their parent's conscientious objection will no longer be able to be enrolled in ECECS.

**Parents must provide a copy of one or more of the following documents to enrol in a child care centre:**

- an AIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations or
- an AIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule (temporary for 6 months only) or
- an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form which has been certified by a GP.

*No other form of documentation is acceptable (i.e. the Interim Vaccination Objection Form or Blue Book).*

## Appendix 3

### OVERSEAS IMMUNISATION RECORDS

Overseas immunisation records will not be accepted by the Farmhouse Montessori School. The overseas immunisation records need to be assessed by an Australian immunisation provider who will transfer the information to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Parents can then request an AIR Immunisation History Statement

## Appendix 4

### CHILD DATA SECURITY AND INTEGRITY

1. Child information forms will be updated annually, to ensure that information is correct and current.
2. A register of enrolments is maintained with all required fields filled in. This register is retained for 5 years before archiving.
3. Enrolment information will be kept in a confidential file and access to this information will be available to School Staff and the Education Department Officers only.
4. When enrolling parents who are not fluent in English, the Head of School will utilise the translating and interpreting services if needed. (Phone: 131450)

## Appendix 5:

### PARENTS TO FAMILIARISE YOUR CHILD

1. Make sure you familiarise your child with the environment and the people in the school (children and adults) by ensuring you attend your child's orientation prior to commencing. (coming in for visits before commencing).
2. If starting on the North Balgowlah campus you may consider providing a favourite toy, blanket or comforter to support your child when they are separating from you or settling to sleep. This can help your child feel more secure.
3. If your child is unsettled, shorter days are encouraged and can be negotiated with your class directress.
4. Interactions between staff and parents or staff and other children can produce positive role models and be reassuring. This experience can help to establish trust in an unfamiliar setting.
5. Try to talk at home about the school. Mention the names of the teachers and other children. Talk about the things the child will be able to do at school that are fun and enjoyable.
6. Talk to the preschool staff about your child, for example, what they like to do, and successful ways of settling them to sleep, foods they like and dislike and so on. This helps the staff to get to know your child. A form will be emailed to you a few weeks prior to your child commencing 'getting to know your child' this will be a comprehensive outline to assist your educators understand your child prior to commencing.
7. When leaving your child, it is best to make sure you say goodbye and then leave. Hesitating and not going after you have said your goodbyes, if a child is upset, only confuses them. Reassure your child that everything is alright and you will return later, this can help them to settle.

Your directress will keep in close contact with how their child is transitioning. If a child is uncontrollably crying for an extended period of time, one of our educators will call parent and tweak the attendance time to a more 'drip feed' approach if appropriate.