

Female School of Industry

1827 – 1926

Details

The Female School of Industry was first established in Macquarie Street in Sydney, then moved to Darlinghurst Road around 1877. It finally moved to Petersham in 1903. It was a girls' home and domestic training home for girls aged 4 to 14. It closed in 1926.

The Female School of Industry was established by a committee led by Eliza Darling, the wife of New South Wales' Governor in 1827. It admitted girls aged between four and nine years of age. Girls were 'trained' in domestic service until they were old enough to be sent out to work, usually at the age of 12 to 14.

It is not clear from the annual reports how girls came to enter the home: presumably they were placed by family members or guardians who were in difficulty, or who wanted training for their daughters. Parents were expected to provide maintenance for their children, if they could, and visitors were only allowed on designated days. Although girls were expected to stay until they reached working age, the annual reports do mention that some were removed from the school 'by their friends'.

The Female School of Industry was dissolved by a special Act of Parliament in 1926 and its remaining assets were vested with the Church of England Archbishop of Sydney. The location of surviving records of the Female School of Industry is not known.

Gallery



Female School of Industry, 1834 / F. Walker

Description: This is a copy of a drawing by F. Walker of the Female School of Industry on Macquarie Street, Sydney.



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Description: This is a copy of a photoprint of the Female School of Industry on Maquarie Street, Sydney. It was published in the album 'Photographs of Public and Other Buildings, &c. photographed by Charles Pickering'.



The School To-Day

Description: This is an image of The Female School of Industry in Petersham. It shows the large, two-storey house that formed the school, with approximately 24 people seated in a line on the ground (presumably girls attending the school) and three standing (presumably staff at the school) in front of the house. Though the photo quality is poor, it appears that the girls are wearing light coloured uniforms. This image was published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 7 November 1921. The caption was provided by *The Sydney Morning Herald*



The New Female School of Industry

Description: This image is an illustration of the Female School of Industry at Darlinghurst. The illustration was made before construction of the building had been completed. The image shows a large two-storey building surrounded by high stone and iron fences. It also depicts several young girls in uniform standing outside of the house, possibly meant to be residents of the school. This image was published in *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* on 3 August 1872. The title was provided by the newspaper.



The Female School of Industry, Darlinghurst Road, early 1870s

Description: This is a photograph taken of the Female School of Industry on Darlinghurst Road in the 1870s. It shows a large two-storey stone building with a front verandah, surrounded by a brick and iron fence. This image was published in *Children of the Back Lanes: destitute and neglected children in colonial New South Wales* in 1986. The original image is held by the State Archives of New South Wales.

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Related Organisations

- [Anglican Diocese of Sydney \(1788 - current\)](#)

The Church of England Sydney Diocese assumed control of the assets of the Female School of Industry in 1926

Resources

- [The Female School of Industry, Petersham](#), Australian Town and Country Journal, 10 June 1903

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