

Forestville
MONTESSORI School
Thriving beyond...

2022 Annual Report



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"The unknown energy that can change humanity is that which lies hidden in the child."

Dr Maria Montessori

ABOUT FMS

Message from the Chairperson and the Principal

2022 SNAPSHOT



Photo: Chris Rehn and Denice Scala

EMERGING FROM COVID

Despite the medical threat of COVID dissipating, 2022 was not without its challenges, many unexpected which made planning difficult. Whilst students were back onsite for Term 1, 2022, due to the COVID safe rules in place, for the first few weeks, parents were unable to access school grounds during school hours. These rules changed in week 4 of Term 1 and parents were once again allowed to enter school grounds.

It was Term 2 before we were able to welcome families back onsite. Not only were families once again able to come onto school grounds to collect their children, we launched our long awaited events calendar. It was time to bring the spirit of community back to FMS.

It did not take long for staff to recognise that children's development had been impacted by the uncertainty of COVID and the lockdowns. Some children returned to school with a loss of independence and social skills, increased anxiety, more attachment to adults, a reluctance to return to routine, issues with delayed gratification and a sense of disconnect after a time of unprecedented change.

For staff also, there were changes afoot. After two years of unprecedented change in which our staff continued to perform daily duties as Essential Workers, in a climate of uncertainty and fear, they were exhausted. We saw an increase in staff requesting to work part time and long service leave. It also seemed that the pandemic had brought

the fragility of life into focus and some of our staff sought to make significant life changes for relocating to resigning from their roles.

Schools were not alone. Society at large would later call this crunch point in history, 'The Great Resignation' Across the board, employers would see workers leave organisations at both scale and pace. At Forestville Montessori School we moved as quickly as possible to secure qualified Montessori trained staff and to focus on staff wellbeing. By the mid year, we had restructured staffing and provided more stability. However, there was a cost to the uncertainty experienced earlier in the year with some families choosing to leave the school and many other families returning overseas or relocating now the borders open.

We set a course to walk forward gently so we could harmonise the FMS environment and return to our vibrant pre-COVID times.

BRINGING HARMONY TO FMS

- We once again, engaged with Uncle Neil, a local Elder, to advise us on the WANNANGINI (GURINGAL) language. We might use to name our environments. From the list he provided, staff chose the following names:

Environment	Aboriginal name	English meaning
0-3	Terrigal	Place of little birds
3-6 (Christine)	Buran	Stringybark
3-6 (Bonnie)	Wirra wirra	Lily
3-6 (Ellen)	Kutukulung	Turtle
6-9	Koorowull (koor-O-wull)	Bandicoot
9-12	Terra-ulong	Blue gum tree, eucalyptus

- Students used the names as stimulus to produce their for art works for the Annual Art Auction;
- Engaged Indigenous artist, Kym from Ngumpie Weaving, offering students creative expression experience;
- Sport for Jove, Shakespearian theatre company onsite were in residency for 5 days conducting immersive acting workshops with 9-12 students. Last at FMS in 2018, this immersive experience is magical;
- FMS Blog promoting the benefits of a Montessori education;
- A new role of Education Support & OSHC Leader was introduced with the aim of having an overlap between staff in OSHC and onsite during the school day to get to know our students;
- Introduced a new role of a domestic assistant. This is a 1 day per week role assisting with the cleaning of materials



in the classrooms, kitchens and general hygiene across the school;

- Welcomed guinea pigs, rats and a bearded dragon to our existing animal family of chickens, turtle, and fish;
- Introduced Sydney Chess Club lessons on Tuesday mornings before school;
- Launched 'Buy A Brick' Campaign;
- Designed the Primary School Subsidy program (PSS) to offer a pathway for parents who wished to continue their child's Montessori education beyond the Pre-School, but for financial reasons may be restricted from doing so;
- Enrolment processes were streamlined. Families can now submit all their details online in one easy portal.

APPRECIATION

Thank you to Nitzan Ingber for leading the Community Team, supported by our class parents:

Birth-3 Sam Pettigrew, Heather Mills and Charles Barnett
3-6 Vanessa Jerah (Christine's class)
3-6 Jennifer Ngu (Bonnie's class)
3-6 Genevieve Lang (Natasha's class)
6-9 Katalin Othmer
9-12 Marsha Howe

Thank you to our Board Directors for their ongoing wise counsel and governance: Nivethan Sivapalan, (Treasurer) Idette Warburton, Ian Howe and Bill Conway

*"Of all things,
love is the most potent."*

Dr Maria Montessori

We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report and encourage you to contact the school on (02) 9452 2044 or visit our website www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au to find out more.

Follow us on social media:



Denice Scala
Principal

Chris Rehn
Chair, Board of Directors



Our Story

OUR IDENTITY

We are a Montessori School educating children for life and for peace.

OUR VISION

To be the launchpad for every child to lead a fulfilling life.

OUR MISSION

To provide an exemplary Montessori education for all children by:

- Presenting an enriched, intentionally prepared environment that embodies Montessori principles
- Nurturing individual growth and development
- Fostering independence, self-discipline, personal and social responsibility
- Enabling natural curiosity to thrive and develop into a love of learning
- Designing learning that promotes a child's own explorations, discoveries, imagination, and creativity
- Making positive contributions to the world beyond school.

OUR VALUES

Our core values inform all that we do from our day-to-day practices to our decision making and long-term thinking, at every level of our school.

Respect: Acknowledging, accepting, and celebrating others' differences

Relationships: Bonding with others, conducting ourselves with dignity and sincerity

Integrity: Knowing right from wrong, taking responsibility for our actions

Scholarship: Competent, confident, and smart thinking that leads to empowered, capable doing

Citizenship: Seeking ways to contribute to society locally and globally

Community: Sharing a sense of belonging by connecting and collaborating



From our Community Team

“We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.”

Dr Maria Montessori

Restart, Refresh, Revive. Those were words we've all heard and used many times this year, coming back to routine after 2 years of constant uncertainty and change. It is these words that best describe the efforts of the Community Team this year, rebuilding our sense of community while constantly adjusting to the rapid changes that this new world provides, Australian weather being one of them.

Indeed, Term 1 was defined by playing “catch” with local weather, and many of our events had to be postponed on short notice. That said, we started the year with a school picnic in Lionel Watts Park, leveraging the guest appearance of some sunshine, to get new and old families together. Our traditional Easter egg hunt took place in the classrooms this year due to the constant rain, but it did not seem to matter to our little chocolate lovers. To seal the social events for Term 1, families came together for a welcome BBQ where we had the long-awaited-for Smoking Ceremony and re-naming of the newly renovated Pre-Primary (3-6 Years) play area. This event marked the official return of parents on-site and reminded us all how vibrant and supportive the FMS community really is.

We kicked off Term 2 with our Bricks Legacy project, raising \$3,050, while gaining the added benefit of having hand drawn bricks soon to be laid across the school grounds, as part of future improvement works. At the end of the term, we held another all-school picnic in Poppy Park, saying farewell to some families returning overseas. Coming to the second half of 2022, we focused our efforts on Reviving the sense of belonging, with class parents organising coffee catch ups to their class community, and the Community Team volunteers holding after drop-off “tea, cake, and an adult conversation” station outside reception. In Term 4 we celebrated World Teachers' Day with heartfelt video messages from the children and their families to the amazing educators and staff of FMS, served with some freshly-baked artisan cupcakes. Future events to mark the end of the year include an end of year picnic on school grounds and a community camping trip at the end of the term.

Embracing the sentiment of Refresh and Restart the community team organised a few “first-offs” this year including a cloths/toy swap in Term 2 raising \$210, a tea towel fundraising campaign in Term 4 raising \$1650 and a smashing Bunnings BBQ also in Term 4, where we raised over \$2,800 thanks to the hard work and donations of our school community. Our Annual Art Auction is being held online this year, featuring, once more, some mind-blowing artworks that would not shame an artist in the heights of their career, together with some incredible donations collected by our community volunteers.

It has been an absolute pleasure being a part of the Community Team this year, and I hope we will forever continue to restart when stuck, refresh when stale and revive when weary, because change is growth.

Nitzan Jacob, Community Team Leader



From our Students

A snapshot from our 2022 Upper Primary Graduate's speeches:

“I love the way the teachers engage with the students especially when things go wrong. They don't turn it into a big deal, just help us to sort things out in an adult like way. They also make you feel very special by the way they acknowledge you concentrate and finishing your work.”

Neste Szarka-Kovacs

“I love the way that at FMS you can choose the work you want to spend time on. Of course you still have to do all the basics but you get time to do special projects and even when you are in lessons, you are in a small group or one on one with your teacher so you get to ask lots of questions.”

Kayla Casey

“I love the teachers at FMS. They just get alongside you and help you to really understand what you are learning. It makes it easy for you to take the subjects to a higher level. The Montessori materials definitely help too. The checkerboard is probably my favourite, again because it helps you genuinely understand what you're doing.”

Abigail Warburton

“My older sister was the real reason my siblings and I all came to FMS, because she had been at public school and was bored. When she got to FMS she came to life again, she couldn't get enough of Montessori.”

Phoenix Parisi



Students at FMS

By the end of Term 4, 2022, the school has approximately 123 students in total from our Birth to 3 and Pre-Primary (0-6 Years) to the Lower and Upper Primary (6-12 Years). By the end of Term 4, there were 63 students in Primary (5-12 years), comprising 24 girls and 39 boys. FMS students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including many with language backgrounds other than English. Students with diverse learning needs are fully integrated, accessing all aspects of our programs.

FMS operates a Birth-3 Program from 3 months of age, a Parent Toddler program from 18 months, a Toddler Program from 2-3 years and a Pre-Primary Program for 3-6-year-old.

The school attracts Pre-Primary students from its Parent Toddler and Toddler Program, and Primary students from its three Pre-Primary Program classes.

The school follows an authentic Montessori philosophy and practice of education, attracting families who wish to educate their children within this philosophy and methodology.

Our students mainly reside in the Northern Beaches and Upper and Lower North Shore of Sydney, coming from the following postcodes, in order: 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2071, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2090, 2092, 2093, 2095, 2096, 2099, 2100, 2154, 2570.

During 2022, we welcomed international students from the Netherlands and France.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE FOR 2022

Term 1 Average	90%
Term 2 Average	84%
Term 3 Average	88%
Term 4 Average	93%

Infant program	89%
Preschool	90%
Lower Primary	89%
Upper Primary	82%

MANAGEMENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

Absences from students currently enrolled at the School are identified and recorded in a consistent manner using the Minister's codes by the delegated staff member. Attendance is monitored daily by teachers and trained administration staff and recorded in digital records Xplore or hard copy against student records.

The Principal may exercise the Minister's delegation under section 25 of the Education Act in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances.

REGISTER OF DAILY ATTENDANCE

The School maintains a register of daily attendance of all enrolled students which records information about each enrolled student in line with the Education Act and NESA requirements. Staff entering the details in the register of daily attendance enter compliant codes that align to the Education Act and AIS accordingly. The register of daily attendance is retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made. Daily attendance figures are viewed by the Principal, Deputy and Coordinator of Birth-6.

STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

Performance on NAPLAN is documented on the My School website. Many FMS parents have consciously opted out of standardised testing for their children.



Assessment in a Montessori School

“We continue to afford the children the opportunity to learn through the activity of the mind.”

Maria Montessori

When it comes to assessments, Montessori teachers don't rely on standardised tests; they rely on the power of observation. They have notebooks brimming with evidence of what their students have mastered, need more support with, and are curious about. They are constantly recording what they notice children working on, how that work is being executed, and ideas they might have in anticipation of a child's next steps.

assidere: (Latin) to sit beside

Montessori teachers exemplify the Latin meaning of assessment, *assidere*, which means “to sit beside”. **Assessment** in a Montessori school means to sit beside the learner.

They sit beside a child and determine exactly what they know about a wide range of content areas.



FMS Teachers are Highly Qualified

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE MONTESSORI TEACHER?

What, exactly, is the role of the Montessori teacher? How is it so different from that of any other teachers?

Sometimes it's easiest to begin by explaining what a Montessori teacher *isn't*.

A Montessori teacher is less like the traditional idea of an instructor, and more like a gentle guide. They don't consider it their job to give a child information. Rather, they lead children in the general direction and give them the tools they need to find the information themselves.

Maria Montessori once said, "The greatest sign of success for a teacher ... is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'"

MONTESSORI TEACHERS CULTIVATE INDEPENDENCE

In a Montessori classroom, rather than seeing a teacher at the front of the classroom giving the same lesson to every child, the teacher will be working quietly with individual children or small groups. While that is happening, the rest of the children are free to spend their time doing the work that calls to them. A Montessori teacher works hard to create structures that allow children to be independent and to trust themselves as learners.

One large part of what a Montessori teacher does is to intentionally prepare a classroom environment that is developmentally appropriate, is inviting to children, and supports them on their journey to work independently. This environment is constantly changing in tiny ways as the teacher notices new and evolving needs of the students.

MONTESSORI TEACHERS ARE TRAINED TO THINK LIKE SCIENTISTS

Parents should know that Montessori teachers are exceptionally well trained. Most have recognised Montessori credentials in addition to their university degrees. Here at Forestville Montessori School, all our teachers hold one of the most highly regarded Montessori credentials: Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Diploma.

To be a certified AMI Teacher means a teacher:

- **Understands** child development and acts as a guide to help children find their natural path
- **Creates** a hands-on, self-paced, collaborative, and joyful classroom
- **Transforms** lives by implementing the principles of Montessori education
- **Believes** in education that meets the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development
- **Guides** children to enthusiastically follow their interests and passions whilst developing strong academic skills, leadership, self-discipline, responsibility and independence
- **Trains** rigorously and has graduated with a set of high-quality skills
- **Connects** to a global network across numerous countries with trainers and teachers to continuously develop their craft.

Montessori teacher certification programs are intensive and demanding; one might compare them to the equivalent of another university degree. These training programs don't just teach Montessori educators how to use the specialised materials; there is extensive coursework about Montessori philosophy, child development, and integrating the arts.

All of our Teachers at Forestville Montessori School hold Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Diplomas, which means that we have a consistently high-quality approach to teaching from Birth to age 12, with all of our teachers speaking the same language about child development and pedagogy.

MONTESSORI TEACHERS THINK LONG-TERM

Students remain with their teachers for a three-year cycle. This means that teachers have the unique ability to consider the big picture when working with students. There is a natural tendency to allow the children to genuinely learn at their own pace. Getting to know a child and their family well over the course of a few years really supports this approach.

MONTESSORI TEACHERS ARE OFTEN CALLED 'GUIDES' ...

... and for good reason. While children in Montessori classrooms have an abundance of choice in their educational pursuits, Montessori is based on the idea of 'freedom within limits'. It's the Montessori teacher's job to carefully craft those limits. Children rely on having a certain amount of structure in place. This gives them comfort and a safe place



in which they can take risks and try new things. Montessori teachers set boundaries and then carefully help students navigate within them.

What if your child loves to read but tends to avoid mathematics? Their Montessori teacher will find ways to ensure the mathematics still gets done. Sometimes this involves a gentle discussion with a child about time management skills, priorities, or setting goals. We call these discussions student conferences. Sometimes the teacher will find a way to integrate the child's interests into the less desirable work. Sometimes all it takes is a minor change in the environment. Montessori teachers give children freedom, but they assist children in finding their way to success in this environment.

Montessori teachers value independence, self-reliance, and intrinsic motivation.

They also value 'grace and courtesy' – cooperation, kindness, and strength in community.



Professional Learning 2022

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING 2022 (SCHOOL FUNDED)	PARTICIPATION NUMBER
Backpack Science – Science Simplified Workshop	2
NAPLAN Online Training	1
Cosmic Education Workshop for 6-12 Teachers	2
English K-2 Syllabus Workshop	2
Mathematics K-2 Syllabus Workshop	2
Governance Workshop	6
Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom	4
Supporting Children with ASD in the Classroom	1
Elementary (6-12) Montessori Bootcamp	4
Primary (3-6) Montessori Bootcamp	1
AMI Montessori 3-6 Diploma	1
Heart First Aid Course	All Staff
Child Protection	All Staff
Joint Montessori Staff Day	All Staff

OTHER (SELF-FUNDED)	PARTICIPATION NUMBER
Training of Trainers Seminar for Assistants to Infancy	1
Apple Mac and iPad Series for Teachers	1
Equine Assisted Psychotherapy	1

The average expenditure on professional learning per permanent staff member in 2022 was \$977. This was lower than the average in 2021 (\$1,668 per staff member) and higher than in 2020 (\$744).

TEACHER ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY (TAA)

FMS has engaged the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) as its Teacher Accreditation Authority for Proficient Teacher. By way of background:

- NESA has approved AISNSW as a Teacher Accreditation Authority to make Accreditation Decisions in accordance with Part 4 of the ACT
- The School may only engage teachers who have gained Accreditation
- The school has requested AISNSW to provide Accreditation Services
- AISNSW has appointed authorised Delegates to make Accreditation Decisions
- An agreement sets out the terms on which AISNSW will provide the Accreditation Services to the school through ISTAA.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

SCHOOL STAFF 2022	
Teaching staff	16
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	14.6
Non-teaching staff	5
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	4.4

There are no Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

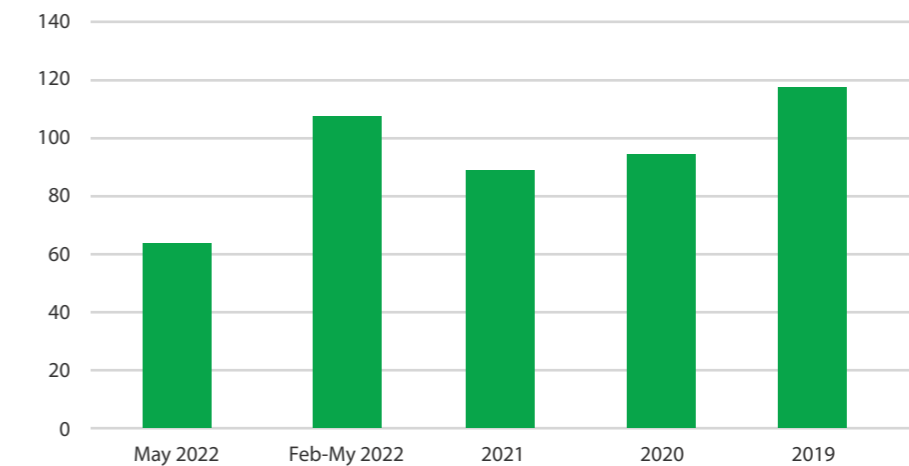
Teachers at FMS are highly qualified, dedicated and committed educators. The teaching attendance rate during Term 1 and 2 was significantly impacted due to COVID. Changes to staff situations resulted in a 14% turnover.

Staff absenteeism was a high risk with two weeks in May recorded as the highest staff absenteeism in 4 years. As shown in the graphs below, the total sick days for May 2022 alone are at 62 with the average over 3 years being 101 for the full years. The first graph shows the total sick leave days from 2019 and the second graph shows the average fortnight sick leave days for the same period.

The impact of this on staff who were able to work was significant with all staff present carrying additional duties. This included teaching, administration and management staff. These duties extended beyond the classroom to recess and lunch breaks and After School Hours Care work being covered by staff who were present. We managed to maintain high quality student programs and chose not to combine any classes or cancel any programs.

FMS is known as a school that retains its excellent staff. Every year, of course, it is natural for some staff to move to new positions, make changes in their lives, achieve promotions or retire. However, the impact of COVID had a significant knock of effect on our staffing.

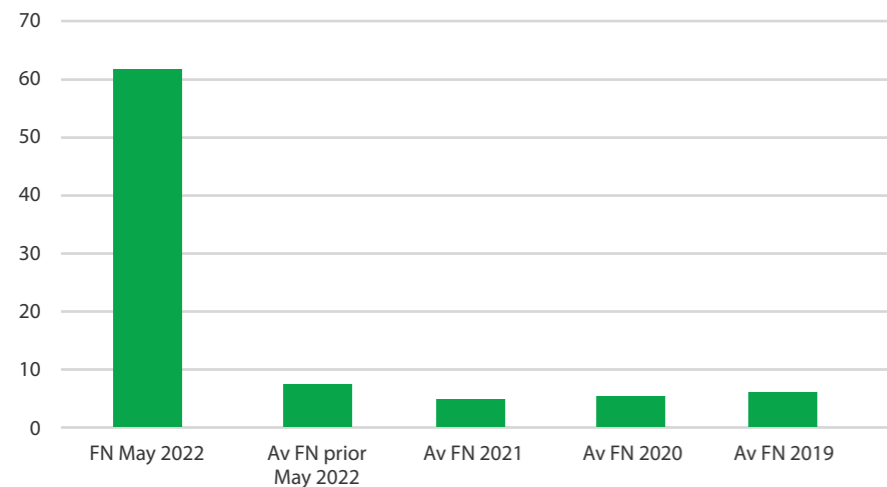
TOTAL SICK LEAVE DAYS



BELOW:
Natasha departed for Bega to build a new family home and start as a Director at Bega Montessori School



TOTAL AVERAGE FORTNIGHT SICK LEAVE DAYS



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LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
Conditional	0
Provisional	2
Proficient Teacher	9
Highly Accomplished (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

(Types of qualifications & Montessori qualifications)

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF ASSISTANTS
Bachelor Degree from an Australian University or overseas equivalent	7	2
Masters Degree from Australian University or overseas equivalent	2	0
Diploma qualified from an Australian Higher Education Institution or overseas equivalent	7	4
Certificate IV or III from an Australian Higher Education Institution or overseas equivalent	5	5
Montessori Qualifications – AMI Diploma or equivalent	7	3

STAFF PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW

Teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and fulfilling lives. Both national and international evidence indicates that a teacher's effectiveness has a powerful impact on students, with a broad consensus that teacher quality is amongst the most important factor influencing student success. Regular staff reflection is therefore an ongoing part of our review.

We seek for staff to reflect in an open and ongoing way on their professional responsibilities and performance, both towards their students and colleagues. Work continued on mapping the Australian Professional standards for Teachers with the Montessori Assessment Playbook instrument designed for teacher appraisal.

Ordinarily our educators would regularly visit other Montessori schools to participate in observations however, that was again restricted during 2022 due to ongoing impact of COVID.

STAFF BENEFITS

FMS is known as a great place to work. Superior working conditions for staff mean that we continue to retain great teachers and attract talented educators when we are seeking to recruit. We actively strive to recruit educators with the highest standard of Montessori credentials.

The administration team is structured to ensure teaching staff are provided with support that reduces administrative loads in favour of time to plan and teach. Assistant educators work in every classroom from Birth to 12 Years, providing ongoing support to prepare the environment and work with children.

In striving to provide benefits for our staff, we offer:

- An attractive award rate that has seen year-on-year percentage increases above inflation
- Access to flexible remuneration packaging
- Human Resources practices to support different needs
- Complimentary, confidential Employee Assistance Counselling services
- Negotiated leave, long service leave provisions,
- Professional Development budgets
- External observations at other Montessori schools and
- Regular social events including meals on Staff Days

Thank you to the FMS staff who work tirelessly to see that our students are thriving beyond.



ACHIEVEMENTS, HIGHLIGHTS & NEXT STEPS

“Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorise, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core.”

Dr Maria Montessori



Beyond Today is the title of our strategic plan, outlining five priorities from 2018-2023. 2020 saw us taking significant steps to achieving our goals.

Central to everything we do is our Montessori philosophy and our commitment to delivering world-renowned Montessori education. This is strengthened by our vision and values. Pivotal to FMS is our vibrant community.

The strategic plan is organised under five key priorities:



TRACKING OUR PROGRESS: current priorities and improvements already underway

STUDENTS

Deliver world renowned Montessori education

“We do not want complacent students but eager ones.”

Dr Maria Montessori

FOCUS	ACTION
Inclusive education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy consultant engaged to assist with impact of COVID on literacy development
Student wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> URSTRONG Program implementation continues Sporting Schools Grant received in Terms 2, 3 & 4. Money used to employ a professional Judo coach and purchase sports specific equipment for Table Tennis, Athletics, Badminton and Tennis. Grant assisted in the delivery of 6 different sports chosen by the children for the before-school sports program.
Challenging thinking: Designing and introducing immersive programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Montessori literacy materials introduced in Lower Primary (6-9 Years)
Citizenship endeavours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish local outreach programs Partnering with the Montessori community to offer international outreach experience Collaborating with Montessori schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local outreach in partnership with Forestville Sub-Branch of the Returned and Services Leagues of Australia to provide Christmas gifts to Manly Warringah Women's Resource Centre continued for a fourth year Combined Montessori Sports Day held





GIVING YOUR CHILD THE WIDE VIEW OF THE WORLD

Experiences of relationships and participation in communities contribute to children's belonging, being and becoming. From birth, children experience living and learning with others in a range of communities. Through the primary and secondary years, this is strengthened by children developing a positive sense of identity and experiencing respectful, responsive relationships. This strengthens children's interest and skills in being and becoming active contributors to their world.

Over time, the variety and complexity of ways in which children connect and participate with others increases. When we create environments in which children experience mutually enjoyable, caring and respectful relationships with people and the environment, children respond accordingly. Children's connectedness and different ways of belonging with people, country and communities helps them to learn ways of being which reflect the values, traditions and practices of their families and communities. Over time, this learning transforms the ways they interact with others.

We believe that through our school we can reach out to the local and international communities to bring to life our core goals of Respect, Relationships, Integrity, Scholarship, Citizenship, and Community.

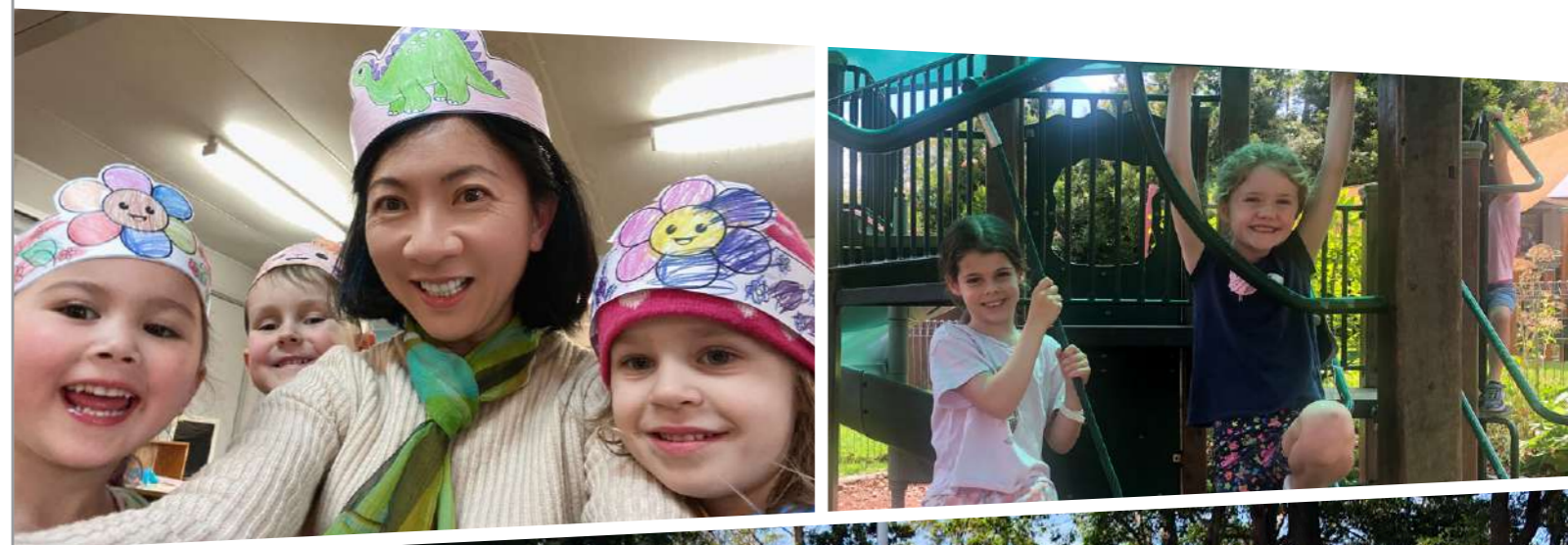
“An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.”

Maria Montessori:
Education and Peace, ch. 3, p. 30

STAFF

Create an inspiring and rewarding environment

FOCUS	ACTION
Widening professional development opportunities offered to staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in a joint Montessori Schools professional development day on 11th June All primary staff involved in designing NESA units of work aligned with Montessori practices Work continued on designing a teacher reflection tool that aligns the Montessori Assessment Playbook with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
Leverage Teacher Accreditation process to support career pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School continued to engage an AIS consultant to work with staff in the process of obtaining accreditation
Continuing investment in Montessori training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsorship continued f1 Pre-School (3-6 Years) educator to complete AMI Diploma-postponed due to COVID, recommenced in 2021 continues until end 2023



OUR COMMUNITY

Enhance internal and external stakeholder engagement

FOCUS	ACTION
Seeing an increase in parent attendance at events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families were still in the 'COVID bubble' and took time to get out and about again. Parent events moved online
Connecting with the local community to increase involvement and 'front of mind' school of choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our social media and outdoor marketing continued to be a strong way to reach prospective families within the local community. Exhibiting at the Pregnancy & Baby Expo at a joint stand with Southside and Northside Montessori Schools Exhibiting at the North Shore Schools Expo connecting with families local to FMS.
Delivering innovative and comprehensive parent education programs including exploring more family-friendly ways to offer parent education about the benefits of a continuous Montessori education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-introduced observations for parents in Term 4 as COVID restrictions were lifted
Introducing a fresh selection of community events aimed at expressing our gratitude for our parents and their contribution to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held the long awaited 'Pre-Primary Playground Opening' and Smoking Ceremony in Term 1, this was a way to show thanks to the families for all their fundraising efforts the previous year.
Strengthening alumni connections through introducing Alumni Q&A sessions for current families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alumni events will be held bi-annually now.
Enhancing the communication channels with parents; including introducing new ways to strengthen student transition between cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to promote weekly e-newsletters and the FMS Blog. Internal transition policy continued to work well.
Expanding communication channels to parents by increasing the number and quality of parent interaction points; increasing information provided; and restructuring parent/teacher conference days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to send the weekly newsletter to all parents. Parent / teacher conferences held via zoom and in person.
Designing and launching a new website helping to increase our reach and grow our reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed in 2020 Updating the website as required throughout the year.
Developing a comprehensive marketing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched the Primary School Subsidy – offered to families currently in the Pre-Primary Program, encouraging them to remain with us for Primary Highlighted that families eligible can claim CCS Promoted that we have Vacation Care and extended hours Offering Lego After School and Chess Club Before School to families Promoted our new FMS Music Classes with FMS Music Teacher Sharyn Curry Continued the outdoor marketing campaign aimed at increasing awareness of FMS at high traffic areas Physical attendance at expos – targeting Birth-3 and Primary families.
Increasing our social media presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to increase our social media presence on Facebook and Instagram, with more sponsored posts, expanding our reach capacity Continued to see a growth in our engagements across Facebook and Instagram

SOCIAL MEDIA

Our social media channels have increased in the level of engagement since 2018:

SOCIAL CHANNEL	ENGAGEMENT 31ST MAY 2018	ENGAGEMENT 18TH MAY 2022	INCREASE %
Instagram	61	624 followers	923%
Facebook	189 likes	594 likes	214%
LinkedIn	329	452	37%
Twitter	69	106	54%



OUR PLACE AND SPACE

Refresh and redevelop facilities

“The child should live in an environment of beauty.”

Dr Maria Montessori

We lodged a noise Abatement application with the Department of Transport in December 2021. They accepted the application in January 2022. They confirmed that they would measure the noise from Warringah road for a full month from October to November 2022. By the end of December this work had still not been undertaken.

FOCUS	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless indoor and outdoor learning Creating a place of beauty Continuing to enhance the gardens, food growing and sustainability practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composting continued and was increased New recycling project was introduced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term planning Ongoing maintenance and capital works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning commenced and budget approved for capital refurbishment work on the Studio and Upper Primary (9-12 Years) learning space Full maintenance schedule in first year of three year cycle scoped Converted old wooden doors, windows and facades to aluminium on exterior of main building New doors added to create a better indoor/outdoor flow New automated retractable awning installed in one Pre-School (3-6 years) outdoor space New external handwashing and drinking fountains installed Full roof restoration of main building. Costing \$168,268 <p>Capital expenditure in 2022 was \$212,380 which was 32% less than capital expenditure in 2021 (\$312,011) but significantly higher than capital expenditure over the previous 4 years (for example, capital expenditure in 2020 was \$21,702).</p>



OUR GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS

Ensure FMS continues to provide a high-quality Montessori education in a viable, ongoing and prosperous way

“Imagination does not become great until human beings use it to create.”

Dr Maria Montessori

FOCUS	ACTION
Positioning the school for ongoing success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital expenditure - \$212,380 Board Directors attended a joint Montessori Schools governance workshop- ‘Foundations for Good Governance’ run by Paul Davis, Director GAICD at Integro Partners. the NESA accredited workshop offered 6 hours of training Introduction of Primary School Subsidy scheme (PSS)
Business practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing focus on continuous improvement in processes and systems to improve operational excellence. Xplore installed. Curtain & Co- Chartered Accountants engaged as new auditors

TRANSPARENT CLASSROOM

Designed by Montessorians for Montessorians, this online portal is a winner with staff and parents alike. Staff spend less time on administration and more time on planning their presentations and students’ learning. Parents can see at a glance what their children are learning, who they are working with and what’s next for their ongoing development. Now implemented across all programs from age 2-12 Years.

Educating children for life and for peace

“Character education cannot be taught. It comes from experience and not from explanation.”

Dr Maria Montessori

The Montessori method fosters respect and responsibility as well as social awareness in children. The critical three-year cycle and the integration of children with special learning needs offer a microcosm of society within which children have the opportunity to develop skills essential for interacting in the wider community. The environment promotes individuality, independence, interdependence, awareness of and consideration for the needs of other human beings, which leads to the appreciation of life.

“When children come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength.”

Dr Maria Montessori

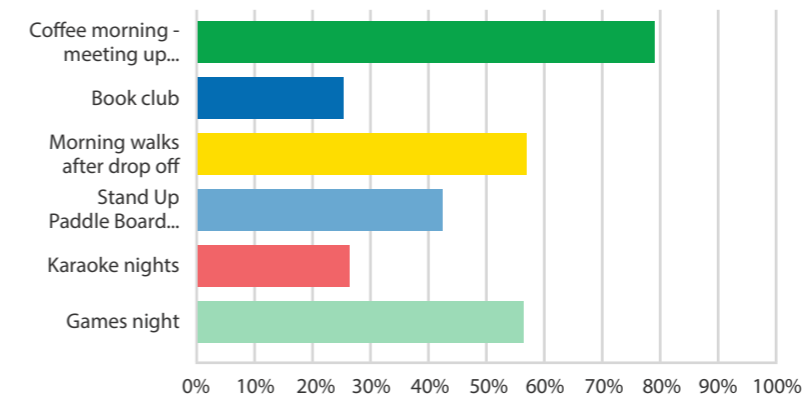
PARENT COMMUNICATION / INFORMATION

We are always looking for ways to respond to feedback from parents. 2022 was no exception

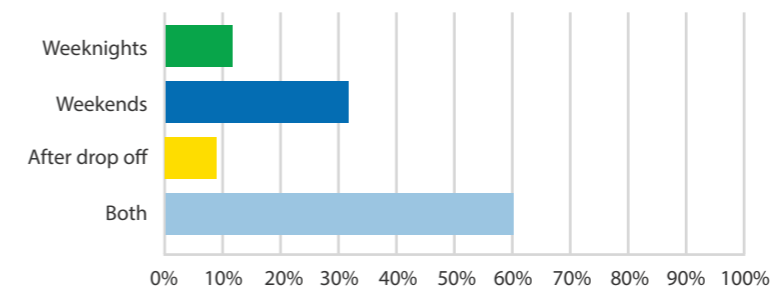
COMMUNITY TEAM MEETINGS

The first Community Team meeting was held on site on Wednesday 2nd March, 9am after school drop off. We had a strong turn out, it was lovely seeing so many people attend. During the meeting, the Community Team decided that they wanted to distribute a survey to all FMS families to determine which activities parents would be keen to participate in, they also asked which times suit most families and if they wanted the activities to be just parents or to include children. Here are the results of the survey:

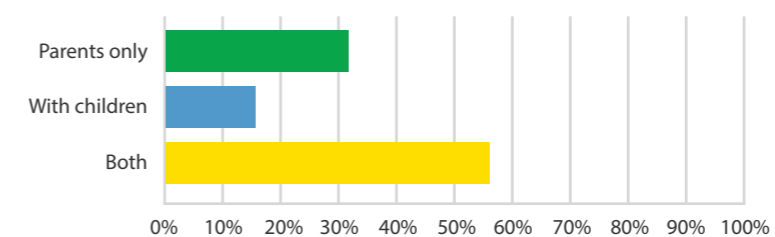
Q1: The FMS Community Team is interested in hearing your thoughts on events you would like to see organised this year. Please select the options below that you feel you would be happy to attend, you can select as many options as you like!



Q2: Would you prefer to have events on weeknights, weekends, or both?



Q3: Would you prefer these events to be parents only or with the children?



These results helped Class Parents and the Community Team plan different events during 2022.

What people say

"What a beautiful Mother's Day celebration it was today. It was so lovely seeing our children at work in their class and being able to connect with the mums afterwards during that amazing high tea you organised. Thank you for all that you do! Wishing you a beautiful Mother's Day."

FMS Parent

"From what we can tell our daughter is having a great time. She is happy at drop off and pick up and it helps to have her big sister with her. The main thing is that she is excited to go to school so I know she is having a wonderful time!"

FMS Parent

"I really like the sense of community. The opportunity for children to garden, cook, look after animals, and organise their own time. At FMS they are teaching children independence from an early age."

FMS Parent



What our staff say

"I joined Forestville Montessori School 12 months ago. After just a short time, I got to know the children. We built our connections from zero to close ties and enjoy a lot of activities together. I am impressed by the confidence and independence of the FMS children, the dedication and professionalism of the FMS educators. I am excited to continue serving the FMS community and to witness the development of the children in the future."

Angie Liang,
Teaching Assistant & OSHC Leader

"Over 16 years I have seen amazing growth and renewal at Forestville Montessori. As a staff member working with a great team of educators over the years, it is the shared understanding of Montessori philosophy and practice that unites us. Working with children aged 6 to 12, it is an honour to provide them with an awareness of the

universe and their place in it. Through the lessons and materials we allow children to use their imagination and reasoning minds to learn and reach their potential."

Anthony Milano,
Deputy Principal, Head of Teaching & Learning & Director of Upper Primary (9-12 Years)

"Warm and friendly are the first words that come to mind as I describe my experience at FMS. I am extremely fortunate to be surrounded by a team of dedicated and passionate educators who are truly "following the child". Likewise it has been fascinating to observe children develop holistically and watch them experience sheer joy of learning. For me personally, Montessori has been a continuum of learning and I look forward to an enriching journey at FMS."

Elma Sheldon,
Assistant 3-6 & 6-12 Environments

OUR POLICIES & PROCEDURES

All Policies and Procedures were updated in 2022 to include COVID-19 safe practices. These included both ACECQA and NESA policies and procedures. 44 policies were included in the update with further revision to be undertaken each year.

ENROLMENT

Forestville Montessori School welcomes children of all backgrounds and abilities. In the spirit of Maria Montessori, we provide child-relevant programs to meet diversity, need and stage of development from 18 months to 12 years old. We are a non-selective, non-denominational school.

We updated our enrolment policy to reflect the philosophical foundations of the school and appropriate pathways for every child. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

There are no pre-requisites for continuing enrolment, provided school fees are paid and enrolment conditions are being met.

Our [enrolment terms and conditions](#) are available on our website.

A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

FMS wishes to promote a learning environment where teachers and students should be mutually supportive. Respect is one of our core values and we expect students and teachers to respect each other and not engage in conduct that undermines this mutual trust and support, and also reflects the philosophy and values of the school. FMS encourages consultation between all members of the community in matters which affect them. In 2022, policies were amended to reflect COVID safe practices.

Code of Conduct

FMS has in place a Code of Conduct for staff which may be supplemented from time to time by specific rules and directives. In 2022, it was updated to reflect the school's expectations of professional relationships between employees and families and appropriate use of electronic communications and social networking sites. Changes were made when NESA expectations in relation to NSW Child Protection matters were updated.

Complaints and grievances

Processes for dealing with complaints and grievances raised by staff, students, and/or parents are in place and available for community perusal. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness. An update was completed in 2021 and reviewed in 2022 for whistleblowing procedures to provide a safe and confidential environment where students, staff and parents can raise genuine concerns regarding actual or suspected contraventions of our ethical and legal standards without fear or discriminatory treatment.

POLICIES SUPPORTING STUDENT WELLBEING

Our Privacy Policy reflects the Australian Privacy Principles and other amendments made to the Commonwealth *Privacy Act*. Updates were made to our welfare or discipline policies in 2022 in line with the normal review timeline. No significant changes were made.

Procedures in relation to the following policies and practices can be accessed via the School's mobile app or by contacting the school on (02) 9452 2044:

- Attendance and Absence
- Behaviour Management
- Communication Protocols
- Discrimination and Harassment
- Emergency Response Procedures
- Inclusive Education
- Privacy (which addresses the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988* and *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012*)
- Student Transitions.

Anti-bullying policy

Our Anti-bullying Policy provides definitions and guidelines for responding to, and managing, allegations of bullying within the FMS community. The full text can be accessed via our website, mobile app and information booklets. While this policy was reviewed in line with normal review timelines, no changes were made.

Procedure for resolution of serious issues

We are committed to ensuring a harmonious, fair and just working and learning environment. We take our values seriously and uphold our conduct in all matters accordingly. Most issues raised can be readily resolved by direct contact with the relevant staff member.

From time to time, however, a significant issue, concern, grievance or complaint may arise. In this instance, please discuss the matter with the Principal who can advise and outline the process FMS will take to resolve the matter.

Educational facilities and safe practices

FMS continued with a commitment to maintaining and enabling compliance with Workplace Health and Safety Acts and Regulations, relevant council and government requirements and environmental and land use guidelines which include:

- *The Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *The Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Privacy Regulations 2013*
- *The Building Code of Australia*
- *The Environment Planning and Assessment Regulations 2000*
- *The Food Act 2003*
- *The Explosives Act 2003*
- *Animal Research Act 1985.*

During 2022, our high level of compliance was achieved through the following procedures and activities:

- Termly evacuation and lock-down rehearsals
- Staff follow-up on student incidents, parental sign-off
- Documentation and compliance of COVID risk management procedures
- Annual Fire Safety audit conducted by qualified, independent professionals and all electrical equipment tagged and tested
- Further development to our staff induction processes
- Planned responses to serious incidents
- All staff are First aid and CPR trained
- Regular updating of all first aid and student health records
- Further improvements to the collection of student medical information
- Injury management and monitoring of student incidents
- Security monitoring by external company.

Safe and supportive environment – legislative requirements

Staff induction procedures for new staff and regular staff briefings throughout 2022, to ensure our staff are aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to Working with Children, Child Protection, mandatory reporting, reportable conduct, teacher accreditation and other FMS expectations.

Our Child Protection Policy was updated in 2022 and is available on the website.



OUR GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

GOVERNANCE

The School is operated by The Peninsula Montessori Association Limited (the Company), a company limited by guarantee.

There is a constitution for the Company which complies with the Corporations Act. It sets out the objects of the Company and provides provisions about membership, general meetings, voting, the appointment and removal of directors, audits and accounts, and other matters. The Company's Constitution is available on the School's website.

Company's membership is voluntary. An invitation to become a member of the Company is provided to our parents and stakeholders annually. In 2022 members were invited to renew their membership. New parents were invited to become members.



BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Overall Results

The School produced a healthy surplus of \$780,598.

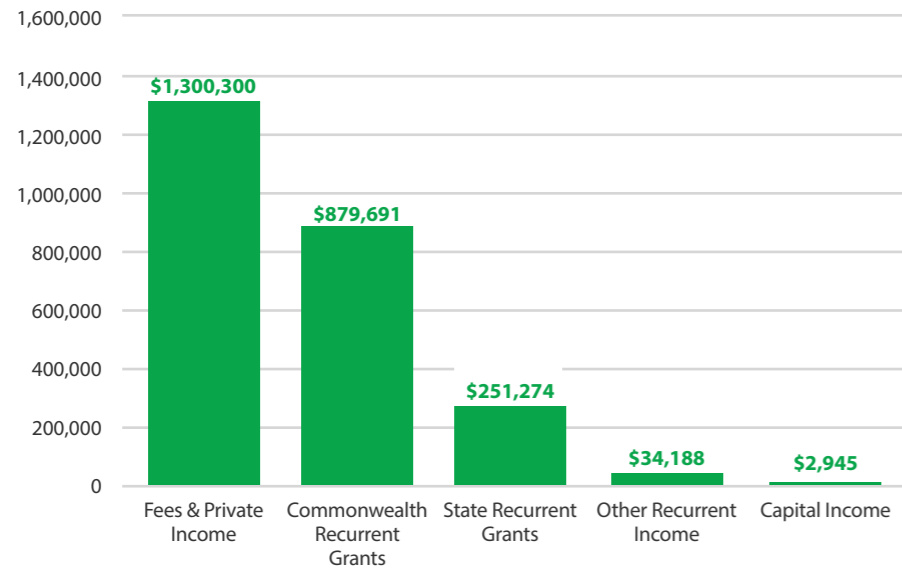
SUMMARY INCOME STATEMENT

INCOME	2022	
Tuition and Other School Related Fees	2,265,915	54%
Government Grants	1,830,874	44%
Fundraising and Other Income	89,761	2%
	4,186,549	
EXPENDITURE		
Employment Related	2,494,506	73%
Teaching Materials and Equipment	195,301	6%
Building and Grounds	208,251	6%
Office and Insurance	356,357	10%
Depreciation	140,202	4%
Interest and Bank Charges	6,280	0%
Fundraising Costs	5,056	0%
	3,405,952	
Net Surplus	780,598	

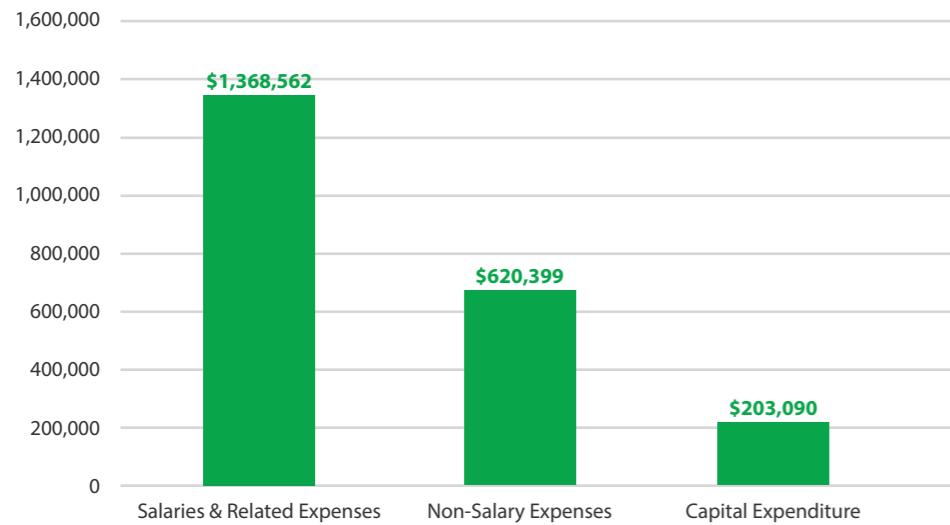
Australian Government reporting for the Primary School

These graphs depict Primary school income and expenses reported in the Australian Government's Financial Questionnaire for 2022. The School has followed the published guidelines relating to the classification, inclusion, and exclusion of income and expenses for this specific reporting.

2022 Primary School Recurrent And Capital Income



2022 Primary School Recurrent And Capital Expenditure



Thank you to the FMS community of current and past parents, grandparents and friends who continue to support FMS and the benefits of a Montessori education. We really do appreciate all that you do. To our Board Directors, who are volunteers giving an immense amount of time and expertise to FMS, thank you for your wise governance.

"Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment."

Dr Maria Montessori

Beyond Today



Forestville Montessori School is a vibrant community with a very special heartbeat. We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report and encourage you to contact the school on (02) 9452 2044 or visit our website www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au to find out more.

Follow us on social media.



"Only poets and young children can feel the fascination of a tiny rivulet of water flowing over pebbles"

Dr Maria Montessori





Forestville
MONTESSORI School
Thriving beyond...

**Let us take your child
above and beyond.**

Forestville Montessori School
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