

2020 Annual Report



Photo: Recorder performance by Class 2/3 at the 2020 end of year picnic on the newly purchased land where the permanent school will be developed.



PORT MACQUARIE

Steiner School



Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Mission Statement and Core Values	Page 3
A Message from the President of the Board	Page 4
A Report from School Leadership	Page 5
Faculty Report – Kindergarten	Page 7
Faculty Report – Primary, Class 1 and 2/3 Composite	Page 7
Student Activities in 2020	Page 9
Parent Education Offered in 2020	Page 9
School Satisfaction	Page 9
Wellbeing Report	Page 10
Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility	Page 10
Teacher Accreditation Status	Page 11
Teacher Professional Learning	Page 11
Workforce Composition	Page 11
Student Attendance	Page 12
School Policies and Procedures	Page 13
Policy Development	Page 15
Policy Changes in 2020	Page 15
Financial Report	Page 17
Looking Back on the Previous Year	Page 18
Looking Forward to Priority Areas of Improvement	Page 18



Introduction

Welcome readers to Port Macquarie Steiner School's 2020 Annual Report.

Port Macquarie Steiner School is an associate member of Steiner Education Australia and the NSW Association of Independent Schools. Our school holds NESA registration to offer classes from kindergarten to class 3. The school plans to progress NESA registration one year level at a time.

It is our aim to instil in our children a love of learning and encourage them to take an active role in their education. We nourish the children in our school and enrich our community through Steiner education in a way that is relevant and meaningful in today's world.

Currently we have a total of 3 classes being kindergarten, Class 1, and a Class 2/3 composite. In acknowledging the goal to provide continuity of education from kindergarten through to class 6, the school has adopted the model of kindergarten and three primary composites. The configuration of the primary composites may change where necessary. The layout and classroom accommodation plans of the school reflect this model and it is the intention that the school will maintain this configuration until the full K-6 complement is achieved and throughout the transition to the permanent site.

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

If I could sum up the years' worth of board work in two words, it would be planning and adaptation. The board had a challenging task of steering the school towards some large strategic goals all the while navigating leadership changes and the impacts of Covid-19. It was an exceptional year on many fronts and one that brought the board close together as a strong vessel for the school. If it were not for the fortitude of each board member, 2020 could well have been an insurmountable year. I would like to pass on my gratitude to the board for their steadfastness and support for one another and the school. We did not do this single handedly, we had valued support from Forman Baxendale Consultants and SEA professional partners.


One of the major focus areas of the board in 2020 continued to be the future site of the school. Faced with the desire and will to continue to grow the school but with no immediate accommodation, the school began a strategic planning process with a view to workshop ideas and crystallise a future direction for the school.

The work of the Future Site Committee continued throughout 2020 with rigour. Over the course of the year, the Future Site Committee vetted many more property options for the board to consider. There was much discussion about the financial picture of the school and purchasing a property on finance. The board considered other options of forming a property syndicate from which the school would lease the facilities. Although there was support for this option within the school community, the legal advice was not in favour of this as a viable option.

Finally, it was determined that our best option was to purchase a property on finance. The board sought financial and legal advice to ensure that the company could take on an amount of debt, fund a deposit from private funds and service a loan. A special thank you to John Oxley, our financial consultant for assisting with the loan application which was successful.

There was a fortuitous slump in the local property market in mid-2020 and the Future Site Committee brought to the board an interesting prospect of purchasing a 4-acre property in Thrumster. Investigations and due diligence processes started and by July, the board had put an offer on the property and negotiated a four-month settlement period with a special due diligence clause in the contract to allow time to seek legal, financial, and planning advice.

Deliberations on the advice received, led to the board's decision to proceed with the purchase of the vacant block of land at 454-456 John Oxley Drive, Thrumster to initiate the plan to transition the school onto a permanent site and achieve a full K-6 primary school. The contract settled in December 2020. I would like to pass on special thanks to Steve Quirk our strategy advisor for assisting the board with the strategic pathway to the land purchase.



Given the number of years this transition is set to take and the enrolment growth that will be required to support the development, the school applied for a DA modification to temporarily increase our student capacity from 32 to 45 until December 2023. This was passed successfully through council and has allowed us to gain capacity to grow the school at Table Street to 45 students.

To explore options of increasing our space at Table Street the school negotiated an arrangement to lease the property on the Southern boundary for additional playground space from 2021. The process went through Council and was delayed due to contentions from neighbours. Ultimately, the decision was made to forego plans to lease the additional playground space at Table St due to both approval issues and for the school to be able to purchase a property and have a real opportunity to secure a permanent future.

The Risk Committee was quite active throughout the year and worked on formalising the schools risk register for strategic risks. There was one risk area that was assessed as extreme and that was the school's growth being stunted by a lack of a suitable property. The board managed this risk by securing a future site for the school to grow onto.

Throughout 2020 the Governance, Leadership, Administration and Management (GLaM) conference was held by SEA with a host of sessions offered by zoom. The board made use of the opportunity to participate in these regular offerings throughout the year.

Another area of focus for the board was the leadership model of the school. This was reviewed with consideration for the evolving picture and needs of the school in its third year of operation and a strong focus on future years. The board worked closely with Steiner Education Australia (SEA) to fill the leadership position in our school for 2021.

Over the course of the year, the Board held 11 meetings, the AGM in June and 10 special planning meetings. There were two new Company members in 2020 which makes a total of thirteen members. Fred Buys resigned from the board at the 2019 AGM and all other existing board members retained tenure throughout 2020. There were no new appointments to the board throughout the year.


I wish to pass on my sincere thanks to my fellow board members for their ongoing commitment and service to the school board. This school is making a difference to people's lives and to the Port Macquarie community and through their work with the school, they are also a part of this positive difference.

Mel Ayriss, President of the Board

A Report from School Leadership

2020 started with our community recovering from the bushfires of late 2019 which seems such a long time ago now. In 2020, the school welcomed Emma Prince to the position of class 1 teacher, Jedda Davis to the position of kindergarten teacher and Kristy Barry to the newly created position of Principal.

The school was buzzing with activity in the weeks and days leading up to school, with the creation of new classrooms, and many enhancements around the school, including new fencing and gardens, and the toilet refurbishments.



The school year began with a graduation and our Rainbow Bridge ceremony, where the graduating kindergarten class of 2019 met their class teacher for the first time. There were smiles, songs and flowers, and a few tears could be seen among the group at that time. Kindergarten commenced the following day with a strong class of 14 students, held by Jedda Davis. In total, we started the year with 28 students in the school in classes K-3.

Term 1 was underway for 6 weeks when the Covid-19 situation brought major changes to the school's operations. Remote learning began whilst the school remained open for families who needed this option. There was much deliberation and consultation with both AIS and SEA on the method of remote learning and ultimately, the decision was made to provide learning from home packs to families rather than provide an online learning platform. The ongoing education and wellbeing of the children was at the heart of this decision. The school communicated health regulations and updates regularly to families through Covid-19 bulletins.

The pandemic brought much change and disruption to all levels of the school and community. The worldwide situation of Covid-19 has affected humanity as a whole and the effects on the education sector have been significant. This was not an easy time for our school, and it was a true test of our ability to come together to support one another and be flexible yet focussed on our path. Much gratitude goes to our staff for supporting our school and families through this time of constant challenges and for their perseverance and care for one another during this time. 2020 was not an easy time for our school, nor any school for that matter during what was a very disruptive year.


Remote learning began at the end of term one and continued into term two with a staged transition back to school commencing in week three of term two. The school saw many creative ways that our teachers, assistants, and staff working together to create such thoughtful and comprehensive work packs to assist the children at home with their work. This was truly a time for everyone to call on new faculties, to be flexible, patient and understanding. Full time face to face teaching recommenced in week five of term two. The school was so pleased for everyone to begin initial reconnections as this staged return commenced for all classes. It was wonderful to see the hearty rhythm of school life return to everyone in our community.

A special thanks to every family for their commitment to the changes in learning for their children and for supporting this work along the way. Hopefully, families have found some positives in this experience. With the understanding that each child will be going through their own transition phase as they return to school as they readjust to being back in their school environment.

The teachers continued in faculty meetings and studies of child development and the human being, as well as report writing and revising policies. The teachers held regular staff meetings to discuss issues, resolve and plan, as well as conduct regular studies to deepen their work and understanding of Rudolf Steiner education.

Kristy Barry attended the SEA Delegates meetings throughout the year where a lot was discussed over four zoom sessions, including a deep enquiry into the Core Principles of Steiner Education.

The school was selected to participate in the 2020 round of the post-enumeration audit for the 2019 year by the Commonwealth Government. This was done remotely through Bellchambers Barrett and was completed in August with a positive result for the school.



Throughout the year, the school received NESA registration for Class 3 until 2023 and initial registration for Class 4 for 2021. Well done to the whole team for executing this in what was a particularly difficult year for all.

Faculty Report – Kindergarten

It was so wonderful to welcome so many new families to the school and to see many familiar children from our Little Bowerbirds Playgroup finally be ready for big school.

The first day of term commenced with our new Kindergarten children being welcomed into their new class whilst their parents crafted outside for the morning. The class quickly became engaged in the stories and friendships started to form.

Term one was a time to establish class rhythms, learn to be a part of a class group for the first time, and a time to get familiar with the school grounds. Emphasis is placed in our Kindergarten program upon a rhythm within each day. In becoming accustomed with this, a sense of stability and security is established. There is a rhythm and a structure to how things are done, where things are kept, and what will come next. The children come to find familiarity in the rhythmical contraction (in breathing) and expansion (out breathing) experienced during the day.

When remote learning commenced at the end of term one, there was a lot to do to prepare resources for the children to connect to. It was an unfortunate interruption to their class interactions that were just starting to blossom after term one however, the children adapted, and the school provided support for families to adjust to this new way of living and learning.


It was wonderful for the class to reunite during the staged return and the children quickly adjusted once again to the emerging rhythm of being at school one day each week then gradually, up to full time once again. This was an exciting time for the children, and they soaked up all the goodness in kindy after a disruptive start to the year.

The kindy class started bushwalking in term 3 when the cooler weather eased. The class thoroughly enjoyed planting out the new garden beds in preparation for spring. There were many grounding activities planned and intentionally brought into the curriculum to promote wellbeing.

Restrictions on singing were still in place and so the kindy class became very used to humming and clapping. It was a challenging year in the kindy as this is typically an environment built on the warmth of human connection. Despite these challenges, the class did very well to progress through the year with purpose.

Faculty Report – Primary, Class 1 and 2,3 Composite

Our journey started with a rainbow bridge ceremony on the first day of the school year. The kindergarten class of 2019 crossed a beautifully decorated bridge to meet me, their new class teacher. Crossing the bridge was a gesture of their ending of early childhood years to the beginning as a class group.



In preparation for the 2020 school year, a dividing wall was erected in the main building to create two separate learning areas for the primary classes. Throughout term one, each morning began with a blessing and gratitude circle, in which parents were welcomed to join, and then said goodbye for the day. The class then participated in skipping and sequenced movements as a form of exercise and means of grounding themselves with their surroundings.

Throughout 2020 the school was required to adapt our curriculum delivery methods at a rapid pace, and often without warning. It certainly was a challenging year, on all accounts. Remote learning began at the end of term one and there was a huge amount of preparation and adaptability required to initiate a learning from home program for the primary classes. Families were provided with learning resources and packs to undertake learning from home. The school remained open during the lockdown phase and families were provided support to adjust to this new way of living and learning.

The staged return to school program was in place from week three of term two. It was wonderful to have the classes back at school for face-to-face learning one day a week however this presented another challenge of inconsistency for the children. When full time face to face learning recommenced, the children and teachers were thrilled to be back at school resuming the learning as a group. The classes were hives of activity.

Throughout the cooler months, soup day was introduced to bring the group together and reform connections that were interrupted by the learning from home phase. Children preparing and eating food together is a wonderful way to do this and it was a particularly enjoyable day of the week. The classes proudly grew most of the soup vegetables and herbs. It was fantastic to see the cycle from planting to eating taking place on a regular basis and then consciously planting to cater for this.


With water restrictions so high in our region in 2020, classes looked at inventive ways of catching grey water from our hand basins to water our thirsty plants. New rainwater tanks were connected in anticipation of harvesting our own rainwater.

Our Mid-Winter Festival took place in school in 2020 and unfortunately parents and families were not able to join in the festivities. Although a little different to how the school would usually have a mid-winter festival, the children enjoyed it and were still able to prepare the hand dipped candles and lanterns. Classes heard a beautiful story told by the teachers and was also gingerbread and warm juice to share.

A weekly strings program was introduced for the class 2/3 composite to learn violin. The children have thoroughly enjoyed this addition to the curriculum and thanks to the Coffs Harbour Conservatorium of Music for making this possible at our school.

In 2020 Kylie Ross took on the role of handcraft teacher in the primary years. Classes commenced the year with dying slippers and hand towels using solar dyes. Kylie brought new skills to the class one children as they started to weave their recorder bags and learned to knit with needles. Kylie also introduced crocheting and needlework to class two/three as they made cushions and their own pencil cases.

The school welcomed Chris O'Brien and Uncle Bill for Reconciliation week to share some of our own local First Nations people's stories. Chris shared some of his own art and brought many interesting artifacts to look at. It was a fantastic incursion and many questions from some very interested children were answered. We even shared a delicious lemon myrtle cheesecake.



A new climbing frame was installed in the primary yard to meet the needs of the growing children. This was made from raw timber logs and assembled to strengthen balance and encourage lots of free play in the playground.

Throughout the warmer months, the school commenced a weekly swimming program which proved to be enormously popular and great fun. The instructors and teachers noticed skills and water confidence increasing within the first few weeks.

Towards the end of the year, the two primary classes combined to prepare for and support a restructure of the primary classes in 2021. The groups were very accustomed to working together with the experience of this from the other joint projects undertaken throughout the year.

The year finished with a special picnic and end of year celebration at the newly purchased block of land. Uncle Bill led the school group up onto the land and offered an acknowledgement of country. It was a humble way for the school community to arrive onto the land that will one day become the permanent school and it was a delight to see the children and families gather in this way.

Student activities in 2020

- Seasonal festivals – the Community Lantern Festival was not held in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Autumn Harvest Festival, Mid-Winter Festival, Spring Festival and Maypole, and Christmas Festival and Nativity Play were held at the school with the children and their teachers however parents and friends were not able to join in the celebrations of these festivals due to the health regulations at the time
- Cooking, gardening
- Woodwork projects
- Handcrafts and arts program
- Seasonal activities such as making hand-dipped beeswax candles, lantern making, fabric dying
- Aboriginal storytelling with Uncle Bill for 'Home Surrounds' Main Lesson
- Class Plays, *'The Elves and the Shoemaker'* and *'Nativity'* play


Parent Education Offered in 2020

Throughout 2020 we were so fortunate to have a few different people visit the school in term 1 to share their knowledge with both parents and teachers alike. These face-to-face visits and workshops were replaced with zoom presentations as required by the health regulations. These workshops and talks are aimed to be inspirational, practical, and engaging to help parents connect with some of the many aspects of Steiner education.

- Simplicity Parenting Talk from Mary Heard – Getting into the Rythm of School Life
- Head Heart and Hands Parent Group
- Family Storytelling - Christmas and birthday stories from Ebba Bodame
- The Spirit of Christmas – Ebba Bodame

School Satisfaction

There was an overall sense of appreciation for the adjustments the school made in response to the evolving Covid-19 situation. The school published regular newsletters and bulletins to keep parents



and the community updated on the evolving health regulations and impact on school operations. It was a challenging time and as such brought out a level of polarity around the decisions made regarding remote learning throughout term 2. The school remained operational for families who needed this option.

The school continued to hold community meetings, mostly via zoom to discuss properties and plans that were being considered and leadership changes that were taking place to update the school community and engage feedback. It was a particularly unsettling year for the school and as such, we experienced a loss of eight enrolments throughout the year. Exit interviews showed that this was mainly due to dissatisfaction with the learning from home program offered and the inconsistent leadership throughout the year.

The feedback from the parent education sessions was positive and there was an appreciation from the parents that these were able to be offered remotely via zoom.

Wellbeing Report

The unfolding Covid-19 situation had a significant impact on the wellbeing of staff, students, and families. The impact on social relationships was substantial. Connection was imperative during the learning from home period and the staged return to school. When the children returned to school, the strong school rhythms and secure relationships fostered between teachers and their students helped to bring connection and a sense of normalcy. There were many grounding activities planned and intentionally brought into the curriculum to promote wellbeing. These involved gardening, cooking, and bushwalking.

Throughout terms 3 and 4 the primary classes combined to address the loss of connection that occurred earlier in the year. The classes joined for craft, swimming, and games curriculum three afternoons a week and shared all meals and play times. This fostered strong peer relationships across these classes.

Many other aspects of Steiner education - such as the healing power of stories and allowing for healthy amounts of creative play; observing seasonal changes and connecting to nature - all help to build resilience and promote a sense of wellbeing.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school has a strong focus on caring for and respecting nature and this is embedded into all areas of the curriculum. For young children, the focus is on caring for their immediate surroundings and over time, the children come to understand their place in the wider world. There is also a strong emphasis on social responsibility in our school.

Throughout the face-to-face learning phases of 2020, the classes regularly combined to promote wellbeing and restore connections that were fractured during the lockdown periods. This combining of age groups provides a wonderful opportunity for the children to model respectful behaviour and learn from their peers. During these joint sessions, the older children would often help their younger friends with their work. The combined group learned teamwork, creativity, problem solving and confidence to suggest ideas.

Through the work of the curriculum and the seasonal festivals, the children strengthen their connection to and respect for the earth. Each morning the children and teachers recite a verse to acknowledge the traditional owners and wisdom keepers of the land. This is very natural for children, and they have a great curiosity about our natural history. During Reconciliation week, the school welcomed Chris O'Brien and Uncle Bill to share some of our own local First Nations people's stories. The children love hearing and learning about these sacred stories.

The school hosted a fun and insightful 'Towards zero waste' workshop run by our local Council. There were role plays and hands on activities that really encouraged the children and staff to think about how we use items and the importance of disposing of them in the right way. Many thanks to Port Macquarie Hastings Council and Chey for coordinating this workshop and bringing it to our school in a positive way.

Teacher Accreditation Status

Level of NESA Accreditation in 2020	Number of Teachers
Conditional	
Provisional	1
Proficient Teacher	4
Highly Accomplished (voluntary accreditation)	
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	

Teacher Professional Learning

- Glenaeon Teacher Training Intensive attended by Class 1 teacher
- Mentor sessions for Class 1 teacher with Elizabeth Baxendale from Forman Baxendale Consulting
- Leadership Circle through SEA for Principal
- Professional Development for Principal with Elizabeth Baxendale from Forman Baxendale Consulting
- GLAM conference online sessions, attended by Principal and Board
- NCCD and DDA training with Dianne Hooke from AIS for teachers
- School visit from AIS Student Services – Dianne Hooke
- Child Protection training in school session, attended by all staff
- School visit from Rosemary Michalowski from Central Coast Steiner School with workshop on literacy with a focus on phonological and phonemic awareness for teachers
- Music and singing workshop with Deirdre Sutherland for teachers

In July the teachers re-commenced weekly college study in which they actively engaged and deepened the conversation on child development, and Steiner's insights into the human being, bringing this back to our classrooms and own teaching and learning at the school.

Workforce Composition

Staff	Position	Load
Kristy Barry	Principal	1.0FTE

Emma Prince	Class 1 Teacher	0.6FTE
Sally McDowell	Class 2/3 Teacher	1.0FTE
Jedda Davis	Kindergarten Teacher	1.0FTE
Kylie Ross	Teacher Assistant	0.6FTE
Arona Gibbons	Teacher Assistant	0.4FTE
Nicola Firth	Teacher Assistant	0.2FTE
Nyree Pryce	Administration Officer	0.875FTE
Steven Quirk	Finance and Strategy Manager	0.394FTE
Judith Rumble	Cleaner	0.323FTE

Student Attendance

In total, at the end of 2020 we had 21 students in the school. The average student attendance rate in 2020 was 90.12%

Student Numbers

Student Population for 2020	
Kindergarten	11.8
Class 1	9
Class 2/3	7

Data as per the August 2020 census

Student Attendance Rates

Student Attendance for 2020	
Kindergarten	88%
Class 1	89%
Class 2/3	93%

Working to Improve Attendance

At the commencement of a child's enrolment to the school and at information sessions, parents and carers are given access to the school's attendance policy. The school's values around attendance and non-justified absences are communicated to parents in the attendance policy. The importance of regular school attendance is reiterated at termly parent-teacher evenings by the class teachers, and is addressed with parents in individual meetings, especially if attendance has been flagged as an issue.

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.

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 and guardians are also expected to be supportive of the ethos of the school.

POLICY

1. Enrolment

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 Enrolment Application Forms 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 needs 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.

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.

The school acts in accordance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)* and will consider enrolment of all students who apply.



Where a student has a disability, it is important that the parents or guardians provide accurate and up to date information to the school and for the school and parents or guardians to go through the Collaborative Planning Process to ensure positive outcomes for the student. Failure to accurately complete all sections of the Enrolment Application Form and provide all relevant information may result in the school's inability to accommodate a child's needs and may affect the child's continued enrolment.

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.

In order to assist parents or guardians to make a decision regarding their child's education at our school we offer all prospective parents an invitation to attend a school tour held by arrangement throughout the year.

2. 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.

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.

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.

3. 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.

Enrolment decisions are led by the Head of School and are made in collaboration with the parents or guardians of the student.

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.

4. 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.

Policy Development

The development and refinement of school policies, procedures and guidelines is an ongoing task at Port Macquarie Steiner School.

We ensure all policies relevant to stakeholders are readily available, either through the school's website for families or in the documents section on our management system for staff. There is also a folder with a printed copy of each policy in the school office. Policy sessions are run throughout the year to ensure staff are aware of and are part of the updating of policies that are relevant to their work.

Policy Changes Throughout 2020

The full suite of educational policies underwent review in 2020 and required changes to reflect the appointment of a key educational leadership position of Principal. All policies were updated to ensure the proper delegation to this position.

More general changes were made as part of this review process also. The registration renewal team included the following changes:

- Included a process for absence notifications in Sentral in Attendance Policy
- Included changes to reportable conduct section of Child Protection Policy to reflect changes to legislation Children's Guardian Act 2019 coming into effect in March 2020
- Improved Student Code of Conduct based on school values and age-appropriate expectations of children
- Improved our Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy by connecting this to the Student Code of Conduct and creating an agreements section
- Included bushfire and pandemic reflections into review of Critical Incident and Emergencies Policy
- Included Covid-19 information into Medical Treatment Policy
- Included Child Protection Policy acknowledgement into the school's Volunteer Policy
- Included compliance portfolio responsibility for board members into the Compliance Policy
- Included members of sub-committees of the board who are involved in decisions or high-level advice may be recognised as responsible persons of the school in Responsible Persons Policy
- Clarified roles and responsibilities of directors in Board of Directors Roles and Responsibilities in response to the creation of the Principal position
- Revised delegations for Principal in Delegations of Authority Policy
- Revised communication channels and created a framework around the Administration Officer role and clarified email communications for teachers in Communications Policy
- Created a Working from Home Policy



Student Welfare

The school is dedicated to providing a safe, secure, caring and supportive environment and to promoting personal growth and self-confidence for students. The welfare of our students and staff is a high priority and was tested in 2020 when we were met with Covid-19 lockdown and remote learning.

Our school promotes and practices a commitment to developing strong relationships between students and teachers. Steiner education, with its focus on creating and maintaining strong weekly and yearly rhythms; the development of the arts and placing an emphasis on social responsibility in the school and a play-based learning model in the kindergarten, all help to establish in the students a positive experience at school. As our class sizes are small, teachers know their students well and can work with each student to know their strengths and areas where they may individually need support.

Behaviour Management

Behaviour management at the school is met consistently through the classes, and may vary, depending on the age of the child. Individual parent meetings take place for teachers to communicate transparently with the parents if behavioural concerns continue and strategies, including communication strategies with the parents are put in place. The school's Behaviour Management Policy is linked to the Student Code of Conduct, which identifies the expected behaviour of students at the school.

The school staff collaboratively set expectations and teach students positive behaviours. Students are required to strive to meet these expectations and follow requests made by school staff. Staff of the school aim to instil in the students a sense of responsibility for their own actions by creating an honest and open approach to behaviour management and discipline.

Anti-Bullying

The school provides a safe, secure, caring, and supportive environment and promotes personal growth and self-confidence for students. We recognise the potential negative effects of bullying and other anti-social behaviours that disrupt the optimal learning and teaching environment. The school does not condone any behaviour which could be of a bullying, harassing, or violent nature and the school seeks appropriate interventions if such situations occur.

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all employees, students, parents, guardians, and volunteers both on and off the school site. 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 these situations. These must be undertaken in a timely manner, ensuring procedural fairness for all parties involved.

The school staff will seek to identify bullying, violent or harassing behaviours and will work with students, staff, parents, or other individuals involved to offer all parties a safe and restorative response.

The school has a Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy giving appropriate levels of response to behaviours including suspension and expulsion, and methods to record and identify repeated behaviours. Students and their parents and caregivers are to be encouraged to report bullying, harassment, and violence, so that appropriate support can be provided.

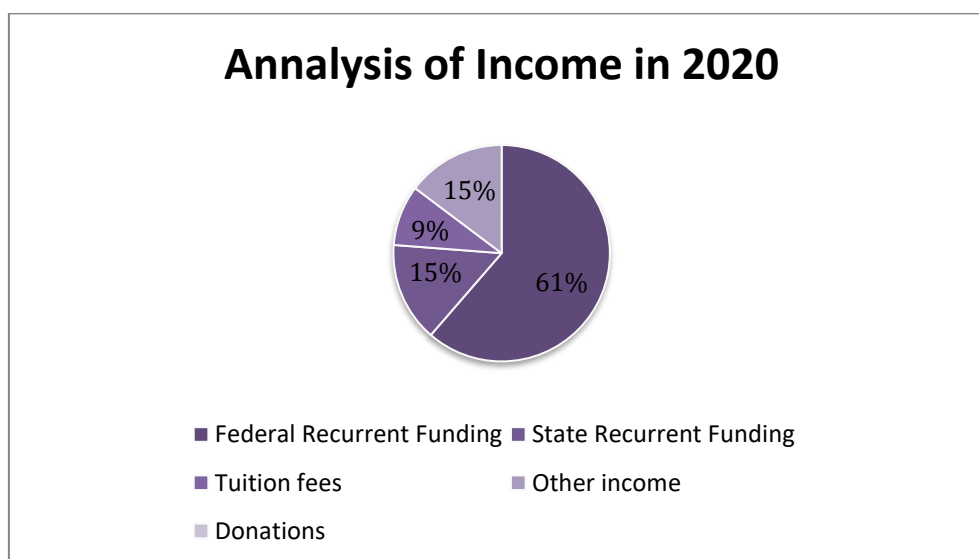
Complaints and Grievances

The Complaints and Grievances Policy is available to parents at the school and offers a mechanism for resolving disputes and or grievances about matters relating to the school. It specifies a process to be applied to such grievances when raised with the school and makes clear that the school will decide the most appropriate method of dealing with the matter on a case-by-case basis and incorporating principles of procedural fairness.

Teachers value parents as partners in the education of their children. An essential part of developing an 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 their 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.

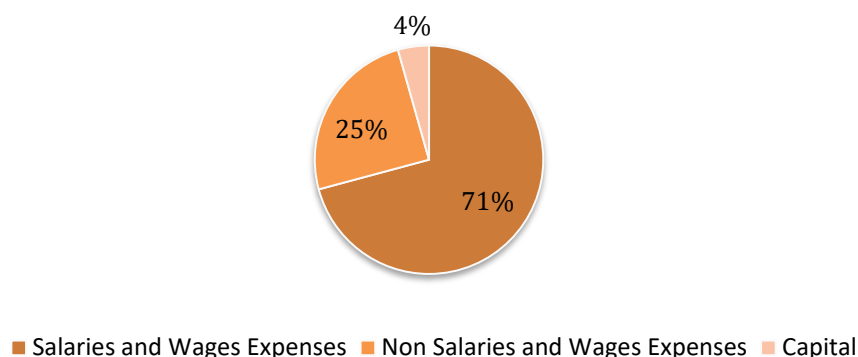
Financial Report

There were some concessions (approx. \$20,000 worth over the course of the year) made in response to the impact of Covid-19 on families. The school also received concessions by way of cash boost incentive to the value of approx. \$100,000 which was reported under other income.



The main expense was salaries and wages which included teaching, assistance, administration, and maintenance staff. These and other expenses were well managed.

Analysis of Expenses 2020



The school had a positive inflow of cash during the year which strengthened the balance sheet. The school purchased a property 454-456 John Oxley Drive in December 2020 on which to develop the permanent school on and retained strong balances at year end.

Looking Back on the Previous Year

There was a large focus and effort put into the school playground, vegetable gardens, mud kitchen and sandpit in 2019, and now the school enjoys established gardens. The building of a second classroom midway throughout 2019 was needed to accommodate the kindergarten and the emerging needs of the younger children to have a separate and more customised learning environment, was a huge achievement. Towards the end of 2019, more than 14 families were interviewed for the incoming kindergarten class of 2020.


Looking Forward to Priority Areas for Improvement

The main priority area for 2021 is stabilising the leadership model in the school to improve teaching, learning and operations. A review of the leadership model was undertaken, and positions of Education Director and Manager Finance and Operations were created. Teacher mentoring and professional development continue to be an area for improvement, and this was a major consideration in the school leadership review.

As the school grows, there will be a continued focus on the review and customisation of all school policies to ensure that they are representative of the school. Parent education sessions will be a priority as well as the revision of the parent handbooks.

A significant point that arose from the strategic planning process undertaken in 2020 was the need to re-establish playgroup. Due to space limitations, it is not possible to have playgroup at the school however it is a priority to source an appropriate venue and offer this important introduction to Steiner education once again.

Another priority area is preparing to develop the newly acquired block of land for capital works. The school Board commissioned a Facilities Master Plan, in collaboration with the school's architect and the School Building Committee. This was to test the capacity of the school to develop from its current size and site of 32 students across K-3 on a leased property, to a full K-6 primary school on a site owned



by the school. The plan identifies the best possible way for the school to achieve a successful transition onto the permanent site and growth into the future.

One of the main strategic goals of the board is to provide accommodation to progress from kindergarten to class 6 and transition the school onto the one permanent site. This goal can be achieved by the completion of stages 1 and 2 of the current design so an approval pathway has been scoped out to reduce the risk to the school should any planning requirements change in that time.

The school submitted a Block Grant Application in April 2021 for capital funding to support the stage 1 project and is now preparing to apply for a concept DA for stages 1 and 2 with full approval for Stage 1. This will allow for a smoother approval process for stage 2 so the school to focus and consolidate resources on growing the school at that time.



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