



TERM 1 ISSUE 1 · FEBRUARY 2023

# MONTESSORI MATTERS

## LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Families,

*The educator must cultivate the potentialities existing in the child, so they may develop and expand. It is essential to take advantage of this highly sensitive period in the life of the human being if, indeed, humanity is to improve.*

*Dr Maria Montessori – Citizen of the World, p.76*

What a wonderful start to the 2023 school year we have had. It has been lovely to welcome back existing families and get to know our new families. The children have been happy to see their friends and teachers again, have settled quickly and are enjoying learning.

Last week I showed several families around the primary school. One parent, a reception teacher herself, was amazed at how calm and settled the reception children were in only their second week of school.

Thank you to everyone who braved the warm weather to attend our Primary Welcome Evening. We anticipate that this will become an annual community event and hope you enjoyed the music, food trucks and relaxed feel. We would love to hear any feedback that will help us grow this event in 2024. I also enjoyed catching up with Middle School families at the Middle School Welcome Evening on Wednesday.



**HEATHER MCINERNEY**  
**PRINCIPAL**

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## PRINCIPAL LETTER (CONTINUED)

### Letting Go

Most children make the transition to school or to a new cycle relatively smoothly, while others may experience some anxiety such as finding it hard to go to sleep the day before school starts and feeling butterflies in their stomach. Anxiety is a natural part of life and something we all experience at times. While it can be enormously challenging for some children, as we learn to manage anxiety, we become more self-confident and more resilient.

While I was reflecting on how strong and capable our children are at managing transitions, I listened to a podcast by Simone Davies from the Montessori Notebook, Season 2 Episode 5. In this podcast Simone considers transitions from the perspective of the parent and suggests that parenting is a series of letting go.

From the first time a baby crawls away from the parent across the room, the first time you leave your child with another adult, the first morning at preschool, the first day of school, and so on, as parents we experience letting go. And children are always ready before us for the next leap.

Simone tells us that letting go means allowing children to trust their own bodies, recognise their limits and their enormous capabilities. Letting go means building up skills that will support them in their next stage of development as they become increasingly independent. Letting go means seeing them for who they are as their own person, and letting go means allowing them to make mistakes and learning from them.

Most importantly, Simone tells us that letting go means giving them strong foundations (they know we are there if they need them) but stepping back to allow them to fly.

In January, I experienced letting go once again, when my youngest daughter left home. I'm not sure that it ever gets any easier, but I am very proud of the competent and capable woman she has become, and I know she will be okay. And this is what we dream of for all of our students: that when they leave us, they will go out into the world and flourish in their future.

### Leadership

Student empowerment is a key tenet in Montessori education. Rather than have Head Boy and Head Girl positions, in a Montessori school all students are expected and enabled to take on a leadership role. I am thrilled that our Year 9 students have started the year demonstrating how competent they are as a leadership group. Not only did they organise lawn games for the younger students at the Welcome Evening, and run the Coffee Corner, but they also planned learning activities and worked with our Year 6 students to identify and understand leadership traits on the Year 6 Leadership Day.

### Professional Learning

I would like to thank and acknowledge the many staff members who have committed five Saturdays in February and March to participate in professional learning: Montessori Mathematics from ages 6-12. Thank you also to Anna Golab (qualified Montessori Institute trainer) and Alison Fish (studying to become a qualified Montessori Trainer) for providing these workshops. We are fortunate to have such committed staff members.

Finally, I hope that you all enjoy Term 1. We certainly have lots of exciting learning opportunities planned for our students. Please do not hesitate to email, phone or make a time to catch up with me, if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards, Heather



# MEET OUR STAFF



Heather  
McInerney  
Principal



Alison Fish  
Assistant  
Principal /  
Cycle 3  
Teacher



David  
Anderson  
Business  
Manager



Danielle  
Johncock  
Admin  
Manager



Hannah  
Oates  
Administrator



Monica  
Berg  
Administrator



Anna Golab  
Inclusive  
Education /  
Montessori  
Coordinator



Cheryl McGaffin  
Preschool  
Educator /  
Toddler  
Coordinator



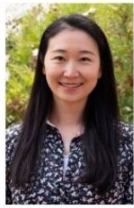
Kate Ball  
ELC Director /  
Preschool  
Teacher



Stephanie  
Slavik  
Preschool  
Teacher



Louise Brady  
Preschool  
Educator



Shixin Li  
Preschool  
Educator



Cherie Lee  
Preschool  
Educator



Rachel Johns  
Cycle 1  
Coordinator /  
Teacher



Karen  
Vianello  
Cycle 1  
Teacher



Maria  
Niedorfer  
Cycle 1  
Teacher /  
Italian Teacher



Joanna Buick  
Cycle 1 / 2  
Teacher



Allie Geddes  
Cycle 1 / 2  
Teacher



Wendy  
Humphreys  
Cycle 2  
Coordinator /  
Teacher



Kristy  
Dunstan  
Cycle 2  
Teacher



Anne-Marie  
Cummings  
Cycle 2  
Teacher



Tricia  
Thompson  
Cycle 2  
Teacher



Judy  
Pemberton  
Cycle 2  
Teacher



Michelle Young  
Cycle 3  
Coordinator /  
Teacher



Luke  
Swindells  
Cycle 3  
Teacher



Renee  
Borgman  
Cycle 3  
Teacher



James  
Mingorance  
Cycle 4  
Coordinator /  
Teacher



Siobhan  
Curran  
Cycle 4  
Teacher



Toni  
Maddock  
Cycle 4  
Teacher



Abby Schultz  
Cycle 4  
Teacher



Amelia  
Rance  
PE Teacher



Jenny  
Chilvers  
Music  
Teacher



Jane Bristow  
Classroom  
Assistant



Raelene  
Barclay  
Classroom  
Assistant



Helen  
Robinson  
Classroom  
Assistant



Tim Ross  
Classroom  
Assistant



Jodie Milde  
Classroom  
Assistant



Liarne Chicco  
Classroom  
Assistant



Alex Bigg  
Classroom  
Assistant



Demi Grant  
Classroom  
Assistant



Desiree Santos  
Classroom  
Assistant



Jess Aloisi  
Cycle 4  
Assistant & Admin



Jaime Nuske  
Cycle 4 Admin/  
Media



Naomi Kelly  
Student  
Counsellor



Jill McClory  
Library  
Coordinator



Shane Lee  
Maintenance



Adrian  
Parraga  
IT  
Administrator





## 2023 INFORMATION

### PRIMARY SCHOOL HOURS

All primary students are expected to be in class ready to start at 8:50am each morning. Primary students are dismissed at 3:20pm.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL HOURS

Middle School students are expected to be in their class ready to start at 8:25am each morning. Middle School students are dismissed at 3:05pm.

### OFFICE HOURS

The Southern Montessori Office is attended from 8:30am to 4:30pm on school days.

### LIBRARY

Library is open every Wednesday before school starts 8:30am - 8:50am.



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### FACEBOOK

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**VIEW  
UPCOMING  
EVENTS  
ONLINE**



**STAY INFORMED  
SCHOOL NEWS,  
REMINDERS,  
EVENTS,  
CANCELLATIONS  
AND EVERYTHING  
YOU NEED TO  
KNOW!**

### STUDENT SUPERVISION

- Students will be supervised within the school grounds from 8:30am on each school day.
- For safety purposes, students are not permitted to use the playground equipment unless supervised by a teacher. This rule applies at all times, including before and after school.
- When dismissed in the afternoon, students are expected to leave the school grounds immediately and proceed directly home. Students staying for activities organised by the school, such as sport or choir practice, will be supervised.





## UNIFORM

We have been really pleased to see all students wearing the correct uniform and tying up long hair and we thank you for supporting us.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL UNIFORM

Our school uniform identifies students as part of our school, building a sense of belonging for students and inclusiveness, and creating an identity for our school in the wider community. From a safety perspective, a school uniform helps teachers to quickly identify students when on excursions, and helps us quickly recognise visitors in the school grounds. Importantly, uniform means students don't have to worry about peer pressure when it comes to their clothes. When everyone is dressed the same, worrying about what you look like isn't so important.

Please Note:

- Plain navy shorts, skirt, skorts, trousers or track pants are permitted for bottoms
- Make-up is not permitted

Footwear

- Shoes/Sneakers/Sandals should be comfortable and safe for daily fitness activities
- No thongs or backless sandals please

Hair

- Long hair should be tied back for safety and hygiene reasons
- Coloured hair is not permitted



## PARKING REMINDER

Drop off and Collection Routines

Due to the building works, we remind parents that parking on Hunter Road is an option that is less busy than Galloway Road. Children enter and leave the school through the side gate in the Vegetable Garden where a teacher is on duty. Children's safety is our utmost concern at school. Drop off and collection times are very busy and we understand that parents are often in a rush to collect their children. It is of vital importance that all parents use caution when parking. Please also remember the driveway alongside the school is not to be used by families. Please help keep our children safe.





## MONTESSORI MOMENT

By Anna Golab

In recent years, there has been an ever-increasing focus on quality teaching, and few would dispute that this is an essential factor in education. But is it the whole picture?

Are teachers solely responsible for students' learning outcomes? Is such a view realistic, or for that matter, helpful?

From a Montessori perspective, such a position undervalues the critical role that students play in their own learning.

Nicole Mockler, associate professor of Education at the University of Sydney, writes that there has been a rise in what she terms 'passive learners' - students who sit back and wait for learning to happen to them.

A teacher can provide accurate and timely feedback to students (effect size .73), but if the student ignores that feedback, it will have zero impact. Teachers can accurately target learning just beyond the student's current abilities, as Vygotsky advocated, but if students decide to take the path of least resistance and choose the easy route, then growth still won't occur.

Skilful teaching cannot be underestimated, but it's only one part of the learning equation. If we accept that learning is a process that students engage in to create new capabilities, then it follows that how deeply they engage in that process is critically important.

Maria Montessori advocated that schools provide learning environments that facilitate and promote high levels of student control over their learning experiences, but unless students learn to focus and apply their talents and energies with passion, they will not succeed in planning and achieving their goals.

Montessori spoke of teachers as 'guides' encouraging students to challenge themselves to strive for personal best.

To do this, students require confidence, courage, and the determination to complete a task to the very best of their ability. Slowly, they build their levels of resilience by becoming increasingly skilled in managing their own time, effort, and the resources they need to do their work.

Yet, even well-organised efforts run aground, and in the face of obstacles, students must learn to face their challenges, find alternatives, and solve their problems – vital skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.



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## New year message from the Counsellor

Welcome to the new school year! I hope that you and your children are feeling energised after the break and are looking forward to learning and experiencing some new things in 2023.

The new year can bring all manner of emotions, sometimes excitement, sometimes anticipation and sometimes fear. It can be scary to step away from the known, to extend ourselves and do things we've never done before, but it is also enriching and how we learn. I often remember one of my wise mentors at this time of the year, as part of a new year welcome speech, they challenged us "to step out of our comfort zone and do something a bit scary every day". Doing something new or challenging helps us to learn and grow, it reinforces or extends our knowledge and understanding. I offer you the same challenge – try something new this year, play a new game, make some new friends, learn something that you didn't know before. Practise every day, see your mistakes as opportunities to learn more.

Some resources that may support you at the beginning of the school year are:

- The Anxiety in Primary school-aged children resource has been developed by Emerging Minds to help parents understand and recognise anxiety in primary school-aged children. It provides strategies for managing anxiety in children aged 5–12 years and identifies when professional help may need to be considered.
- The eSafety Education and Training team developed a range of resources for Safer Internet Day which was on Tuesday 7th February. You may be interested in the Parent and Carer Webinar Series
- At Home — Smiling Mind – browse the website and / or download the App for free tailored Mindfulness progress for ages 3+.

If you have any concerns about your child's social or emotional wellbeing, please talk with their teacher first. Working in partnership with you and the school, I can provide short term therapeutic counselling and support where needed.

I'm Naomi, accredited as a Level 4 Counsellor with the Australian Counselling Association. With over 20 years experience supporting children, young people and their families in Australia and South East Asia. I work at the Primary School on Tuesdays from 8:30am-2:30pm (based in the Wellbeing Room) and the Middle School on Wednesdays from 8:30am – 1:30pm.

I look forward to getting to know more of you!

Naomi Kelly





## PRESCHOOL

### The Importance of Routines and Rituals

Staff in the preschool often take time to reflect on any improvements we could make to benefit our learners, both academically and for their wellbeing. We considered the busy lives that we all have and how taking time to pause, and to still our bodies and our minds, helps us to feel grounded and more connected with our surroundings.

To help with this, Kate and Shixin introduced a short candle ritual to the Preschool children. It involved sitting very still in a quiet and dim room. As the candle was lit, the children were encouraged to use their senses to smell and watch the flickering candle. We played a very gentle song called “Light a Candle for Peace” and we noticed our bodies feeling calm, still and relaxed.

We have repeated this activity several times to help it to become a part of our routine. Routines and rituals provide many opportunities for repetition and mastery. When the children take part in a routine at preschool, such as setting the lunch table, they are required to be conscious and aware of their movements and their surroundings. Rituals and routines help children feel that the world is a safe and predictable place.

When you think about some of the routines that you follow at home, you will notice that they usually have a positive outcome. Consider a well-established bedtime routine or some of your holiday traditions that bring joy. Routines bring children a sense of security, identity and belonging. That’s because they’re special things that you do together and they have special meaning for you. They create shared memories and build family relationships and bonds. We hope that your routines and rituals at home over this busy time of year give you all a chance to feel connected and you make some wonderful memories together.

Regards,  
Preschool Staff







## CYCLE 1 - RECEPTION

We have had a great couple of weeks getting to know each other and learning the classroom routines and expectations. The children are showing great enthusiasm and are eager to learn. Don't be surprised if your child is tired in the first few weeks, starting school is a tough job!

Most recently, we have started the introduction of our phonics program where children are learning a sound a day. This has been very exciting with many children telling us they can't wait to read!

Children are beginning to start working independently through the Montessori maths curriculum. Children will initially be working with numbers 1-10 and then beyond. Children in Rachel's class have been playing 'Race to 10'. It has been very exciting beating the teacher at this game. Ask your child to teach you how to play. All you need is a dice, 10 counters each and a 10s frame.



Over the coming weeks in Cultural Studies, children will focus on themselves and their families, identifying their own unique features, what makes them special and their likes and dislikes. We will be participating in a workshop at the Art Gallery of South Australia to explore identity through self-portraiture on Friday the 24th of February (Week 4) to support this learning.

Our team cannot wait to continue the term, learning, connecting and having fun together.

*'I like doing drawing' – Amber*

*'I like playing with people' – Kristof*

*'I like playing race to 10' – Willow*

*'I like running outside' - Tyler*

Kind regards,  
The Cycle 1 Team





## CYCLE 2

Welcome back for 2023,

It has been such a pleasure to welcome both our new and established families back this year! We have enjoyed sharing your children's excitement as they share about their holidays, as well as their eagerness to get back to their school routines. Children who are new to Cycle 2 are becoming more familiar with their new classroom community and appear to be increasingly settled at drop off time which has been wonderful to see.

Already we have begun to see their independence flourish through their ability to come into the room, organise their equipment and select tasks to begin their day. We have appreciated your support in encouraging your child to do all of these things that they are so capable of doing!

The Cycle 2's have spent time over these initial two weeks participating in a variety of grace and courtesy lessons which will set our communities up for success. Some children have learnt how to greet adults and friends while others have been learning to use the appropriate volume when entering different spaces in the school. The smiling faces coming in to greet us in the morning, by name, gives us such a positive start to our mornings.



The children have reconnected with some well-rehearsed practical life tasks by participating in lessons such as how to wash a table, dust a shelf or water a plant. These skills support the children's need to explore and orient themselves within their space. They have already shown an enthusiastic responsibility towards their environments and have supported us in deciding where many of their everyday materials will live. This has not only reinforced their sense of independence but also their value as a member of our community.

We look forward to forging ahead with the amazing work our Cycle has planned for this term alongside your passionate learners.

The Cycle 2 Team





## CYCLE 3

### Year 6 Leadership

The Year 6 students take on key roles at the primary school campus. One of these roles is the “Better Buddy” program where the Year 6 students are ‘buddied up’ with Reception students to support our youngest students with their transition to school. The students work together regularly throughout the school year enjoying special events together, as well as supporting the younger students with their learning activities. It was lovely watching them meet each other last week.



The Year 6 students also carry out jobs around our school each week including assisting in the library, caring for the chickens and helping Raelene with preparing sessions for our school's Cooking and Gardening program.

On Tuesday last week the Year 6 students were involved in a whole day leadership day training them for these roles and developing their leadership skills. One of the highlights was having some of our school's Year 9 leaders come and run the afternoon session with the Year 6's.

### Year level activities

In Cycle 3 we aim to foster a strong community across the 3 classes. One way we focus on this is through timetabling sessions where the students work in their year level groups each week. The Year 6 students will continue to focus on leadership in these sessions. The Year 5 students will work with one of our music teachers, Sam, to form the school Drum Corp that you may have seen perform at the School Musical Spectacular last year. To begin the year the Year 4 students will focus on developing IT skills to enable them to be confident, competent and thoughtful users of technology and develop skills they can use to support their learning.





## Food Waste

This term all 3 classes are taking part in OzHarvest's FEAST (Food Education and Sustainability Training) program learning about food waste and devising solutions to this key issue. The program involves hands-on cooking sessions where students make recipes that use foods that are commonly wasted. We are excited to participate in this hands-on learning and look at how we can be change-makers in our community. This topic will include a visit from KESAB and an excursion to the Adelaide Central Markets.



## Food Packaging

We are striving to limit the amount of packing in our lunch boxes. The school's fabulous cooking and gardening program will support this work with Raelene cooking yummy lunchbox snacks with the students. We will also be investigating this through our Cultural Studies work as we look at ways we can be more sustainable in how we live, and looking at consumer choices through our Economics and Business topic.







## CYCLE 4

### Shared Community Lunch

This term, as part of our Occupations program, our Year 7 students are providing a prepared lunch for our Middle School. They are responsible for planning a nutritious menu within a set budget, catering for dietary requirements, ordering and preparing the food. We use as much produce from our garden as possible!

Every Thursday, our group is divided into meal planners, a cooking group, and a catering group. The meal planners for the week are responsible for planning and ordering food and leading the group on the day of cooking. The cooking group is responsible for handling, preparing, and cooking the food, while the caterers are responsible for setting tables and serving food.

In tandem with preparing shared lunch, we are learning about our digestive system and why it is important for our bodies to maintain a nutritious diet. We are planning on making a model digestive system to demonstrate different digestive processes.

Preparing lunch every week is a lot of hard work for our students, but sitting together and sharing a meal fosters a real sense of community!

