

# Annual Report 2013

## **Barrenjoey Montessori School**

Barrenjoey Montessori School is a non-denominational and co-educational school catering for 80 children from Birth – 9 years of age. The school adheres to the philosophy and method of internationally recognised (being Canadian I grew up with Z's but I think the Aussies prefer "s"! ) pedagogy determined by Dr Montessori. In 2012 the school opened a primary program (years 1 and 2) and was subsequently successful in obtaining registration for Years 3 and 4. The school has a strong parent education program attracting diverse and well informed parents seeking a contemporary education for their children.

The school was registered with the NSW Board of Studies for Years Kindergarten to Year 4 and is provisionally rated under the Early Years Learning Framework. The school is a member of the Association of Independent Schools and the Montessori Australia Foundation, participating in the Montessori Quality Assurance Program.

### **Reporting Area 1 - Message from Chairman**

2013 continued to be a year of substantial growth and development for the School. The board met 9 times during the year to govern a number of significant initiatives:

- Secured ongoing employment of a 3 Montessori-trained teacher with International and Australian qualifications recognised by the NSW Institute of Teachers
- The principal led a broad range of improvements to the school in curriculum, staffing, administration, student and parent welfare.
- Successful registration of Years 3 and 4 in preparation for the year 2014.
- Securing enrolments above forecast for these new years of learning (Years 1 and 2) as identified in the strategic plan to ensure a strong classroom practice for future years.
- Continued sponsorship of a teacher studying the internationally recognised Montessori 3 - 6 training to provide consistency and succession planning for the future
- Graduation of an educator on staff from the internationally recognized Montessori 0 - 3 training, to further develop the infant and toddler programs and establish the strong educational and development foundations, leading also to healthy 3-6 enrolments
- Building on the School's Vision, Mission and Values statements and implementing the School's Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2015. The strategic plan provides for increased alignment of the School's development activities to our long-term goals. This includes improving efficiency and ensuring that purpose, vision and the culture of the School is maintained and strengthened as we grow.

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- Successful approval of grant led to the improvement of facilities including landscaping, increased shade and the telecommunications system.
- Turnover of board members has been very low however to ensure development and sustainability 2 board members left to be replaced by 2 current members of the Association. The school continues to attract both internal and external board members with a diversity of skills and knowledge.

### **Reporting Area 2 - Contextual Information about the School**

In 2013 the school extended and consolidated the facilities to enable increased community interest in the school providing a 6 – 9 year classroom, a playgroup and parent education program. The school was focused on the creation of an excellent learning environment for early primary years with attention to preparation of resources and the smooth transition from the preschool to primary. Parent Education and discussion groups were a key part of the marketing strategy.

The school enrolled 24 primary students with approximate equal numbers of boys and girls. The majority of the students are from English speaking backgrounds.

The school continued to embrace increased enrolments and the strategic planning of staff employment and training was a key priority to ensure teachers of excellence in the classroom and familiarity with compliance under current legislation.

During 2013 the school focused on increased resources and an increased involvement in the local community to ensure an ongoing presence as an educational option for families residing in the local area.

### **Reporting Area 3 - Student performance in Naplan N/A**

### **Reporting Area 4 - Senior secondary Outcomes N/A**

### **Reporting Area 5 - Professional learning and teacher standards**

#### **Teacher standards**

As at December 2013 BMS employed 5 teaching staff (with one on maternity leave).

Level of qualification	Number of staff
a. Have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as a recognized within the NOOSR guidelines	4
b. Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education	1

institute within Australia or as recognized with the NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teaching qualification.	
c. Do not have qualifications as describe in a) or b) above but have relevant successful teaching experiences or appropriate knowledge to the teaching context.	
d. No qualifications or teaching experience	0

### **Professional Learning**

Professional development was provided to teaching (4)

Area of professional development	Number of staff
Education conference (MAF)	1
First aid	2
Living Life Well (NSW Health)	1
Anaphylaxis and Asthma	4
BOSTES curriculum briefing	1
AMI Montessori Training course (3 - 6 year olds)	1
BMS Policy education (ongoing)	4
Teaching Degree (distance part time)	1

The Principal attended regular AIS briefings covering areas of leadership

### **Reporting Area 6 - Student attendance**

Attendance for Years 1 and 2 was over 92% with absences due to short term sickness and children taking extended holidays overseas. The average attendance over the year for the Kindergarten students was 86%, however if the 2 students who took extended leave to visit family overseas are excluded the attendance is over 95%.

The school implements policy and procedures for the management of non-attendance. Parents are requested to contact the school in the case of sickness / absenteeism and to advise the school office and teacher in the case of preplanned leave. Non-attendance is followed up within 48 hours by the office and recorded in a hardcopy role book. Absentee forms with reasons and signed by parents are collated and filed in a central folder located in the office.

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	86% (see note above)
Year 1	92%
Year 2	93.5%

## Reporting Area 7 - Enrolment policies and characteristics of the student body

In 2013 the primary classroom enrolled a total of 14 children in years 1 and 2. This number was as forecast in the strategic plan (2011 – 2014).

Children enter the kindergarten year (Pre Year 1) when they are close to the age of 5 years or when they demonstrate developmentally readiness.

In 2013 the gender make-up of primary students was 54% male and 46% female.

The full enrolment policy is attached as an appendix at the end of this report.

## Reporting Area 8 - 10 - School policies

The school policies can be found in the Manual located in the office and also electronically by contacting the office.

The school is committed to providing a learning environment that supports the individual child in all areas of their development - intellectually, socially and emotionally. To this end the school has policies that ensure a safe and supportive environment at all times and for all children.

Policy	Changes in 2013	Access to full text
<b>Student Welfare</b> The school seeks to promote safe and supportive learning environments where all students can develop socially, emotionally and academically both as a school community but also as individuals.	In 2013 the policy was revised to include greater detail regarding the attendance and non-attendance processes	The full text of the school's Student Welfare policy can be accessed by request from the Principal and from the policy manual located in the office. The full text is available in both electronic and paper formats.
<b>Anti- bullying (Positive Peer Relations Policy)</b> This policy clearly sets out the expectations of the school community and outlines the consequences and actions that might be taken should such behaviours occur.	In 2013 clear definitions of behaviours considered to be harassment were included to the policy. Guidelines for Appropriate behavior were included to the Positive Peer relations Policy. In 2013 a flow chart was included to assist parents and the community clearly identify the process	The full text of the school's Anti- bullying policy can be accessed by request from the Principal and from the policy manual located in the office. The full text is available in both electronic and paper formats.
<b>Discipline</b>	There were no changes to	The full text of the school's

<p><b>BMS recognizes the unique value of each child and the importance of providing clear boundaries that are acceptable within both the school and wider communities. Corporal punishment is not sanctioned at any time with positive reinforcement being the preferred role model</b></p>	<p><b>this policy in 2013</b></p>	<p><b>Discipline policy can be accessed by request from the Principal and from the policy manual located in the office. The full text is available in both electronic and paper formats.</b></p>
<p><b>Complaints and Grievances Grievances and complaints may arise from time to time and are handled in an unbiased and consistent manner taking in to account the principles of procedural fairness</b></p>	<p><b>In 2013 a clear step by step procedure was made available to all parents. (The summary statement is a summary of the grievance policy and is not a stand-alone document.</b></p>	<p><b>The full text of the school's Complaints and Grievances policy can be accessed by request from the Principal and from the policy manual located in the office. The full text is available in both electronic and paper formats.</b></p>

Minor changes occurred to other policies and procedures to ensure they were current to the year 2013. All staff and the school community were informed of these changes with

## **Reporting Area 11 - School determined improvement targets**

Achievement of priorities identified in the school's 2012 annual report

### **2012 priority areas for improvement into 2013**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<p><b>Teaching and Learning</b></p>	<p>Create units of work for Kindergarten to Year 4 Introduce NSW new Curriculum for English and map to National Montessori Curriculum for approval by NSW BOS. Complete paperwork for continued registration of Years 3 and 4 Create electronic recording system for all curriculum and developmental</p>	<p>Achieved and approved by NSW BoS Mapped in preparation for introduction in 2014  Completed  Completed as a reporting checklist Not successful due to resource constraints / turnover</p>

	tracking. Resource possibilities of extra funding for targeted programs	
<b>Financial</b>	Review and refine monthly reporting to Board Review enrollment procedure and fees process	Board and Treasurer improving this process Achieved
<b>Facilities and resources</b>	Landscaping of outdoors area	On going
<b>Marketing</b>	Complete redesign and launch of website to use as marketing tool and communication with school community	Website team contracted with launch date of March 2014
<b>Management and operation</b>	Strategic plan to be reviewed as scheduled and appropriate changes made and worked upon	Used as a reference but minimal changes made in preference to waiting until 2014 when new strategic plan will be initiated.
<b>Parent welfare and marketing</b>	Annual parent survey to be held in T3 identifying any comments Generic signs and banners to be purchased	Annual parent survey held in T3 with 55% response.  Purchased x 2
<b>Student Welfare</b>		
<b>Human Resources</b>	Training of staff for succession plan – 1 teacher to be supported through NSW Institute of Teacher Accreditation Assistant to be supported in Cert 111 qualifications Professional Development to be increased to ensure staff are visiting other like-minded schools.	1 teacher achieved new teacher status PD courses attended by all staff but higher budget in 2014 to ensure greater diversity of PD

**2013 priority areas for improvement into 2014**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	
<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	Create consistent units of work across all KLAs from K to Year 4	

	<p>Introduce NSW new Curriculum for English and map Maths to National Montessori Curriculum for approval by BOSTES</p> <p>Complete paperwork for continued registration of Years 3 and 4</p> <p>Refine electronic recording system for all curriculum with focus on reports and tracking of social developmental</p> <p>Resource possibilities of extra funding for targeted programs</p>	
<b>Financial</b>	Review and refine monthly reporting to Board	
<b>Facilities and resources</b>	Landscaping of outdoors area	
<b>Marketing</b>	Utilise the website and face book marketing tool of choice both within school and to wider community	
<b>Management and operation</b>	Strategic plan	
<b>Parent welfare and marketing</b>	Annual parent survey to be held in T3 identifying any comments	
<b>Student Welfare</b>		
<b>Human Resources</b>	Professional Development to be increased to ensure staff are visiting other like-minded schools.	

## **Reporting Area 12 - Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility**

The school follows the educational approach as defined by the Montessori philosophy which has respect embedded as a key element. The children are valued as individuals with diversity embraced. The integrated curriculum and multi aged grouping ensures that responsibility and opportunity for independence, self-esteem and a mutual respect for others and the environment are continuously addressed. Lessons of grace and courtesy are given on a daily basis and modeled by all staff.

The parents and staff provide care and support whilst assisting the school community to be considered as an educational establishment focusing on social, ethical and environmental responsibility, respect and sustainability.

## **Reporting area 13 - Parent, student and teacher satisfaction**

Parents continue to have several avenues to voice their thoughts and ideas. These are appropriately addressed by the Principal, the Board, teachers or a parent representative. It was not necessary for the Board to be made aware of any ongoing concerns. The school community continues to enjoy the social aspect of the school and gain from friendships created.

Children enrolled at the school typically stay for the 3 year preschool cycle which includes the kindergarten year but with the introduction of years 1 and 2 the parent body has become more stable. Students left predominantly due to relocation (overseas) and financial reasons (total 7).

The school continues to have a high retention rate for all staff members indicating high satisfaction with 1 staff member leaving due to a job offer closer to home.

An online parent survey was again conducted in 2013 to measure current parental satisfaction and to address issues that might lead to student / family withdrawal.

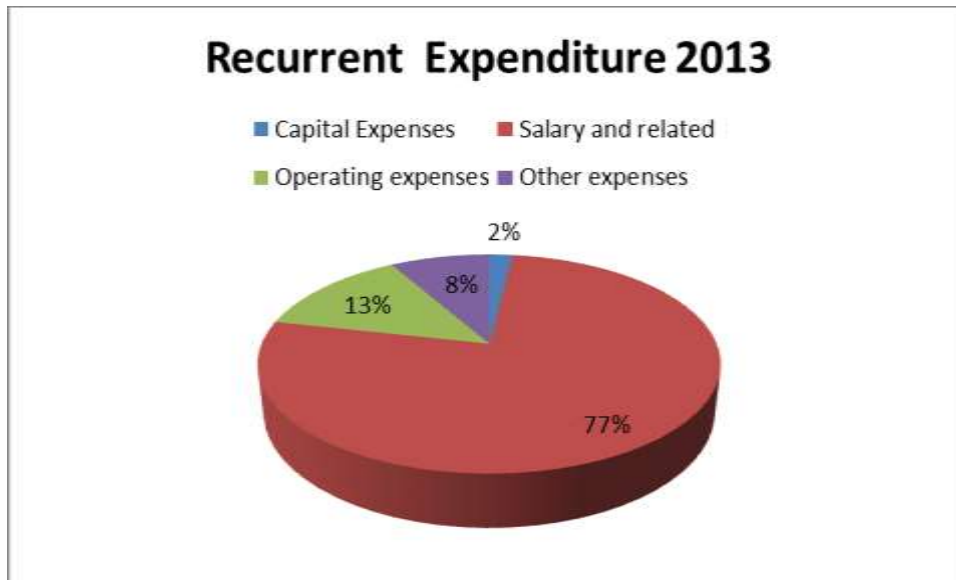
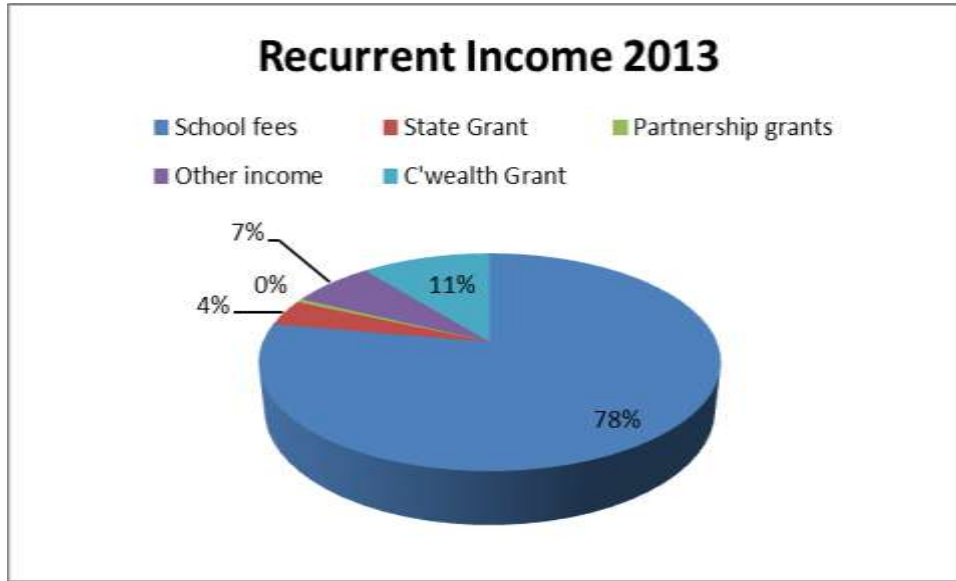
Response was high with 100% suggesting they would highly recommend the school to others and over 75% being extremely satisfied with the quality of education and depth in reporting processes. More than 50% of the respondents indicated an interest into higher years of Primary education.

The young students were not formally asked about their satisfaction but anecdotal information would suggest that all enjoy being at the school. Focus and student behavior is of a high standard again suggesting satisfaction with their school.



## Reporting Area 14 - Summary financial information

The financial year operates from 1 January to 31 December inclusive. The accounts of 2013 were audited in April with the information being used for the Australian Government Financial Questionnaire. The following data has been extracted from the audited accounts of the school.



## Enrolment Placement Policy

### **Rationale**

Barrenjoey Montessori School offers a Montessori program currently consisting of a cycle 1(3 – 6) program and a cycle 2 (6 – 9) program commencing at the age of 3 years old. Barrenjoey Montessori School is a non-denominational and a co-educational school and accepts enrolment applications from all members of the community. The school has a responsibility to currently enrolled students, staff and the community to provide a learning environment that is reflective of the society in general and will consider all applications made to the school in a transparent and equitable manner. Children with additional needs are considered on an individual needs basis keeping in mind the standards of the *Disability Standards for Education Act 2005*.

The policy has been formulated to outline and clarify the process and procedures that will determine the placement of students.

### **Under 3s program (with parent / carer in attendance)**

To apply for admission to the under 3's program and to have a child waitlisted, a parent must complete an application form and pay the (non-refundable) application fee.

Parents are advised when a vacancy occurs and are required to make a commitment of attendance for one term.

Prior to commencement parents are invited to attend a session to meet the facilitator and to gain an insight regarding the format and structure of the sessions.

### **Pre-primary Program (3 – 6 year olds)(Cycle 1)**

#### **Admissions procedure**

**Enrolment from the under 3s to 3 – 6 program is not automatic and requires a separate enrolment form to be completed. It is strongly suggested that a child is waitlisted at least 12 months prior to the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to ensure consideration be given to an offer of place.**

The steps in the enrolment procedure can be summarised as:

1. Parent enquiry:  
Parents are advised to book a school observation and are directed to the website for further information.
2. School Observation:  
Following an observation (typically 30 minutes) the Principal (or delegate) meets with the parents to provide some background specific to the school and also to answer any questions that might have occurred during the observation or might be more general in nature. The parents are given an enrolment application form and a school brochure.
3. Application form received:

- This must be accompanied by the waitlist fee. The child's name is added to the waitlist. The contact email address is included in the 'waitlist' group email. Parents receive the ebulletin (school newsletter), Montessori articles and specific information about school events.
4. Confirmation of application form:  
The school sends a letter to confirm that the child's name is now on the waitlist. It is the responsibility of the parent to update the school of current contact details etc.
  5. Waitlist management:  
In the July preceding the year in which a child would be turning three years of age initial applications are considered for enrolment and placement. Preference is given to siblings of current students.
  6. Interviews:  
Parents are contacted by the school and booked in for an interview / discussion with the Principal. The child is to be present at this meeting.
  7. Offers of place:  
Offers of place (including a financial commitment) are sent to the parents by the school.
  8. Acceptance of place:  
Parents are given 14 days to return the contract including appropriate fees.
  9. Contract acknowledgement:  
A letter and receipt are sent to the parent. The letter confirms the anticipated term of commencement and informs the parents that the school will make contact prior to the end of the term proceeding the child's term of commencement to schedule a meeting.
  10. New child and parent orientation:  
The day before the allocated start day the child and parents are invited to visit the classroom and meet the class director. This typically occurs after the school day. The class director in discussion with the parents decides on the most suitable hours during the first (transitional) week.
  11. Review:  
The class director and parents are in communication during the first six weeks as is required. After six weeks the parents are invited to a parent teacher conference to review the initial first weeks of the child's attendance at the school. The Principal is informed of any concerns by either party with regards to the continued enrolment of the child.

**Pre requisite for continued enrolment**

An ongoing enrolment of 3 years for each program as determined by the Montessori philosophy is assumed by the school unless it has been necessary to activate the Behaviour Management Procedure or philosophical differences are identified by the school as being detrimental to the development of the child. Withdrawal prior to

completion of the 3 years will affect the enrolment of siblings. All outstanding fees must be paid as a condition of continued enrolment.

**Supplementary Notes.**

Application to the waitlist can be made following the birth of a child. Application is not accepted prior to the birth of a child.

Children are eligible to commence at, or close to the age of 3 years old. The child must demonstrate appropriate social, emotional and physical independence.

To assist parents in making an educated decision for the 3 years of a cycle 1 pre-primary program, the following events are typically held on a regular basis:

- Open day (March / November))
- Festival of Small Hands
- Intro evening (May/June)
- parent education evenings (Termly)

Parents on the waitlist are advised of the dates via the website and school communications.

**Guidelines**

The Principal decides to whom places will be offered based on the following selection criteria:

- Sibling status (with conditions as set out below)
  
- Position on the waitlist.  
Priority is given to students who have attended BMS under 3s if the child was waitlisted at least 12 months prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Special consideration will be given to under 3 students who have not enrolled 12 months prior to their commencement date.
  
- Transfers from another Montessori School  
(Offering a full Montessori 5 day program with a full complement of Montessori materials and with a trained Montessori director in the classroom and where attendance has been constant and for a period of more than 1 year)
  
- The age of the child when application to waitlist was received.
  
- Gender balance reflecting society
- Commitment to the 3-6 programme and continuation of a Montessori education into Primary.
  
- Commitment / involvement of parents if sibling attends school.

- The Disability Standards for Education Act 2005.

Offers of place are made in the August prior to the anticipated year of commencement or as vacancies occur.

When all factors are equal, the date of registration determines priority.

In the case of older children the above criteria also applies. In addition, a place will only be offered if there is a vacancy for the age and gender of the child and if there is a definite commitment to the programme. Offers for older children are subject to an interview and orientation period.

### ***Conditions of Acceptance for First Child Entering the School***

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

- A non-refundable placement fee (per child) is payable on acceptance of the offer.
- A security bond is payable. This is invoiced and payable the term prior to the child commencing at the school. The security bond will be refunded on completion of the enrolled program; that is on completion of the Pre Primary program or Primary program. Withdrawal of a child before the completion of the program causes the child's educational development to be compromised and disrupts the dynamic of the class.
- Parents are expected to assist with the organisation and general needs of the School. Parents are also expected to attend parent education evenings organised by the teaching staff.
- Parents are expected to participate in fundraising activities and working bees or contribute a required skill or knowledge to the school. Non participation attracts a levy of \$100 per term. (The levy is the non-preferred alternative).

### ***Conditions of Acceptance for Siblings***

Conditions of acceptance for siblings are similar to those for the first child. Sibling priority is only applied when older sibling has completed or has the intention of completing the full program.

### ***Timing of Entry – Pre-Primary***

The School adheres to the Montessori principle of staggered entry to enable maximum attention to be given to each new child in the class and to assist the children to adjust to

their new environment. Commencement dates are determined by the Principal in consultation with the class directors and parents.

***Primary (6-9 programme)***

**Application Procedure**

The School operates a separate waiting list for primary expressions of interest. There is no wait list fee for children already enrolled in pre-primary at the School. An application fee applies to families who wish to transfer from other schools into the Primary programme. This fee will be credited to the first term's fees.

***Offers of Place – Primary***

Parents of children on the Primary waiting list will be encouraged to attend an observation in a primary classroom and also attend the Primary Introduction Evening or equivalent.

All children on the primary waitlist are observed in their Pre-Primary setting (if possible).

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

- The child's readiness
- BMS priority
- Transfers from another Montessori School (attendance pattern of a Montessori 5 day program with a full complement of Montessori materials and with a trained Montessori director in the classroom and where attendance has been constant and for a period of 3 years)
- Transfer from a non Montessori School
- Commitment/involvement of parents
- Gender balance

***Conditions of Acceptance for First Child Entering the School – as per the PrePrimary conditions***

***Timing of Entry – Primary -Information Only***

The child moves onto Primary (6 – 9) at the beginning of the term following observations and assessment across all developmental areas (emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically). Typically this is close to the 6<sup>th</sup> birthday however it is unusual for a child to commence Primary in term 4 of any year. (See Transition Statement.)

Children are assessed on an individual basis and the move to Primary is based on developmental readiness with the orientation days being natural and child driven. Applications by students from non-Montessori schools will be considered taking into account the needs of the child, family and school. A child will be required to attend for an orientation of 1 week prior to an offer of place.

***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 above criteria being met.

Once children have commenced in a class at the School, they will not be transferred to another class.

***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 School Principal.

The School may advise a deferred start in which case a place will be held without imposition of fees until a commencement date.

***Confidentiality and Privacy***

The School respects the privacy of the families and staff who make up the School community. It is the School's 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 applicable laws.

(Please refer to the Privacy Policy for more formation)

***Principal's Discretion***

The Principal has the discretion to consider the individual application of an enrolment in extenuating circumstances.