

Frequently asked Questions

Why Montessori at St Pius X?

- A Montessori stream builds on the current programs of the school and parish community:
- 2010 Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) begins. “The Atrium” is a room set aside that accommodates CGS a Montessori approach to the religious formation of children.
- 2016 Aug- first sessions for Montessori 0-3 playgroup and 3-6 space
- The philosophy is in line with current programs at the school but offers choice to families and means that Montessori education is accessible to the local community.
- It provides for children and their families who have already experienced the benefits of Montessori in a number of Montessori-based early years facilities in surrounding suburbs to continue to be immersed in a Montessori Education in the primary years.

How do I know if St Pius will have a quality Montessori program?

- St Pius X is working in partnership with MAF (Montessori Australia Foundation) to develop a quality program which is based on International Montessori standards and maps the Australian National Curriculum. In addition MAF offers the school opportunities for discussion with a mentor who is the principal of an Independent Montessori School.

How is Montessori different?

- A Montessori Education is based on the discoveries of Maria Montessori in the early part of the 20th century. Scientific research today validates what Maria Montessori discovered all those years ago.
- It fosters and supports the natural process of human development. A child’s great work is to create the person he/ she will become (this is particularly so for children 6 and under).
- Through a thoughtfully prepared and sensorial-rich environment alongside a prepared adult (Montessori trained) the child has access to what he/ she needs for self- construction.
- Concepts are introduced beginning with the concrete and then moving towards the abstract.
- Children are grouped in three year age groups according to what Montessori called the “planes of development” rather than by age. 3-6 (Cycle 1), 6-9 (Cycle 2) and 9-12 (Cycle 3).
- For more detailed information on Montessori education visit MAF website. <https://montessori.org.au/>

How does Montessori benefit my child?

- Children become confident, responsible, independent learners, who trust in their own abilities. The inclusivity and positive social development facilitated by the Montessori programme forms the basis for a persistent attachment to learning and knowledge. (MAF Website). <https://montessori.org.au/>

How will the Montessori Stream work within the school?

- Beginning with a 2020 prep enrolment that will move up the school, expanding to a Cycle 2 (6-9 year olds) in 2021 and Cycle 3 (9-12 year olds) as it grows up the school.
- The current Montessori space will be fully equipped with 3-6 materials for 2020.

What will the fee structure be?

- St Pius is committed to enabling Montessori to be accessible to families by keeping the cost to a minimum. We are currently working with MAF (Montessori Australia Foundation) to provide a sustainable option for families.
- As Catholic schools are not fully funded by the government; school communities/families have to make up the short fall. St Pius currently has an annual fee of approx \$1500. There are additional costs associated with setting up Montessori classrooms. These costs are for the purchase of quality Montessori materials/ equipment specific to the developmental needs of each age group. Montessori training and ongoing professional development requires additional funding. The total cost would be on par with surrounding Catholic primary schools in the area.

Will my child be able to access the same programs as other students enrolled at the school?

- LOTE (Languages other than English), Physical Education, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, FOODWEB garden program, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (the Atrium), excursions, camps, swimming program, choirs etc will be part of what St Pius offers to all students.

What about the transition to secondary school?

- Montessori students are adaptable, independent learners, so are able to transition into mainstream secondary schools. For families that are interested in continuing with a Montessori education Templestowe College has a Montessori Adolescent Program. Otherwise there are many great Catholic Secondary colleges in surrounding suburbs.

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Will there be pre-schoolers in the Cycle 1 classroom?

- The prep children will have the benefit of having 3 and 4 year old children to interact with in the 3-6 Montessori classroom. Families with 3 and 4 years will continue to have the opportunity to access our Montessori 3-6 space with extended possibilities from 2020.

Will there be a uniform?

- The school currently has a uniform that all students are expected to wear.

How is Montessori education related to Catholic education?

- Maria Montessori was a Catholic who was inspired by her faith and the Catholic understanding of dignity of the human person. Her life's work and particularly her respect for children, and the development of a peaceful education demonstrated this.
- A few quotes from our educational documents illustrate the core similarities with Montessori and Catholic Education:

- “Catholic education values the dignity, differences and infinite possibilities in each student, and their full flourishing is at the heart of all its endeavours.” (Catholic Education Melbourne 2015).
- “At the very heart of each Catholic school is a desire for the full flourishing of each student, across religious, physical, cognitive, emotional and social domains. Here we support students to grow in virtue and to embrace a view of themselves and the world that leads to peace, justice, and the prospering of the whole of creation. It is a journey that is enlightened by faith, animated by love and leading to hope” (“Horizons of Hope” Catholic Education Melbourne)

Why is Catholic Education relevant today?

- Catholic education offers the opportunity for moral education, or to borrow from Maria’s Montessori, education for the "whole child". The recognition that academic education, though important, needs to be complimented with education that enables a child to form their character and gives children the opportunity to develop self-discipline, confidence and a sense of community.
- Our society exists within a world where the Christian tradition has informed the systems and structures that are a part of Australia. To know and become familiar with the aspects of the Catholic faith and traditions help children now, and in their future, to understand their world within a wider context.
- Much of our society is founded on Christian values which at its centre is the unconditional worth of the human person. The worth of each human person is deepened by encouraging habits such as forgiveness. In a Catholic school the bigger questions of life are encouraged and explored and so not limited to materialistic explanations. This enables the individual to be open to the mystery of life.

Does my child have to be Catholic to attend and will they be required to participate in religious programs?

- St Pius X welcomes children and families from any or no faith background. We are a diverse and multi-cultural community. All children in the school participate in the religious education programs at the school. There are many opportunities to explore areas of social justice. The opportunity for children of different faith backgrounds or no faith to attend St Pius and participate in its programs, opens discussion for/amongst children and their families and encourages respect within the community.