Cameragal Montessori School

Enrolment and Orientation Policy

POL-031

Cameragal Montessori School seeks to provide a child safe environment where the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children are paramount and take precedence over other considerations. Our School actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of our students, and our School staff are committed to preventing and protecting students from abuse or harm in accordance with their legal and ethical obligations. Our School prioritises children's safety, rights and best interests in all decisions and fosters an environment where children thrive, feel valued, and are protected, and their wellbeing and developmental needs are consistently supported. CMS's child safe policies and procedures and our staff code of conduct form part of this commitment.

Updated October 2026

Enrolment and Orientation policy

Cameragal Montessori School is a co-educational pre-primary and primary school providing an education underpinned by the philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori and fulfilling the educational and care requirements of Education and Care Services National Regulations and the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Our School implements a process to ensure enrolment and orientation processes are planned and implemented to meet the needs of the child and the family as well as ensuring all legislative requirements (for the pre-primary Priority Access Guidelines).

All applications are processed in order of receipt and consideration is given to the applicants' support for the ethos of the School, siblings already attending the School and other criteria determined by the School from time to time. Once enrolled, students are expected to act concisely with the School's ethos and comply with the School rules to maintain enrolment. Parents are also expected to be supportive of the ethos of the School.

Child Safety School statement

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Cameragal Montessori School is a co-educational Pre-Primary and Primary school to Year 6 providing an education underpinned by the philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori and fulfilling the educational requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority. All applications are processed in order of receipt and consideration is given to the applicants' support for the values and philosophy of the School, siblings already attending the School and other criteria determined by the School.

Procedures

- Process all applications within the School enrolment policy.
- Consider each applicant's supporting statement/interview responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the School ethos.
- Consider each applicant's educational needs. To do this the School will gather information and consult with the student's parents/guardians and other relevant persons.
- Identify any strategies which need to be put in place to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding the enrolment is made.
- Inform the applicant of the outcome.

Pre-primary

Waitlist

To apply for admission to the School and to have the child's name included on the waitlist, a parent must hold current membership of Cameragal Montessori School and pay a non-refundable fee for each child. A parent must also attend a campus tour. The School follows the standards as determined by the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Standards). Detailed guidelines are available from the School Office.

Offer of place

The Principal offers places based on the following selection criteria:

- Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander children, low income or disability (Pre-primary);
- Sibling status (with conditions as set out below);
- Position on the waitlist;
- The age of the child when entered on the waitlist;
- Commitment to the 3-6 cycle and cycle 2/3 education program and/or;
- Commitment to the Pre-Primary cycle educational program;
- Montessori overseas or interstate school transfer;
- Cameragal Montessori Under 3s attendance for one year; and/or
- Commitment of parents to the Montessori ethos.

When all other factors are equal, the date of registration determines priority. However, the School retains the right to consider specific enrolments on an individual basis. Offers for older children are subject to availability and dependent on a successful interview and orientation period.

Primary

Waitlist

The School operates a separate waiting list for Primary (Years 1-6). There is no wait list fee for children already enrolled in Pre-Primary (Year 1 minus 2 to K) at the School. Students of Cameragal Montessori School pre-primary are given priority of place.

The School follows the standards as determined by the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

Offer of place

Parents of children on the primary waitlist will be asked to attend school tour and attend an interview with the Principal before an offer of place is made.

Cameragal Pre-Primary students are observed in their 3-6 classroom by a 6-9 teacher and follow a transition procedure which involves three full day visits at the end of the term prior to commencing in Primary.

An offer of place is made based on the following criteria:

- Cameragal Montessori School Pre-Primary student priority.
- The child's readiness, considering academical, social and psychological factors.
- Sibling priority (please note that generally priority is only given if a sibling has completed Pre-Primary).

- Montessori overseas or interstate school transfer.
- Commitment of parents to the Montessori ethos.

Places are only offered to children not currently attending the School when we have been unable to fill all available places from those at the School or siblings of those at the School.

Conditions of acceptance

First child entering the school

Offers of place must be accepted within 14 days by returning the Letter of Offer which lists the following conditions:

- A non-refundable placement fee is payable on acceptance of the offer.
- A non-refundable donation is payable to the Cameragal Fund.
- Each child is expected to attend the School for the entire three year pre-primary program OR entire nine year program (Pre-primary to Primary). Withdrawing a child before the completion of the program may upset the child's educational development and disturb the balance in the class, creating a gap which is often impossible to fill.
- If an elder sibling is withdrawn from Cameragal before his or her minimum completion date, the School will withdraw priority consideration for any of his or her younger siblings and they will be placed on the general waitlist as at the date of their application.
- Parents agree to observe the School's policies and procedures.
- The child is completely toilet trained by the time he or she is due to commence at the School. If parents have concerns about their child's readiness the Enrolment Manager must be notified at least 4 weeks prior to the start date. Whilst the start date can be revised, the expectation is that payment will be made from the original start date for holding the place if this notice is not received.
- There is a probationary period of one school term for the child and the School. If either the parents or the School considers that at the end of one term that the child should not continue at Cameragal, the placement fee less an administration fee will be returned.
- Parents intending to withdraw their child from the School prior to the minimum completion date are required to provide one full term's notice, in writing, to the Principal. Where one full term's notice is not provided, the parents will be charged a full term fee in lieu of notice.
- In the event that circumstances change after acceptance of a place and the payment of the placement fee the School requires written notice of four full weeks excluding school holidays, of intention to relinquish the place. If this notice is not received within this period then the placement fee will not be returned. This provision provides some protection to the School against financial loss from non-starters and the subsequent revision of the class plan.
- Cameragal Montessori School membership must be kept current for the duration of the child's attendance at the School.
- Parents are requested to support and participate in the school community in a variety of ways and are encouraged to attend parent education evenings organised by the teaching staff to deepen their knowledge of Montessori education at Cameragal Montessori School.

Siblings

Conditions of acceptance for siblings are similar to those for the first child. Sibling priority is only applied if the older sibling has completed or is completing the full School program (i.e. three year pre-primary or three to six year in the primary program).

Priority of Access

All Pre-Primary enrolments endeavour to comply with the Priority of Access Guidelines issued by the NSW State Government for state funded preschools to ensure equity and consistency for the community. In no particular order, these are:

- Children who are at risk of harm
- Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from low income families
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with disabilities
- Children in their year before school (with highest priority given to children closest to school entry).

Timing of Entry – Pre-Primary

The School follows the Montessori principle of staggered entry to enable maximum attention to be given to each new child in the class and to assist each child in adjusting to their new environment. Commencement dates in any one term are determined and notified by the Enrolment Manager after places have been offered in collaboration with the Principal.

Timing of Entry – Primary

The child may transition to Primary by attending transition visits at the end of previous term. Families who are offered Primary are to attend a new families meeting with the primary teacher.

Transfers

There is no automatic right to transfer between Montessori schools but every attempt is made to offer a place to a transfer, subject to the enrolment criteria being met.

Once children have commenced in a class at the School, they will not be transferred to another class except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Principal.

Deferrals

Requests by parents for deferred entry are generally not granted but each case will be considered on its merits. Requests for deferred entry must be made in writing to the Principal.

The School may also advise a deferred start, in which case a place will be held without fees being charged until the entry date given by the Enrolment Officer.

Confidentiality and privacy

The School respects the privacy of the families and staff who make up the School community. It is the School policy to ensure that all information obtained by the School in relation to personal circumstances of children and their families will be kept confidential unless:

- The family concerned authorises disclosure of the information; or
- The School is obliged to disclose the information pursuant to health regulations or other Commonwealth, State or Local Government laws or regulations.

Fee Policy

Payment of Fees

Fees are set annually for all children in the School, with discounts available for younger siblings.

Fees are due and payable according to a payment plan that is agreed between the family and the School.

Some families of pre-primary children may be eligible for government subsidies through the Family Assistance Office. Further details may be obtained from the School Office.

Fees for children commencing School after the commencement of term (at the request of the School) are reduced pro rata on a weekly basis after week 3. There is no reduction for absences due to holidays, illness or a late start to the term instigated by parents.

If families do not adhere to their instalment commitment and fall behind in their fees the School is obliged to consider withdrawing the child's enrolment.

Fees determined by School Board

School Fees are determined by the School Board, considering:

- Cameragal Montessori School's status as a non-profit organisation.
- Compliance with government funding and other regulatory requirements.
- The financial needs of the School.
- Application and enrolment levels.
- Other relevant criteria.

The School Board also determines the conditions that apply to fees including interest charged in relation to late payment, discounts, prepayment arrangements and other similar conditions.

Notification of fees and conditions

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that parents of existing students and applicants are notified of fee changes and of conditions which may apply to fees. The Principal maintains current fee schedules which are available to all parents.

Fee Relief

The School Board may agree to provide families with relief in relation to fees. Families who have concerns about fees should approach the Principal. The Principal will consider the appropriateness of fee relief having regard to:

- The length and nature of the family's involvement with the School, including the degree to which the family participates in and supports the School community.

- The financial affairs of the family.
- The needs of the School having regard to specific needs of classes
- The current level of enrolments and applications.
- Other relevant criteria.

In appropriate circumstances, the Principal may recommend to the Finance Committee (the Principal, the Treasurer and the Chairman) that some form of fee relief be provided. The Principal and Treasurer will then meet with the family concerned in order to assess the family's financial situation and, if possible, agree on behalf of the Finance Committee to a solution acceptable to both parties.

Fee relief arrangements are made for periods of 12 months only. At the end of an initial 12 month period, arrangements are reviewed by the Finance Committee and extended only if appropriate. All fee relief arrangements must be documented by way of a letter signed by the Principal, Treasurer or Chairman. All fee relief arrangements are dealt with in the strictest confidence.

The School Board is informed of all fee relief arrangements, on a no-name basis.

The School reserves the right to increase fees at any time by the giving of prior written notice. The notice period will be at least one month.

The Cameragal Fund

The Cameragal Fund provides financial assistance to parents in time of genuine difficulty meeting the school fees. The main purpose of The Cameragal Fund is to assist families so that children are able to complete the full three-year Montessori program.

Applications for financial assistance are made directly to the Trustee who handle all matters on a completely confidential basis.

The financial assistance is made as an interest free loan form The Cameragal Fund with a repayment schedule to suit the parents' situation. The repayment of the loan means other children will be to benefit as the need arises.

Decisions to grant financial assistance are made by the Trustee and the Chairman with best intentions to support the School and the Cameragal community; to maintain enrolments, to balance classrooms, to retain children for the full three-year program and for compassionate reasons.

The Cameragal Fund receives its main support form parent donations, in particular from families leaving the School who wish to give all or part of their bond to The Cameragal Fund when their children complete the full three-year program.

The School Board applies a small levy for each new enrolment on entry to the School.

The Trustees work in conjunction with the School to maintain appropriate balance of funds. Unlike school fundraising, parents may contribute to The Cameragal Fund on voluntary basis.

To contact The Cameragal Fund Trustee please email chair@cameragal.nsw.edu.au

Orientation Procedures

The School has several procedures in place to ensure a smooth transition to Cameragal Montessori School for all families. Orientation is a joint effort between the Enrolments Manager and the lead teacher in the child's classroom.

Procedures include:

- New starters morning tea at the beginning of each school year with the families, educators and the School's administration staff
- Orientation pack provided to the families including a "This is my School" book for the Pre-Primary children.
- One on one meeting with the lead teacher and the new family prior to the child starting where a "transition" plan is agreed.
- The School has an internal checklist which the teacher and administration staff are both responsible for checking to ensure all of the require documentation has been obtained and saved in the child's file.

Monitoring evaluation and review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gap, the service will review this policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to actively involved.

In accordance with R172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the school will ensure that families of children enrolled at the school are notified at least 14 days before making any changes to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service or a family's ability to utilise the school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Cameragal Montessori School's policies.

Related legislation

- Education And Care Service Nation Law Act : Section 85-86, 88, 90-91, 99, 157,168-172, 175, 177-178
- Education And Care Services Nation Regulations 2011: Regulation 97 and 116
- Work Health And Safety Act 2011 Regulation 43

Related standards

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical environment
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationship with children
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

"The School's Policies are made pursuant to the requirements set out in section 47 of the Education Act, the Board of Studies for registration of the school and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)."