

## Philosophy of the School Values and Objectives

The Montessori approach: The Montessori approach to learning in its most authentic understanding is the framework of our educational program. We understand that Maria Montessori's methods and materials are not a closed system; however, we commit to apply the words, wisdom, and practical advice of Maria Montessori and her closest associates as the lens through which we select, design, and evaluate our program and curriculum.

1. We believe that self-esteem, human dignity, and emotional well-being, as well as the ability to communicate and cooperate effectively with others, whether adult to adult, adult to child or child to child, must be valued as highly as academic and material success.
2. We affirm that we will support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy including the commitment to elected government, the rule of law, equal rights for all before the law, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association and the values of openness and tolerance.
3. We affirm that we will support the ideal that all beings are interdependent and that every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings. We will support and promote the belief that we need to protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life; and to manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems.
4. We affirm that education begins at birth and continues throughout life and that therefore all our values apply equally to adults, parents, teachers, guardians and all children in the School. We believe that intelligence is not rare among human beings.
5. We nurture intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical growth for the development of a whole, healthful being:
  - **Emotional:** Our emotions are complex and powerful and it is important that we learn to feel them fully and without fear, identify them correctly (in ourselves and others), respect them, and accept them. It is equally important, however, that we learn to harness their power and not let them control our lives unchecked.
  - **Social:** Our ability to interact positively with each other is essential to creating a peaceful world.
  - **Physical:** We acknowledge our place in the physical world and seek to discover, understand, and adopt the lifestyle habits most appropriate and beneficial for our bodies and minds.
  - **Spiritual:** While we feel it is each person's task to develop his or her own understanding of the nature of the universe and the individual's place in it, we proceed on the premise that our world is a beautiful, positive, loving place, a setting that provides the potential for each person to lead a full, free, joyful, and healthy life.
  - **Intellectual:** The intellect is an important tool in the shaping of our world. Through the development of our thinking abilities we refine our emotional responses, and we clarify our picture of the universe.
6. We approach learning seeking to understand our students' uniqueness and guide them individually and at their own pace, so they fully realise their potential.
7. We celebrate the natural diversity of human beings.
8. We affirm the ideal of the Renaissance person. Our ultimate goal is to produce individuals who not only have learned how to learn, but also have a love of learning, a wide range of interests, and an openness to new ideas and possibilities.

9. We affirm that self-esteem is one of the crucial ingredients for the full expression of a person's potential. We strive to nurture self-esteem at every level of learning.
10. We believe true success is achieved through the willingness to take risks. Individual success and failure are simply feedback mechanisms by which growth and progress are achieved.
11. We believe that wisdom can be cultivated, and consists of the ability to listen to your heart and know how best to put your intelligence to work for you.
12. **Developmental Approach to Education:** Our educational approach is centred around the stages of human development. This approach includes keeping abreast of current theories on development, regular student observation, and a constant evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that it is appropriate for the developmental stages of our students. We recognise that the first six years are critical to a person's development. For that reason, the programs in toddler and early childhood are as important as any other level of the school. Investment of resources in the early childhood years will be made accordingly.
13. **Individualisation:** We follow the Montessori curriculum which, by design, is adaptable to different paces and styles of learning. Each child works within an established curricular framework that includes the school's expectations for basic academic achievement. If a child needs more direction at certain times or is not internally motivated in a given area, we feel it is our responsibility to acknowledge the personal preference but to guide the child toward that necessary work.
14. **Active learning:** We promote active rather than passive ("lecture and drill") learning by: encouraging students to pursue studies in areas of their personal interests; using hands-on, experiential learning, such as concrete manipulative learning materials, experimental discovery seminar discussions, independent library research, field investigation; creating an environment in which the child's personal success is the motivation for learning.
15. **The Passage to Abstraction:** We consistently work from a very concrete level of experience to the abstract. We begin with "the big picture" and work toward an increasing level of detail. This model is supported by a spiralling curriculum in which skills and concepts are presented and reintroduced at increasing levels of complexity and abstraction over the years. 1.7. Freedom within limits: We strive for a balance between freedom, order, and responsibility. How do we enact this: Through our Teaching and Learning Policy, the Policies of the Board, the National Montessori Curriculum which includes Grace and Courtesy lessons, Bounce Back, School Meetings and through Staff Policies, Staff Meetings, individual meetings and regular Professional Development.