SOUTHSIDE
Montessori School

Volume 3 · Edition 51- 19/06/2026

THE SOUTHSIDE SCOOP

Southside Montessori School newsletter

- Anti-Bullying Policy Update
- School Camp- Update
- Protect yourself and others this winter
- Classroom Programs
- Join Us on Facebook & Instagram
- Key Dates

Dear Southside Families,

As we reach the end of Term 2 and share this final newsletter for the semester, this edition brings together a number of important updates and reflections from across the school. You'll find information about recent policy developments, including updates to our Anti-Bullying procedures and the introduction of our Privacy Policy, as well as key dates, classroom programmes, and updates on school activities and planning.

Alongside these updates, it feels important to acknowledge that this has not been a straightforward term. We have navigated a number of challenges as a school, including some unexpected staffing changes. Our team has worked with professionalism and care to support one another and ensure continuity for the children, with staff stepping into new roles and responsibilities where needed. Our students have continued to show resilience and curiosity in their learning, and our families have supported the school with patience, trust, and care.

As we move forward, there is a clear and collective determination to continue strengthening our practices, improving clarity and consistency, and ensuring that Southside remains a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for every child. The work reflected in this newsletter—particularly in areas such as child safety, wellbeing, and communication—is part of that ongoing commitment.

Thank you for the role each of you plays in our community. We look ahead to Term 3 with a sense of purpose and optimism, and with appreciation for the shared effort that makes our school what it is.

With gratitude,
The Southside Montessori Team

Welcoming Kirsten Boutros

We are pleased to welcome Kirsten Boutros to the Southside community as she joins the Loft classroom from Monday. Kirsten brings valuable experience working in a 9–12 Montessori setting at Sydney Montessori School and has completed her AMI Montessori training.

Her experience and calm, capable presence will support continuity in the Loft, and we are confident she will be a positive addition to the classroom. We warmly welcome Kirsten to Southside and look forward to the contribution she will make to our community.

Anti-Bullying Policy Update

We have recently updated our Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures to provide greater clarity around how incidents are managed at school.

The updated policy strengthens:

- the steps staff follow when concerns are raised, including how incidents are documented, reviewed, and monitored
- alignment with our Behaviour Management and Child Protection policies, ensuring a consistent, fair, and safety-focused approach
- clearer expectations around communication with families and ongoing support for students

For families and children, this means:

- concerns will continue to be taken seriously and responded to promptly
- there is now greater clarity and consistency in how situations are managed
- a continued emphasis on student safety, wellbeing, and respectful relationships

The updated policy is available on our website and in the Parent Portal and App.

Looking Ahead

We are also currently working on a broader update of our Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Management policies to align with the new NSW anti-bullying framework, as required for implementation from the start of 2027.

We will keep our community informed as this work progresses.

Privacy Policy Update

Southside Montessori School has introduced a formal Privacy Policy to clearly explain how we collect, use, store and protect personal information relating to children, families, staff, volunteers and members of our school community.

The policy reflects our existing commitment to handling information carefully and respectfully, and sets out how families can access or correct personal information, or raise a privacy concern. In line with Early Childhood Education and Care requirements to provide at least 14 days' notice of significant policy changes, the Privacy Policy will take effect from Monday 20 July 2026, the first day of Term 3.

A copy of the policy is available on the school website and in the Parent Portal and App..

New Laptops in the Loft

We're pleased to share that the Loft environment now has 10 new laptop computers available for student use—part of our ongoing investment in enhancing the learning experience for our students.

These devices are primarily used by our older students (ages 9–12) to support research, writing, and project-based learning. In keeping with Montessori principles, technology is introduced thoughtfully and purposefully as a tool to extend curiosity, deepen inquiry, and support independent work—never replacing the hands-on experiences at the heart of Montessori education. Students use the laptops to gather information, synthesise ideas, and present their findings, developing strong research and digital literacy skills alongside their classroom work.

This addition also supports our ability to meet NESA curriculum requirements, particularly in areas involving research and digital production, while remaining aligned with our Montessori approach.

Each device is connected to our internal school systems, with students logging in using individual accounts. This ensures a safe, monitored environment where use is guided and appropriate.

We extend our sincere thanks to Michael Costello (father of Heath & Joey), who generously volunteered his time and expertise to set up the laptops and prepare them for student use. His support is greatly appreciated.

Protect yourself and others this winter

Influenza is serious, but it isn't as scary if you're vaccinated. Protect yourself and others from influenza. Your yearly flu vaccine offers you the best protection from serious illness.

Getting a flu vaccine is safe, easy and recommended for everyone aged 6 months and over.

The flu vaccine is free for people who are most at risk of severe illness, including:

- Children aged 6 months to under five years
- People aged 65 and over · Aboriginal people from 6 months of age
- Pregnant women
- Those with serious health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, immune disorders, obesity, severe asthma, kidney, heart, lung or liver disease.

Everyone aged 2 years and older can get a flu vaccine at a pharmacy.

Book your flu vaccine at your GP or pharmacy today: healthdirect.gov.au/nswfluvaccine
For more information, visit health.nsw.gov.au/influenza

Healthy and Active Families

FREE healthy eating and physical activity program for families.

A 5-week program for parents/carers learning practical strategies and tips to support their children to be healthy, active and happy. Children will participate in fun games, cooking and mindfulness activities.

Topics to be covered:

- Healthy eating for the whole family
- Strategies to support fussy eating
- Managing screen time and sleep
- Being active as a family
- Building resilience

Monday 27 July - Monday 24 August
4:00pm - 5:30pm

Primary school aged children and their parents/carers.

Arncliffe Youth Centre
9 Townsend Lane Arncliffe

Program delivered in English with in-language support for families from culturally diverse backgrounds.

SCAN HERE TO REGISTER

Registration: Scan the QR code or click here to register.
Email linda.trotter@health.nsw.gov.au, if you have any questions.

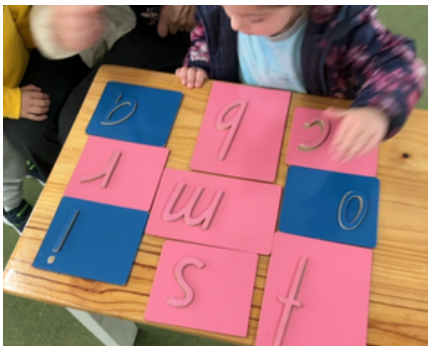
Afternoon tea | **Participation rewards** | **Expert health presenters**

This program is organised by the Equity and Prevention Service, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.

NSW GOVERNMENT

Bulletin week 9 – Garden
End of term reflections

Connection, continuity and growth; It has been wonderful and my absolute privilege to be observing the growth and development of children, throughout the term as a permanent figure in the Garden and particularly in the last 2 weeks with a more permanent presence and guide in the classroom. With the only constant of building meaningful connections with each child, the journey of building trust, sense of safety and security, independence, confidence and responsibility have.



Trust and transitions; I am honored when a new child trusts me enough to walk with me confidently into the classroom. The morning transitions might be challenging at the separation moment for new children but slowly, these moments of trusting the adult in the environment reflect the strong relationships, sense of security, and mutual respect that are at the heart of our montessori values and approach and the greatest privileges of teaching. Building this trust from the very first moment and throughout the first few weeks are significant milestones for the child.

Design and sustainability; Through their love of learning and commitment to purposeful work, older children are deepening their understanding across the areas of the curriculum and embracing new challenges with enthusiasm. It is rewarding to witness their growth as capable learners and leaders within our montessori community. We are wrapping up the term with an environmental project of building bird feeders bringing together creativity, science and Tech and sustainability. In this project, we are considering the property of materials, design, and safety for local wildlife. We have been learning about the local birds and a DIY bird feeder from recycled materials is a fantastic way to embrace eco-friendly practices. Our project is underway.

Creating or protecting a habitat; demonstrates alignment with the Georges River Council strategic plan for increasing biodiversity in our local area. As the school ground is housing a family of blue tongue lizards, we are planning on placing sticks, logs and pots to create awareness and protect our lizard's basking area. For Science and Tech, the children also designed a bird feeder. Through the process of designing, investigating, collaborating, discussing, collecting recycled materials and putting the design together, we are learning about scientific observation, investigating, and making a product.

Discovery and Connections with nature; *"There must be provision for the child to have contact with nature; to understand and appreciate the order, the harmony and the beauty in nature."* Maria Montessori.

Montessori stressed the importance of providing children with opportunities to engage with nature, fostering a sense of wonder and respect for the environment. Our Discovery of the Environment program integrates varies opportunities to engage with nature. This term we progressively explored how people, plants, and animals are connected. Through the Care of the environment daily activities, the children are investigating and practicing ways to care for the Earth and learn about sustainable practices such as recycling, composting, and respecting natural habitats in our immediate environment and the local wildlife in Riverwood. Our learning experiences included:

- Mindful Nature walks across the school looking at trees, local plants, insects, and wildlife.
- Gardening and learning how plants grow and making a compost heap
- Sorting natural materials on the Nature Table; Sorting and classifying flowers
- Printing Technique with airdry clay and leaves
- Creating art with natural or reused materials
- Discussing simple ways to protect the environment at home and at school
- Exploring the importance of trees, water and healthy ecosystems

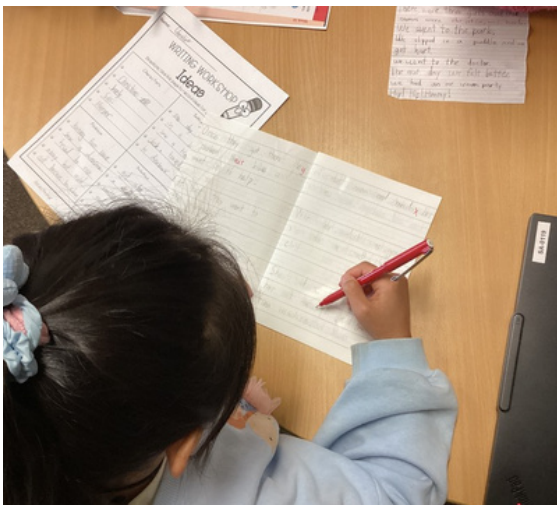
Tree to Table; Late last term and early this term after we got back from the term break, we harvested some black olives from the tall olive tree near the training Centre. The children observed the olives growing on the tree and falling on the ground once turning black or half black. They inquired and we responded. We picked whatever we could reach or pick from the low branches. Our children are exploring where olives come from and how they become food we can eat. After harvesting the olives, with adult support we pickled the olives in a jar with sea salt and olive oil. The jar has been sitting on the shelf for a few weeks. Next week we will taste the olives with freshly made bread in the classroom.

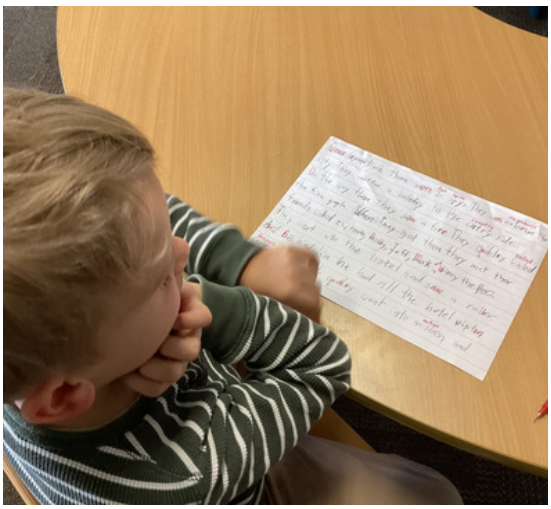
Small actions can make a big difference, and by caring for nature, we help create a healthier future for everyone.

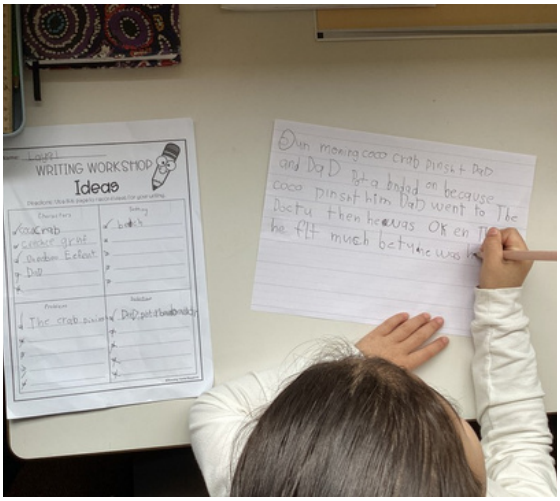
Loft: Exploring the Art of Storytelling

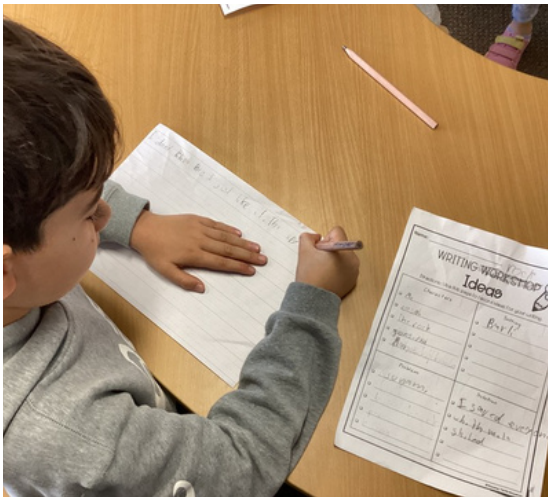
This week, the children have been enthusiastically exploring creative writing, an important skill that supports language development, imagination, and self-expression. Through guided lessons, they are learning the foundational framework of storytelling—developing characters, describing a setting, and introducing a problem that leads to a thoughtful solution. This structured approach helps children organise their ideas while still allowing their creativity to flourish in meaningful and engaging ways.

In addition to building their stories, the children are being encouraged to revisit and refine their work. They are practising reading over their writing to make improvements, editing for clarity, and taking pride in presenting their ideas neatly. The process of drafting, revising, and creating a final "good copy" supports concentration, independence, and attention to detail—valuable skills that extend well beyond the classroom.









Loft: Light a Candle for Peace

There has been an energy filling our classroom lately as the children have been preparing to sing “Light a Candle for Peace”. This song has become an inspiring part of our morning routine, offering the children a moment to reflect on what it means to be part of a community.

In a Montessori environment, peace education is woven into every aspect of our day. We see it when a child handles a delicate material with care, when they speak with respect, or when they resolve conflicts through dialogue. By singing "Light a Candle for Peace," the children are absorbing the concept of peace through melody and collective effort, refining their ability to listen, wait, and contribute their own voice to a shared purpose.

One of the most exciting elements of this performance is that we are incorporating other spoken languages into the song. It is special to hear the children embrace their unique cultural backgrounds by singing a portion of the lyrics in the language they speak at home. It turns the performance into something deeply personal as we celebrate the diversity of our classroom community. It is a powerful reminder that while we might use different words to express ourselves, our desire for peace is the one language we all actually share.

You might notice your child humming or singing parts of the song at home, especially those lines in their home language! If they ask for your guidance or want to practice with you, please listen with presence. Your encouragement and the simple act of celebrating the language they are proud to share is what matters. If you are able to help them with the phrasing, it creates such a beautiful bridge between our classroom and your home.

Written by: Farah El Halawani

Loft: Research in the 9-12

In the 9-12 community, research is far more than an academic exercise, it is a manifestation of the child's desire for intellectual independence. At this stage of development, the capacity to follow a self-directed path is essential. When children are empowered to select their own topics of study, they move beyond the passive consumption of information and become active in building their own knowledge.

The current focus in the classroom is an extensive study of space, a project initiated entirely by the curiosity of the children. This project exemplifies the Montessori commitment to Great Work. The process begins with each child identifying a specific area of interest, which requires the ability to locate reliable resources, navigate diverse texts, and curate information to inform their research.

The transition from raw notes to a coherent narrative requires the development of focused work habits. Children engage in the rigorous task of drafting, during which they synthesise complex scientific concepts into their own original language. The integration of art is equally essential for internalising abstract concepts. By creating detailed illustrations, children demonstrate their understanding, translating scientific theory into visual representations.

The project culminates in typing, editing, and formatting. Whether constructing a detailed timeline or preparing a final display, the children must attend to the precision of their presentation. This work fosters a profound sense of responsibility. When children manage their own projects from inception to completion, they develop genuine resilience. They learn to navigate the complexities of collaboration, negotiate the distribution of tasks, and resolve the inevitable challenges that arise during an extended period of inquiry.

Ultimately, the power of this research lies in the process, not in the final product. By seeing a self-directed task through to completion, the children cultivate the confidence and executive functioning necessary for lifelong learning. The final results are highly anticipated, as they represent the culmination of weeks of dedicated, focused, and purposeful work.

Written by: Farah El Halawani

NEST: Fostering Independence in the 0–3 Environment

Over the past month in the 0–3 environment, it has been a pleasure to spend time with the children and their families. One of the most rewarding aspects of working alongside the children and their parents/carers has been observing the growing confidence and independence that emerge when children are given the opportunity to do things for themselves.

In Montessori education, independence is not simply about completing tasks alone; it is about helping children develop confidence, concentration, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging within their community. The prepared environment supports this by offering opportunities for meaningful work that children can choose and repeat at their own pace.

A particular favourite has been food preparation. The children have shown great enthusiasm for peeling and cutting bananas, slicing apples, spreading onion and chives spread on crackers, orange squeezing, and mandarin peeling. These experiences allow children to participate in real-life activities while refining their coordination, concentration, and fine motor skills. The sense of pride on a child's face after preparing food independently is a wonderful reminder of the value of practical life experiences.

The children have also been busy caring for themselves and their environment. We regularly observe children putting away materials after use, helping to clean spills, washing their hands, removing their socks and shoes, and participating in daily routines. These moments may seem simple, but they contribute significantly to a child's developing sense of competence and responsibility.

An important feature of the Montessori approach is allowing children the time they need to complete tasks independently. While it can often be quicker for an adult to step in and help, children gain confidence and capability when they are given the opportunity to try for themselves. Through repetition and practice, they develop perseverance, coordination, and problem-solving skills.

Families can continue supporting independence at home through small, everyday opportunities. Children enjoy helping with household tasks such as setting the table, watering plants, packing their bag, folding laundry, or preparing simple snacks. Providing child-sized tools and allowing extra time for participation can make these experiences both enjoyable and successful.

Offering simple choices can also encourage independence. For example, choosing between two outfits or selecting a snack from two options allows children to practise decision-making within appropriate boundaries. These opportunities help children develop confidence while fostering a sense of ownership over their daily activities.

As adults, our role is often to observe carefully and provide support only when needed. When children are trusted with meaningful responsibilities and given the freedom to participate in everyday life, they demonstrate a remarkable capacity for learning and growth.

Thank you to all the parents and carers who have welcomed me into the classroom community this month. It has been a joy to work alongside you and observe your children's curiosity, determination, and growing independence. I look forward to continuing this journey together and supporting the children as they develop the skills and confidence that will serve them throughout their lives.

Gracey Santos
AMI Trained 0–3 and 3–6 Montessori Educator

Reminder - Join Our Social Media Community

We're excited to remind you that our Facebook and Instagram pages are now live!

Our social media platforms are a wonderful way for families, friends, and the wider community to experience life at our Montessori school in action. Through our posts, you'll enjoy a front-row view of the learning, creativity, and discovery that takes place each day — from children engaging in hands-on classroom activities and exploring the outdoors, to special events, celebrations, and meaningful community moments.

Being active on social media allows us to share our Montessori environment with you in real time, helping you feel more connected to your child's learning journey and the vibrant community around them. It's a space where you can like, comment, and share in the joy of achievements while supporting and celebrating the growth of our children.

We warmly encourage all families to follow our pages, engage with our content, and share our profiles with friends, family, and the wider community. Your support helps us grow socially and invite others to discover the inspiring, nurturing, and joyful world we are creating together.

Join our online community here:

Facebook: Join SSM on FB
Instagram: Join SSM on Insta

SSM Community Calendar

Term 2, 2026

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	**Apr** 20 Staff PD Day- Pupil Free Day	Apr 21 School Starts- TERM 2	Apr 22	Apr 23 Music	Apr 24 Athletics- Primary (K-6) Playball - (3-6) Spor ts Southside Scoop	Apr 25 Anzac Day (School Closed)	Apr 26
2	Apr 27 Anzac Day Public Holiday (School Closed)	Apr 28	Apr 29	Apr 30 Music	**May** 1 Athletics- Primary (K-6) Playball - (3-6) Spor ts	May 2	May 3
3	May 4 Parents Observation- Garden & Loft	May 5 Parents Observation- Garden & Loft	May 6 Parents Observation- Garden & Loft	May 7 Parents Observation- Garden & Loft Music Mother's Day Afternoon Tea	May 8 Parents Observation- Garden & Loft Athletics- Primary (K-6) Playball - (3-6) Spor ts Southside Scoop	May 9	May 10 Mother's Day
4	May 11 Parents Observation - Garden & Loft	May 12 Parents Observation - Garden & Loft	May 13 Parents Observation - Garden & Loft Athletics Carnival - Pymble (K-6)	May 14 Parents Observation - Garden & Loft Music	May 15 Parents Observation - Garden & Loft Athletics- Primary (K-6) Playball - (3-6) Spor ts	May 16	May 17
5	May 18 Parent Observation- Garden & Loft	May 19 Parent Observation- Garden & Loft	May 20 Parent Observation- Garden & Loft	May 21 Parent Observation- Garden & Loft Music	May 22 Parent Observation- Garden & Loft Athletics- Primary (K-6) Playball - (3-6) Spor ts Southside Scoop	May 23	May 24
	May 25 Parent Observation- (Garden &	May 26 Parent Observation- (Garden &	May 27 Parent Observation- (Garden &	May 28 Music Parent	May 29 Athletics- Primary (K-6)	May 30	May 31

6	Loft)	Loft) School Photo Day	Loft)	Observation- (Garden & Loft)	Parent Observation- (Garden & Loft) Playball - (3-6) Spor ts		
7	**Jun** 1	Jun 2	Jun 3	Jun 4 Music	Jun 5 Combined Montessori Staff PD Day- Pupil Free Day Southside Scoop	Jun 6	Jun 7
8	Jun 8 King's Bir thday- Public Holiday	Jun 9	Jun 10	Jun 11 Music	Jun 12 Athletics- Primary (K-6) Playball- (3-6) Spor ts	Jun 13	Jun 14
9	Jun 15	Jun 16	Jun 17	Jun 18 Music	Jun 19 Playball - (3-6) Spor ts Athletics- (K-6) Primary Southside Scoop Semester One Repor t	Jun 20	Jun 21
10	Jun 22	Jun 23	Jun 24	Jun 25 Music Parent Teacher Interview- Garden	Jun 26 Playball - (3-6) Spor ts Athletics- (K-6) Primary Parent Teacher Interview- Loft	Jun 27	Jun 28

SOUTHSIDE
Montessori School
- Est 1979 -

2026 Term Dates

Term	Commences		Concludes	
1	Wednesday	28 January	Thursday	2 April
2	Tuesday	21 April	Friday	26 June
3	Tuesday	21 July	Friday	25 September
4	Tuesday	13 October	Thursday	10 December

Public Holidays (during school term)		
Term 2	ANZAC Day	Monday 27 April
Term 2	King's Birthday	Monday 8 June

Staff PD Dates (Pupil Free Days)	
Term 1	27 January
Term 2	20 April / 5 June
Term 3	20 July
Term 4	12 October/ 11 December

School Hours		
NIDO Program (Thursday)	11:15am	12:30pm
ParentChild Program (Wed,Thurs)	9:15am	11:15am
Pre -Primary Program (3-6)	9.00 am *Supervision from 8.30am*	3.00pm
Primary (6-12)	9.00 am *Supervision from 8.30am*	3.00pm

Extended Leave

Please note that Southside Montessori School does not generally support extended leave for students. Applications are considered at the discretion of the Principal and will be considered under
extenuating circumstances.