

# Enrolment Policy and Procedure

The aim of this policy is to ensure the fair and transparent enrolment of students at Farmhouse Montessori School. It provides a framework for the school to manage enquiries and applications efficiently, collect and maintain all required enrolment information in line with regulatory requirements, and support families in understanding the Montessori principles that underpin our educational approach.

Farmhouse Montessori School offers Montessori education for children from early childhood through to primary age. Our enrolment process is designed to ensure that families are well-informed about the Montessori method and are committed to fully engaging in the life and philosophy of the school.

## Policy Framework

This policy framework outlines the enrolment process from the initial expression of interest through to a child's confirmed placement at Farmhouse Montessori School, including the completion of all relevant documentation and fee payments. It applies to all prospective students and their families and includes the following stages:

1. Enquiry and School Tours
2. Enrolment Requirements
3. Offer of Enrolment
4. Orientation and Transition
5. Withdrawing an enrolled student

### 1. Enquiry and School Tours:

**1.1** Families initiate the enrolment process by contacting the school directly or through the school website. All families interested in enrolling are required to attend school tours or Open Days. School tours can be booked online through the website or via direct contact with the school, through phone or email. Virtual tours are offered for International enquiries.

**1.2** Administration staff will add the details of the family, the child's name, date of birth and expected year of commencement at Farmhouse Montessori School (Preschool and Primary School) on the OWNA CRM system.

### 2. Enrolment Requirements:

**2.1** Families expressing interest must first complete the Waitlist Application Form and pay the associated fee. Families receive a receipt and a letter of confirmation that their child has been placed on the waiting list.

**2.2** To remain on the waitlist, families must maintain a current membership with the Manly Warringah Montessori Society through the payment of the annual membership fee. Being placed on the waiting list does not guarantee a placement at the school. Families of students on the waitlist will be provided with updates on their current position on the waitlist upon enquiry.

**2.3** Families are required to disclose any relevant information regarding the child's physical and mental health, as well as any past experiences, circumstances, medical or developmental assessments that may impact the school's ability to meet their needs in a standard classroom setting. This ensures the school is fully informed and able to consider how best to support each child.

**2.4** At the primary school level, parents are invited to attend observation sessions. Following this, children are offered classroom visits or trial periods. The duration of these visits is determined at the discretion of the school, based on the individual needs of the child, the family, and the school. Reports from previous schools must be submitted to proceed with the process.

**2.5** An interview with the Principal or Delegate is held prior to the offer of enrolment.

### 3. Offer of Enrolment:

#### 3.1 Criteria to determine enrolments

- Priority is given on a case by case basis and takes the following into consideration:
  - Enrolled children transitioning from one Cycle to another
  - Siblings of enrolled students and Children of current Staff from our waitlist
  - Date of application
  - Children transferring from another Montessori School
  - Children transferring from a non-Montessori School
- Commitment from the family to support the School's ethos and values.
- Outcome of the interview process
- The ability of the School to effectively meet the individual learning needs of the student
- Student Behaviour
- Commitment to the full Montessori program to the end of Primary school, Cycle 3 (9-12 years).
- The needs of the classrooms in terms of maintaining a balance of children by age and by gender.
- An internal waitlist is maintained for requests of change of programs (days of attendance) within the Preschool.
- Regulatory and legislative requirements are followed..
- All applications are at the Principal's full and final discretion.

**3.2** Vacancies usually occur at the start of the year but can also arise during the year. Any mid-year vacancies will be offered to families on the waitlist.

**3.3** Upon reviewing the application and meeting with the student, the Enrolment Officer will send a letter to inform the parents/carer of the outcome. A formal letter of offer is made to families which includes details of the program (days of attendance) at the preschool and the Cycle along with the NESA equivalent year group at the Primary School. Applications can be denied upon not meeting the above criteria.

**3.4** Acceptance of offer: An offer of enrolment is considered formally accepted once all the following requirements have been met:

- Return of the completed Student Information Form.
- Signed Enrolment Contract. Both parents or legal guardians are required to sign the Enrolment Contract unless there is a legal agreement or court order in place outlining a special care arrangement, in which case supporting documentation must be provided.
- The enrolment fee must be paid in full by the due date specified in the Enrolment Offer Letter. This payment secures the child's place at the school and confirms the family's intention to proceed with enrolment.
- Up to date Immunisation Status in accordance with the National Immunisation Program (for preschool-aged children) Children who are unvaccinated due to their parent's conscientious objection will no longer be able to be enrolled in ECECS (See 2017 Amendment to Public Health Act 2010). A copy of one or more of the following documents have to be provided for a preschool enrolment.
  - 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).*
  - 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

## QA6

## Enrolment Policy & Procedure

- Visa and passport details must be provided where applicable to confirm eligibility for enrolment.
- Other required documentation must be submitted to finalise enrolment. This includes a copy of the child's birth certificate, Government Census and consent forms for platforms and services the school uses such as OWNA etc.
- Enrolment is not considered complete until all of the above steps are fulfilled. The school reserves the right to withdraw an offer if the requirements are not met by the specified deadlines.

**3.5 Deferral of Offer:** If a family wishes to defer the offered or accepted place prior to the student's commencement, the student will be placed back on the waitlist for the new intended entry point. The original application date will be updated to reflect the date of the deferment. Requests for deferred enrolment must be made in writing to the Principal.

**3.6. Class Placement:** Class placement decisions are made based on professional judgment, with careful consideration given to the needs of each child and the overall balance of the classroom. A range of factors are considered, including:

- The child's experience with Montessori education
- Gender balance within the class
- Age distribution
- Social groupings and peer relationships
- Specific learning needs or differences
- Presence of siblings
- Current enrolment numbers in each classroom
- Any other factors deemed relevant by the School
- Transitions from the Elouera (2 and 3 year olds) environment to the 3-6 environment is not guaranteed as the child turns 3. The decision for transition is based on the factors mentioned above.
- Requests to move between classrooms within the 3–6 environment are not encouraged, as enrolments and programs are structured based on availability and planned continuity.

**3.7 Register of Enrolments :** The School maintains a current Register of Enrolments for all students in an approved electronic or manual format, in accordance with Section 24 of the NSW Education Act and the requirements outlined in the NSW Registration Manual Non-Government Schools .should be (Section B7, 7.1) This register uses the codes approved by the NSW Department of Education and is retained for a minimum period of five (5) years before being archived.

The Register is made available during school hours for inspection by a Board Inspector or any authorised person. These practices form part of the School's commitment to ensuring compliance and maintaining a safe and supportive environment, as required under Section 3.6.2 of the NSW Registration Manual.

**3.8 Continued Enrolment:** Farmhouse Montessori School, though located across two separate campuses, is one independent school operating under a unified philosophy, leadership, and governance.

At Farmhouse Montessori School, children who enrol in the Toddler Program are offered continued enrolment through to the end of Year 6 in the Primary School. An ongoing enrolment for each year is generally assumed by the School. However, continued enrolment is reviewed annually and is subject to the following conditions:

- The student's ongoing adherence to the School's rules, values, and expectations
- Consistent attendance, with prolonged or recurring unexplained absences potentially placing enrolment at risk
- Parents or guardians fulfilling all financial obligations to the School

In some cases, continued enrolment may not be appropriate, for example, if the Student Behaviour Management Procedure has been activated, if significant philosophical differences are identified between the family and the School, or if the child is formally withdrawn.

The School reserves the right to review a child's ongoing enrolment in consideration of these factors.

**3.9 School Fees:** The Board sets the school fees to cover the running costs and to ensure sustainability of the school. Payment of all fees in a timely manner is critical to the operation of the school in its efforts to meet high quality standards.

- There is a compulsory maintenance levy per family which is included in the issued invoice.
- Additional fees for specific curriculum items or programs may be required. For example, school excursions, camps, before and after school care programs at the preschool etc.
- Fees are charged according to age and the number of days a child attends
- A schedule of fees is available from the school office and on our website.
- Late payments will incur a late fee charge. Periodic payments are considered following a written request to the Principal.
- If the enrolment of a child occurs later than the last day of Week 6 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.
- The enrolment fee is non-refundable in all circumstances.
- Term fees must be paid before the end of the previous School Term. Failure to do so can jeopardise enrolment at the School.
- Once term fees have been paid, families will not be refunded the term fee if the student leaves the School throughout the term.
- Default in Payments : TIMELINE TO BE CREATED FOR LATE PAYMENTS/DEBT COLLECTION (Fee Policy to be amended to reflect the same)

**3.10 Exemption from Enrolment and Attendance:** In line with Section 25 of the Education Act, the Principal may grant or cancel Certificates of Exemption from enrolment and attendance for students of compulsory school age, under specific circumstances. The certificate outlines the exemption dates, applicable conditions, and notes that it may be cancelled if conditions are not met. A maximum of 100 days may be granted within a 12-month period, including accumulated part-day exemptions.

All exemptions are recorded in the Attendance Register using the approved NESA codes by the Administration staff. A copy of the exemption certificate is placed in the student's file, and the original is given to the parent or caregiver

#### 4. Orientation and Transitions

Once enrolment is confirmed and as the child's start date approaches, Farmhouse Montessori School provides families with key information to support a smooth and positive transition.

At the North Balgowlah campus, families are invited for a pre-commencement visit to support familiarisation with the new environment. An orientation session is also held at the beginning of the academic year to welcome new parents and provide guidance on the Montessori approach and daily routines.

The school recognises that for many children and families, this may be their first experience in an Early Childhood setting. In line with Montessori principles, we follow a staggered entry approach to the preschool to ensure each child receives focused attention and time to adjust to their new environment. Commencement dates are determined in consultation with staff and families, based on classroom capacity and individual readiness.

Building a sense of trust and emotional security is essential during this period. To minimise distress, the transition process is tailored to each child's needs, with flexible arrangements, such as shorter initial days or early pick-ups until the child is comfortable and settled.

The School works closely with families throughout this process to ensure each child's transition is as smooth and supportive as possible.

## 5. Withdrawing an enrolled student

It is our hope that families will continue their child's journey with us through the full Montessori program offered at our school. At Farmhouse Montessori School, children who enrol in the Toddler Program are offered continued enrolment through to the end of Year 6 in the Primary School.

If you intend to withdraw your child from the School, written notice must be provided at least one full term in advance, to take effect at the end of that term. If this notice is not received, a full term's fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

In cases of extenuating circumstances, families may apply in writing to the Principal for consideration. Any exception to the policy is at the Principal's discretion and subject to School Board approval.

As required by NESAs, families of all Primary aged children must also inform the School in writing of the name and address of the new school and the grade the child will be entering.

Notice Deadlines:

- Withdrawal at end of Term 1 → notice due before end of Term 4 (previous year)
- Withdrawal at end of Term 2 → notice due before end of Term 1
- Withdrawal at end of Term 3 → notice due before end of Term 2
- Withdrawal at end of Term 4 → notice due before end of Term 3

## Suspension or Termination of Enrolment

Farmhouse Montessori School reserves the right to suspend or terminate a student's enrolment, either temporarily or permanently, in circumstances including but not limited to:

- Serious breaches of the School's rules or Code of Conduct
- Behaviour that negatively affects the wellbeing of students or staff, or damages the School's reputation
- A breakdown in the relationship of trust and cooperation between the School and the parent/carer that impacts the child's enrolment

The School will only consider expulsion after providing the family with written details of the concerns and a fair opportunity to respond, in accordance with principles of procedural fairness.

Enrolment may also be terminated without notice if it is found that important information regarding a student's special needs was not disclosed or was materially incorrect or misleading, either before or after enrolment commenced.

## Safe Environment

The School maintains a safe environment for students where the risk of harm is minimised, and students feel secure. The School is aware that harm relates not only to dangers in the physical environment, involving such matters as architecture and construction, lighting, space, facilities and safety plans, but also refers to violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial vilification. Every effort is made to mitigate such incidents.

## Supportive Environment

The School acknowledges a supportive environment fosters the social, academic, physical, and emotional development of students. A supportive environment is one in which:

- students are treated with respect and fairness by teachers, other staff, and other students
- members of the School community feel valued
- effective teaching and learning take place
- positive support and encouragement are provided by members of staff and students
- non-discriminatory language and behavioural practices are defined, modelled, and reinforced by members of the School community
- consultation takes place on matters relating to students' education and welfare.

### Confidentiality and Privacy

Farmhouse Montessori School is committed to protecting the privacy of all families and staff within our community. Personal information relating to children and their families is treated with the utmost confidentiality and will not be shared unless:

- The family provides consent for the information to be disclosed; or
- Disclosure is required by law, such as under health regulations or child protection obligations etc.

### Amendment of Terms and Conditions

Farmhouse Montessori School reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions at any time, with written notice provided to parents and carers. Any changes will take effect from the date specified in the notice and will apply to all current and future students and their families.

### Procedure

Step 1: Enquiries received through the school website, communication via emails or phone are logged on OWNA CRM by Admin Staff and/or Enrolment Officer.

Step 2: Enrolment Officer contacts the family to organise and schedule a tour. Updates and additional information is updated on OWNA CRM.

Step 3: A tour confirmation email, along with the School Prospectus, Fee Details and Waitlist Application Form is sent to the family by the Enrolments Officer.

Step 4: Group tours and private tours are offered, answering all relevant questions. The tour offers an insight into the Montessori program, the physical environment, the range of resources, any additional programs and the staffing of the school. A virtual tour is offered for International enrolments. Follow-up notes for each family that tours are updated on OWNA.

Step 5: Families fill in a waitlist application form and pay necessary fees. Waitlisted families receive confirmation email upon payment of Waitlist Application Fee and Membership Fee from the Enrolments Officer. Families are waitlisted by the date of payments received.

Step 6: Parents are invited for a classroom observation at the primary school

Step: Children's school reports and documents from specialists are collected.

- If a child is seeking the services of a health/learning professional, we ask parents to sign a disclosure form so we can liaise with the specialist.
- If needed, an IEP is created, and parents are invited to an IEP meeting at the primary.

Step 7: Children in year 1 and above are invited for three visits at the primary school.

Visit 1: 1 hour

Visit 2: Morning work cycle

Visit 3: Whole Day

Children applying for Kindergarten at the North Head Campus are invited for one 1-hour visit.

Overseas families participate in an online meeting with the child. The child is given a small task or activity to complete prior to the meeting, which provides insight into their interests, learning style, and engagement.

Step 8: Availability of spaces is determined by the Enrolments Officer in consultation with the Principal and staff. New offers are made by adhering to the criteria and priorities as per the Enrolment Policy.

Step 9: Offers of Enrolment if confirmed are issued Enrolment contracts along with the required documents by the Enrolments Officer. Enrolment is confirmed upon receipt of the enrolment fees and all due documentation.

Step 10: Families at the preschool are invited for a compulsory orientation prior to the child's enrolment.

Step 11: A welcome pack is shared with families to ensure a smooth transition for their child/children.

Policy Review Date	Modification	Next 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	2024
25/7/2023	Reviewed and reformatted by Principal	2025
21/08/2025	Reviewed and reformatted by Board and Interim Principal	2027