

Policy Group	Administration	Policy No
POLICY	MEMBERSHIP	AD3
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MEMBERSHIP POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the membership structure of Montessori Schools and Centres Australia Ltd (MSCA) and the expectations of members of MSCA. It also serves as a guide to MSCA's staff regarding the administrative processes when schools, centres, organisations and/or individuals join MSCA. This policy also provides information to MSCA members regarding the MSCA Constitution, rules for membership and expected Code of Conduct.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members and Board members of MSCA.

POLICY

The MSCA Board Directors will adhere to the MSCA Constitution regarding the application, approval and registration of MSCA membership.

It is the responsibility of MSCA members to read and adhere to the MSCA Constitution and MSCA members Code of Conduct to ensure ongoing membership.

MSCA annual membership fees will be set by the MSCA Board each year.

The benefits of MSCA membership will be communicated to the Australian Montessori community regularly.

This policy and the MSCA Constitution, outlining membership rules will be made publicly available on the MSCA website.

The MSCA membership policy will be reviewed regularly.

MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

Membership Categories

There are three categories of membership in the MSCA constitution:

1. Full members – for Montessori Schools and Centres;
2. Associate members;
 - i. organisations – typically for overseas schools and centres, or training organisations;
 - ii. individuals – typically for retired Montessori educators/leaders or interested friends (*Individual membership is for individuals who are not associated with a school or centre in a leadership position*);
3. Any other class of person that the MSCA Board Directors allow to be a member, in accordance with the MSCA constitution.

A register of members is kept by the MSCA secretary and members are displayed on the MSCA website.

Membership Fees

MSCA annual membership fees are set by the MSCA Board each year.

MSCA must notify members of changes to membership fees for the following financial year by November 1 of the current financial year.

School Membership fees will be invoiced in January of each year. Schools joining for the first time after January will be billed for the remainder of the calendar year on a pro-rata basis. This will bring their membership in line with January invoicing the following year.

Centre and Associate Memberships will be billed annually from the date that the member's application to join is approved by the MSCA board. *For example: join in September, membership is valid until the following September.*

Specific dates of membership validity will be indicated in the fee invoice issued upon membership approval.

Members Rights and Restrictions

Full members – schools and centres – have all rights of a member under the MSCA Constitution including a right to vote.

Associate members have a right to receive notice of any general meeting but will have no right to vote as set out in the MSCA constitution.

Other classes of membership determined by the MSCA Board directors will have the rights and restrictions of membership as determined by the directors from time to time.

Applying for Membership

A school, centre, organisation or individual may apply for membership via the MSCA website by specifying the type of membership and completing the membership form. On application to join MSCA, schools, centres, organisations and individuals must agree to support the purposes of MSCA and agree to comply with MSCA's Constitution and Members' Code of Conduct, including payment of annual fees.

Applicants must nominate an individual to be their representative at General Meetings. The representative appointed for full members (schools and centres) is usually the School Principal or Centre Owner/Director. Full member representatives hold the right to vote at General Meetings and sign circular resolutions on behalf of the member.

Who can be a MSCA member?

A school, centre, organisation or individual who supports the purposes of MSCA is eligible to apply to be a member of MSCA.

A full member (schools and centres) must:

- i. have an object to provide Montessori education, or
- ii. have an object to support the provision of Montessori education, and
- iii. the majority of the Montessori education provided or supported must occur in Australia.

Approval of Membership

The MSCA Board Directors will consider an application for membership within 30 days after the secretary receives the application. The secretary will give the applying member notice of the application and the result within 14 days of the Directors' decision.

If the MSCA Board Directors approve an application, then it is taken to be provisionally approved by the Directors. Applicants will be notified of their provisional membership status and invoiced for their annual fees.

Provisionally approved members are posted on a closed electronic notice board that all MSCA members have access to. It is the individual responsibility of MSCA members to check the electronic notice board periodically for a list of provisional members.

Any MSCA member with the right to vote may object to an application by written notice to the MSCA Board Directors within 60 days of the application. If members holding at least 75% of the votes that may be cast at a General Meeting give notice that they object to an application, the application is taken to be rejected.

Where an application has been provisionally approved, the MSCA Board Directors may, as they determine from time to time, confer all membership rights, except any voting rights, to the applicant prior to the expiry of the time for members to object.

If the MSCA Board Directors approve an application and the time for members to object to an application has expired without the application having been taken to be rejected, the secretary will:

- i. enter the new member on the register of members;
- ii. write to the applicant to tell them that their application was approved, and the date that their membership started;
- iii. send the applicant a certificate of membership and a link to MSCA member logos to add to their website; and
- iv. add the new member to the list of members on the MSCA website unless they have indicated otherwise.

If the MSCA Board Directors or members reject an application, the secretary will write to the applicant to tell them that their application has been rejected but does not have to give reasons. If Directors or members reject an application, MSCA will refund any fees already paid, without interest.

Membership Benefits

The benefits of joining MSCA include:

- Being part of a collegiate network of Montessori Schools and Centres;
- Two-way networks and professional development opportunities from Australian, top-quality, highly experienced providers, for all involved in the operation of schools and centres;
- Support for practitioners in their day to day work to provide quality Montessori programs for students and staff across Australia and the world;
- MSCA is a national body designed to support members and link members to current work in Montessori practise;
- As a democratic peak body, members voices will be heard.

Full Members will receive:

- Information and have voting rights at MSCA General Meetings and the AGM;
- Discounted member prices for events, which extend to all school and centre staff;
- Access to the Montessori Hub which provides a plethora of documentation that can be utilised and modified to suit any Montessori setting;
- Quarterly Newsletters;
- Direct web links to their school or centre from the MSCA website;
- Free job listings advertised on the MSCA website and MSCA Facebook page;
- Invitations to join and free access to MSCA hub groups; and
- Discounted member prices for parent education sessions.

Associate Members will receive all of the above rights except for voting rights.

When a school, centre, organisation or individual stops being a member

A school, centre, organisation or individual immediately stops being a member if they:

- i. die (for an individual);
- ii. are wound up or otherwise dissolved or deregistered (for a school or centre);
- iii. resign, by writing to the secretary;
- iv. have not responded within three months to a written request from the secretary that they confirm in writing that they want to remain a member.;
- v. are expelled because:
 - (a) the member has not paid their annual fees by the time required, or
 - (b) the member no longer meets the criteria for membership, or
 - (c) the member has breached the MSCA Constitution, or
 - (d) the member's behaviour is causing, has caused, or is likely to cause harm to MSCA.

The MSCA Constitution rules will be followed when expelling a member.

Related Documents

MSCA Members Code of Conduct
MSCA Constitution

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MSCA MEMBERS

Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA) exists to support, unite and represent our members. We greatly value contribution, and the collaborative relationships we have with our members and we encourage our members to use our logo to proudly assert their membership.

It is, however, important to us and to all our members that the MSCA brand is not compromised, so we do ask our members to agree to the following Code of Conduct for the benefit and protection of all our members and to allow us to provide them with the best services we can.

MSCA as an organisation may be judged by the conduct of individual members. MSCA members should conduct themselves in such a way that reflects the vision, mission and values of MSCA and the conduct outlined in this document and the MSCA Constitution.

This code covers matters undertaken by MSCA members while attending MSCA events, on MSCA business or interacting during MSCA events.

It is an expectation that all members of Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA) will abide by the following Code of Conduct.

Members of MSCA will:

- demonstrate a commitment to MSCA, the Mission, Vision and Values;
- demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, Montessori philosophy and education;
- work within the terms and spirit of the MSCA Constitution;
- treat others with respect and dignity;
- consider and respect the rights and views of others understanding that others have a right to hold and express an opinion;
- observe and adhere to all equality laws and regulations and shall not discriminate against any person or other member;
- act professionally, with honesty, integrity and mutual respect;
- foster a positive and constructive working relationship with other MSCA members;
- support MSCA in the wider community and uphold MSCA's good reputation;
- work with MSCA staff and other MSCA members to contribute to a safe, supportive, positive and trusted environment for all attendees at MSCA events;
- observe confidentiality if a member at a MSCA event discloses sensitive information about their school/centre or work;
- disclose relevant information to MSCA administration that is required annually upon membership application and/or renewal;
- pay their MSCA membership fees in a timely manner when they fall due.

Any complaint that a member has breached this Code of Conduct shall be dealt with in accordance with the MSCA Constitution and MSCA Grievance Policy.