

2018 Annual Report



Photo: 2018 Keystone recognising the founding mothers, the founding teacher and the six founding students.



PORT MACQUARIE

Steiner School

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Introduction

From the beginning there was an impulse that took hold in the hearts of five mothers with young children at their weekly Steiner playgroup. Between them was a longing for an education for their children which would help them grow into strong, healthy people with their creative and artistic capacities developed, their minds open to possibilities, and their energies able to be focused with moral grounding to work in the world for the good and the true. They took up the task to start a Steiner school in Port Macquarie.

To begin a school takes more than the dedication of a few individuals, however committed. It takes the support from a cross-section of a whole community which provides that support in many different ways – from businesses donating equipment, labour, and materials; to individuals with skills, background or experience needed to give their time and services; to families with the trust and courage to enrol their children in a new, untried school. It takes staff prepared to pioneer a new enterprise which can involve sometimes working in challenging circumstances, but also able to take initiative to find solutions and bring about positive change with limited resources. It takes a board of directors with time and energy to give in a myriad of ways, and able to juggle priorities with a small budget. It takes financial donors to make the seeming impossible, possible.

All of this, Port Macquarie Steiner School was so fortunate to draw to itself. Importantly, this also included a founding teacher who could not only create a Kindergarten worthy of the high standards from the long tradition of Rudolf Steiner Education in the world, but who could steer the school soundly on the foundation of her understanding of the knowledge of the human being as indicated in Steiner's philosophy of Anthroposophy. As a Steiner school, support also came from the sisterhood of other Steiner schools, the national body – Steiner Education Australia and peak body – the Association of Independent Schools NSW.

Still, it was a very modest start – six children and two staff in a rented church hall. The office was also the hall kitchen. Each term brought improvements and more children. Everyone found their way into what is needed to make and run a school, which was a new venture for most involved.

The site for the school, while providing a good place to start, has intrinsically within it a limited capacity. Even from the beginning there has been an active looking ahead and searching outward into the local area for a site to be our permanent home. Early investigations strengthened the Board's resolve that the School retain its identity as belonging to the place of its origins – Port Macquarie.

The original Business Plan contained the following under “Our Vision”

Our community is influenced by our natural environment, and our social culture. We are a product of what has come before us, and our cultural heritage. We have much to learn and to lean on in response to the local Indigenous history, and we also have much to offer through an enriched and relevant education which may celebrate culture and country. Our school should then reflect this environment.



Here already in the founders' words is communicated a strong sense of place.

We continue to plan for a future in this community of Port Macquarie, on the mid-north coast of NSW, and look forward to building on our beginnings to fulfil the vision, and our mission.

Mission Statement

To create a community-centred, Steiner education-based school for the Port Macquarie region, which fosters a holistic education for our children and a valuable, ethical, nurturing resource for our community.

Our Core Values

- Education which nurtures the head, the heart and the hands
- Social relationships as a means for connection, inclusion, trust and meaningful learning
- Art, creativity and imagination as an integral part of the learning process to cultivate self-motivated free thinkers who are equipped to meet the challenges of the future
- Valuing whole-life-learning and actively supporting learning for parents, families and our community as well as for the children
- Inclusiveness as opposed to exclusiveness
- Valuing community and the importance of skills and human contribution before economic value
- Education should be accessible to all, regardless of social, cultural or economic background
- Supporting the long-term study and experience of the natural environment in order to deeply connect to ourselves, one another, and the world as a whole
- Recognising that the actions and thoughts of each individual impact the health of our community, and then our planet
- Festivals to celebrate the change of seasons, the natural rhythms of the earth and the community, and to experience reverence and gratitude for the natural cycles of life

A Message from the President of the Board

2018 was the inaugural year for Port Macquarie Steiner School. The first year of a Steiner school brings special things that can never be repeated. This was a very exciting time for the group who had worked hard to create the foundations of the school, and for the families eagerly awaiting the start of the school year.

I am a founding mother of the school and have been a member of the Board since March 2017. I was elected as President at the 2018 AGM in July, after our previous President, Peter Newman resigned from the Board earlier that month. I have been involved in community groups for a large portion of my life but never have I experienced such strength and will from a small group of volunteers, working for a united purpose. Out of this strength and will, the school was born and placed in the very capable hands of our Head Teacher, Kristy Barry.

When we employed Kristy at the end of 2017, the classroom was almost bare, the walls were grey and the garden was non-existent. Again, strength and will were at play in the community which brought contributions and participation from all around. By the first day of classes in January 2018, the classroom was filled with toys and resources lovingly handmade, the kitchen was stocked with nourishing food, the walls were warmed with pink and the garden had native trees and a shaded log sandpit, all awaiting the presence of the Kindergarten class of six children. We are indebted to Kristy for her willingness, courage and skill to create.

Over the course of the year, the Board held 13 meetings, the AGM and one general meeting of the Company to ratify amendments to the Constitution of Port Macquarie Steiner Limited. Our Company grew by three members in 2018 to a total of twelve members.

In April we held a policy workshop with staff, Board members and School Management Committee members to roll out our revised policies and procedures. Key governance, management and operational policies were covered to ensure the entire team behind the school was aware of our framework.

Throughout 2018 the Board was focused on finding options for a permanent site for the school and also finding management solutions within the current organisational structure and staff, and volunteer pool.

Being a new school, we are in constant improvement mode and our attention is on all areas. The school's enrolments grew from six students on the first day to eleven students on the last day of the school year. The increase in student numbers in the second half of the year gave us the confidence that the community would continue to support the school, and allowed us to focus in on certain areas of improvement which were of importance to the school's success. The Board saw the urgency in putting more energy into searching for a permanent site to suit our school's further development. Fortunately, at that time the skills



on the Board were suited to the task. We began investigating options, setting up meetings and attending site inspections. There was also a need to make plans and preparations to accommodate a second class for 2019.

Another priority area was the staffing model. Being our first year of operation and having two employees – a Head Teacher and Administration Officer, the Board worked on our organisational structure and resolved to form the School Management Committee and delegate all aspects of school management and operations to this committee. The committee consisted of our Head Teacher and a mix of Board members and Company members with relevant management or educational experience. The Board considered issues of benefit and risk for a committee approach as there is always risk in delegated operational management, especially when it involves a committee.

Throughout the year, the Board, staff and School Management Committee worked together on issues of decision making, monitoring communication and overall efficacy of the model. The School Management Committee was appointed until such a time as the school staffing model could sustain a Principal position, which was estimated to be within the following two years.

As the Kindergarten class grew, we employed a teacher assistant and engaged more relief teachers to support our Head Teacher in her role.

In November, the Company received registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. We opened a Building Fund with a local facility and subsequently applied for Donatable Gift Recipient endorsement with the ATO. Being able to receive tax deductible donations into our Building Fund will be essential to our growth to a permanent site in the future.

On reflection of our historical first year, and on our humble little school, I feel a huge sense of gratitude for all those involved who have carried and cared for our school so far – our wonderful and dedicated staff, Board members, volunteers and families.

To our current board members, Bianca Bateman, Cheryl Meyer Millican, Ruth Gallagher and Fred Buys, thank you for your dedication and unwavering contributions to the school. The work of a school Board in the pioneer years is demanding and often it comes with many challenges. In a school which is still developing many processes, to aim for consensus at Board level and encourage consistent involvement in a relatively new Board, is no mean feat. I would like to thank you all for the work we do together, as a group, for your individual contributions and to acknowledge the countless hours volunteered by the Board of Directors, School Management Committee and Bursary Committee in keeping a steady momentum and forward direction of the school towards our vision.



To our outgoing Presidents and Board members, Alanna Alfaro, Peter Newman and John Oxley, thank you for your commitment and service to the school. Your input and efforts are greatly appreciated and this still continues in different forms for each of you, outside your previous Board roles. For that, I am very grateful and humbled.

A special thanks to our Head Teacher, Kristy Barry, who met the constant onslaught of challenges that the year did bring, whilst having the inner strength to weave magic every day, giving loving energies to the children and their families.

We are forever grateful to the anonymous benefactor who supported our school from the very beginning with donations, lovingly handmade furniture and weavings, toys for the Kindergarten children, and many chats and words of support over cuppas. It is extremely difficult to raise money for a new initiative school with very little resources and this benefactor's offerings and donations have made all the difference to our school.

I am so grateful for everything, small and large, that has been done in the creation of the life of Port Macquarie Steiner School this year, for the children in this school, and their parents and families. With newness comes the unknown, and it takes courage, strength and creativity to work through the challenges as they arise. In each case something better and stronger is forged, and the school evolves as a result. It is only through the voluntary contributions of many that the school exists and it will be with the contributions of many that it will continue and thrive into the future.

- **Mel Ayriss, President of the Board**

A Message from the Founding President of the Board

2018 marked the foundation of Port Macquarie Steiner School, and the realisation of a seemingly impossible dream, through an enormous amount of hard work, dedication, learning and problem solving. As President and one of the founding mothers, I relied on the strength of Steiner education foundations and the incredibly resilient small community that had gathered to make the seemingly impossible, possible.

January saw endless hours of volunteer work by the board, staff, and the community, to prepare the space and the work for our foundation Kindergarten class. Floors were sanded, gardens established, the interior painted, a new car park was installed, the western boundary fence extended, the toilet and storage building renovated, and rainwater tanks were installed as per council requirements. We were very fortunate to have an agreement with an anonymous benefactor who supported our staff wages during the first term until

our funding application was approved.

Our first day was quiet, reflective and very special. As a parent and a Board member it was a significant moment, the beginning of a challenging yet fruitful journey that would hopefully benefit the community for generations to come.

At this time, the Board was meeting monthly and communicating often daily via email or telephone. We welcomed Peter Newman to the board, whose expertise and networks would greatly assist the school both in governance and policy making, and in our search for a permanent site. There was an enormous amount of work required from the Board and

staff to prepare the registration application to NESAs. During our March board meeting, I gave my official notice of resignation, after serving as President since the foundation of the Company, in order to be able to focus on my family. I agreed to remain President to represent the Board until the official school opening in early April.

On Friday the 6th of April, we held our official school opening and were blessed with the attendance and words of Birpai Elder, Aunty Rhonda Radley; Hon. Peta Pinson, Mayor of Port Macquarie-Hastings; and Virginia Moller, CEO of Steiner Education Australia.

I gave the President's speech, and it was a great honour to acknowledge the incredible hard work, skill and dedication of our Board, staff and community. I feel privileged to have been able to stand as President and as a founder of such a wonderful initiative.

- **Alanna Alfaro, Past President of the Board**

A Report from the Head Teacher

Port Macquarie Steiner School commenced the school year with five full-time kindergarten students, and one part-time, pre-kindergarten student, in Term One 2018, with myself, Kristy Barry, employed as the full-time Head Teacher.

Term One saw us celebrate our official school opening, with a message from the Mayor, Peta Pinson, and an Acknowledgement of Country from Aunty Rhonda Radley. This was covered by the local newspaper, Port News. On this day, the parents created a *Keystone*. This recognises the founding mothers, the founding teacher and the six founding students of Port Macquarie Steiner School, and stands at the front of the school in the fork of a tree branch, and symbolises that definitely from little things, big things can grow!

The school recruited Kylie Ross, a Steiner Early Childhood trained teacher to assist in the Kindergarten and to offer relief teaching when needed. In Term One, the school applied with NESAs for our Kindergarten registration and for Stage One (Classes One and Two), for 2019. Kindergarten successfully received registration for five years, until the end of 2023.



Term One concluded with an Autumn Harvest festival, which was an opportunity for parents and families to attend the school, and see some of the students' work, and to be part of a school festival, with a shared picnic and games.

In Term Two, a new full-time Kindergarten student joined the group, as well as a new pre-kindergarten child who joined us in a part-time capacity. The Kindergarten commenced a regular bushwalk to the local nature reserve, Kooloonbung Creek, to eventually grow into walking more than 3 kilometres of local paperbark and mangrove forests. We held a winter lantern walk from the school, walking down to the reserve with our handmade lanterns, singing all the winter lantern songs that we had learnt. Following this, families and students were invited to attend a midwinter solstice spiral walk at the school that evening. This was a very special festival by candlelight, and collectively we lit up the school! The festival had a quiet inner mood, with a parent accompanying us by playing some beautiful harp music. The School community also held a lantern walk in conjunction with the local Community Garden, The Lost Plot. The children made bread and cooked it in the wood fired oven there, and were told a seasonal puppet story, with lyre accompaniment.

In Term Two, the school received news of our initial registration for Class One and Two, for 2019.

In Term Three, we welcomed another pre-kindergarten student attending on a part-time basis. The school celebrated a Spring Festival, with the children learning and performing a Maypole dance.

In Term Four, more students joined us, and orientation days for Kindergarten, Class One and Two students were offered.

The school year ended with a Nativity Play performed by the students for parents and families. The conclusion of the school year was a picnic at the local beach picnic area. The school recruited a new teacher, Sally McDowell our founding Class Teacher, who attended the festival and picnic and had an opportunity to meet the families and children.

- **Kristy Barry, Head Teacher**

A Report from the School Management Committee

In order to streamline the management of the operational areas of the school (Human Resources, Finance, Maintenance and Infrastructure) and enhance our capacity to support our Head Teacher, we decided to form a sub-committee of the Board – the School Management Committee (SMC). This also allowed us to co-opt specialist support from community members as the need arose.

In 2018 we underwent applications for NESAs registration renewal for Kindergarten and initial registration for classes 1 and 2. A full review was completed of all school policies and procedures. Some were restructured and many new ones created throughout the year to improve processes and provide clarity.

In April, the SMC implemented a Quality Improvement Process where suggestions could be considered and implemented if agreed upon by the School Management Committee or Board. As part of this Quality Improvement Process, the school's entire policy framework is under annual review. This is something the Board and School Management Committee feels is necessary in this time of rapid growth and change. The School Management Committee processed fifteen Quality Improvement Processes throughout 2018, encompassing improvements to policies, school resources, forms and operating processes.

The SMC worked on school community engagement strategies to meet the arising need for clear communication throughout the School. An open community meeting was held to discuss plans for the upcoming years, and seek input from the school community. Clarification of one major point was achieved - the search area for a permanent site being within Port Macquarie's environs.

There was a wonderful eagerness to help amongst the parent body so the SMC put forward to parents to come up with a fundraising project for the school. The parents and friends of the school met regularly to craft together and discuss ideas, all the while forming stronger bonds between them. The group hand crafted goods to sell at the local foreshore community markets, arranged an information flyer to be printed and created rosters to hold the stalls. Bunnings barbeques were also part of the fundraising projects. These two fundraising ideas were successful in many ways – for bringing the parent body closer together and more connected to the school, for raising awareness of the School in the community and raising much needed funds for the school.

- **Mel Ayriss, School Management Committee Member**

Faculty Report – Kindergarten

With just one small class operating at the School in 2018, in many respects it was a quiet year, starting with a cohort of six children. It was a harmonious group, and the children explored all of the Early Stage One outcomes of the NESAs curriculum, through the context of the Steiner curriculum.

The year allowed the children many opportunities to work closely with the arts: painting, drawing, handcrafts, woodwork, storytelling, speech and drama. In addition, the children



were engaged in daily domestic activities such as cooking and setting the table for meals.

The curriculum is in rhythm with the seasons around us, and the songs, poems, verses, music, festivals and weekly bushwalks all provide strong connections to the natural world around us also. Furthermore, seasonal gardening activities also help the children to connect to the seasons, the natural environment, and to work with meeting the outcomes of Key Learning Areas.

In the Steiner curriculum there is an appreciation to ensure the innate and developmentally important need of the children for music and creativity, providing many opportunities for artistic expression. The day begins with Morning Circle, which is a twenty minute sequence of songs, movement, clapping games, counting games, verses and poetry. It is repeated each morning for three weeks, for the children to really learn and know this content and to develop new skills, and learn to be in their bodies through the healthy imitation of movement, skipping, hopping, balancing, and crossing midlines.

Many projects were completed and new handcraft skills learnt, such as sewing and threading a needle, finger-knitting, weaving, Egyptian plaiting, and French knitting, which provide important foundation skills in developing concentration and fine motor skills. Each day, the Kindergarten children are offered time for unstructured creative play, where they have opportunities to create their own stories, retell a story they have heard at story-time, relate and communicate with their peers, and to digest and play-out the world they are coming to learn.

Student activities in 2018:

- Participation in the start of year working bee;
- Regular cooking experiences, such as bread and butter making, using a roller press groats into oats, making ginger bread and vegetable soup, and cultural activities such as peeling and eating prickly pears, making sushi, enjoying daily a large range of fruits grown in our area;
- Regular artistic and handcraft lessons;
- A visit by music teacher and composer, Bonnie Nilsson to start a composition of a school song;
- Attendance to our official school opening and Acknowledgement of Country;
- In-class Easter festival puppet story and egg hunt. Planting Easter grass and making Easter baskets. Decorating eggs;

- Observing the day, the week and the year in a healthy, rhythmical way;
- Autumn end of term Harvest Festival and games with families;
- Mid-Winter Spiral Walk Festival at the school;
- Martinmas Lantern walk and festival at the Lost Plot Community Garden;
- Weekly bushwalks to Kooloongbung Creek Nature Reserve;
- Participation in the start of term working bees;
- School photos;
- Eyesight health check from Community Health;
- Spring garden planting working bee, with biodynamic stir with Mark Gallagher;
- Spring Maypole Festival celebrated with families;
- Participation in market stalls held locally to help promote the school, showcasing samples of the children's handcraft and work;
- Performance in a class play, of the nativity story for families; and
- End of school picnic at local Flynn's beach.

Parent Education Offered in 2018:

- Community meeting with Lana Risi;
- Craft morning (wet felting) with Lana Risi;
- *'Introduction to Biodynamic Gardening'* talk and stir demonstration with Mark Gallagher;
- *'Nurturing the Senses'*, with Lyn Clifton (Developing the Self, Developing the World);
- *'The Six Year Change; the Developmental Picture of the 6-year old'* by Kristy Barry;
- School Community Meeting with the Port Macquarie Steiner School Board; and
- Architect's presentation case study, *'Buildings in Space. How Architecture can Take Form from Landscape'*, with Bronwyn Bellemore. She also described the design



process behind the Casuarina Steiner School, Coffs Harbour.

In addition to this, there were three school Information Sessions, (June 29, August 10 and September 7, 2018) for prospective families, as well as a Kindergarten Orientation morning.

Kristy also presented a talk on Steiner Education and pedagogy to the graduating teaching students at the University of Newcastle, Port Macquarie campus.

School Satisfaction

In 2018, the overall summation of our first year of operating as Port Macquarie Steiner School, was a successful one. We had 100% retention rate for both students and staff, and our student numbers in Kindergarten grew over the year. Any issues raised by staff, were dutifully cared for under the provision of the School Management Committee and Board. The school enjoyed a wonderful community spirit, with the stepping out into the wider community with some concerted fundraising and market stalls to help promote the school. Both of these were parent initiatives. Open Days at the school were also well attended.

Wellbeing Report

Each student and staff member's wellbeing is highly regarded, and many improvements to our school site were made over the course of the year to ensure that the school was cool in summer, warm in winter, safe, and had enough staff on site to ensure that needs were accounted for.

Parent Education is highly regarded and valued to help provide an important link between school and home, and ways that parents can help to understand more the values behind Steiner education, and childhood development. The health and wellbeing of children and the developmental phases the students are going through are met through the Steiner curriculum to help support this growth. This is communicated on-going throughout the year with whole class/teacher sessions to discuss the class and their development, and key topics. Additionally, individual parent-teacher interviews were offered to all families over the course of the year to discuss their child/ren's wellbeing and development in the class.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Our official school opening day was a wonderful way to connect to the traditional owners, the Birpai people of the local area, acknowledging our gratitude to this nation, the traditional owners, the elders, past, present and emerging, as well as to the Aboriginal family at the school. One family specially created hand-painted headbands for each child to wear on the day as a special contribution to the school's links to the Aboriginal culture.



These are now a beautiful memoir for our school for this founding Kindergarten class.

Each morning, to mark the commencement of the school day, we shared a morning circle song in the garden with students and parents/siblings gathering. This song acknowledged the elders of our ancient land as custodians of this land.

In our Kindergarten, individual birthdays are highly regarded and valued, and provide a wonderful opportunity to share, honour and celebrate each child's biography story to the class. This is a way for students to learn more about each other, where they come from and an insight into their family life and interests. It helps to develop empathy, understanding and a sense of belonging in the class group. Parents and siblings are invited to this celebration, a birthday tableau is created, and the children make a birthday book to gift to their peer. Together we make a birthday cake to enjoy on that day.

- **Kristy Barry, Head Teacher**

Teacher Accreditation and Professional Learning

During 2018, Kristy Barry completed her maintenance period for her Proficient Teacher status, and achieved this. In total, this was 100 hours of Teacher-identified and approved courses of teacher professional learning.

Kristy attended the *Northern Regional Meeting* in Grafton, a collaboration of Steiner Leaders from Northern NSW, the Mid North Coast and North Rivers area; the *Governance, Leadership and Management* conference (G.L.a.M) held at Chrysalis Steiner School in Upper Thora (Bellingen on May 11 and 12). She attended an Early Childhood conference, *Vital Years' Early Childhood* conference, held at Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School in Middle Cove (July 11-12), as well receiving a scholarship to attend the '*Leading Learning*' leadership course held over two days at Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School in Belrose, Sydney (July 9-10). Kristy also attended an ES1 Steiner Curriculum and Assessment collegial meeting at Steiner House, Sydney in late 2018.

Kristy also received mentorship through Principal, James Goodlet, from Aurora Steiner School in Bowral; as well as from Lana Risi, experienced early childhood teacher and regional Steiner early childhood representative, who provided a mentor report. Greig Scott, Business Manager from Linuwel Steiner School, also offered assistance, especially in recruiting a new teacher for 2019, as well as Virginia Moller, CEO of Steiner Education Australia, who has supported the school from the very beginning.

Kindergarten teacher, Kylie Ross had her accreditation number re-instated after a few years

out of the school system, is a Proficient Teacher and her maintenance period is now active.

Workforce Composition

2018 composed of Kristy Barry as Head Teacher, full-time Kindergarten Teacher; Nyree Pryce, as part-time Administration Officer; and Kylie Ross as Kindergarten Assistant and Kindergarten Relief Teacher. Patricia Philp also worked as a Relief Teacher throughout 2018. Karen Doyle was employed to help with the curriculum aspects of the registration process for Class One and Two. Karen Scott was employed on a contract basis to advise on some administration processes and tasks.

During Term 4, we advertised and interviewed for the position of the Founding Class Teacher for 2019, recruiting Sally McDowell for the full-time teaching role commencing in January 2019.

Student Attendance

In total, at the end of 2018 we had eleven students in the Kindergarten. The majority were full-time students with a small number of part-time students who joined the class for three days each week. The average student attendance rate in 2018 was 92.74%.

Student Numbers

Student Population for 2018 by Term			
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
6	8	9	11

Data as per the August 2018 census

Student Attendance Rates

Student Attendance for 2018				
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Yearly Total
97.43%	95.96%	88.70%	88.84%	92.74%

Overall Attendance 92.74%

Working to Improve Attendance

The importance of attending school regularly and consistently is always reiterated to parents at school parent meetings. The class teachers are responsible for identifying students with unsatisfactory attendance in their class. These students can be vulnerable and at risk of disengagement from the school. Class teachers are to raise concerns regarding unsatisfactory attendance with the Head Teacher. Early intervention is focused on those

who are at higher risk of harm and disengagement from education, and aims to improve their resilience through effective and appropriate support.

Where a student has an unsatisfactory record of attendance, the student's class teacher notifies the parents or guardians in writing, and requests a meeting with them. As part of this meeting, an Attendance Improvement Plan is drafted by the class teacher which is to be implemented under the direction of the class teacher and the parents and guardians of the student.

School Policies and Procedures

The need for clear guidelines and a full policy framework which is compliant with the law is not only a requirement of NESA registration but is required to effectively operate, manage and govern an independent school.

Our aim in the 2018 policy review was to achieve more clarity and purpose in our documents so that they could be relied upon as a valuable resource at any level in the school. The registration renewal team worked to write in procedures for all policies and create a resource section linking forms and other useful documents. A Quality Management Framework was also created to categorise the school's policies for ease of reference.

Enrolment Policy

The school's enrolment policy is as follows:

INTRODUCTION

All applications received by the School will be processed in the order they are received. To maintain their enrolment, once enrolled, students are expected to act consistently with the School's ethos and comply with the conditions and terms of enrolment. Parents are also expected to be supportive of the ethos of the School.

POLICY

1. Enrolment

The School acts in accordance with anti-discrimination legislation and will consider enrolment of students from families irrespective of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference or marital status.

Clear enrolment procedures are in place for the enrolment of students into the appropriate classes. These are outlined below in the Procedures section of this document. All applications for enrolment will be processed as per

these procedures and in order of receipt.

Students enrolling for the first time into Kindergarten will be five years of age on or before July 31 of the year preceding full-time Kindergarten entry.

When an enrolment application is received, consideration is given to:

- the applicant's support for the ethos of the School;
- siblings already attending the School;
- the educational needs of the students already attending each class;
- the School's ability to meet the special needs or abilities of the student; and
- other criteria determined by the School.

All of these points are considered and none of the above, by itself, is a determining factor.

2. Classes

The School operates with one to two classes per year from Kindergarten, Class 1 and 2. Classes are formed as required and composite classes may be formed if enrolments and School operations require this.

Students will be placed in a class according to their age and in accordance with Steiner principles of education, together with perceived levels of maturity and ability.

3. Fees and Charges

Parents and guardians will be made fully aware of the financial requirements of the School, prior to enrolling their child. Continuing enrolment is subject to the satisfactory payment of all school fees and charges as per our Fee Schedule and Enrolment Contract.

An application fee of \$200 is payable on submission of the Enrolment Application Form. This fee is non-refundable except under extenuating circumstances by consideration of the Head Teacher.

When a new family joins the School, the first term's fees and charges are to be paid in advance of the student commencing their first day at the School.

When bursaries are available, parents and guardians are welcome to complete the Bursary Application Form in order to be considered for a bursary. Information collected on this form is subject to the School's Privacy Policy.

4. Enrolment Contract and Acceptance of Placement

The Enrolment Contract is to be completed by all prospective families wishing to enrol their child/ren at the School. This document outlines the agreement between the School and the family. Where applicable, the Enrolment Contract is to be signed by both parents or by both guardians. An additional, separate Enrolment Contract is to be completed and signed by any third party responsible for paying School fees.

The Acceptance of Placement form is to be completed to acknowledge receipt of an Offer of Placement.

Communication between the School and parents or guardians is very important and as such it is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to inform the School of any change of address, telephone numbers or email as soon as it is known.

5. Continued Enrolment

Continued enrolment at the School is dependent upon the student making satisfactory academic progress, attending consistently and the student and the parents or guardians observing all aspects of the student code of conduct and other requirements of the School which are applicable from time to time.

6. Other Aspects

Students are expected to respect the property of the School, their own personal belongings and the belongings of others. Each student is responsible for their personal belongings and the School will not be liable for any loss or damage to these belongings.

The School shall not be obliged to continue any student who does not observe all of the foregoing conditions.

7. International Students

The School is not registered to accept International students.

PROCEDURE(S)

Enrolment

In order to assist parents or guardians to make a decision regarding their child's education at the School we can offer all prospective parents the following information by email or mail. These can also be sent as a follow up

to any enrolment enquiry:

- relevant Handbooks and or access to the School's policies via the website; and
- an invitation to attend a School tour held by arrangement throughout the year.

The following documentation must be included to support an Enrolment Application Form:

- a copy of the child's Birth Certificate;
- a copy of the child's latest School Report (if applicable);
- copies of educational and or medical assessment reports where relevant; and
- copies of Family Court Orders or Parenting Plans if applicable.

A photograph of the child for identification purposes is also requested.

Application and Enrolment Process

1. Parents intending to send their child/ren to the School are required to complete the Enrolment Application Form and return it by email or mail.
2. A non-refundable administration fee of \$200 is to be paid upon lodgement of this form.
3. The School administration will phone, email or mail to arrange a time for the parents or guardians to meet with their child's prospective teacher to discuss the enrolment application and go through any questions. Parents and guardians will be given a Pre-Interview Questionnaire and Student Medical Form to complete and bring to the interview for discussion with the prospective teacher. The interview is one step in the application process and does not guarantee an offer will be made.
4. The School administration will then contact the parents or guardians with the outcome of the application. If there is a place in the relevant class they will confirm that the child's name has been placed on the Class Enrolment List. In cases where there are no longer places available, the child's name can be placed on the Class Waiting List.
5. Where an offer can be made parents and guardians will receive an Enrolment Contract and Acceptance of Placement form. The completed and signed form together with a \$300 bond must be returned to the School within 14 days of receipt of the offer. Payment of this fee reserves a place for a child to commence at the nominated

time. If the offer is not accepted, then it will lapse and be able to be filled by another applicant. The \$300 bond is returnable when the student leaves the School, provided all School fees have been paid.

6. Families will then receive a letter including an invitation to an information evening for parents or guardians and a copy of the Parent Handbook for the relevant class.

Offer of Placement

Enrolment decisions are the responsibility of the Head Teacher. The reasons for declining to offer enrolment will not necessarily be given. If the decision is made to offer a child a place and there is a place available for the nominated commencement date, an Offer of Placement will be sent to the applicant.

Payment of Fees and Charges

For new families to the School, the first term's fees and charges are to be paid prior to the student's first day at School. For families with children already enrolled in the School, the required Fees, consolidated charges and other charges for the newly enrolled child will be added to the existing account and invoiced accordingly.

Student Welfare, Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying

The School has a number of policies which overarch student welfare, behaviour management and anti-bullying. These are our Student Code of Conduct, Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy, Student Welfare and Security Policy, Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Student Welfare

A fundamental value of the School is care for each individual. The safety and welfare of all students is of great importance and we are committed to providing a learning and teaching environment where children are safe from harm and supported to learn and grow.

Student welfare encompasses the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the student. Student welfare policies and programs are essential for developing a sense of self-worth and fostering personal development. This:

- encompasses everything the School community does to meet the personal, social and learning needs of students;

- creates a safe, caring school environment in which students are nurtured as they learn;
- is achieved through the curriculum and the way it is delivered;
- incorporates effective discipline;
- recognises the value of early intervention when problems are identified;
- recognises diversity within the School community and provides support to acknowledge difference and promote harmony; and
- provides students with opportunities to enjoy success and recognition, make useful contributions to the life of the School and derive enjoyment from their learning.

The educational philosophy of the School lends itself to pastoral care being the responsibility of primarily the teachers in their day to day interactions with the students.

Behaviour Management and Discipline

Discipline is a response to individuals and situations in such a way as to lead to the development of skills that promote responsibility and accountability. Such responses are different at differing age levels.

Students, parents and staff of the School are to be treated with respect at all times, including when behavior management and disciplinary actions are being carried out. Under no circumstances, are practices of humiliation or being made an example of to be used.

The consequences in disciplinary action vary according to the behaviour of the student. Students are supported to address their behaviour through considered restorative practices under the guidance of their teacher. At the lower end of the scale, removing the student for quiet time to reflect may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale, the behaviour could result in suspension or expulsion. Our behaviour management process is based on procedural fairness where parents and guardians are involved and well informed of the stages of discipline and any consequential actions.

The School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the School.

Anti-Bullying

Everyone has the right to be free of bullying. The School is committed to the creation and maintenance of an optimal learning and teaching environment. It is a priority and an expectation of the School for all students, staff and visitors to the School to be granted a safe, secure, caring and supportive environment free of bullying, harassment or violent behaviour. However, should situations of bullying, harassment or violence occur, the School has in place procedures to follow in response to aggressive situations. These must be undertaken in a timely manner, ensuring procedural fairness for all parties involved.



Students and their parents and caregivers are to be encouraged to report bullying, harassment and violence, so that appropriate support can be provided.

We seek to inform the School community on methods of resilience, positivity and conflict management, whether within the School curriculum, newsletter, class emails or within general information sessions given to students, staff or parents throughout the year.

Complaints and Grievances

Communication is of great importance to the School and we value the input of our parents and guardians. We are committed to effective communication in all areas and particularly with parents and guardians. Teachers value parents as partners in the education of their children. An essential part of developing this open environment is ensuring that students and parents are encouraged to come forward with their matters of concern and grievances in the knowledge that the responsible staff will take prompt and effective action to address these concerns. Grievances that are not addressed have the potential to grow into major problems that can cause tension, low morale and reduced learning and academic achievement.

It is an expectation of the School that all grievances should be:

- Treated seriously and sensitively, having due regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy. Requirements relating to confidentiality and privacy extend to the use and storage of any information and records related to a grievance;
- Handled quickly and as close as possible to their source. This may be modified by the nature of the grievance and the complainant's wishes. Students and staff should raise concerns as early as possible after the incident/s occurred; and
- Wherever possible, resolved by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation. The aim is to reach an acceptable outcome that minimises any potential detriment to ongoing relationships.

Both the person raising the grievance (the complainant) and the person against whom the grievance is made (the respondent) will receive appropriate information, support and assistance in resolving the grievance.

All complaints and grievances will be handled with procedural fairness. Procedural fairness is the application of the 'hearing rule' and the 'right to an unbiased decision' where decisions are to be made which affect the rights of others.

Policy Awareness

The first staff and faculty meeting of each school year addresses key policies. These are

reviewed, with mandatory completion. If a staff member joins after this meeting, the employee is given an induction, and they complete an online component of compulsory training, such as Child Protection. Throughout the school year at faculty meetings, other policies are familiarised and revised, including the fire and emergency evacuation and lock-down procedures. An induction is given to all new staff prior to commencement at the school, including volunteer teachers or prac students, introducing key policies, risk assessments, emergency exits, first aid, student allergies (if known) etc.

All parents offering their support in class in a voluntary position, are given a letter to read and sign, acknowledging their responsibilities and code of conduct working as a volunteer in the school. This letter requires some additional features to include and refers to key policies, and where to find them, such as Child Protection, and how to make a report if they need to. Key school policies are found on our school website

<https://portmacquariesteinerschool.nsw.edu.au/our-approach.html>. All school policies are available in hardcopy in the school office.

Policy Changes Throughout 2018

The policies relating to student welfare, behaviour management and anti-bullying and complaints and grievances underwent review throughout 2018. As part of this process, the registration renewal team included the following changes:

- Names and contact details of three counsellors with differing areas of expertise were included as part of the Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy;
- Included more specific information regarding school grounds to the Student Welfare and Security Policy;
- Updated extract from current transitional NESA Manual and updated definition of exclusion to the Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy;
- Added a dispute resolution section and procedure to the Complaints and Grievances Policy;
- Included use of Teacher and Parent Meeting Record as part of the Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Added procedures and resource sections to all policies; and
- Included all policies in the Quality Management Framework

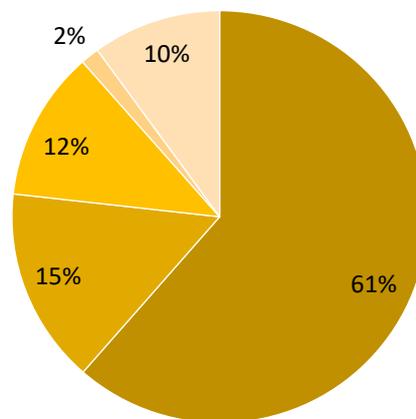
These policies are available to staff in the Policies Folder on Dropbox and also in the hard copy Policies Folder in the Administration Office which staff, parents and volunteers can access. Some of the policies covering these areas are available on the School's website <https://portmacquariesteinerschool.nsw.edu.au/our-approach.html>

Financial Report

Port Macquarie Steiner School had a successful financial year, ending with a relatively strong balance sheet and a net surplus. The majority of our funding came from Federal and State funding - 76%. Tuition fees contributed 12%, and were helped by a generous donor funding our bursary scheme. Furthermore, we were fortunate to attract donations of over \$25,000. Expenses were kept well within our budget for the year. Teacher salaries were the major expense at 55%, and will continue to be in the future.

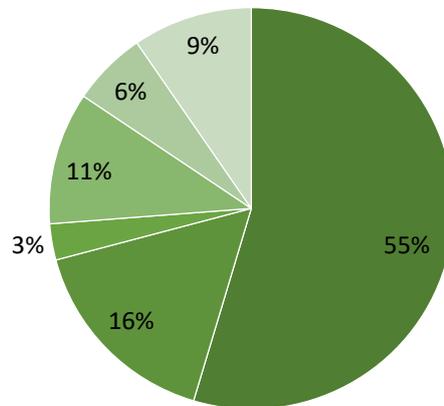
The School's balance sheet showed equity (school funds) of \$98,495, which is considered good for a very new school. The cash balance also indicates a strong position and will help the school to meet future commitments, such as capital expenditure for expansion. Leasehold improvements of \$44,391 were necessary to obtain development approval from the local Council. These will have to be written off over the period of our lease; consequently a charge of \$13,000 per year is being made against this asset.

Annalysis of Income in 2018



■ Federal Funding ■ State Funding ■ Tuition fees ■ Other income ■ Donations

Analysis of Expenses 2018



Looking Back on our Foundation Years

2016 and 2017 were our foundation years and although the school was not operational during this time, much work was done and many efforts made by volunteers who pulled together to do the ground work on establishing the foundations of the school.

We would like to acknowledge the Directors of the Company and volunteers who were involved in many of the hands-on tasks of the foundation years – Alanna Alfaro, Bianca Bateman, Melissa Allwood, Melodie Ayriss, Alison Sharma, Jehni Sheyan, Hugh Bateman, Amy Robinson, Justin Robinson, John Oxley and Cheryl Meyer Millican. With many stops, starts and hurdles, their efforts in all aspects were remarkable.

A thanks to all for the important visionary work in these extremely challenging years. A special thank you to Alanna, for inspiring a whole community to support the initiative to start a Steiner school in Port Macquarie. Alanna's sacrifices will always be known by the foundation group, and she will always be honoured as a pillar of the school.

The information in this section of the report may be of particular interest to those considering starting a Steiner school in Australia. We receive many enquiries from other initiative groups and we love to be as supportive as possible to the further development of these wonderful initiatives in Steiner education. Our journey has been short in time but long

in detail.

Our Beginnings

30th March 2016: Our first playgroup in the lounge room of one of our founder's home.

22nd June 2016: Playgroup moves to the hall at 8 Table Street to accommodate growing numbers.

20th July 2016: Natasha Oliarynk, a Steiner teacher from Canada on exchange for one year takes on the role of facilitator as Alanna goes on maternity leave.

7th November 2016: Our first parent evening, including adult study session and craft workshop.

19th November 2016: Our first working bee at 8 Table Street to install the raised garden bed and sandpit.

25th November 2016: As a community we decide to pursue the endeavour of opening a Kindergarten at the hall aiming for 2018.

7th December 2016: Initial Community and Committee proposal meeting at The Lost Plot Community Gardens.

17th December 2016: Our first fundraising event at the Makers Market in Port Macquarie, contributed to by all the parents in our community through crafts we made by hand.

15th February 2017: Port Macquarie Steiner Limited registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee with ASIC. Constitution of Port Macquarie Steiner Limited officially executed.

28th February 2017: Playgroup begins the year with two sessions per week, to introduce new families to the growing initiative.

5th of March 2017: *Long Point Long Lunch* fundraiser and auction. Funds that were raised paid for all legal fees associated with company registration, fees required for building reports on 8 Table St Hall and council fees.

31st March 2017: Application submitted to NESA for initial registration of a new independent school.

11th May 2017: Donation of \$36,510 generously gifted to Port Macquarie Steiner School from the estate of a supporter.

6th June 2017: Expressions of interest for teachers in 2018 uploaded to SEA website.

9th June 2017: Approved the official logo design for Port Macquarie Steiner School.

9th June 2017: Arranged insurances through AON Australia EduPak Insurance Program.

11th June 2017: Bunnings BBQ Fundraiser held.

21st June 2017: Our inaugural Lantern Festival and Winter Spiral in Port Macquarie.

5th July 2017: Front page article published in local newspaper Port News on the school initiative.

7th July 2017: Finalised version 1 of Business Plan.

24th July 2017: Finalised version 1 of School Information Booklet.

29th July 2017: School information session with guest speaker Sue Moran from Tallwood Steiner School.

9th August 2017: Submitted the NSW Community Building Partnership grant application.

19th August 2017: Annie Bryant's Story Tent event to raise awareness of the school in the community.

28th August 2017: Finalised version 1 of teacher application packages.

1st September 2017: Teaching positions advertised for 2018.

21st September 2017: Received Certificate of Registration with NSW Education Standards Authority for Kindergarten in 2018.

4th October 2017: Commenced advertising for 2018 enrolments.

14th October 2017: Steiner Education Australia CEO, Virginia Moller visits the Port Macquarie Steiner School and offers an information session on Steiner education.

21st October 2017: Garden working bee – sandpit made and shade sail installed.

31st October 2017: Launched the school's website.

6th November 2017: Opened position of Administration Officer.

7th November 2017: Head Teacher, Kristy Barry is employed to teach the Kindergarten class of 2018.

11th November: School working bee – planting and mulching over 50 trees at the school.

27th November 2017: Our first AGM for Port Macquarie Steiner Limited.

8th December 2017: Go Fund Me campaign set up to receive donations for the school.

13th December 2017: School information session held by Kristy Barry.

14th December 2017: Parent craft night to make resources for the Kindergarten.

15th December 2017: Renovations and upgrades commence on the hall to prepare for the inaugural class of 2018.

16th & 17th January 2018: Parent Education Sessions with Nansi Finch.

31st January 2018: First day of school for the 2018 Kindergarten class of 6 children.

In 2017 the foundation group secured a five year lease agreement with the property owners and submitted a Development Application to the local Council for this school site. The working group then underwent planning to complete the upgrades on the building and grounds required by Council under the DA to obtain the Occupancy Certificate.

We gathered expressions of interest from families who were interested in enrolling their child/ren at the school and watched this closely over time.

The registration group worked on the NESA registration application for a new school. With support from other Steiner schools, we were able to complete the application and submit it on 31 March, 2017. We received initial K-2 registration with NESA in September 2017 after our first inspection.

We developed a business plan and estimated our budget for the coming years. It was quite difficult to create these resources without having reliable historical data to work from. At the time, we had a fairly good indication of expected student numbers and were able to roughly forecast from this. We assessed the current education climate in Port Macquarie and looked at the Urban Growth Plan for the area. With most public schools nearing capacity and significant growth predicted for the area we were able to include this information into our business plan to substantiate our initiative and to see that there is more educational choice on offer to families in the region. We submitted these documents to the Association of Independent Schools NSW as part of our Financial Viability Assessment. It was only through the donations of an anonymous benefactor that resulted in our school being assessed as medium risk by AIS.

2018 was a year to celebrate the germination of the ideas that grew from the parents who were involved in setting up a Steiner-inspired playgroup, *Little Bowerbirds*. It is amazing to reflect on the determination, hard work and connections within the community, and larger afield, that have now amounted to the beginning of Port Macquarie Steiner School here in a small church hall in our community.

Looking Forward to Priority Areas for Improvement

There is so much to look forward to, to learn, and grow into as a new school. Finding a permanent site for the school and the design of a new custom-built campus is high on our list of priorities. The welcoming of additional staff to our teaching and administration team; the registration of more classes; welcoming new students, and connecting more strongly to the community are also priority areas. Furthermore, becoming more present in the larger educational movement of Steiner Schools both regionally in Australia and worldwide is an exciting prospect. In 2019 Steiner education celebrates its 100 year anniversary since the opening of the first Steiner school in Stuttgart Germany in 1919. There are many initiatives for the school to be involved in these celebrations – locally, Australia-wide, and world-wide.

The School Management Committee discussed the need for stronger leadership to occur within the School and that the remote nature of this management had its disadvantages in terms of its every day operational capacity. The School subsequently considered different models of leadership and how and what might best unfold for our young school.

The School's staffing model is something that will continue to grow alongside the school but will also be a driver for the growth of the School. In addition to increasing the number of teachers and teacher assistants in the school each year, we are planning to open a position for a Business Manager in the coming years, and to grow the Head Teacher to a Teaching Principal role, to support the educational leadership and management of the School.

In 2019, we look forward to welcoming a new teacher on board to take the first composite class of Class One and Two students, with the intention of taking this group of children through to Class 6. Professional Development and mentoring will be factored into this role to help support a teacher new to Steiner education. This will include attending the Steiner training intensives, held in mid-January at Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School, regular meetings with the Head Teacher, and visiting other Steiner schools to facilitate and encourage collegial learning and mentoring with neighbouring Steiner schools.

Growing our humble little school in Port Macquarie is such an exciting venture. Many gifts come from being involved in a new initiative such as this. What was once a seed is now a little sprout, gaining strength for the next stage of its being. Our community has been blessed in many ways by the school, and watching the children learn and experience in such a wonderful nurturing environment is the biggest blessing of all.



PORT MACQUARIE
Steiner School

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