SOUTHSIDE

Montessori School

Enrolment
Policy and Procedures

Version Control **2**

1. Policy Statement **3**

2. Legislative Registration Requirements **3**

3. Maintenance of Enrolment Register **4**

3.1 Procedures at point of enrolment *4*

3.2 Updating the enrolment register for withdrawals *4*

3.2.1. Known destination *4*

3.2.2. Unknown destination *5*

4. Application Process **6**

5. Enrolment Process **7**

5.1 Enrolment considerations: *7*

5.2 Additional considerations: *7*

5.3 Students with special needs or abilities: *7*

5.4 Enrolment decision: *8*

5.5 Agreement to terms and conditions: *8*

6. Appendix: Terms and Conditions of Enrolment **9**

Version Control

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1. Policy Statement

Southside Montessori School is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and nurturing educational environment for all students. This document outlines our expectations and obligations to ensuring that each child receives quality education in compliance with legislative requirements for student attendance at school. It also aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, contractors as well as parents/carers understand their roles and responsibilities for children's attendance at school.

It is the legal duty of parents/carers to ensure a child of compulsory school age (6-17yrs) is enrolled at, and attending, a government school, registered non-government school or registered for home schooling. It is an offence under The Education Act 1990 if a parent fails to meet this duty.

This policy applies to all prospective parents/guardians seeking enrolment for their children at Southside Montessori School.

The Leadership Team is responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy.

2. Legislative Registration Requirements

Southside Montessori School has a comprehensive enrolment policy designed to ensure that every child receives an education of the highest quality. This policy helps ensure operations are aligned with the following legal obligations:

- The Education Act 1990 (section 22): mandates that children of compulsory school age (6-17 years) must be enrolled in school or registered for home schooling.
- The Education Act 1990 (section 25): The Act includes provisions for the exemption of students from enrolment in certain circumstances. The NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning has delegated the authority to school Principals to grant and cancel certain types of exemptions for students enrolled at school.
- The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual (2023) – section B7.1: requires the Principal of the School to keep a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of student enrolments.
- Within the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the National Quality Standard (NQS): Quality Area 5 [Relationships with Children] and Quality Area 6 [Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities].

Related policies:

SSM Attendance Policy and Procedures

SSM Exemption Policy and Procedures

SSM Child Protection Policy and Procedures

SSM Privacy and Data Breach Policy and Procedures

3. Maintenance of Enrolment Register

The Leadership Team maintains an enrolment register that is retained for at least five years before archiving.

SSM uses Sentral as the main platform for managing various aspects of school operations, including student enrolment.

While Sentral handles the primary backups, SSM's IT subcommittee team implements additional backup measures, such as periodically exporting enrolment data from Sentral to SharePoint and stored indefinitely in the cloud.

In addition to digital records, SSM also keeps hard copies of enrolled students' forms within their individual physical student files.

The enrolment register is updated at the following times:

- receiving the acceptance of enrolment letter
- receiving written notification of withdrawal
- when parents/guardians inform of a change of details

3.1 Procedures at point of enrolment

The enrolment register includes the information set out below.

The Leadership Team enters data in the enrolment register at point of enrolment.

Information for each student
- name, date of birth and address
- name and contact phone number for parent(s)/guardian(s)
- enrolment date
- leaving date and destination.

Extra information for students older than 6 at the time of enrolment
- pre-enrolment situation or
- previous school (where relevant).

Extra information for students under 17 with an unknown destination at the time of leaving the school.

3.2 Updating the enrolment register for withdrawals

3.2.1. Known destination

When a parent or guardian indicates they want to withdraw their child from SSM, the Leadership Team directs them to formally request the official withdrawal form via email. This form then requires the family to inform the school about where the student will be attending next (If enrolling in another school) or, if they are intending to homeschool, to supply a valid Certificate of Registration for Home Schooling.

The Leadership Team may request a copy of an acceptance letter or enrolment confirmation as evidence that the student has been accepted and will be enrolling at the new school. SSM may contact the new school directly to confirm that the student has indeed enrolled or has been offered a place. This is often done via phone or email.

3.2.2. Unknown destination

The Leadership Team notifies the NSW Department of Education and records the date of notification in the enrolment register.

The completed destination unknown form is stored in individual physical student files.

For each student who has left the school with an unknown destination, the following information is provided to the DoE:

- full name
- date of birth
- last known address
- last attendance date
- possible destination
- full name of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- contact information for parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Work, Health and Safety risks of contacting parent(s)/guardian(s)/student
- any information that may help locate the student.

The Leadership Team determines that a student's destination is unknown based on the following criteria:

- No response from parents/guardians after several attempts using various methods.
- No confirmation of enrolment at another school after reasonable inquiries.
- Information received indicating the family has moved without providing a new address or school.

Once the established criteria are met, the Leadership Team formally determines and records that the student's destination is unknown.

The Leadership Team follows a risk-based approach to determine how to proceed in order to determine the whereabouts of a student:

- Ringing the primary contact numbers listed in the school records.
- Sending an email to the registered email addresses of the parents/guardians, requesting confirmation of the student's departure and their destination.
- Sending a formal letter to the student's last known address, requesting information about their departure and destination.
- If contact with parents/guardians is unsuccessful, other emergency contacts listed in the student's records will be contacted.

A detailed communication log is maintained, documenting all attempts to contact the student's family and any other relevant individuals. This log includes:

- Date and time of each attempt
- Method of communication (phone call, email, letter, personal contact)
- Name of the staff member making the attempt
- Name and contact details of the person contacted
- Outcome of the communication (e.g., message left, conversation summary, no answer, email bounced back)
- Copies of any written communication sent (emails, letters, SMS messages)

If a student's name is removed from the register of daily attendance because their enrolment destination is unknown, absences from the last day of attendance at school are not included as absences (A) for statistical purposes.

4. Application Process

1. **Booking the school tour:**
    - Parents/guardians can complete a booking form via the school's website, providing their personal contact details. The school will confirm with parents/guardians the day before the scheduled tour.
2. **School tour:**
    - Parents/guardians will attend a school tour. Parents/guardians must attend a school tour before proceeding with the application for enrolment process.
    - After the tour, parents/guardians will receive an Enrolment Pack containing:
        - Application for Enrolment instructions/ form
        - Fees schedule
        - Enrolment policy
        - Program overview
        - Terms and Conditions of Enrolment
3. **Post-tour process:**
    - After the tour, parents/guardians will receive the Application for Enrolment Form and are required to pay the non-refundable $250 application fee to commence the application for enrolment process.
    - A Letter of Acknowledgement will be sent to families outlining the steps in the application for enrolment process.
    - The school will follow up with parents/guardians within a week if no correspondence is received after the tour.
4. **Classroom observation and trial process:**
    - Following the tour, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to observe in a classroom environment*.
    - A questionnaire will be sent to parents/guardians ahead of an Orientation Meeting** being scheduled for the preschool.
    - Trial days*** will be arranged for the primary school, including additional support for any specific needs, if necessary. A meeting will follow the trial days to discuss the experience.
5. **Review process:**
    - The Leadership Team will review all documentation, observations, and feedback before making a final decision regarding enrolment.
6. **Offer of enrolment:**
    - Once the enrolment decision is made, the family will receive an Enrolment Offer, which will include the necessary documentation, Terms and Conditions, and placement fee details.

*Classroom observation: after the tour and submission of the application to enrol, parents/guardians will be invited to observe a classroom session for approximately 30 minutes. This observation will take place in the class corresponding to the child's age group but may not be the class the child is placed in if enrolled. A guideline for the observation session will be provided to parents/guardians ahead of the observation session.

**Orientation meeting: for students entering the preschool, parents/guardians will be asked to complete a Questionnaire ahead of an Orientation meeting with the educators and Lead Educator ahead of a potential enrolment.

***Trial days: for students entering the primary school, two trial days will be arranged (with the possibility of extending to a third day if required based on the needs of the student). Following the trial, the Educators and Lead Educator will meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the potential enrolment. The school will aim to provide an outcome to parents/ guardians regarding the students' enrolment within 2 weeks following the classroom observation or trial days.

5. Enrolment Process

5.1 **Enrolment considerations:**

When considering enrolment, the school takes the following criteria into account:

- Family relationship with the school (e.g., sibling of a current or former student).
- Parent/guardian connection to the school (e.g., parents who have attended the school).
- Understanding of the Montessori approach and its core principles.
- Compatibility with the school's Montessori ethos in terms of values, attitudes, and priorities.
- Previous Montessori experience, such as attendance at a Montessori preschool, long day care, or school.
- A balance of the students' ages and genders that make up the classroom environment.
- Student's previous educational history, including reports from prior schools or early childhood services (e.g., NSW Department of Education's Transition to School Statement).

5.2 Additional considerations:

- Reasonable adjustments: The school will assess whether it has the necessary resources, facilities, and means to make reasonable adjustments for students with special needs or abilities. **Refer to SSM NCCD Policy and Procedures (available upon request).**
- Parent/guardian involvement: The school values active participation from parents in key decisions related to their child's education.
- Application order: The order in which applications are received, along with the non-refundable application fee, may be taken into consideration when determining enrolment.

5.3 Students with special needs or abilities:

- Parents/guardians provide written permission to the Leadership Team to gather further information about the student's needs from the previous school or early childhood setting as well as health professionals such as paediatricians, psychologists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists.
- Parents/guardians and the Leadership Team collect information to determine the student's educational needs and identify adjustments:
    - physical access
    - health issues
    - personal care needs
    - communication needs
    - curriculum access
    - specialist agencies
    - emergency procedures
- Parents/guardians attend a meeting with the Leadership Team to discuss identified barriers, and consult regarding adjustments and considerations of how SSM can meet the student's needs.
- SSM makes assessment regarding reasonable adjustment.
- SSM considers whether reasonable adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship.
- SSM advises parents/guardians of preliminary view regarding those matters.
- SSM provides parents/guardians the opportunity to respond to preliminary view before making final decision about adjustments.
- If the enrolment proceeds, SSM provides a letter to parents/guardians stating what the school is able to provide and offers the enrolment. SSM subsequently follows its procedures as stated in SSM's NCCD Policy and Procedures.
- The enrolment may not proceed if the parents/guardians may choose not to proceed with enrolment if they believe SSM is unable to adequately meet their child's need or if SSM can demonstrate that the enrolment will cause unjustifiable hardship in relation to the student and the circumstances of the school.

5.4 Enrolment decision:

Based on all the information gathered during the application process the Leadership Team will make the final decision regarding enrolment. The school will aim to communicate this to parents/guardians within two weeks.

Continued enrolment at Southside Montessori School depends on the student's consistent attendance, adherence to the school's behavioural codes, payment of all school fees, and compliance with any other school requirements.

5.5 Agreement to terms and conditions:

- Parents/guardians must agree to the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment (Appendix) as a condition of enrolling their child at the school.
- If an enrolment position is offered, parents/guardians will need to accept the enrolment offer within a week of the offer being made or one week ahead of the intended start date.
- Parents/guardians will complete the enrolment forms along with the payment of the non-refundable placement fee of $800.
- In the event of withdrawal after acceptance and prior to commencement, the placement fee will be retained to cover administrative and processing costs.

6. Appendix: Terms and Conditions of Enrolment

The Terms and Conditions of enrolment of Southside Montessori School have been developed in order to support the shared responsibility of our families and the School in the education of your child.

One of the values of the School is to build strong relationships between home and school with clear boundaries, this enables students to grow into confident, happy and purposeful individuals.

1. APPLICATION FOR ENROLMENT

- A non-refundable application fee is due following attendance of a school tour and upon submission of an application for enrolment.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF OFFER OF ENROLMENT

- An offer of enrolment must be accepted by both parents where appropriate unless the School agrees to waive this requirement. Upon acceptance of an offer, all signatories to the terms and conditions will be jointly and severally liable in respect of the obligations contained in these terms and conditions.
- The acceptance of the offer must be accompanied by a non-refundable placement fee.
- If the student does not commence the enrolment, the placement fee will not be refunded unless the School, acting reasonably, agrees that there are special circumstances supporting a full or partial refund. A decision to enrol the student at another school will not, of itself, constitute special circumstances.
- If the parents wish to defer the entry of a student to a different calendar year to the initial request, the School will advise whether it is able to agree to this. If it is unable to agree, the Student will be placed on a waiting list for the requested year but enrolment cannot be guaranteed.

3. CONDITIONAL ENROLMENT

- All enrolments are at the discretion of the School and conditional upon the School being satisfied in its reasonable discretion that the Student's needs can be met by the School. The School may cancel the enrolment if it reasonably determines prior to the start of the enrolment that the Student's needs cannot be met.
- The School may require parents to provide reports and assessments necessary to determine the particular needs of the Student.

3. PROGRESS OF STUDENT

If the School reasonably considers that the progress of a Student is unsatisfactory and that it can no longer meet the Student's needs it may terminate the enrolment of the Student by giving not less than one term's notice.

4. FEES AND CHARGES

- The School Board determines the fees and charges that will be payable from time to time which are set out in a Schedule of Fees. The Schedule of Fees is revised regularly and may be amended each year. Where possible, the School will give not less than one (1) term's notice of any change to the Schedule of Fees.
- Fees and charges are also levied for co-curricular activities, excursions/incursions, sport and camps.
- All fees and charges must be paid on or before the due date set out in the fees notice.
- If an account for terms fees and/or charges is not paid in full by the end of Week Three of each term, a $100 late fee will be charged.
- If fees and charges are not paid within 30 days of the due date an overdue charge may be levied calculated on the amount outstanding from the due date. This charge reflects the reasonable administrative and financial costs of collecting the outstanding fees and charges which may be incurred by the School as a result of the late payment. The charges payable from time to time can be obtained from the School office.
- While an invoice for fees and charges remains outstanding, the School may determine that the student will not be permitted to participate in any discretionary activity offered by the School (such as, sport, excursions, camps and local trips).
- If fees and charges are not paid within 60 days of the due date the enrolment of the Student's enrolment may be terminated unless the School agrees in writing to accept other arrangements. Failure to abide by any other agreed arrangements may result in the enrolment of the Student being terminated without further notice.
- Fees will not be remitted in whole or part if the Student is absent due to illness, leave or suspension.
- If the school enters into debt recovery procedures, we understand that we would be responsible for any additional costs, which may arise (e.g. professional fees and interest charges).

5. WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

- Where students leave to enrol at another school, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requires that Parents advise the School in writing of the name of the school the Student will be attending and the grade the Student will be entering at the new school.
- If Parents wish to withdraw a Student from the School, notice given must be not less than one full term's notice to expire at the end of a term.
- A full term's notice in writing must be addressed to the Leadership Team before any student is withdrawn from the School. The notice must be given no later than the first day of Week One of the said term for withdrawal of student from that term. This will accommodate the one terms notice requirement. If this notice is not given, we agree to pay a full term's fees inclusive of GST. This amount is a genuine pre-estimate by the School of the loss that it would suffer if we do not provide the required notice. Fees are not pro-rated to accommodate withdrawal during a term. Fees for one full term must be paid.
- If the School does not give at least one term's notice of an increase in the fees payable by the Parent/Carer, the Parents may withdraw the Student from the end of the term in which the notice of the Fee increase was given provided notice of withdrawal is given to the School within 30 days of the date on which the notice of the Fee increase was given.
- By accepting the School's offer of a position for the student, Parents are committed to the best of their ability to completing the cycle in which the student is enrolled (3-6 years, 6-9 years, and 9-12 years) with the intention to continue on to the subsequent cycles, culminating in the graduation from primary school.

6. OBLIGATIONS OF STUDENTS

Students are required to have high standards of behaviour and:

- abide by the School Rules and Codes of Conduct as they apply from time-to-time,
- behave courteously and considerately to each other and to staff at all times,
- not do anything which may bring the School into disrepute, including in print and electronic media,
- support the goals and values of the School,
- attend important school events as determined by the Principal, and camps and excursions that are an integral part of the School curriculum,
- attend the School during school hours, except in the case of sickness or where leave has been given or an exemption from attendance has been granted.
- acknowledge that the School is a Montessori community and that behaviours and attitudes based on Montessori Grace and Courtesy values and beliefs are encouraged.
- acknowledge the School's positive discipline policy and agree to support the administration of the School's positive discipline policy. In particular, we accept that the Leadership Team may in their absolute discretion suspend, or after consultation with the Chair of the School Board, exclude a student for breaches of rules or discipline or where we (as parents/guardians) have failed to comply with the Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct or with these conditions of enrolment.

7. OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS

7.1 Parents

- must accept and abide by the requirements and directions of the School Board and the Leadership Team relating to the Student or students generally and not interfere in any way with conduct, management and administration of the School,
- are required to support the goals, values and activities of the School, and
- should view the School's parent portal on a regular basis and/or read the e-Newsletter.

7.2 Parents must promptly advise the School:

- in writing of any change of home, mailing, email address or contact details or other information on the Enrolment Application Form. Offers of enrolment may be cancelled if the School loses contact with the parent or mail is returned
- in writing via email if the Student will be absent from the School due to ill health or other reason,
- in writing of any Orders or arrangements that affect the Student concerning custody or access, any change to them or any other orders or arrangements which were relevant to the Student's education and welfare and provide copies of any Orders to the School.

7.3 Parents also:

- should communicate with students, other parent/carer(s), visitors and staff members in a courteous manner, and follow the communication guidelines laid down by the School from time-to-time and observe the Parent Code of Conduct,
- should use their reasonable endeavours to attend parent-teacher interviews and parent education sessions
- must not disseminate inaccurate, misleading or defamatory information on social media to in relation to the School, staff, students or other members of the School community.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Parents must advise the School as soon as reasonably practicable if they become aware of any special needs that the Student may have including, but not limited to, any medical, physical, psychological needs, or any changes to these needs.
- Parents must complete and return to the School the required health form for the Student prior to the Student commencing at the School and provide updates if circumstances change or as required by the School from time to time.
- If the Student is ill or injured, requiring urgent hospital and/or medical treatment (including but not limited to injections, blood transfusions, surgery) and where a Parent is not readily available to authorise such treatment, the Leadership Team, or a senior staff member of the School, may give the necessary authority for such treatment. The Parents indemnify the School, its employees and agents in respect of all costs and expenses arising directly or indirectly out of such treatment except to the extent that such costs or expenses arise as a result of the reckless or negligent conduct of the School, its agents or employees.
- Parents must observe School security procedures for the protection of students.
- Students are responsible for their personal belongings and the School does not accept any responsibility for the loss or damage to those belongings.
- The Leadership Team may search the Student's bag or other possessions where there are reasonable grounds to do so, in order to maintain a safe environment for all students.

9. PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

- The School determines the educational and other programs and activities conducted at the School from time to time in its reasonable discretion.
- The School may change its programs and activities and the content of these programs and activities without notice where reasonably necessary or desirable to do so.
- The Student will be required to participate in all compulsory activities including excursions, camps and outdoor education unless the Principal agrees otherwise. Charges may be levied for these activities and will be payable unless the Student is unable to attend due to ill health or other good reason which makes it impossible for the Student to attend.

10. REPORTS AND NOTICES

The School will generally provide a printed copy of the progress report, and parents/carers are expected to provide their signed acknowledgment. Where parents/carers do not live together, reports and notices will be sent to both Parents at the address notified by them, unless:

a) there is an Order of the Court providing reports and notices to be sent to one Parent,
b) there is an agreement between the Parents that the reports and notices will be sent to one Parent, or
c) the School in its reasonable discretion considers that it is in the best interests of the Student that reports and notices should only be sent to one Parent.

11. LEAVE

- If the parent/carer(s) need to take the student out for an extended amount of time [e.g., exemptions from attendance/ enrolment or a serious medical conditions) (5 weeks and beyond) and wish to hold a position for the student's return, a 50% of the term's fees is incurred during this extended time. This fee is payable in one lump sum at the time of leaving the school and guarantees re-entry Day 1, of the agreed Term and of the agreed re-entry year. Should a student require earlier return than the agreed date there is no guarantee that such entry would be possible. Should a student return during an academic year, full fees would be payable for the whole of the returning term.
- Requests for absences/leave from School activities, including academic and co-curricular programs, and for early departure at the end of a day or term and/or late return from breaks are considered on a case-by-case basis and must be applied for in writing to the Leadership Team. Parent/carer(s) understand that as far as possible medical or other appointments should be made outside of school hours. Leave will usually only be granted on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Leadership Team and in consultation with the family upon review of circumstances.

12. SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF ENROLMENT

- The School may suspend or terminate the enrolment of a student at any time for reasons which may include, but are not limited to:
    - a serious breach of the School's rules or Code of Conduct
    - where a Parent has breached these Enrolment Conditions [or the Parent Code of Conduct];
    - where a Parent conduct is detrimental to the reputation of the School or the well-being of its students or staff, and;
    - where the Leadership Team or School Board reasonably believes that a mutually beneficial relationship of co-operation and trust between the School and the Parents or a Parent has broken down to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship.
- The School will only exercise its powers under this clause to terminate the enrolment if it has provided the Student and their Parent(s) with details of the conduct which may result in a decision to terminate the enrolment and provided them with a reasonable opportunity to respond and where there has been procedural fairness.
- The School may terminate the enrolment of the Student [without notice or on 14 days' notice] if, either before or after the commencement of enrolment, the School finds the relevant particulars of the special needs of the Student have not been provided to the School or the particulars provided are materially incorrect or misleading, and the failure to provide that information has had a material effect on the School or the student's welfare or both.

13. COURT ORDERS

- The Parents must provide accurate information to the School about any arrangement between Parents or Court Orders in relation to the Student at the time for applying for enrolment. The Parents must immediately notify the School of any new arrangements or changes to any previously communicated arrangements.
- The Parents must immediately notify the School of any new Court Orders or changes to any previously communicated Court Orders.

14. PRIVACY

- The School may from time to time collect personal information about parents and students which may be necessary for the School's function or activities. We authorise the School to use and disclose information in such a manner that the Leadership Team may deem appropriate for the purposes of the student's education, health, care, welfare or development.
- We have signed our intent for consent for the display of student photographs and videos from time to time around the School, and/or published in School publications, on its website and in other marketing and promotional material. (Media Consent Form provided in the Enrolment Pack).
- The Parents agree to not post photos taken at school of students and staff or post school related information on social media platforms unless approved in advance by the school's Leadership Team.

15. AMENDMENT OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The School may alter the terms and conditions of enrolment at any time by giving not less than two (2) terms' notice to the Parents in writing which shall apply to both current and future students and parent/guardian(s) from the date specified in the notice.

16. DEFINITIONS

In the terms and conditions:

- Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) means the parent/guardian(s) who entered into the contract of enrolment with the School.
- School means Southside Montessori School (SSM).
- Student means the student who is named in the contract of enrolment.