





The farm is an immersive real-world environment where students experience adult responsibilities, practice sustainability, and engage in community-based work. These experiences help them understand the world around them, fostering a sense of responsibility, agency, and purpose. And in today's tech-driven world, the farm offers a refreshing, grounding experience—connecting students to their community and the natural world, while still embracing technology in meaningful ways.

### **Core Academic Learning: Science, Math, and Literacy**

We recognise the importance of building a solid foundation in core subjects. Our Montessori approach provides students with direct instruction, complemented by opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, enhancing their understanding and retention.

For example, science is woven into the farm experience through environmental studies, biology, and sustainability practices, but it is also integrated in all subjects, ensuring that students develop a deep understanding of scientific principles like objectivity in all facets of life. Math is equally integral to daily farm activities, such as managing resources, budgeting for projects, starting businesses, and even calculating yields in agricultural production, yet it is also taught explicitly to ensure mastery of core mathematical concepts. Similarly, literacy is emphasised through project-based research, reflective journaling, and formal presentations, helping students to sharpen their communication and writing skills while engaging in authentically applied work that is meaningful to them.

This balance of explicit teaching with integrated, practical application empowers students to see the relevance of these core subjects in their everyday lives, while ensuring they achieve the academic proficiency required for future success.

### **What to Expect: Curriculum and Activities**

The farm enriches the Montessori curriculum by creating a "Microcosm of Society" through the principles of "Work and Study" and "Production and Exchange," based on the needs of both the farm and the community. This approach blends academics with hands-on, experiential learning, going beyond rote memorisation and exam preparation. Instead, it emphasises the development of **metacognition**—the ability for students to reflect on their own learning processes—and **executive functioning** skills, such as planning, problem-solving, and self-regulation. These skills are crucial for lifelong success, helping students navigate real-world challenges with confidence and adaptability.

Through real-world experiences such as farming, craftsmanship, and community projects, students will also build essential skills like teamwork, resource management, and economic literacy. Additionally, we will collaborate closely with local Indigenous custodians to ensure our curriculum respects the land's history and fosters inclusivity. Here's just a glimpse of what's planned:

- ✓ **Agriculture:** Farm-to-Table programs, animal care, crop management, and farm-to-market initiatives.

- ✓ **Business Studies:** Entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and small business management, with hands-on experiences running farm-based or student-led ventures.
- ✓ **Arts and Creativity:** Opportunities in art, music, and theatre, encouraging creative expression through projects, performances, and exhibitions.
- ✓ **Community Engagement:** Participation in sustainability workshops, community service, nutrition education, and organized sports, helping students develop social responsibility and leadership skills.
- ✓ **Environmental Stewardship:** Conservation projects, water management education, and environmental science studies, promoting sustainable practices and care for the land.
- ✓ **Outdoor Adventures:** Camping trips, environmental studies, and wilderness survival skills, fostering self-reliance and a deep connection to nature.
- ✓ **Culinary Arts:** Cooking classes and food preservation techniques, incorporating nutrition and food science into everyday learning.
- ✓ **Care for the Environment and Each Other:** Daily chores, shared responsibilities, and leadership roles that encourage students to contribute to the well-being of the community and the environment.
- ✓ **Student-Led Projects:** Empowering students to take charge of their learning with self-driven initiatives that nurture leadership, independence, and a sense of purpose.

### Assessment: A Holistic Approach

To measure your child's progress in this hands-on, experiential learning environment, we'll use a variety of assessment methods that go beyond traditional tests. From observational assessments and project-based evaluations to self-reflections and practical demonstrations, our assessment strategies ensure a well-rounded understanding of your child's growth.

- **Observations and Peer Assessments:** Daily reflections and peer reviews foster accountability and collaboration.
- **Project-Based Assessments:** Portfolios and project presentations showcase student learning and progress.
- **Self-Reflection and Goal Setting:** Journals and goal-setting help students reflect on their personal development.
- **Practical Demonstrations:** Students will showcase their skills in areas like farming, cooking, and crafting.
- **Integrated Assessments:** Cross-curricular projects tie together subjects like science, math, and art in meaningful ways.
- **Family Involvement and Regular Feedback:** One-on-one check-ins with educators ensure ongoing support and guidance.

### **RESOURCE: Deepen your understanding of Montessori at the adolescent level:**

[Montessori Adolescence \(Teenagers\), with Paula Lillard Preschlack - YouTube](#)  
[Deep Dive on Social Organization — Montessori Adolescent Initiative](#)

## What About Post-Secondary?

We will provide more details about this in the next newsletter, but here's a brief overview of the **International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC)**—one of the four senior school pathways we will offer. The IBPLC is a unique, personalised assessment system that focuses on evaluating students' skills and real-world abilities, rather than relying on traditional content-based exams like the ATAR. Instead of testing rote learning, the IBPLC allows students to develop portfolios that highlight their strengths, passions, and achievements, including projects, internships, and personal reflections. This approach aligns closely with the Montessori philosophy, which emphasises independence, problem-solving, and lifelong learning—skills that are essential whether students choose to pursue university, vocational training, start a business, or enter the workforce.

Students' portfolios are evaluated through rubrics developed in collaboration with Big Picture Education Australia and the University of Melbourne, ensuring alignment with the Australian Curriculum. This method provides a holistic view of a student's competencies, such as creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking, offering a valuable alternative to standardised exams.

One of the major advantages of the IBPLC is that it is recognised by 17 Australian universities, allowing students to gain direct entry based on the quality of their portfolio rather than an ATAR score. This shift reflects a broader trend in education, as universities increasingly prioritise skills and capabilities over test results. Additionally, advancements in neuroscience show that learning approaches focused on critical thinking and real-world application are more in line with how the brain naturally learns, making the IBPLC an ideal choice for students who thrive in non-traditional learning environments.

The IBPLC prepares students for various life paths, equipping them with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Don't hesitate to reach out if you would like more information about Big Picture Education. Below, you'll find some general information to get you started.

### Learn More About Our Senior School:

1. [MRMS Senior Secondary Pathways - Parent Info.pdf](#)
2. [Reinventing the Traditional HS Diploma: International Big Picture Learning Credential - Aurora Institute \(aurora-institute.org\)](#)

## Conclusion

We are on the brink of an exciting journey, one that will connect your child to the land, their community, and their own potential in meaningful ways. The Land-Based Montessori Adolescent Program embodies Maria Montessori's vision of fostering independence, responsibility, and a deep sense of purpose in adolescents. Through this program, we are not only educating students for today but shaping the next generation of leaders—those who will guide our communities and the world with empathy, resilience, and innovation. We can't wait to embark on this adventure with you and your children, creating an environment that nurtures them academically, socially, and personally as they prepare for the future.

**Let's celebrate this next step together—2025 is just around the corner!**