The Central Coast Montessori Primary School

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

"The greatest wisdom is first to love." Dante

Sawubona……

This Annual Report provides an overview of the achievements and progress of the Central Coast Montessori Primary School and an opportunity to bring into focus the evolution of our shared community vision.

CCMPS is a young school, with a passionate, supportive and committed community. In little over two years, together, we have realised a dream….to make a Montessori inspired Primary Education possible on the Central Coast.

An exciting future lies ahead, one of collaboration, innovation and contribution…. as we strive to be in the service of humanity whilst trying to remain as true and authentic to ourselves as possible.

We come into primary school education at a very interesting time. Much is being written and said about the role of education, of teachers and schools. Life is dynamic and ever changing, the future our children and their children will experience will be vastly different to the one we know.

The question we must always consider is –

"How can we prepare an environment and develop a culture that offers each individual the guidance, support and opportunity to realise their true potential?"

Together with reverence, work, respect and love, we form a committed network "a village" ready to promote holistic wellbeing, a strong sense of self, free-thinking, creativity, mindfulness and connection.

Each of us will make mistakes, we will all face challenges, these both present great opportunities for further growth…in fact, how we respond to adversity will ultimately define us.

The school's governing body is focussed on – the preparation of a space within which all can be supported to continually grow.

Dimitri Nicolaou
Principal

Brad Twynham
Board Chair

General

CCMPS is a non-denominational and co-educational Montessori primary school currently registered in 2018 for children in K - 4. Over the next two years we will seek registration for years five and six. Our school is based on and inspired by the educational model (pedagogy) developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. The school is located in the beachside suburb of Bateau Bay in a residential area. We have transformed a community centre into an educational space and are fortunate to back onto a reserve. In 2018 we opened our doors with 29 students, ended the year with 37, 60% of whom were females. We are expecting to reach 45 students in 2019.

Whilst we strongly believe in the principles Montessori puts forth as a philosophy for life, we are strong advocates for on-going exploration. We strive not to be limited by our interpretation and understanding of said pedagogy but approaching it always as a dynamic, creative process….a process that values and respects that other beautiful ideas exist and that we must collaborate, innovate and grow to truly thrive.

CCMPS is comprised of a diverse range of people which sees cultures from five continents represented through family heritage. We take the approach (in keeping with Montessori pedagogy) that each child is an individual and thus learns differently. We strive to prepare an environment and develop a culture that is not only respectful and supportive of these differences but celebrates them.

CCMPS is registered with NESA (New South Wales Education Standards Authority) and is a member of (AIS) the Association of Independent Schools.

Our History

CCMPS was founded in 2016 and opened its doors for the first time in February 2017. The demand for a Montessori Primary school on the Central Coast had been present for numerous years. Finally, a committed group of people came together to pioneer this initiative. Through the work and support of a relatively small community, their extended family/friends and Central Coast Council, a space was found, and enough money raised to set up the school.

Our Goal, Vision, Purpose - Our "Why"

Our goal is to prepare an environment rich with stimulus that supports the developmental needs of each individual. A place where mindfulness, compassion and reverence are deeply valued… where the commitment to growth is ever-present. A place that helps children understand the interconnected nature of life and the responsibility we have to ourselves, to one another and to our environment. Our aim is to create a space within which children will grow in size, in mind and in heart…a place where they will understand the notion of service, be free to innovate, be supported to sing their own song and dance their own dance.

"Who you are shouts so loudly in my ear I can't hear what you are saying." Emerson

National Assessment Program – (NAPLAN) 2018

The National Assessment Program (NAPLAN) is a test that provides a measure of students' performance against pre-established standards and against other students in Australia. The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and Numeracy.

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum acceptable standards for literacy, numeracy, reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling at particular ages. For primary aged children the ages are Year 3 and Year 5. Each year the results from these tests can be analysed by schools to inform teaching staff of student performance in literacy and numeracy.

In May 2018 students across Australia participated in the National Assessment Program, however, CCMPS did not have any children in Year 3 participate in this assessment program.

Professional Learning

In 2018 staff participated in fortnightly professional learning sessions in conjunction with staff meetings. Discussions included but not limited to, Workplace Health & Safety, child protection, communication and curriculum. Each teacher is involved in classroom observations where feedback to improve is given.

In addition, staff undertook the following professional development activities throughout 2018.

Description of the Professional Learning Activity	Number of Staff
Child Protection in House Training Workshop	6
Child Protection Online Module	2
First Aid Certificate training	1
Mindfulness for Children Workshop	1
Montessori Early Childhood Conference – Brisbane	1
Cert III in Early Childhood Education and Care	1
AIS Montessori Governance Workshop	1
Head to Head Forum (Montessori Principals)	1
AMI – Montessori Diploma – Elementary (6-12) (ongoing)	1
MWEI – Diploma of Early Childhood and Primary Education in Montessori (ongoing)	1
Governance Online Modules (Board Members)	4

Teacher Accreditation

Level of Accreditation	Number of Teachers
Provisional	2
Proficient Teacher	1

Accreditation status of all teaching staff (as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004) who are responsible for delivering the curriculum.

Teacher Qualifications*

Teacher Qualifications	Number of Teachers
i. Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines or;	3
ii. Teachers having a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications.	0
**Note that the number of teachers falling within these two categories may not sum to the total number of teachers as reported in the previous accreditation table as some teachers with Conditional accreditation may not be included.*	

Workforce Composition

School Staff 2018	
Teaching Staff	3
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	2
Non-teaching staff	6
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	2.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff	0

Student Attendance Rates

Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Whole School
98%	92%	88.5%	81.5%	81%	88%

For whole school student attendance rates please refer to the school's data on the My School website: https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/52434/attendance

Management of Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at the Central Coast Montessori Primary School is important and essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Parents must ensure their children attend school every day.

Unexplained Absences

The Principal in conjunction with the Head Guide for each environment (classroom) is responsible for ensuring that all unexplained absences are promptly followed up. At the end of each day the Head Guide for each environment will send 'notification requests' to parents/guardians via Transparent Classroom asking them to 'submit an explanation', also submitted via Transparent Classroom, of their child's absence within seven (7) days.

These absence 'notification requests' remain open and accessible on Transparent Classroom by parents/guardians for seven (7) days from the date of the unexplained absence. The Head Guides are able to see a list of any outstanding 'notification requests' at any stage by logging into Transparent Classroom. Parents/guardians will receive an automated reminder after six (6) days if the from hasn't been submitted. After seven (7) if the form hasn't been returned by the parent, they will be contacted directly either by email/phone/in person to receive an explanation for the absence. It is the policy at CCMPS that all unexplained absences will be followed up.

Unsatisfactory Attendance

CCMPS classifies *unsatisfactory attendance* or *non-attendance* as consistently late attendances, unjustified absences, unexplained absences or absences without a valid explanation approved by the Principal. Students absent for more than 10 days in one term are also considered as unsatisfactory attendance.

The Head Guide will promptly bring to the attention of the Principal any unsatisfactory attendance in the form of a written record of the non-attendance which will be transferred to the students file. All communication between CCMPS staff regarding a student and their unsatisfactory attendance will be recorded, as appropriate, and placed in the students file.

Notifying Parents/Guardians of Unsatisfactory Attendance

After consultation between the Head Guide and the Principal regarding the student's unsatisfactory attendance, the Principal will contact the parent/guardian to have a verbal conversation regarding any concerns and offer support to allow the student to return to school as often as possible. CCMPS acknowledges that resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school-based strategies and support. The parent/guardian will also be asked at this stage to sign a statement acknowledging their legal obligations to ensure the student attends school as often as possible.

If the absenteeism or late arrival does not improve, an email will be sent to the parent/guardian outlining the legal obligations of both CCMPS and the parent/guardian to ensure that the student can attend school as often as possible. The email will also notify the parent/guardian of CCMPS' mandatory reporting procedure.

Enrolment Policy

The Central Coast Montessori Primary School (CCMPS) is a small non-denominational and co-education school for children from K to Year 4 (in 2018). It currently offers a Primary Montessori Program for children commencing at or close to 6 years of age. Commencement at the Primary level, at 6 years of age, is similar to commencement in Year 1 of a traditional school. In 2018 the program at CCMPS offers a Montessori Stage 2 environment, a class for the 6-9-year age group, with an extension class for those children in Year 4.

Enrolment into CCMPS is pending the application process. All enrolment applications are processed in order of receipt, with the exception of;

- current siblings
- children transitioning from a Montessori stage 1 environment or
- transferring from other Montessori schools
- consideration is also given to the applicant and families support for the Montessori pedagogy and the applicant and families desire to commit to a 6-year Montessori primary education.

Sufficient buffers will be left to accommodate possible new enrolments who fall into the above exception categories throughout the school year. Other criteria such as gender and age to maintain balance in the classroom and whether the school is able to best support the applicant's needs are also considered.

The application process differs slightly for children transitioning from a Montessori stage 1 environment to children applying from non-Montessori schooling. All the requirements are the same, however the order of some of the steps differ due to the families already having a sound knowledge of the Montessori pedagogy and the applicant already having experience in a Montessori environment.

The application process for entry into CCMPS includes, but is not limited to; attending an *information session* prior to making an application for enrolment, completing an *application for enrolment* form along with required attachments (school reports, teacher references, specialist/medical reports), attending a *classroom observation,* attending an *interview* with the Principal and the student attending *trial visit day/*s. Pending review and analysis by the enrolment committee of each of these requirements of the application process and a place being available an *offer of place letter* will be sent out, along with an invoice for a non-refundable *enrolment placement fee*. An offer of place letter cannot be sent out until all of the requirements have been met, however, if CCMPS is unable to offer a place for the applicant they can be notified in writing at any stage of the application process.

Children with additional needs are considered on an individual basis keeping in mind the standards of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education Act 2005*.

International fee-paying students may apply for enrolment at CCMPS. However, the visa status of non-Australian citizens will be checked with regard to additional fees necessary to be paid in the absence of the student's eligibility to receive Government funding.

Where a parent wishes to appeal against the decision of the enrolment committee, the appeal should be made in writing to the Principal. The Principal will seek to resolve the matter, where the purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the stated criteria have been applied fairly.

Continuing enrolment at CCMPS is dependent on the students and parents/guardians complying with the School's policies and procedures including, observing all behavioural codes of conduct, the student attending on each day that instruction is provided, keeping up to date with tuition fee payments and other requirements of the School which are applicable from time to time. Once enrolled, students and parents are also expected to support the Montessori pedagogy, including attending school information sessions and school community events.

Policies

At the Central Coast Montessori Primary School (CCMPS), the primary goal is to nurture in children their natural love of learning and their desire to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually. CCMPS seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- Minimises the risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- Supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of students
- Provides student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development.

When developing policies and procedures for CCMPS the main objective is to promote a learning environment where staff and students are mutually supportive. Where staff and students respect each other and not engage in conduct which undermines this mutual trust and support. Staff and students are expected to respect the philosophy and ethics of the School and work cooperatively together. The School also encourages consultation between parents and members of the school community in matters which affect them.

Policy	Changes in 2018	Access to full text
Student Welfare CCMPS seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through programs that: ○ meet the personal, social and learning needs of students ○ provide early prevention for students at risk ○ provide a nurturing and supportive environment where children are able to continue the natural process of their growth and development The school provides a safe and supportive environment by having in place policies and procedures that provide for student welfare. CCMPS school policies that provide for a safe and supportive environment include, but not limited to, child protection, attendance, lockdown and evacuation procedures, going out/excursion procedure and risk management plans, code of conduct for students and staff, positive peer relations policy and pastoral care statement.	As an integral part of student welfare, in 2018 the Child Protection Policy was revised and various procedures were developed including, Annual Child Protection Responsibilities Notification for Employees Procedure and Working With Children Check Procedure. The Attendance Policy was also revised to include the provision to follow up on student attendance issues as another vital part of student welfare. In addition, various procedures were developed including Monitoring Daily Attendance/Absence of Students, Following Up Non-Attendance, Issuing Certificates of Exemption and Notice of Intention to Leave. Other Policies updated in 2018 include; Contact Information and Authorisations Policy and Code of Conduct for Students	The full text of all the school's Child Protection Policy and Attendance Policy can be accessed by request from the principal and from the school website. A full set of policies are held in the administration office for staff to refer to and via the staff intranet on Google drive.

Anti-bullying At CCMPS we have an expectation of respect for others. All students and staff at CCMPS have the right to learn and to teach in a supportive and caring environment. This right also carries with it the responsibility that nothing done, felt or said interferes with the learning and teaching of others. The school policy provides strategies to maintain systems of appropriate behaviour that enable students and staff to feel safe and valued. It also provides processes for responding to and managing allegations of bullying.	In 2018 the School's Appropriate Behaviour Policy was updated to detail how to manage incidents of inappropriate behaviour. A behaviour management flowchart was also generated that details a step by step plan of action to be taken when following up an incident of inappropriate behaviour. Code of Conduct for Students was updated in 2018 as mentioned above.	The full text of all the school's Appropriate Behaviour and Behaviour Management Policies can be accessed by request from the principal and from the school website. A full set of policies are held in the administration office for staff to refer to and via the staff intranet on Google drive.
Discipline CCMPS actively seeks to provide students with a stimulating environment that is safe. It is a fundamental right of everyone in our school community to feel safe. The school's policy outlines definitions of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, the responsibilities of all staff, students and parents, managing incidents of inappropriate behaviour and procedural fairness, to assist in ensuring that our school is a safe learning environment for everyone. All behaviour management actions are based on procedural fairness. Parents are involved in the processes of procedural fairness when sanctions result in suspension and expulsion of a student. Disciplinary actions do not include exclusion. The school expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.	Following a review of the discipline policy and procedures in 2017, the policy implemented in 2018 includes revised processes for disciplinary action that are based on procedural fairness. The Appropriate Behaviour Policy was developed as detailed above. The Behaviour Management Procedure was updated to include suspension, expulsion and exclusion. As mentioned above in 2018 a step by step Behaviour Management flowchart was also created to include suspension, expulsion and exclusion.	The full text of all the school's Appropriate Behaviour and Behaviour Management Policies can be accessed by request from the principal and from the school website. A full set of policies are held in the administration office for staff to refer to and via the staff intranet on Google drive.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution At CCMPS complaints and grievances are handled in an unbiased manner and taking into account the principles of procedural fairness. The school's policy outlines the specifications of ensuring procedural fairness. The policy also provides set procedures for all community members, including students, parents and staff members, to follow in case of a grievance or complaint. The policy illustrates processes for raising and responding to matters of concern and the line of communication to follow in the event a student, parent or staff member has a question or grievance.	In 2018 a review section was added to the Complaints and Grievances Policy to state that the policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier, if significant change in legislation or service practice occurs.	The full text of all the school's Complaints and Grievances Policy can be accessed by request from the principal and from the school website. A full set of policies are held in the administration office for staff to refer to and via the staff intranet on Google drive.

As time passes, we not only have the advantage of growing experience but also the beauty of reflection and 2018 has been a significant year for future planning.

Aspiration	Growth/Achievement
Policy & Procedure Development To continue reviewing, reflecting, refining and contextualising CCMPS policies and procedures.	As time passes, not only has our practical understanding of our site become clearer but our vision has naturally evolved. 2018 has seen us successfully begin to develop a culture of deeper policy review. This work is on-going and remains a priority.
Compliance and Regulatory Requirements Carrying on from 2017, we strive to deepen our understanding of all compliance and regulatory requirements. We continue to review our approach to meeting the above.	Greater fluidity has been established. Management have developed, and use, a 'Management Compliance Dashboard'. This instrument has begun to serve as a vehicle for us to keep better abreast of all requirements.
Refining Curriculum, Programming, Tracking, Reporting Continuing on from 2017, an on-going school goal is, and will continue to be, to review and refine our programs and tracking documents/ methods.	Educators continue to work collaboratively to refine our curriculum documents for all KLA's. We have made progress, now offering a Collaborative Conferencing System seeing parents, students and guides come together to share, reflect and plan.
"Going-Out" Program As noted in 2017, this forms a crucial part of the Montessori Primary program. It provides an intentional and personal extension for the students.	The school purchased a mini van with a view to commence using it to explore students interests and to engage with the greater community.

Facility Development and Beautification To continue to beautify and improve the school site.	We have begun making improvements in the school entry area. This will carry over next into the combined outdoor area as we look to reflect not only on beauty but functionality.

Future Development Planning Looking into the future, the long-term stability and growth of the school along with the future place and purpose of our school.	2018 saw the beginning of what is to be a significant investment of time and resources toward this initiative. The initial planning stage was completed with a view to develop a school 'Futures Committee' in 2019 comprised of various stakeholders within the community.

Communication and Community Engagement We are committed to exploring ways to not only bring the community closer together but also to delve into the individual and collective needs of all community member as we strive to serve life.	2018 saw us turn our attention to the need for a greater understanding of what our community requires. Surveys were sent out and discussion were had. The results of this research will guide initiatives in the future.

Collaborative Staff Development, Reflection & Growth Identifying the need for personal nourishment, support and growth for all staff.	Through conferencing and small gatherings, we have started to develop the foundation for a culture of sharing, vulnerability and growth. 2019 will see the beginning of fortnightly philosophical/pedagogical gatherings for the team, in the hope of facilitating greater cohesion and a culture of support.

The Pedagogy/Cosmic Education

Maria Montessori's goal was Education for World Peace. She saw the child as the 'hope and promise' for the future. This was her life's work and fundamental purpose. The curriculum she developed revolved around the holistic development of the human being through a process that saw each and every person not only as part of an interconnected whole but as a valuable individual with a cosmic contribution to make. The Pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori in modern day parlance is, in essence a practice in daily mindfulness. At the core of the philosophy is a sense of reverence and responsibility, of value and connection.

The Adult/Guide and The Prepared Environment

The adult/guide not only prepares themselves to act as a role model, aware of their attitudes to life, use of thoughtful language, they also prepare the environment ready to cater to the development needs of the growing human being, an environment rich with stimulus (materials) that represent keys to the greater world.

The adult in this prepared environment is in effect 'in service of' the child/student who in turn learns that each of us, is in fact in the service of humanity and on a life long journey striving to realise our potential and ultimately make the 'cosmic contribution' mentioned above.

A Cooperative Culture

CCMPS supports this period of sensitivity to morals and justice by helping students to work harmoniously with peers and teachers through cooperative activities. The opportunity exists daily for all students to take responsibility for themselves, one another and the environment. In 2018 children had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills when working with one another in sporting activities, school performances and cooking demonstrations. They were also able to share their chosen area of interest in the classrooms, offering demonstrations and presentations. Collaboration is woven into the fabric of the school and the student's embrace it as part of their everyday school life.

The Method and Material

The method is about supporting the growth of each individual and the development of their understanding of community. In 2018 a group of the older children visited Tarragal Glen Retirement Village. This initiative enabled children to help others in their local community by sharing stories, performing and showing their work to the residents. The visit was very successful and the staff and residents have invited the children to return, which they are more than happy to oblige.

Children at CCMPS are presented exercises in Grace and Courtesy from a young age to bring their awareness to positive social interaction and this thread is then picked up in later years during a time of sensitivity to morals, to justice and to community. CCMPS also looks at Fundamental Human Needs and tell Great Stories and use impressionistic charts that highlight the interconnected nature (interdependence) of life. The stories set the scene for students to begin to develop a sense of existence over time and the importance of all things. This process offers not only the opportunity for students to gain perspective, but more importantly to develop a deeper sense of gratitude.

A Respectful Culture

Our school is multi-cultural and inclusive, we encourage students to explore learning opportunities that encompass diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs. In 2018 our school participated in activities such as our annual Cultural Day which encompasses Harmony Day celebrations, Grandparents Day and various national cultural celebrations including Chinese New Year. These occasions are intended to acknowledge and celebrate, family, community, culture and develop understanding, acceptance and peace.

In 2018 CCMPS also undertook a new initiative and participated in a joint school camp consisting of students from five Montessori schools. Students attended camping and activities which allowed them to get to know each other as students from a variety of cultural backgrounds and beliefs.

Education of the Individual is the basis for Montessori in practice. The very way that each day is approached sees students within a mixed age classroom actively supporting and guiding one another. Each member is involved in decision making and planning. The environment is a dynamic microcosm of the world that sees some exploring, others reinforcing, groups experiencing new ideas and socialising. Together, in the classroom we form a family .... a family that supports and challenges one another.

"To go fast, go alone. To go far, go together." African Proverb

At this early stage in only our second year of operation, being a small school with 34 enrolments direct communication is regular and manageable with all community members. Discussions/conferences formal and informal take place with students, their families and with teachers as and when required.

The community which makes up CCMPS (the students, educators and parents) will inevitably make mistakes as the school develops and grows. Life is comprised of ebbs and flows …. however the manner with which our community collectively chooses to address challenges that arise will in effect determine who we are, our identity.

Our responsibility is not to please others, but to learn to respect others perspectives/world views, to understand that we are all on a unique journey and that if we come from a place of compassion and honesty, if we are committed to not only growth but to self-reflection, then ultimately the culture we will create, will support self-expression and an acceptance that there will be times of dissatisfaction. However, through understanding, cohesion and collaboration we can work through challenges … accepting that the culture at CCMPS will resonate for some but not for others and that makes neither right nor wrong.

The idea of satisfaction is multi-layered and not a permanent state. It may be influenced by many things. Most importantly for the goal of community satisfaction to be achievable, there must exist a culture of openness, inclusivity, understanding, acceptance, humility and reflection.

Parent Satisfaction

Families have been integral to the conception of the school. The creation of CCMPS is a response to community need and an interest in what Montessori offers humanity that saw the school come into being.

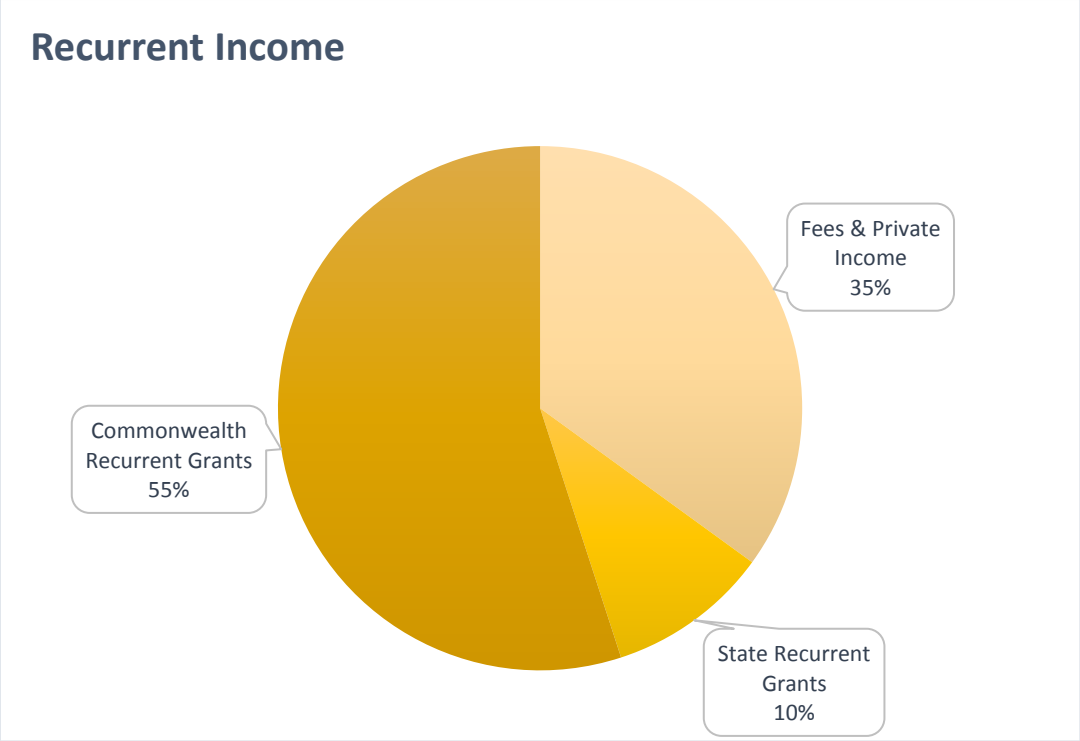
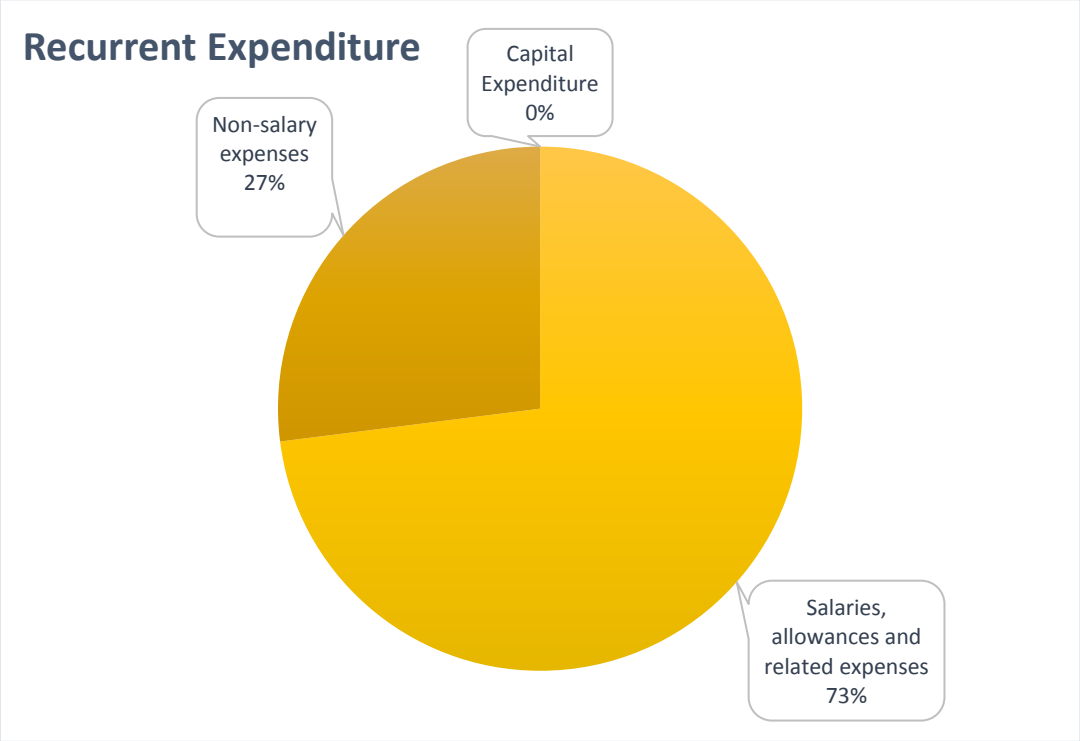
In 2018, parent participation and commitment to school continues to be welcomed and encouraged. As a small community school, we actively seek to involve parents in the school, the level of involvement and engagement is high and discussions throughout the year indicated that parent satisfaction is extremely positive. CCMPS holds regular Parent Discussion Evenings, including parent education activities based on aspects of the curriculum. The Principal has an open door policy with our parent community and consistently meets with parents on an individual level as requested.

Student Satisfaction

Students at CCMPS have the opportunity not only to be involved in decision making daily, but scope to direct their learning and the extensions that come from that. They manoeuvre in the environment with great comfort and sense of belonging. In 2018, students happily showed visitors around the school, along with younger transitioning peers.

It is important at CCMPS that students feel they are treated fairly and can talk to teachers about their concerns. Students meet daily as a group with their teacher to discuss issues and seek solutions to problems that may arise from time to time. Some outcomes of these meetings in 2018 included care of the environment (classroom), stocktake of the materials, classroom operations and logistics and dealing with conflicts. All student expectations are also set in correspondence with them. Student involvement in these activities would suggest that student satisfaction is high throughout the school.

Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers at CCMPS has the opportunity to air any concerns as well as express their level of satisfaction with their employment at their bi-annual reflection meetings with the Principal. In 2018 regular staff meetings were also set up to allow staff the opportunity to raise concerns in a professional and productive manner. Once again, the Principal's open door policy ensures that all staff have the opportunity to discuss educational or personal issues as the need arises. Informal feedback from teachers, discussions with the Principal and school manager and excellent staff retention indicates during 2018 staff were generally very satisfied in all areas of the school, particularly in terms of job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Graphical representation of income and expenditure using percentages only.