



# Lindfield Montessori Preschool

Strategic Plan

2023-2025

# Overview

- The Montessori Ethos
- Executive Summary
- Our Objectives
- Strategies and Actions to deliver

# The Montessori Ethos

- The strategic plan for Lindfield Montessori Preschool (LMP) exists within the context of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).
- AMI's mission is to support the natural development of the human being from birth to maturity, enabling children to become the transforming elements of society, leading to a harmonious and peaceful world.

## Executive Summary

## Who we are

We are a small, community minded, family oriented Montessori school who have served the community for the past 48 years.

### Our Purpose

To provide a premium Montessori 'Education for Life' to the community.

### Our Vision

Education in Harmony with Life

### Our Mission

To provide children with an education for life within the ages of 3-6 years. Our practices are based on the developmental needs of individual children and the pedagogy and work of Dr Maria Montessori. We aim to build a community of children, staff and families, that actively support our vision.

# Who we are

## Our Philosophy

- Lindfield Montessori School provides an education for life for all children in our community. We do this by offering a respectful and child centered service that embodies the Montessori philosophy within all that we do such as creating a carefully prepared environment, allowing children's choice, providing age-appropriate freedom within limits, encouraging a love of learning and curiosity, and respecting the needs of the child.
- We are committed, as a not for profit, community-based service to including our families and children in supporting our vision of delivering 'education in harmony with life'.
- Our educators follow the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) standard which is the original training developed by Dr Montessori. The high standards of AMI and the National Quality Standard inform our practice, and we consistently seek ways to ensure the quality and continuous improvement of Lindfield Montessori for all.

# Our Target Audience

- 25 – 45 year-old parents who are dissatisfied with what is on offer with more traditional childcare, or who may be looking for a smaller Centre.
- Educated group – often white collar workers.
- Those who know Montessori with an understanding of what a Montessori education can provide for their children's future.
- People looking for more than just 'childcare'. They want a structured education, one that reflects their personal values.
- Geographic – Lindfield, Killara, Gordon, St Ives, Chatswood, Roseville, Pymble, Macquarie Park.

## WHO ARE THEY REALLY?

- Independent thinkers
- Searching for alternative answers to education
- Wanting a small, personalised, nurturing, small boutique service where their child will not 'get lost'.
- Interested in giving their children a good head start to their education – focused on purposeful activities as opposed to just play.

## WHAT DO WE WANT THEM TO:

- **Think** – This school is in line with my family values. They speak my language. This is what I am looking for. I can imagine my child here; I want to send my child here. This is different to other places.
- **Feel** – Excited to find out more. Curious.
- **Do** – Enquire, come for a tour and a chat, and ultimately, enrol.

# The Market

## **What need are we fulfilling?**

Families of the North Shore are looking for an alternative education in the form of Montessori for their children from an early age. There is a glut of childcare available, however, we are offering something unique in Montessori education that is vastly different from a play based day care or preschool setting.

## **Our Clientele**

- Local families who have chosen the school out of convenience
- Families who are specifically seeking Montessori education and the values it embodies
- Families who are dissatisfied by mainstream offerings and are seeking something different
- Families who are wanting a personalised, individual program for their child in a unique setting

## **What sets us apart**

- Our non-traditional child care approach - an individual and personalised approach for each child and family
- The benefit of consistent attendance patterns over 3 years
- Our focus on building a strong and connected community
- Our high calibre of educators with low turnover
- Our high teacher to child ratio
- The prepared environment, purpose built, with open ended natural space
- Our mixed age group (3-6 years)
- Our offering of the NESA approved Kindergarten program
- A calm, nurturing, and positive environment

# The Market

## The competition

- Northside Montessori, Pymble
- Montessori Academy
- Reddam House Early Learning School, Lindfield
- Lindfield Learning Village
- Little Zacs, Killara
- Kids Club Early Childhood Learning Centre, Killara
- Highfields Preparatory and Kindergarten School
- Lady Game Community Kindergarten, Lindfield
- Preschools claiming to have adopted the Montessori philosophy amongst their methods eg. Little Giants
- Mainstream preschools

## Strategic Alliances

- Association Montessori International
- Principal's Alliance
- Surrounding Montessori Schools
- Association of Independent Schools (AIS)
- MSCA (Montessori Schools & Centres Australia)

# SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- Experienced , permanent and content staff.
- High teacher to child ratio.
- Two AMI trained directresses.
- Full compliment of Montessori materials, well resourced / new classroom furniture.
- Purpose built, open ended natural space.
- Connected community of parents.
- Support from other Montessori schools.
- Mixed age group.
- Longest running Montessori school in NSW.
- Not-for profit business.

## Opportunities

- Increase 3-6 enrolments .
- Find more suitable premises .
- Continue to focus on professional marketing.
- To provide further Montessori education to the community (existing and new).
- To participate in more community events to increase our brand and profile.

## Weaknesses

- Current premises – constant increasing rent and being under a license. Lack of autonomy – inability to advertise freely, no street presence. Needing to pack away and set up each week.
- Short tenure of Committee Members. Small cohort of parents to draw Committee Members from.
- No profits since 2018 and low savings.
- Lack of awareness and understanding in the Montessori program and brand.
- Low enrolments.
- We do not offer long daycare hours (6am – 6pm) / lack of vacation care.
- Can be hard to find, not in close proximity to public transport.

## Threats

- Competitors – other childcare centres.
- The Placement fee.
- The economy and people's financial situation at present.
- Current license and premises restricting growth.
- The school's limited income.
- The cost of not owning the premises and the potential cost of moving.
- Lack of enrolments not sustainable in the future.
- Losing all or most of our four year olds, which compromises the Montessori method.

## Our Objectives, Strategies & Actions

# Objective 1- Being Child Focused

To deliver positive outcomes for each child

## **1.1** Ensure sustainability of ongoing programs

LMP will strive to include opportunities for existing children to develop their initiative and inner curiosity, encouraging a positive attitude towards learning, building self confidence in their individuality and creating an environment where each of them is able to contribute towards harmonious relationships at all levels.

## **1.2** Continue to offer opportunities for staff education and professional development to provide an optimal education environment for children's needs.

## **1.3** Continue to offer best practice Montessori environments in terms of staffing, materials, facilities and practices.

# Delivering Objective 1- Strategies & Actions

## Strategies and actions to ensure positive outcomes for each child

### **1.1 Ensure sustainability for our ongoing programs**

- Critical reflection and review of practices to ensure consistency in approach each day and through formalised appraisals
- Maintain integrity of Montessori core principles and values.
- Build strong relationships and confidence with families and children to retain enrolments into the Kindergarten year.

### **1.2 Continue to offer opportunities for staff education and professional development to provide an optimal education environment for children's needs.**

- Prioritise staff education in our school budget through both PD budget and replacement staff budget.
- Leadership to highlight learning opportunities for staff
- Leadership to ensure they are aware of and abreast of opportunities and offerings.

### **1.3 Continue to offer best practice Montessori environments**

- Maintaining and replacing key Montessori materials as required to maintain an environment of a high standard.
- Leadership to maintain awareness of current Montessori and mainstream education practices in order to maintain best practice.

## Objective 2 – Aligning our Education with the Montessori Pedagogy

To maintain compliance of our education programs whilst aligning with the Montessori Pedagogy

- 2.1** Commitment to remain at the leading edge of Montessori Principles & practice
- 2.2** Provide education to families and the broader community about Montessori education.
- 2.3** To actively promote Lindfield Montessori Preschool as the preferred choice for an education

# Delivering Objective 2 - Strategies & Actions

Strategies and actions to maintain compliance of our education programs whilst aligning the Montessori pedagogy

## **2.1 Commitment to remain at the leading edge of Montessori Principles**

- Continue to employ a high standard of Montessori trained staff
- Continue to offer best practice Montessori environments through materials and resources
- Create a culture of excellence by involving staff in setting professional goals and participating in professional development

## **2.2 Provide education to families and the broader community about Montessori methods**

- Further develop our parent education program via parent information evenings/ creation of the 'Montessori Circle'
- Classroom observation opportunities
- Community events
- Continue to revise the parent handbook
- Make clear and timely communications to parents via our bulletin and Transparent Classroom
- Provide regular opportunities for parents to become familiar with their child's class and teacher (open mornings where the child hosts their parent)

## **2.3 To actively promote Lindfield Montessori Preschool as the preferred choice for a Montessori education**

- Build brand awareness to drive enrolments – refreshed website, signage, rebrand etc
- Targeted marketing communications via regular updates on social media and signage
- Increase community engagement – Open Days, events

## Objective 3 – Growth

To grow our school

**3.1** To increase families committing to the 3 year program

**3.2** To retain 50% of our 4 year old children into the following year's enrolment

**3.3** To fill a class of 30 and a waitlist generated for 3-6

**3.4** To break even in 2023 and make a profit by 2024 & 2025

# Delivering Objective 3 - Strategies & Actions

## Strategies and actions to ensure the growth of Lindfield Montessori Preschool

### **3.1 To increase families committing to the 3 year program**

- Ongoing effort to improve retention of our students, especially in kindergarten, by focusing on the relevance of a Montessori education
- Continue to promote the validity of kindergarten at Lindfield Montessori
- Create targeted marketing materials to promote the program including parent testimonials

### **3.2 To retain 50% of our 4 year old children into the following year's enrolment**

### **3.3 To fill a class of 30 and a waitlist generated for 3-6**

- Relevant, professional, consistent and focussed marketing of the school across social media and the local community
- Continue to improve the school's physical environment
- Building a relationship of trust – a personalised, empathetic and flexible enrolment process, tailored for each individual family
- Community events and sponsorships

### **3.4 To break even in 2023 and make a profit by 2024 & 2025**

- Create a financial sustainable plan for the school
- Take advantage of local and government grants
- Ensure adherence to set budgets

## Objective 4 – Effective Management

To improve the effectiveness of our management and Communication

**4.1** To continue to ensure compliance and efficient management

**4.2** To have a sound understanding of the school's financial position, with low risk appetite

**4.3** To maintain a strategic, researched and professional marketing and communications plan

# Delivering Objective 4 - Strategies & Actions

## Strategies and actions to improve our management and communication

### **4.1** To continue to ensure compliance and efficient management

- Develop specific key areas of responsibility for committee members
- Develop a 'working plan' that outlines limits of authority and review processes
- Clear roles and responsibilities for each staff member

### **4.2** To have a sound understanding of the school's financial position, with low risk appetite

- Office manager to forecast, budget, track and report all finances to the Directress and Treasurer on a monthly basis
- Agreed budgets in place at the beginning of the year to give the directress freedom to allocate as necessary
- Directress to have access to the online accounts
- Employ an external person to analyse finances/financial processes

### **4.3** To maintain a strategic, researched and professional marketing and communications plan

- Setting out clear, specific and measurable goals and objectives for the year
- Building community awareness through signage and events as well as a more targeted approach via social media to drive enrolments
- Incorporating an annual review of the marketing plan

# Objective 5 – Community Partnerships

## To foster partnerships with our community

### **5.1** To be an active member of our community

- To develop, adopt and implement within the marketing plan for the school
  - A community activity plan
  - A fundraising plan

### **5.2** To develop partnerships with the indigenous community our local area to further the reconciliation process

# Delivering Objective 5 - Strategies & Actions

## Strategies and actions to develop and foster partnerships with our community

### **5.1 To be an active member of our community**

- Develop and implement a community activities plan
  - Incorporated within the marketing plan
  - Commit to an annual calendar of community based activities (festivals, cake stalls) that engage the local community
  - Participate and support (where possible) community events. E.g. RSPCA Fundraiser, Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Black Dog Institute, Books for Kids etc.
- Develop and implement a fundraising plan
  - Determine annual target based on the school's growth plans
  - Develop tactics for fundraising initiative that address targets

### **5.2 To develop partnerships with the indigenous community our local area to further the reconciliation process**

- Participate in local events in order to make contact with the indigenous community