



2020

Annual Report

WITH DATA FROM THE 2019 SCHOOL YEAR



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1. MESSAGES from the KEY SCHOOL BODIES

1.1 Chair of the Board of Directors

I would like to thank the whole school community for their contributions during 2019. It was a year of challenge and transition. The children's happiness and connectedness speaks to the work performed by the teaching staff. Stepping on the grounds of the school with its beautiful gardens and loving atmosphere continues to be a testament to the hard work and commitment performed by so many.

2019 saw a restructure in the leadership of the school with the establishment of Marga Helms as school principal. The Board of Directors (BOD) assisted Marga in overseeing this transition which allowed for a review of school processes and significant improvement and learnings. The BOD looks forward to continuing this journey.

The school continues to be a centre for arts and culture as evidenced through 2019's assemblies and performances. The Spring Fair was a great success bringing the community together to celebrate, honor and commune. The bushfires at the end of the year brought us all closer together and reminded us of our connections to nature. Thank you to all staff who assisted in the management of the bush fire crises.

It was also with mixed emotions that we farewelled the class 7 and 8 students. Such a wonderful cohort of children - strong, wise and grounded. We also farewelled Abby Nguyen and Anja Hunold from the BOD and would like to thank them both for their contributions and passion.

Janu Cannings, BOD Chair

1.2 Treasurer of the Board of Directors

2019 ended with Australia's largest bushfires raging between us and Victoria, along the Great Dividing Range. We even had to close the school several times, as the intense local wildfires led to our families evacuating their country abodes and shifting to nearby towns and cities. While some families left, other families stayed, with members at the fire front, volunteering their time with the RFS. Throughout the fires the school community, Board and staff held strong for the school. I wish to extend my great appreciation to all those involved through this stressful period.

A special thanks, as always goes to the Board members who volunteered considerable time and energy to the oversight of the school during 2019: Abby, Anja, Ben, Bruce and Janu. A very special thanks to Abby and Anja who have finally stepped down from the Board after over 10 years of amazingly dedicated service and contribution. Thank you!

While we ended the year with fires still raging, financially the school performed moderately well with a small profit of \$22,364. This was a further decrease from the previous years of \$54,801 in 2018 and \$160,464 in 2017. This drop in 2019 profit can be partially attributed to a decrease in income of \$111,870, while our total income for the year was \$1,707,081.

In summary, at the end of 2019 Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education is in a very healthy financial position with current assets of \$735,469 and total assets of \$2,468,223, current liabilities of \$374,252 and total liabilities of \$378,122. Total equity for the School is valued at \$2,090,101.

As we look back at 2019, we can be happy with our School's great educational and social achievements and be appreciative of our community and dedicated staff members. In particular, a special thanks to our Principal Marga Helms who has remained in her strong leadership position through the transition from shared leadership to the development of our Principal framework. A thank you also to Laurel Grant for the management of our financial system.

Looking forward from the end of 2019 and we could not have predicted the surprises that 2020 would bring. Luckily, the wildfires ended before the coronavirus pandemic came to dominate our school's operation. This new crisis will pose new challenges and opportunities for 2020 and into the future.

It is with this in mind that I urge the school to focus on the continued delivery of quality education, while examining ways to control expenditure and to aim for higher retained earnings in the future.

Dr. Noah Nielsen, BOD Treasurer

1.3 Chair of College of Teachers

The College of Teachers (COT) continued to meet weekly on Mondays at 3.15pm in 2019. There was a pedagogical section of the meeting as well as the agenda. The meetings involved discussions on curriculum and program details and dealt with the many issues that arise in the daily lives of the students.

As part of the School's Registration Process teachers were required to send all scope and sequences, class programs and assessment documents for term 4 2018 and term 1 2019 to NESAs. This was the culmination of much work and deep consideration on how to meet NESAs requirements as a Steiner School now and in the future.

When the feedback from NESAs required amendments, further work commenced, and inspectors visited the school in week 3. This resulted in a 5-year approved registration period without monitoring which was a wonderful achievement by the COT in the educational sector and of course the administration team.

Ongoing work is required by teachers to uphold the requirements and streamline the paperwork processes for the future.

Towards the end of term 1 we hosted a workshop on 'Sensitive Children', which was facilitated by Lakshmi Prasana and Michael Kokinos. It was a lovely coming together of teachers and parents and gave rise to many insights.

We have also been attending accredited professional development sessions offered by Rudolf Steiner House and hosted at Aetaomah Steiner school. These have resulted in strengthening relationships with our closest Steiner School and allowing for more opportunities to work together.

In the term 1 school holidays work began on the extension of our school vegetable garden to support our gardening program. This term Mark facilitated a session at College on working digitally with assessment and programming.

In the pedagogical section of our meetings in term 3 were class presentations. Teachers continued to attend regular Professional Development courses such as the SEA National conference in July, teacher training with Dr. Lakshmi Prasana and Patries Orange and other courses of their choice. Teachers continued to attend weekly Eurythmy sessions with Patries. In set up week of term 3 professional development sessions were held at school on management of diabetes and child protection.

In term 3 the school welcomed visiting students from China for a cultural exchange. In terms 3 and 4 teachers continued to work with Steven Stratton from AIS who offered classroom observation and pedagogical support. Mark and Simone organised a Middle school experience day and presentation to parents which was well received. Term 3 ended with a wonderful Spring Fair & Open day which showcased the students work.

In term 4 we started our set-up week with more professional development on child protection in a session facilitated by Catherine. In the pedagogical section of our college meetings we did group reading and study sessions on Steiner's book, "The Study of Man".

We welcomed Billie Walker and his wife Margie to share their views on teaching first nation children. We had a visit from Lakshmi to discuss the class one transition and heard about the children who would be moving to class one from the Kindy at the end of the year.

We also had discussions on the school's ESL guidelines and a paper was written.

In term 4 the class 7/8 went to India and had a remarkable experience.

We had a visit from Seamus who worked with students and teachers on speech.

Camilla and Helen facilitated a wonderful strings concert and the Middle school students showcased their project work.

The term was disrupted by the bushfires which effected the community deeply.

The term ended with celebrations as families were invited to enjoy the Kindy Golden Boat ceremony and primary school Summer Festival and leaving ceremony.

At the end of the term we farewelled Deborah Rose from the College and welcomed Jacqueline Morrissey into the class 1/2 position for 2020. We said goodbye to Helen Black our cello teacher and welcomed Thomas Zachary. We wished Lishia O'Reilly well on her sabbatical year.

Writing this report highlights for me the complex and inspiring nature of our work as a COT and the importance of our task to uphold the pedagogical aspects of the school and to work with the students in the light of Anthroposophy. It also is a reminder of the work we do together as a school community during what have been particularly challenging times.

Katrina Ross, College Chair

1.4 Principal

After our Business Administrator left before the start of the school year 2019 the Board and College of Teachers reflected on the School Structure of shared leadership between the Business Administrator and the Educational Administrator. Halfway through the year the school had come to a different model and a restructuring of roles in the school. The Educational Administrator was endorsed by the College and offered the role of Principal.

The Principal is working closely with the Finance Administrator and the Executive Assistant in her organisational role of the office, having responsibilities for WHS and communication with Maintenance, Gardening and Cleaning staff. Other delegated administrative roles are in Curriculum Planning and Administering NCCD Documentation.

The strength and quality of the Education lies in working with Steiner's principles and his suggestions for renewal of education. Being a member of the Steiner Education Australia SEA unites us with other Steiner Schools and attending Delegates meetings, Teacher Conferences and Governance, Leadership and Management Conferences. GLaM supports all areas of the school to involve with and work enthusiastically with this task. Our teachers are following the National Steiner Curriculum which is based on Steiner's indications in relation to Child Development. All our teachers are committed to Professional Development to gain understanding in this area. Early Childhood Kindy educators attend Regional meetings and every second year the "Vital Years" Conference; Primary teachers attend at the beginning of every year either an intensive week of PD at the Glenaeon Steiner School or an intensive online course to prepare for the age group they are teaching. The same is provided for our Middle School teachers through the Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training seminar in Melbourne. We are grateful to the Steiner House in Sydney being able to provide NESA registered Professional Development for our teaching staff. Teachers participated in these courses organised by another local Steiner School.

Our weekly College meetings are well established. Here Class Teachers work together pedagogically and manage the cultural calendar of the year, excursions and camps, having input in all education-based decisions. Wellbeing of students is a weekly agenda item. We have different modules to support students with additional needs: Literacy and Numeracy Support which is provided through Teaching Aides working under the direction of the Class Teachers and/or a member of the Learning Support group; we involve anthroposophical trained Therapists

providing Eurythmy/movement Therapy with consent from parents; another module is health support, such as giving a child a foot bath, with consent of the parents.

We continued to embed programs supporting quality of Teaching and Learning. Our two Strings (violin and cello) Tutors worked hard to inspire the students. They continued building up their teaching materials. It became clear that we needed to restructure physical space for them to be able to teach without moving to different spaces available during the week. The strings program connects students with other students of Steiner Schools, participating in music camps; it connects the school to the community performing in communal spaces and inviting for a music concert at the end of the year. I highly commend the teachers who were so committed, dedicated, and brought music alive with such little resources.

We established Gardening/Horticulture classes for all students and our newly terraced garden extended the space to be used by all students.

Practical craft lessons once per week as extracurricular activity again was the high light for many students in their week, where the students work with soft craft and hard craft. In the Middle School there are mandatory courses provided in Horticulture, Technology, Mechanics and Design.

Class Teachers have been integrating Visual Arts, Sculpture, Dance and Movement and Storytelling and Drama into their Teaching programs. All these artistic activities are known to enhance student's academic faculties as well as their emotional wellbeing. It is this wonderfully rich program that supports the young people in their growing bodies, their health and happiness and their intellectual faculties.

The class teachers who lead a class from class 1 to the Middle School foster through a long-lasting relationship with the students respect for self, others, their environment, and materials surrounding them. The social fabric of the community helps our students to have a feeling of belonging. In our school assemblies, students witness the gifts and achievements of other classes and build respect for each other. Student's achievements are not measured in tests but in holistic approaches to learning, including all intelligences. The emphasis is rather on cooperation than being competitive. This is practised in all areas of the curriculum including movement, games, and sport.

The communication with parents follows our set-up of having class meetings in term 1, parent interviews in term 3 after the Mid-year report. Other meetings about student's education and wellbeing was arranged either by the class teachers or requested by parents. The Kindergarten Teacher organises information meetings for new parents and talks to all parents of the importance of rhythm, sleep, and free play in the Kindergarten.

Vision for 2020

The extension of our school garden is overly exciting, and we envisage a rich garden program for all classes, which will align with their year level activities and lesson content. As well we envisage the from garden to plate philosophy providing our tuckshop with fresh produce.

It is important to keep all programs working to a high standard and to make sure that our teaching staff fits well into the school's culture and has the best possible understanding and experiences in Steiner Education. Searching for new Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Tutors among our community and alumni is of utmost importance.

Staff satisfaction and staff intentions surveys inform about support and succession planning to be organised by the Leadership of the school.

Unfortunately, the school has not been able to employ an Eurythmy teacher for the students. We have been working with a highly qualified Eurythmist in the area and we endeavour to support a mentor program for teachers interested in this area.

Marga Helms, Principal

1.5 Finance Summary

2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

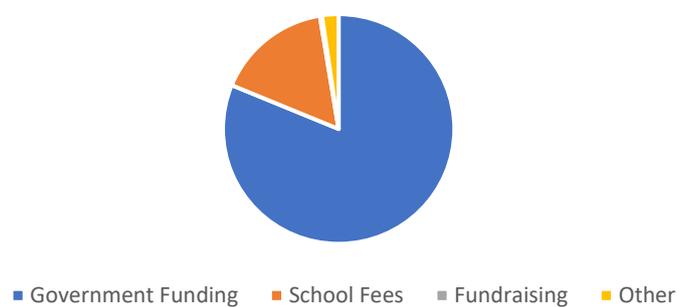
INCOME

Government Funding	\$1,386,683
School Fees	\$275,960
Fundraising	\$5,024
Other	<u>\$39,416</u>
	\$1,707,083

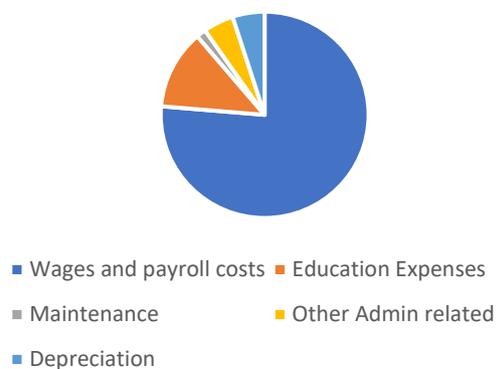
EXPENDITURE

Wages and payroll costs	\$1,285,884
Education Expenses	\$209,690
Maintenance	\$25,232
Other admin related	\$79,850
Depreciation	<u>\$84,062</u>
	\$ 1,684,718

INCOME 2019



EXPENDITURE 2019



1.6 Parent group

Parent Group in 2019 comprised of a group of parents from Rainbow Ridge, who continued to play an active role in the community. The dedicated group met regularly throughout the year and focused their time and energy on projects that would benefit and support the children, teachers, staff, and wider school community. It also aimed at creating an opportunity for parents to come together in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere to discuss different aspects of their children's education and upbringing. The group's main focus in 2019 was to strengthen the school's sense of community by facilitating events that bring families together.

One of the first events in Term 1 was the introduction of the Friday Feast. This comprised of a shared afternoon tea followed by an early dinner that was well supported by the school community. It allowed families to come together in a relaxed social atmosphere at the school and enjoy a delicious, wholesome meal together. The success of the first Friday feast gathering inspired the PG to host a second gathering in Term 2. This coincided with the school hosting Chinese students on a cultural exchange for a week. This Friday Feast was part of the Chinese students farewell and showcased a traditional Australian bush dance. Irish Music was lovingly played by a Rainbow Ridge family and everyone joined in and had a great night.

The Parent Craft Group was coordinated by the Craft Teacher Catherine Dunham who was employed to prepare, facilitate and purchase materials for these meetings. The group met fortnightly during Terms 2 and 3 to produce handmade craft items to be sold at the Spring Fair & Open Day. It was a lovely social atmosphere where new skills were learnt and shared, and beautiful items were produced.

There was a demand from the school community to create a recipe book that encompassed all the favourite meals provided from Tuckshop over the years. Bec Fagan collated the recipes whilst students and Sara Stephens-Huddleston worked together to produce beautiful illustrations. The final product was a collection of starters, mains and deserts and was sold as a fundraiser at the Spring Fair & Open Day.



Another PG initiative in 2019 to advertise Rainbow Ridge School was to produce calico market bags, branded with a new and improved school logo to be sold at Spring Fair and through the office. This was to enable Rainbow Ridge families to display and promote the school to the wider community.

During the year of 2019, the Parent Groups major fundraising event was once again the Spring Fair & Open Day. There was a dedicated team of parents who contributed a lot of time and effort into the planning, preparing, organising and running of the day. It was a great success and very much appreciated and enjoyed by the whole school community. A big Thank you to all the Parents who helped and for everyone's contribution and attendance on the day, making it such a memorable event.

PG funded the purchasing of three brand new xylophones for the music program. It was lovely to see them in use during the children's performances at the school. PG continues to support the string program end of year concert providing supper for the intermission. The funds raised for this evening are given back to support the music program.



The Parent Group is always looking for and encouraging more parents to join and participate. During the year, the numbers usually ranged between 2 and 6 parents. It gets busier in term 3 when the preparations for the Spring Fair & Open Day are under way but it is often an ongoing challenge to get more parents involved. The group continues to create a variety of opportunities and activities to encourage participation and feel passionate about their role in the school community. There is an agreement between the School Executive Committee and the Parent Group, that they would consult with each other prior to dispersing funds from the Parent Group account.

After three years of active engagement in the Parent Group Committee, both Rosalie Shearer and Bec Fagan have chosen to step away and focus their energies in other areas of their life. They hope that the new PG will continue to enrich and engage the school community and would like to thank everyone for their support over the years.

By Bec Fagan and Rosalie Shearer (Former members of the Parent Group)

2. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education is one of approximately 900 Steiner schools in more than fifty countries and was first registered in 1996. It was founded by an enthusiastic parent group with the inspirational backing of Alan and Susan Whitehead.

The School's vision statement reflects our aims:

We offer a universal education in balance and harmony with the environment, embracing Rudolf Steiner's deep understanding of child development.

We inspire life-long learning to meet the changing needs of time.

Rainbow Ridge School grew from the good will of the community, parents and teachers to create the beautiful sustainably designed timber buildings blending into the sub-tropical landscape setting.

The School's property is bordered by forest at the edge of the Wollumbin caldera.

The School is situated 10 km from Nimbin, 43km from Lismore and 25km from Kyogle, occupying 2.5hectares of bushland at Lillian Rock in Northern NSW. There is a balance of forest, playgrounds and school gardens. Environmental awareness is extended to the buildings, which also includes stand-alone solar power and composting toilets.

The most recent Certificate of Registration for Kindergarten to year 8 was approved in 2019 for the maximum five-year period.

The School is incorporated (not for profit limited by guarantee) with ASIC and ACNC.

In summary, the objectives of the School, as set out in the School vision statement are:

- To provide children with a Steiner Education

- To provide a healthy and inspirational school environment
- To recognise the soul-spiritual foundations in all areas of the school
- To provide the community with insight, clarity and ways of exploring Steiner education and anthroposophy
- To maintain a sustainable independent school
- To facilitate healthy community relationships

The School's College of Teachers, Board of Directors, Executive Committee and the Parent Group endeavour to work together with the students and parents in constructive and co-operative ways to create a positive, fruitful social environment to achieve harmony and to develop everybody's best potential.

This Annual Report to NESA and the school and wider community (via our website) provides reliable and objective information about the 2019 school year.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

Faculty	Total students	Female	Male
Kindergarten	23	11	12
Class 1	9	3	6
Class 2	9	7	2
Class 3	11	4	7
Class 4	16	10	6
Class 5	9	6	3
Class 6	16	7	9
Class 7	4	4	0
Class 8	7	3	4
Whole school	104	55	49

Students from Non-English-speaking background: 9

Students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent: 3

4. STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

Parents of classes 3, 5 and 7 withdrew their children from the standardised NAPLAN testing in 2019, so Rainbow Ridge School did not participate in NAPLAN.

5. A SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING UNDERTAKEN BY TEACHERS DURING THE YEAR

The Teachers at Rainbow Ridge School are very enthusiastic to deepen their understanding of Child Development and implement appropriate programs and lessons that enable all students to learn to the best of their ability.

Professional Learning is happening in different areas:

1. In College meetings

- Participation in concise and continuous Child Studies
- Class presentations including planning, assessment, lesson evaluation, work samples and student and class profiles
- Dialogue about assessment, differentiated teaching and learning including attendance of the school's AIS consultant.
- Presentation of student's wellbeing, either needing physical, emotional, social or learning support.

2. At School

- Learning Support meetings to establish student wellbeing support.
- Class meetings, where class teachers talk about relevant developmental stage of the class in relation to the curriculum and other educational topics
- Written reports about those meetings
- Reflection of Student learning and classroom practice documented in teacher's diary
- Attendance at talks given by guest speakers
- Mentor time with specialists including class observations.
- Professional development meetings before the start of a new term with different topics, guest speakers or practical applications, such as Speech, Movement, Water Colour Painting etc.
- Individual parent meetings after the mid-year report
- Peer-appraisal process for all teachers with documentation and feed-back
- Mentor sessions
- Digital Programming workshop
- Managing Diabetes One
- Study groups and speech work
- Sensitive Children workshop for teachers and parents

3. Out of School Professional Development

Attendance or Participation:

- Learning Support Conference
- Glenside Steiner School one week intensive for class teachers before start of a new school year
- Eugen Schwartz Webinar in the summer holidays for preparation for the next school year and class
- Regional Kindergarten meetings
- Professional Development with Association of Independent Schools (AIS)
- Professional Development with Steiner Association of Australia, (SEA) including the annual GLAM conference and the National Teacher's Conference
- First Aid and CPR
- Liaison with mentors/teachers from other Steiner Schools
- Several Professional Development sessions shared with a local Steiner School on classroom management, music and speech.

6. DETAILS OF TEACHING STAFF WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING THE CURRICULUM

Class teachers:

Lauren Mitchell (pv)	- Kindy	Simone Weihermann (pr)	- Class 5&6
Katrina Ross (pr)	- Kindy	Mark Piper (pr)	
Deborah Rose (pr)	- Class 1	Lishia O'Reilly (pr)	- Class 7&8
Jane Robinson (pr)	- Class 2&3	Marga Helms (pr)	-Principal
Theo Sison (pr)	- Class 4		

Specialist Tutors:

Helen Black	- Cello	Leanne Logan	- Playgroup
Xixia Cao	- Chinese	Michelle McDonald (pr)	- Gardening
Catherine Dunham	- Library & Craft	Camilla Warner (pr)	- Music Teacher & Strings

Classroom aids:

Robyn Berry	- Kindy Assistant	Leanne Logan	- Classroom Assistant
Elenya Heart	- Kindy Assistant,	Shanna Eyres	- Classroom Assistant
Sonja Kindermann	- Classroom Assistant	Neville Stokes	- Classroom Assistant & School Support Facilitator
Pollyanna Kingsley	- Classroom Assistant		

7. WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Administration:

Laurel Grant – Finance Administrator	Rosalie Shearer – Admin Assistant
Anja Hunold – Executive Assistant	Marga Helms – Principal

Buildings, Gardens & Grounds:

Aaron Adlington - Maintenance Assistant	Patrick Pembroke – Maintenance Coordinator
Mel Cashmore – Cleaner	
Vanessa French – Gardener	

School Executive Committee:

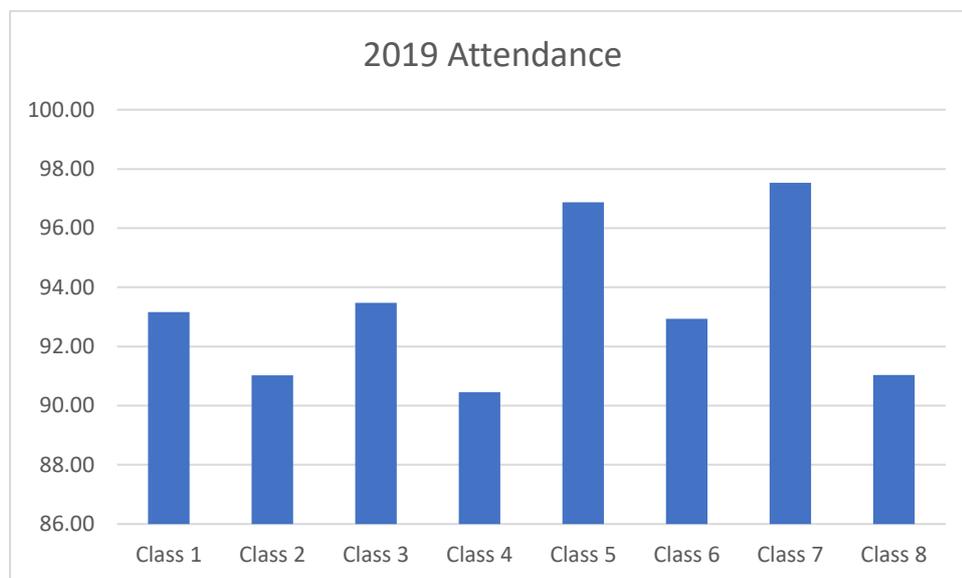
Laurel Grant	Anja Hunold
Marga Helms	

Board of Directors:

Janu Cannings	Chairperson	Ben Robinson
Noah Nielsen	Treasurer	Bruce Davis
Abby Nguyen	Secretary	Myfanwy Sterling

8. STUDENT PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE

Student Attendance Data 2019



Total attendance was 92.47%.

9. A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE SCHOOL MANAGES STUDENT NON-ATTENDANCE

Rainbow Ridge School has a responsibility to monitor the daily attendance of all students at the school and a legal responsibility to record student attendance, including reasons for student absence.

Teachers use class roll books to register student attendance, absences and reasons for absence. Roll book records are a daily responsibility of the class teacher.

The School office passes any notification of absences on to the teacher in note form. Parents are expected to inform the school of their child's absence on the day of or before the absence, by a written, dated note, by phone, by email or by coming into the office with the information.

Student absence due to pre-arranged family, cultural or religious reasons are notified in writing by the parent or guardian to the School, including the reason for absence and the dates of the absence.

If a student is withdrawn from the School, notice of the destination school and address must be given to the office using the student enrolment withdrawal form, which needs to be approved by the Principal.

A copy of the School's Attendance Procedures is attached at Appendix 1.

10. RAINBOW RIDGE ENROLMENT POLICIES

The full text of the school enrolment policies is attached at Appendix 2.

11. A SUMMARY OF OTHER KEY SCHOOL POLICIES

Student Welfare

Rainbow Ridge School has several policies relating to student welfare, including the following:

- Child Protection Policy – This outlines the obligations of the School and the staff, relating to the safety, protection and welfare of students, including obligations under child protection legislation.
- Policy for a Safe and Supportive Environment – This outlines steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students in terms of supervision, use of grounds and facilities, and travel on school-related activities.
- Pastoral Care Policy – Under this policy, students are made aware of and have access to appropriate pastoral care arrangements. Teachers can counsel children to the best of their ability on site, in conjunction with the parents. In addition, Rainbow Ridge School employs a School Support Person who can be accessed by students, parents and staff.
- Work Health and Safety Policies – These outline how Rainbow Ridge School meets legislated Work Health and Safety requirements.

Copies of all these policies are available on the School’s website.

Anti-Bullying

The School’s Social Behaviour Policy and Policy for a Safe and Supportive Environment outline the behaviours that are expected of students, and any kind of bullying behaviour is not supported under these policies. The School has a specific Anti-Bullying policy which is available on the website.

Social Behaviour Policy

Rainbow Ridge School takes a whole school approach to addressing social behaviour, leading to a consistent and supported behaviour management practice. All children and staff are aware of the expectations of behaviour and that any failure to meet the expectations will be followed up. The policy is based on principles of procedural fairness and involves parents in the process of procedural fairness.

Rainbow Ridge School does not condone corporal punishment by any staff or non-staff members, including parents either on or off the school campus at any time.

Full details of the procedures to address inappropriate behaviour are outlined in the Rainbow Ridge Social Behaviour Policy, which is available on the website.

Resolution of complaints or concerns

To maintain harmony within our school community we endeavour to find resolutions to all concerns. Effective communication – speaking and listening – is essential to resolve conflicts. Parents, students and school employees can resolve concerns by following the steps outlined in the Rainbow Ridge Communication Guidelines. These steps cover various stages of resolution, which escalate if a concern is not resolved quickly. As a last resort, a mediator is engaged.

Parents can always raise a concern with their child’s class teacher, the Principal or the Finance Administrator, depending on the nature of the concern. In all cases, issues will be addressed in accordance with principles of procedural fairness.

The School has a Complaints Handling policy for situations where the Communication Guidelines are either not relevant to the complaint or have been followed but the complaint has not been resolved.

Many policies were reviewed and updated in 2019. The Attendance Policy was updated to reflect the new codes for attendance, the Enrolment Policy with more streamlined procedures. The Child Protection Policy was updated in relation to in-School Child Protection training. Both Flood and Fire policies and procedures were updated in response to the bush fires and the floods and school

closures. Our Parent Handbook was updated to refresh the format, expectations of behaviour on the buses and communication guidelines. A lot of the Policy updates were to include the new leadership role titles. Some of these policies are now available on the Rainbow Ridge School website.

12. PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE SCHOOL

Many of the key educational, strategic, community and environmental priorities for the school are ongoing processes of continuous improvement. In 2018, the school identified several key priorities for 2019, and this section of the Annual Report comments on how we managed those priorities, with a view to implementing continuous improvements in 2020.

Comments on the priorities for 2019:

The areas of the Executive Committee, School Health with the School Support Officer and Learning Support Officer are working well.

The planned All-Staff meeting to work on the Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 was scheduled for the very beginning of 2019 and the finalized plan was ratified by the Board.

The Extended Early Childhood capacity was not needed as much as we had anticipated but gives the Kindergarten teachers the possibility to run two Kindergarten groups at any needed time, depending on the number of students.

The review and development of Policies and Procedures proved to be a weak area because they were developed in isolation and not communicated to the stake holders involved. This has led to a staff change and a commitment to working on policies and procedures in a more inclusive and collaborative way, with the BOD taking a greater role in their development and adoption.

Our investigations into heating solutions for winter resulted in upgrading of our solar system which enabled us using heaters in every classroom in the mornings. This has proven the best solution for our environment for the time being.

The new launched website needs continuous updating and extending.

The shared leadership model was under review. After the first half year working without a Business Administrator, the Educational Administrator was appointed Principal with the full support of the College of Teachers.

Priorities for 2020:

Educational Priorities

We are continuing our effort to establish Middle School (class 7/8) and make it attractive for all students to choose the path of staying longer at Rainbow Ridge and to support them better for a transition to other High Schools with the future goal to continue up to year 10.

The Principal appointed a curriculum coordinator to oversee and support all Planning in line with NESA requirements and in line with the National Steiner Curriculum. The School set up an electronic file to keep all documentation from Kindy to year 8 and this will be monitored by the curriculum coordinator reporting to the Principal. The Principal also authorised a Teacher Accreditation Delegate to support teachers during their accreditation process. In 2019 we had 1 teacher progressing to Proficient Teacher and we will have another teacher going through the process in 2020.

We intend to progress the teaching and learning goals of commitment to Steiner Education, always deepening the understanding of the relationship between Child Development and the Curriculum. We also plan to foster mentor mentorships for teachers to enable them to bring Life Movement (Eurythmy) and Art to classes. We continue effective Student Assessment, Teacher Professional Development, Learning Support and Student Attendance.

The School's enhanced Educational Programs include: Professional Development , Health and Physical Education program, Library, School Environmental Sustainability, Gardening and Building program, Languages and their associated Cultural aspects, Connecting with Chinese Steiner Schools, Indigenous programs and Music and Strings program with the School ensemble.

With some classes coming up to full capacity, we carefully need to consider how we can develop more spaces to enable more students to receive Steiner Education at Rainbow Ridge School.

Strategic Priorities

Priority	2018 for 2019	2019 for 2020
Strategic Plan	To create a new school Strategic Plan for the years 2019-2023.	The Strategic Plan was created and ratified by the Board.
Master Plan	Develop architectural Masterplan to guide the construction of new buildings.	The plan is developed but no need for new buildings yet until we reach a stage of creating single classes.
The transition from a pioneer stage to a differentiated stage of development, and to clarify roles within the school.	The goal is to reassess the effectiveness of shared leadership and investigate other leadership models	Created the Principal role midyear. Revisiting the relationship between Governance and Management and clarification of delegations from Governance to Management. Implementation of a culture of feedback including supervisor reviews, performance reviews, Board reviews, SMART goals, professional development, reporting and clarification of employment roles. Succession planning with the College of teachers and the Board involved in structural models and creating possibilities for staff to step into leadership.
To specialise in our areas of strength as a school, such as the School Health program and the Strings program	To continue to offer and explore specialist areas such as school health and strings	Fostering mentorships for teachers to enable them to bring Life Movement (Eurythmy) and Art classes to support the wellbeing of students.

Environmental Priorities

Priority	2018 for 2019	2019 for 2020
Continuous improvement of the school environment	Continue to evaluate heating/cooling of school. Development of the garden area and gardening program. Front entrance amenity, a communication board.	Heating and cooling is still not achieved for all areas of the school. The School garden has been developed. Aiming towards a Tuckshop position to work with the gardening teacher to provide produce for the Tuckshop meals.

Community Priorities

Priority	2018for 2019	2019 for 2020
To engage and involve parents, including parent education.	In 2019 we hope to maintain and build on parent involvement.	Embedding the programs we have created for parent involvement.
Reviewing staff salaries and wages	This is an ongoing consideration of the Board of Directors.	
Communication School website	Ongoing maintenance and if needed improvement of website. Development of goals for school website and appointment of website coordinator. Review of school communication including internal communication, communication forums, digital and hardcopy communication, formal and informal communication and reporting pathways.	We have created a different website, but the attention needed has not happened yet. This is a high priority to be able to communicate and provide information on the website. Need to create special job for the coordinator. In our all-staff meetings, we are working on improving communication. And several staff members had training in Restorative Practise.
To market the strengths of the school to the wider community	The school advertises and publishes an article in the local paper every month.	Newspaper articles will continue, and the school website will also achieve this. Talks that are open to the wider community.

To foster positive staff morale and health within the school	The success in this area is reflected in the exceptionally low rates of sick leave taken by staff, and remarkably high staff retention rate. The principal meets with all staff to find out about satisfaction and improvements.	In 2020, we hope to maintain this record.
To strengthen student numbers	In 2019 our enrolment numbers went down after a strong 7/8 cohort left for Highschool.	To continue to strengthen student numbers, within the capacity of the school facilities.

13. ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE SCHOOL TO PROMOTE RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Promoting respect and responsibility is an integral part of the Steiner school curriculum.

We had several visits from an Aboriginal elder to tell stories and inspire the children with dance and movement. The children also received foreign language lessons in Chinese and Spanish, which promote respect and understanding for other cultures.

The Social Behaviour Policy outlines the expected standards of behaviour, which includes the requirement to participate in a safe, respectful and responsible manner. Consideration is given to the ages of the students engaged through various KLA's with stories, drama, group work, role playing, music and games to build many social capacities.

Active participation in the daily chores is another avenue to enhance the students' ability to become a responsible person in group dynamics.

And we started to train staff in Restorative Practice which was then introduced into all areas of school life.

14. A DESCRIPTION OF PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

Students are monitored for satisfaction through teaching practices integral to Steiner schooling generally and Rainbow Ridge specifically. Teachers evaluate lessons and complete daily reflections on their teaching practice. Assessments and observations of students include the teacher's gauge of student satisfaction to ensure that any dissatisfaction issues can be cleared up while minor. Parents may also express any concerns directly to teachers if need be. The high level of student satisfaction throughout the year is reflected in the high attendance rates in all classes, apart from some overseas travelling families, which are supported by the school for their enormous cultural learning outcomes.

2018 Steiner Education Australia organized and conducted surveys for all Steiner Schools in Australia.

Key messages from the parent survey at Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education:

- Top reasons for selecting the school:
 - School reflecting parent's values
 - Wanting something different from mainstream
 - It is a Steiner School
 - Wanting their child to be allowed to be a child
- Over 80% satisfaction of parents
 - That the school is committed to Steiner Philosophy
 - With their choice of school and their expectations being fulfilled
 - With the quality of the teachers
 - With the arts-based approach to learning
 - In the high quality of classrooms and resources
- What is outstanding in the School:
 - Culture and values
 - Teaching to the individual
 - Community feel
 - Well-rounded education

Areas of improvement according to the survey:

- Not enough learning support for students
- A question about the students achieving their best academically
- Effective responses when issues are raised
- More feedback about the student's learning

These improvement areas were addressed in 2019 through Teaching Aides in classes who are taking on support for individual and groups of students.

Communication with parents was made a strong priority in cases of accidents or incidents at school being documented and communicated straight away. Teachers communicating through emails with parents encouraging voicing of concerns and addressing these promptly.

Apart from interviews with parents after the Mid-year reports teachers invite parents into the classroom to view their student's work and of course our yearly Open Day.

[Link to the survey outcomes](#)

Teacher satisfaction is also a constant monitoring and feedback process, allowing minor issues to be cleared up before major problems develop. Various methods of gauging satisfaction include peer review, staff reviews and open channels of communication in the College of Teachers and with the Board of Directors. Our school body takes a cooperative and participatory approach to problem solving, ensuring that staff satisfaction remains steady and positive. The school has been able to attract new staff, receiving several applications from the local community wanting to work at RRS. In the past it was difficult to attract new teaching staff.

APPENDICES

1. ATTENDANCE POLICY

2. ENROLMENT POLICY

3. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Created by: HP

Date: Aug 2016

Reviewed by: CD

Date: July 19

RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

The School aims to ensure all students are attending school or accounted for on all scheduled school days. Regular school attendance gives students the best opportunity for education and social well being.

PURPOSE

To describe the policy and procedures that our School uses to ensure accurate and consistent attendance recording, monitoring and follow up.

POLICY

- 1) Rainbow Ridge School maintains a Register of Enrolments in accordance with the [Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools \(NSW\) Manual](#).
- 2) The School monitors the daily attendance of all students at the School and maintains a daily Attendance Register for each class of students, including reasons for student absence.
- 3) Student absences from classes or from the School are identified and recorded in a consistent manner by each class teacher, using the attendance codes approved by the Minister for Education.
- 4) A student may be granted an exemption from attendance/enrolment, or a period of extended holiday, by the Principal in some circumstances, in accordance with section 25 of the *Education Act 1990*.
- 5) Unexplained absences from classes or the school are followed up by phone within 7 days by the clerical officer with the parent or guardian to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- 6) Where a student has a poor record of school or class attendance, or where there is an unexplained absence of three consecutive school days, the Principal shall be informed, who will discuss the matter with the class teacher and make efforts to contact the parents/ guardians.
- 7) Where unacceptable class or school attendance is identified, the Principal will arrange an interview with the parents/ guardians to discuss the attendance issue. Any notes or action taken are recorded, as appropriate, in the Student Management Software (SchoolPro) with any hard copies in the student file.

- 8) Information in the Register of Enrolments and the Attendance Registers is backed up regularly and a copy kept offsite.
- 9) Hard copies of the Register of Enrolments are maintained for at least 5 years before archiving and the Attendance Register is retained for at least 7 years after the last entry was made in respect of a Student.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Register of Enrolments

- 1) The Register of Enrolments is maintained, using the School's Student Management software, by the clerical officer appointed to oversee enrolments (Clerical Officer).
- 2) The School collects the following information on enrolment forms. Information is updated each year:
 - a) Name, age and address of student;
 - b) Name and telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s);
 - c) Date of enrolment; and
 - d) For students over 6 years old, previous school or pre-enrolment situation.
 - e) The School also collects information as required by NESAs, including parent education levels and employment, student and household primary language and indigenous status.
- f) The Clerical Officer stores the hard copy of the enrolment form in the student file.
- g) When a student leaves the School, their parents complete a Student Exit Form, which provides the following information:
 - i) Date of leaving the school; and
 - ii) The destination of the student after leaving the school.
 - iii) The information is recorded into SchoolPro and the Student Exit Form is stored in the student file.
- h) The Clerical Officer processes the Student Exit Form and transfers the information into the Register of Enrolments. The Clerical Officer stores the hard copy of the exit form in the student folder.
- i) Where the destination of a student is unknown, the Principal will send an email or letter to the Department of Education and Communities officer with home school liaison responsibilities, to notify them of the following information:
 - i) The student's full name, date of birth and last known address;
 - ii) The last date of attendance of the student;
 - iii) Name(s) and contact details of the parent(s)/guardian(s);
 - iv) An indication of the student's possible destination;
 - v) Any other information that may assist officers to locate the student; and
 - vi) Any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parent(s) or student.

Attendance Register

- a) Parents are expected to inform the School of their child's absence on the day of or before the absence, by a written, dated note, by phone, or by coming into the office with the information.
- b) Office staff pass any notification of absences to the teacher in note form.
- c) Class teachers complete roll books each day, which are the Attendance Registers for their class(es). Teachers record any absences in the roll books, as well as reasons for the absence and any documentation to support the reasons for absence.
- d) Attendance data is transferred on a weekly basis into SchoolPro by the clerical officer.
- e) The roll books must be readily accessible.

The Minister's Attendance Codes

- a) It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that teachers have access to the current attendance codes. The attendance codes approved by the Minister, as varied from time to time, can be found on the website of the NSW Association of Independent Schools (AIS). The AIS also sends email newsletters to advise member schools of any changes in these areas.
- b) The Principal regularly instructs teachers at College meetings about how to record absences so that teachers are recording absences consistently.
- c) Teachers use the attendance codes to record:
 - i) The reason for a student's absence or the reason for a variation in attendance. A variation in attendance includes the student's attendance at school camps, school excursions or school sporting events.
 - ii) The duration of the absence or variation. For example, absent for the whole day ('a') or for part of a day ('Pa'). If absent for part of a day, the time of arrival or departure must be recorded.
 - iii) An 'X' symbol to indicate the first and last day that the student attended each term.

Exemptions from Attendance/Enrolment, and Extended Holidays

- a) These Procedures reflect the 'Exemption from School Procedures' published by the NSW Department of Education and Communities ([School Attendance Policy PD 2005 0259](#)). When deciding whether to grant an exemption, the Educational Administrator will refer to this publication.
- b) The Principal has authority to grant exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student. The Principal may only grant an exemption where it has been clearly demonstrated by the parent(s)/guardian(s) that it is in the child's best interests in the short and long term. The Principal must consider and fully explore alternatives to exemption. For example, the Principal must consider whether it is in the child's best interests to access distance education. The Principal may discuss options with the NSW Association of Independent Schools, to gain their input and guidance where appropriate.
- c) Parent(s)/guardian(s) may make an application for their child's exemption from attendance at school, by completing an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School. A copy is attached at Appendix A.
- d) On receipt of an application for exemption from attendance/enrolment at school, the Principal may grant full-day exemptions due to:

- (1) Exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate);
 - (2) The child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under the Public Health Act 2010;
 - (3) Employment in the entertainment industry; or
 - (4) Participation in elite arts or elite sporting events.
- e) For any other matter not covered, the Principal must consult with the School Education Director (through NESAs).
 - f) On receipt of an application for exemption from attendance/enrolment at school, the Principal may grant part-day exemptions for students participating in school-based programs that have been approved by the Director, Public Schools NSW.
 - g) If parent(s)/guardian(s) request authority not to enroll their child, the Principal will consider this as an application for exemption from enrolment. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may make an application for their child's exemption from enrolment by completing an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School ([Appendix A](#)). On receipt of an application, the Principal may grant an exemption from enrolment at school where:
 - (1) A child turns six on or after 1 October and is engaged in accredited pre-school education; or
 - (2) The health, learning or social needs or disability of a child requires the child's continuation in an approved program.
 - h) Where the Principal decides to grant an exemption from attendance or enrolment in any of the above circumstances, and having regard to the factors in d) of these procedures, the Principal will complete a Certificate of Exemption under Section 25 of the Education Act, a copy of which is attached at [Appendix B](#). The Principal will provide the Certificate of Exemption to the parent(s)/guardian(s), and also place copies in the student file and in a 'Leave and Exemptions' file.
 - i) The Principal must not issue a Certificate of Exemption where child protection issues or risk of harm have been identified. Prior to granting a Certificate of Exemption the Principal will conduct a risk assessment to identify and manage any child protection issues. Where the Principal is aware of existing child protection concerns, the Principal will consult the Director, Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships prior to approval being granted.
 - j) If the Principal chooses to decline an application for exemption, a letter will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s), outlining the reasons for the decision. A template letter is attached at [Appendix C](#).
 - k) Holidays taken by students outside of school holiday periods are considered as absences, so a Certificate of Exemption cannot be granted for this purpose. However, parent(s)/guardian(s) may complete an Application for Extended Leave – Vacation/Travel, a copy of which is attached at [Appendix D](#). On receipt of such an application, the Principal may complete a Certificate of Extended Leave – Vacation/Travel, where the parent(s)/guardian(s) have demonstrated that the extended leave is in the student's best interests in the short and long term. The Principal may attach conditions to the Certificate where appropriate, such as requirements to complete reading or homework tasks. A copy of the Certificate of Extended Leave – Vacation/Travel is attached at [Appendix E](#). The Principal will provide the Certificate of Extended Leave to the parent(s)/guardian(s), who must produce it when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers. The

Principal will place copies of the Certificate on the student file and in a 'Leave and Exemptions' file.

Unexplained Absences

- a) If a student is absent without an explanation, the teacher or delegated office staff member will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone or email to ascertain why the student has been absent and to remind the parent of their responsibilities in relation to their child's attendance at school. The teacher may request the office staff to make this initial contact, and the office staff will make a written note to the teacher, to let them know the outcome of the phone call.
- b) If the office staff member is not able to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone, a letter or email will be sent to them, asking why the child was absent and reminding them to let the school know the reasons each time their child is absent.
- c) All activity is recorded in SchoolPro.
- d) Following a response from the parent(s)/guardian(s), the teacher will report to the College of Teachers and the Principal if there are any significant issues in relation to the absence.
- e) The teacher and/or the Principal make every attempt to address any issues of hindrance for the child attending school.

Poor Attendance Record

- a) If a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) have been unable or unwilling to provide a satisfactory reason, the teacher or the Principal contacts the parent(s)/guardian(s) to:
 - (1) Outline the School's and the parent's responsibility in relation to attendance and attach a copy or give website of the document '[Compulsory School Attendance – Information for Parents](#)', published by the NSW Department of Education and Communities, and available on the website of the NSW Association of Independent Schools.
 - (2) Outline the support the School can offer to assist the family in relation to attendance. Such support may include an appointment with the School Support Facilitator.
 - (3) Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting with the class teacher and Principal, to discuss ways to resolve the situation.
- b) The teacher stores notification on the student file in SchoolPro, and notes of any meeting/s are also saved on the student file. A template letter is attached at [Appendix E](#).

Where a student is absent for 30 days, the Principal will access the mandatory reporters section of the Keep Them Safe website (www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au), to determine whether a report is required.

Unacceptable Attendance Record

- a) Unacceptable attendance is clear when the child is not being given an opportunity to receive the appropriate education.
- b) If the parent(s)/guardian(s) do not respond to the School's correspondence, or cooperate with the School's requests in relation to their child's attendance:
- c) The Principal will contact Teaching and Educational Standards (NESAs) to notify that the parent(s)/guardian(s) do not appear to have fulfilled their responsibilities in relation to their child's attendance.
- d) The Principal sends a letter, this time by registered mail, which informs the parent(s)/guardian(s) that NESAs has been notified because of the lack of response or cooperation regarding the child's unexplained absence from school. A copy of this letter is stored on the student's file.
- e) In some cases, the Principal will need to forward documentation to the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) officer with home school liaison responsibilities, outlining the student's attendance record, and the efforts made by the School. In this case, the Principal will also advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the DEC has been contacted.
- f) At the end of this process, the Principal will send an email or letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s), notifying them that the child's enrolment at the School is no longer valid.

Storage of Registers

- a) The designated Clerical Officer ensures that the Register of Enrolments in SchoolPro is accurate and complete and backups are made on a regular basis.
- b) The designated Clerical Officer ensures that a photocopy of the Attendance Registers is made at the end of each term, to keep in each class file.
- c) At the end of each term the Attendance Register copies are scanned and stored electronically off site.

Archiving of Registers

- a) The Principal will determine when the Register of Enrolments and the Attendance Registers (roll books) will be disposed of.
- b) The Principal will ensure that the Register of Enrolments will be held in a storage site at the school for at least 5 years and will maintain backup records for the same length of time.
- c) The Principal will ensure that Attendance Registers will be held in a storage site at the school for at least 21 years after the last entry was made and will maintain backup records for the same length of time.

Associated Documents:

Parent Handbook
Enrolment Application Form
Application for Attendance Exemption Form
Application for Extended Leave Form
Exit Interview Forms
Class Roll books



Created by: HL

Date: Oct '15

Reviewed by: CD

Date: Nov '19

Enrolment Policy

RATIONALE

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education aims to embrace children and their families irrespective of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference and marital status and integrate them into our school community. The School endeavours to provide children with age-appropriate learning experiences as well as an environment that serves the freedom of the human spirit by emphasizing the balanced and disciplined education of the child as a whole being.

The school's vision statement is as follows:

“Rainbow Ridge School offers a universal education in balance and harmony with the environment, embracing Rudolf Steiner's philosophies and growing with the changing needs of time.”

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline the enrolment policy and procedures at Rainbow Ridge School.

POLICY

Information about the school

We encourage parents to inform themselves about our educational approach before proceeding with the enrolment process. An information package describes the School and can be obtained from the school or the website. The school website address is: www.rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au

Application for Enrolment

Parents obtain an application for enrolment form as part of the school's information package from the school office, the website or by post. The Enrolments Officer will acknowledge the application within two weeks.

Enrolment at Rainbow Ridge School is dependent on the outcome of the enrolment procedures including an interview and additional assessment (if required) to determine whether the school can meet the child's needs.

Priority will be granted to:

- Children registered on the school's waiting list
- Teachers' children
- Siblings of current enrolments and
- Transfers from other Steiner school

Interview

After Rainbow Ridge School has received the Application for Enrolment Form and all the required information, an interview will be arranged, if a vacancy exists in the appropriate class. If a vacancy does not exist, the applicant is invited to have the application put on the waiting list and will then be informed when a place becomes available.

The purpose of this interview is to:

- Enable the parent(s) and the child to meet the Class Teacher;
- Ensure parents are fully aware of what a Steiner Education at Rainbow Ridge School offers and how this may differ from other educational options;
- Enable parents to gauge if Rainbow Ridge School is the appropriate school for their child;
- Determine whether Rainbow Ridge School can meet the child's needs;
- Inform parents of administrative arrangements: i.e. school structure, fees, community involvement, expectations of parents, parent group etc.;
- Discuss the Parent Handbook and give parents an opportunity to ask questions;
- In the case of families of a child with additional needs, another school support staff member will also attend the interview, as appropriate;
- If a place is available parents will be advised and the enrolment process will proceed to the next steps.

The school may accept children for enrolment when it considers that:

- It is in the best interest of the child;
- The school can meet the educational needs of the child (including children with additional needs) within resources available;
- The family understands and is prepared to actively support the ethos of the school, including signing an Enrolment Agreement form that contains the conditions of entry into the school;
- The teacher considers they can develop a working relationship with the parents and the child;
- There is a vacancy in the class in accordance with enrolment policy.

The school may not accept children for enrolment when it considers that:

The school is not able to meet the educational needs of the child. This decision can only be made after guidelines have been followed for students with additional needs. (See Guidelines for Applications for Enrolment of Students with Additional Needs below).

- Families do not support and/or embrace the school ethos and policies.
- The enrolment is part-time and/or short-term.
- The class is full.

Additional Needs and/or Disabilities

Parents must disclose their children's additional needs e.g. physical, emotional, behavioural, sensory, learning difficulties or other relevant information at the time of application. The school will require reports and assessments in order to determine whether it can meet the child's special needs. The selection criteria are not intended to discriminate against students with special conditions. However, as an independent school, resources that can be made available to support children with specific learning difficulties are limited, affecting the provision for such students.

The school follows the Disability Standards for Education introduced by the Commonwealth Government which have been formulated under the paragraph 31(1)(b) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Age of School Entry

Children shall turn six during their kindergarten year. Every child is individually assessed by the Kindergarten Teacher to determine the child's 'readiness' to enter Class 1.

Occasionally, a kindergarten child may not be considered ready to progress to Class 1 and will be recommended for another year in kindergarten. Parents and/or Guardians are included in this process.

Offer of a place and acceptance by signing the Agreement Form

The final steps of the enrolment process are taken after the interview with the teacher. The application is referred to the College of Teachers, or its designated representative, for approval.

If a place is to be offered a letter of offer will be sent along with the **Family and Child Enrolment Contract** to be returned completed before the next step in the process.

The child is formally enrolled when the signed enrolment contracts have been received, administrative requirements are met and processed by the office. The Class Teacher will make contact to arrange the child's first day at the school.

The Term's Trial System

All students enrolling at Rainbow Ridge School are initially accepted for one term, until both parents and teachers have had the opportunity to see how the student is settling in. This allows the school to evaluate whether the child is benefiting from what the school has to offer and is responding well to their new school environment. It also gives the parents the opportunity to evaluate whether this is the right choice of school for their child. In some cases, and in consultation with parents, this trial period might be extended; if the situation requires it, the parents or the school may terminate enrolment before the completion of the term.

Follow up

The Class Teacher will contact the parent to arrange a meeting within the first few weeks of the term to see how the child is settling in. The teacher and the parents will meet again before the end of the term to determine the outcome of the trial period at which time the child's enrolment is fully accepted or extended.

Guidelines for Applications for Enrolment of Students with Additional Needs

All students applying for enrolment will be considered in line with the Enrolment Guidelines. These guidelines are intended to be applied flexibly, to suit the circumstances of each application.

When considering any application for enrolment, the school will consider whether the school is able to cater for the student's individual needs (including any additional needs). This will be achieved by working through an individual planning process to identify any reasonable adjustments and the school's ability to meet the student's needs.

Where a child is considered to have additional needs as perceived by the parents, the Principal or Class Teacher, or a diagnosed disability, these will be explored and documented throughout the enrolment process. The nature of the additional needs or disability will be clarified through consultation with the parent or guardian in the interview process, contact with previous school (where appropriate) and available reports.

If the decision is taken to enrol a student with a disability, any strategies that need to be put into place to accommodate the student's additional needs – including ongoing needs – should be identified before communicating/announcing the enrolment decision.

The College of Teachers and the Principal supports the Class Teacher throughout this process.

Individual Planning Process

Document that the following has been completed:

- The family's views have been heard and the school can demonstrate it has seriously considered relevant issues regarding their child's enrolment.
- Identify student's additional needs or disability – this should be a collaborative approach with the family and school and possibly relevant experts. The Principal may seek advice and consultation from the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) (AIS).
- Request the family to provide information about the student's needs as part of the individual planning process. Relevant information will assist in identifying any adjustments and could include:
 - previous school or preschool reports, noting current achievements and areas of need
 - psychologist's report documenting functional skills and recommended strategies for working with the student
 - speech pathologist's report documenting receptive and expressive language skills and any recommendations for programs or technology in the classroom
 - occupational and physiotherapy reports documenting self-help skills and mobility, including assistive technology reports recommending equipment and access audits regarding access to premises
 - medical specialist reports identifying issues which need to be considered by the school
 - vision and hearing reports documenting level of functioning and recommended strategies
- The teacher and the Principal prepare a detailed analysis of the student's additional needs for the initial years of the student's schooling and considers potential needs in the years following enrolment, being flexible about solutions to potential difficulties.
- Request feedback and suggestions from relevant staff in the school and external special educators about the possible impact of the student's enrolment on the school and possible adjustments.
- If the school makes an enquiry of a third party, care will be taken to protect the privacy of the applying student and their family. Parental permission in writing will be sought if needing to speak to preschools, other schools or specialists.
- Identify the adjustments necessary for the student to access and participate in the school before determining what is **reasonable**. Advice from an independent expert may be obtained.
- Developing a **reasonable adjustment** requires an **informed judgement** using input from the student, student's specialists, school staff and possibly special education advice to support the school.
- Objective notes and records will be taken of all discussions and interviews with parents and kept on file. Documentation will be kept outlining the people involved in the process, the issues raised, objective notes on possible adjustments, agreed actions and a timeline.
- The family will be kept informed about the progress of the application.
- As part of the planning process, it is possible to consider all options available to the student. This could be sensitive and is best addressed through the planning process by the collaborative team.

- After assessing whether there are other appropriate options and whether the adjustment may need to be changed over the period of the student's education, the Principal will decide, in consultation with teacher and relevant experts, **whether to make the adjustment. A school does not have to make a reasonable adjustment if by doing so it would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the school.**
- **Provide the adjustment within a reasonable time.** The school is entitled to ask for relevant information in considering a reasonable adjustment. This should be provided by the family in a timely manner.
- If the school accepts the enrolment, an ongoing process will be implemented to manage issues which might require further adjustments. The ongoing use of a collaborative team approach will be used.
- It will be determined if the student meets the requirements for Integration Funding from AIS.
- Determining whether there is an unjustifiable hardship involves a similar balancing process and should be done in consideration of AIS advice.
- If the school considers that it may have to decline the enrolment, the Principal will be involved, seeking advice from AIS and communicate the preliminary decision to the family. The school must be able to demonstrate that it is unable to meet that student's needs without unjustifiable hardship, having regard to the student's current condition and prognosis.
- Before making a final decision about adjustments to be made, or declining an application for enrolment, the Principal must have communicated the preliminary decision to the family and invite their input to the school.

Adjustments are measures/actions that identify the type and level of support required by the student with a disability or additional needs to **access and participate** in all aspects of school life.

An **adjustment is reasonable** if it **balances the interests of all parties affected**. Issues which are relevant to the balancing exercise include:

- the impact of the disability itself on the student
- the views of the student or parents/guardians of the student
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on the student
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on others including students and staff
- the costs and benefits of making the adjustment



Created by: LB

Date: May 2015

Reviewed by: CD

Date: Feb 2019

Child Protection Policy

RATIONALE

The safety, protection and well-being of all students is of fundamental importance to the School.

The School and its employees, contractors and volunteers have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and welfare of students including:

- a) a duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students;
- b) obligations under child protection legislation; and
- c) obligations under work health and safety legislation. There are three key pieces of child protection legislation in New South Wales:
 - a. the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) (the **Care and Protection Act**);
 - b. the *Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012* (NSW) (the **WWC Act**); and
 - c. the *Ombudsman Act 1974* (NSW) (the **Ombudsman Act**).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to summarise the obligations imposed by child protection legislation on the School and on employees, contractors and volunteers at the School and to provide guidelines as to how the School will deal with certain matters.

Child protection is a community responsibility.

POLICY

1. **Obligation to Report**

- a. While we set out below circumstances in which the **legislation** requires reporting of child protection issues, the School requires all staff to report **any concern** about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person to the Principal and/or Child Protection Officer (CPO).

- b. If the allegation involves the Principal and/or Child Protection Officer (CPO), you are required to report to the Chair of the School's Board of Directors.
 - c. This obligation is part of the School's overall commitment to the safety, welfare and well-being of children.
2. **Obligation to Comply**
- a. Our School will comply with the relevant Acts
 - b. The Principal will be responsible to ensure that the requirements of the Act and the requirements of School policy are carried out.
3. **Definitions and expansions** – see below Parts A, B and C for further explanations under the relevant Acts.
4. **Other policies**
- a. Please note that there are other School policies that relate to child protection
 - b. (but not limited to):
 - i. the School's Code of Professional Conduct, which sets out information about the standards of behaviour expected of all employees, contractors and volunteers of the School;
 - ii. the Work Health and Safety Policy which summarises the obligations imposed by work health and safety legislation on the school and workers;
 - iii. Working with Children Check Policy and Procedure
 - iv. Social Behaviour Policy
 - v. Anti-Bullying Policy
 - vi. Child Protection Officer Duty Statement.

PART A: The Care and Protection Act

The Care and Protection Act provides for mandatory reporting of children at risk of significant harm.

NOTE: Any concern regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student must be reported to the Principal.

1. Who is a mandatory reporter?

Under the Care and Protection Act persons who:

- a) in the course of their employment, deliver services including health care; welfare, education, children's services and residential services, to children; or
- b) hold a management position in an organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of services including health care, welfare, education, children's services and residential services, to children, are mandatory reporters.

All teachers are mandatory reporters. Other School employees may also be mandatory reporters. If you are not sure whether you are a mandatory reporter you should speak to the Principal .

2. When must a report be made to Community Services?

2.1 What is the threshold?

A mandatory reporter must, where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child (under 16 years of age) is at risk of significant harm, report to Community Services as soon as practicable, the name, or a description, of the child and the grounds for suspecting that the child is at risk of significant harm.

In addition, while not mandatory, the School considers that a report should also be made to Community Services where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a young person (16 or 17 years of age) is at risk of significant harm and there are current concerns about the safety, welfare and well-being of the young person.

2.2 Reasonable grounds

'Reasonable grounds' refers to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm, based on:

- a) first hand observations of the child, young person or family
- b) what the child, young person, parent or another person has disclosed
- c) what can reasonably be inferred based on professional training and / or experience.

'Reasonable grounds' does not mean that you are required to confirm your suspicions or have clear proof before making a report.

2.3 Significant harm

A child or young person is 'at risk of significant harm' if current concerns exist for the safety, welfare or well-being of the child or young person because of the presence, to a significant extent, of any one or more of the following circumstances:

- a) the child's or young person's basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met,
- b) the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive necessary medical care,
- c) in the case of a child or young person who is required to attend school in accordance with the Education Act 1990 —the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive an education in accordance with that Act,
- d) the child or young person has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated,

- e) the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, therefore, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm,
- f) a parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child or young person that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm,
- g) the child was the subject of a pre-natal report under section 25 of the Care and Protection Act and the birth mother of the child did not engage successfully with support services to eliminate, or minimise to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk factors that gave rise to the report.

2.4 Other relevant definitions

Policy definition of significant harm

- a) A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or well-being of the child or young person are present to a significant extent.
- b) What is meant by 'significant' in the phrase 'to a significant extent' is that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent.
- c) What is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child or young person's safety, welfare or well-being.
- d) In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial, and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child after the child's birth.
- e) The significance can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these.
- f) A Child is a person under the age of 16 years for the purposes of the Care and Protection Act.

Child abuse and neglect

There are different forms of child abuse. These include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

- a) Neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.
- b) Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation.
- c) Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints.
- d) Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.

- e) Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.
- f) Although it is possible for 'one-off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child.
- g) This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Child sexual abuse is a crime.

Child wellbeing concerns are safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns for a child or young person that do not meet the mandatory reporting threshold, i.e. risk of significant harm.

Young person means a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years for the purposes of the Care and Protection Act.

3. What should you do if you consider that a mandatory report is required?

Reporting by the School about these matters to Community Services and, where necessary, the police, is generally undertaken by the Principal and/or Child Protection Officer (CPO). This is in accordance with best practice principles and is the expectation of the School.

If you have a concern that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm you should contact the Principal as soon as possible to discuss whether the case reaches the threshold of 'risk of significant harm' and the steps required to report the matter.

However, if there is an immediate danger to the child or young person and neither the School Education Administrator and/or Child Protection Officer (CPO), are contactable, you should speak to the Police and/or the Child Protection Helpline directly and then advise the School Education Administrator and/or Child Protection Officer (CPO) as soon as possible.

If the Principal receives information that may be subject to mandatory reporting, the Principal will:

- Obtain relevant details of the matter of concern.
- Assess the scenario using the Online Mandatory Reporter Guide (at <http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au>)
- Notify the Department of Family and Community Services if required (the Mandatory Reporter Line is 13 36 27)
- Advise the referrer of the decision to report or not to report; and
- Record details of the process and of the decision.

Please note that:

- You are not required to, and must not, undertake any investigation of the matter yourself.
- You are not to inform the parents or caregivers that a report to Community Services has been made.
- You are required to deal with the matter confidentially and only disclose it to the persons referred to above or as required to comply with your mandatory reporting obligations.
- Failure to maintain confidentiality will not only be a breach of this policy but could expose you to potential civil proceedings for defamation.

4. What should you do if you have a concern that is below the mandatory reporting threshold?

While the Care and Protection Act outlines a mandatory reporter's obligation to report to Community Services, as an employee of this School, any concern regarding the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a student must be reported to the Principal.

You are required to deal with all reports regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student with confidentiality and only disclose it to the Principal and any other person the Principal nominates. Failure to do so will be a breach of this policy.

PART B: The Ombudsman Act

1 Responsibilities

1.1 General

Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act requires the heads of certain agencies, including non-government schools in New South Wales, to notify the New South Wales Ombudsman of all allegations of reportable conduct by an 'employee' and the outcome of the School's investigation of these allegations.

An 'employee' includes employees, contractors, volunteers, and work experience participants. In this part of the Policy, where there is a reference to an employee, it includes all of these persons.

1.2 The Ombudsman

- must keep under scrutiny the systems for preventing reportable conduct by employees of non-government schools and the handling of, or response to, reportable allegations (including allegations which are exempt from notification) or convictions;
- must receive and assess notifications from non-government schools concerning reportable conduct or reportable convictions;
- is required to oversee or monitor the conduct of investigations by non-government schools into allegations of reportable or reportable convictions;
- must determine whether an investigation that has been monitored has been conducted properly, and whether appropriate action has been taken as a result of the investigation;

- e) may directly investigate an allegation of reportable conduct or reportable conviction against an employee of a non-government school, or the handling of or response to such a matter (eg arising out of complaints by the person who is the subject of an allegation); and
- f) may undertake 'own motion' investigations of non-government schools where the Ombudsman considers it appropriate to do so, including where there is evidence of systemic failure or serious conflict of interests.

1.3 Head of Agency

At Rainbow Ridge School, the Head of Agency is the Principal. Under the Ombudsman Act the Principal must:

- a) set up systems within their organisation to ensure that they are advised of any allegations of reportable conduct against employees;
- b) notify the Ombudsman as soon as possible and no later than thirty days after being made aware of an allegation;
- c) notify the Ombudsman whether or not the School plans to take disciplinary or other action in relation to an employee who is the subject of a reportable allegation or conviction, and the reasons for taking or not taking any such action as soon as practicable; and
- d) provide the Ombudsman with any documentary and other information as the Ombudsman may from time to time request to assist in the Ombudsman's monitoring of an investigation.

1.4 Your obligations to report

You must report any concerns you may have about any other employee engaging in reportable conduct or any allegation of 'reportable conduct' that has been made to you (about you or about any other employee), to the Principal. If you are not sure whether the conduct is reportable conduct but consider that it is inappropriate behaviour you must still report it.

You must also report to the Principal if you become aware that an employee has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving reportable conduct. This includes information relating to yourself. If the allegation involves the Principal, you are required to report to the Chairman of the School's Board of Directors.

1.5 Contact for parents

The Principal is the contact point for parents if they wish to report an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee. If the allegation involves the Principal, you are required to report to the Chairman of the School's Board of Directors.

2 What is reportable conduct?

2.1 Definition of reportable conduct

Reportable conduct is defined as:

- a) any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence or an offence involving child abuse material);
- b) any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child; and
- c) any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

Reportable conduct does not extend to:

- a) conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards; or
- b) the use of physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures; or
- c) conduct of a class or kind exempted from being reportable conduct by the Ombudsman under section 25CA.

3. What happens when an allegation of reportable conduct is made?

3.1 Initial steps

Once an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is received, the Principal and the Child Protection Officer (CPO) is required to:

- determine on face value whether it is an allegation of reportable conduct;
- assess whether Community Services or the Police need to be notified (ie, if reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm or criminal offence);
- notify the child's parents (unless to do so would be likely to compromise the investigation or any investigation by Community Services or the Police);
- notify the Ombudsman within 30 days of receiving the allegation;
- carry out a risk assessment and take action to reduce/remove risk, where appropriate; and
- investigate the allegation or appoint someone, such as the Child Protection Officer, to investigate the allegation.

3.2 Investigation principles

The School will:

- be mindful of the principles of procedural fairness;
- inform the person subject of the allegation (PSOA) of the substance of any allegations made against them and provide them with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations;
- make reasonable enquiries or investigations before making a decision;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- conduct the investigation without unjustifiable delay;

- handle the matter as confidentially as possible; and
- provide appropriate support for all parties including the child/children, witnesses and the PSOA.

3.3 Investigation steps

In an investigation the Principal and the Child Protection Officer (CPO) or appointed investigator will generally:

- interview relevant witnesses and gather relevant documentation;
- provide a letter of allegation to the PSOA;
- interview the PSOA;
- consider relevant evidence and make a preliminary finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman guidelines;
- inform the PSOA of the preliminary finding and provide them with an opportunity to respond;
- consider any response provided by the PSOA;
- make a final finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman Guidelines;
- decide on the disciplinary action, if any, to be taken against the PSOA;
- apply the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG) Guidelines and decide if the matter is reportable to the OCG; and
- send the final report to the Ombudsman and report to the OCG (where required) (see Part C).

The steps followed in the investigation process will be guided by the “Recommended Protocols for Internal Investigative and Disciplinary Proceedings, 2001” (IEU/AIS) as updated from time to time.

The steps outlined above may need to be varied on occasion to meet particular circumstances. For example, it may be necessary to take different steps where the matter is also being investigated by Community Services or the NSW Police.

A PSOA may have an appropriate support person with them during the interview process. Such a person is there for support only and as a witness to the proceedings and not as an advocate or to take an active role.

4. Risk management

Risk management means identifying the potential for an incident or accident to occur and taking steps to reduce the likelihood or severity of its occurrence. The Principal is responsible for risk management throughout the investigation and will assess risk at the beginning of the investigation, during and at the end of the investigation.

4.1 Initial risk assessment

One of the first steps following an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is for the Principal and the Child Protection Officer (CPO) to conduct a risk assessment. The purpose of this initial risk assessment is to identify and minimise the risks to:

- the child(ren) who are the subject of the allegation;
- other children with whom the employee may have contact;
- the PSOA;
- the School; and
- the proper investigation of the allegation.

The factors that will be considered during the risk assessment include:

- the nature and seriousness of the allegations;
- the vulnerability of the child(ren) the PSOA has contact with at work;
- the nature of the position occupied by the PSOA;
- the level of supervision of the PSOA; and
- the disciplinary history or safety of the PSOA and possible risks to the investigation.

The Principal and the Child Protection Officer (CPO) will take appropriate action to minimise risks. This may include the PSOA being temporarily relieved of some duties, being required not to have contact with certain students, or being suspended from duty. When taking action to address any risks identified, the School will take into consideration both the needs of the child(ren) and the PSOA.

Please Note: A decision to take action on the basis of a risk assessment is not indicative of the findings of the matter. Until the investigation is completed and a finding is made, any action, such as an employee being suspended, is not considered to be an indication that the alleged conduct by the employee did occur.

4.2 Ongoing Risk Management

The Principal and the Child Protection Officer (CPO) will continually monitor risk during the investigation including in the light of any new relevant information that emerges.

4.3 Risk Management at the Conclusion of the Investigation

At the completion of the investigation, a finding will be made in relation to the allegation and a decision made by the Principal regarding what action, if any, is required in relation to the PSOA, the child(ren) involved and any other parties.

5. What information will be provided to the PSOA?

The PSOA will be advised:

- that an allegation has been made against them (at the appropriate time in the investigation); and
- of the substance of the allegation, or of any preliminary finding and the final finding.

The PSOA does not automatically have the right to:

- know or have confirmed the identity of the person who made the allegation; or
- be shown the content of the Ombudsman notification form or other investigation material that reveals all information provided by other employees or witnesses.

The WWC Act enables a person who has a finding referred to the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) under the Act to request access to the records held by the School in relation to the finding of misconduct involving children (see Part C section 3)

6. Disciplinary Action

As a result of the allegations, investigation or final findings, the School may take disciplinary action against the PSOA (including termination of employment).

In relation to any disciplinary action the School will:

- give the PSOA details of the proposed disciplinary action; and
- give the PSOA a reasonable opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

7. Confidentiality

It is important when dealing with allegations of reportable conduct that the matter is dealt with as confidentially as possible.

The School requires that all parties maintain confidentiality during the investigation including in relation to the handling and storing of documents and records.

Records about allegations of reportable conduct against employees will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School office and will be accessible only by the Principal and the Child Protection Officer (CPO) or with the Principal's express authority.

No employee may comment to the media about an allegation of reportable conduct unless expressly authorised by the Principal to do so.

If you become aware of a breach of confidentiality in relation to a reportable conduct allegation you must advise the Principal.

8. Record Keeping

All allegations, notifications, records of interviews, findings and reports will be maintained in a secure filing system that is separate from the regular school staff files and strictly confidential to the Principal and the Child Protection Officer (CPO) only.

PART C: Working With Children Act

1. General

The Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG) is responsible for employment screening for child related employment. A Working With Children Check (WWCC) is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and review of reported workplace misconduct findings. The result of a WWCC is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring by the OCG, and any relevant new records which appear against a cleared applicant's name may lead to the WWCC being revoked.

It is the responsibility of the child-related worker to ensure that when they are eligible to apply for a WWCC or when their WWCC is up for renewal that they do so.

If you are an existing employee, employed at this school in paid child-related work prior to the commencement of the new Working With Children systemⁱ, or you are a volunteer, your requirement to obtain a WWCC will be phased in over a five year period, according to the phase in schedule developed by the OCG.

2. Responsibilities

The object of the WWC Act is to protect children:

- by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work; and
- by requiring persons engaged in child-related work to have working with children check clearances.

Schools are required to:

- verify online and record the status of each child-related worker’s WWCC;
- only employⁱⁱ or engage child-related workers or eligible volunteers who have a valid WWCC; and
- report findings of misconduct involving children made against child-related workers or volunteers.

Child-related workers and eligible volunteers are required to:

- a) hold and maintain a valid WWCC;
- not engage in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a bar; and
- report to the Principal if they are no longer eligible for a WWCC, the status of their WWCC changes or are notified by the OCG that they are subjected to a risk assessment.

All volunteers are required to:

- sign the Volunteer Statutory Declaration. Volunteers who attend the school as volunteers on more than 4 occasions will be required to have a WWCC,ⁱⁱⁱ
- be aware and follow the expectations of conduct expressed in the Rainbow Ridge School Staff Code of Conduct

3 Relevant Definitions

3.1 Bars

Final bar

This bar is applied based on a decision made by the OCG, following a risk assessment. This person is barred against working with children.

Interim bar

An interim bar is issued to high risk individuals to prevent them from continuing to work with children while a risk assessment is conducted. An interim bar may be applied for up to 12 months. If an interim bar remains in place for six months or longer, it may be appealed against through the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

Not everyone who is subject to a risk assessment will receive an interim bar; only those representing a serious and immediate risk to children.

Interim bars are issued only for risks considered likely to result in a final bar.

3.2 Child-related work

Child-related work includes, but not limited to work in the following sectors^{iv}:

- early education and child care including education and care service, child care centers and other child care;
- education schools and other educational institutions and private coaching or tuition of children;
 - a) residential services including boarding schools, homestays more than three weeks, residential services and overnight camps; or
 - b) transport services for children including school bus services, taxi services for children with disability and supervision of school road crossings.

3.3 Child-related worker

A 'child-related worker' is a person who has physical contact or face to face contact with children in work outlined above in 3.2, including schools. This may include volunteer work.

A child-related worker may commence work once they have completed the WWCC application process. An application is completed when the online application form is complete and the worker's identity has been proven at the NSW motor registry or Council Agency and the fee has been paid (if in paid work).

If you are unclear if your role is child-related you should speak with the Principal.

3.4 Disqualified person

A disqualified person is a person who has been convicted, or against whom proceedings have been commenced for a disqualifying offence outlined in Schedule 2 of WWCC Act.^v

A disqualified person is a person who has a bar preventing them from working with children in child-related work.

It is an offence for an employer to knowingly engage a child-related worker when they do not hold a WWCC or who has a bar or an interim bar.

It is an offence for an employee to engage in child-related worker when they do not hold a WWCC or has a bar or an interim bar.

3.5 Findings of misconduct involving children

The school will report to the OCG when a finding has been made that the person (an employee of the school) subject to the finding engaged in:

- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child, including grooming of a child; or
- any serious physical assault of a child.^{vi}

The School will advise the person that the OCG has been notified of a finding of misconduct involving children.

The WWC Act enables a person who has a finding referred to the OCG under the Act to request access to the records held by the School in relation to the finding of misconduct involving children.

3.6 Reporting body

The WWC Act defines Independent Schools that are members of the AISNSW as a reporting bodies. Section 35 of the WWC Act requires this School to notify the OCG of findings of misconduct involving children made against a child-related worker. The school may also be obliged to report, amend or provide additional information to the OCG as outlined in the WWC Act.

3.7 Risk assessment

Risk assessment is an evaluation of an individual's suitability for child-related work. The OCG will conduct a risk assessment on a person's suitability to work with children when a new record is received which triggers a risk assessment. This may include an offence under Schedule 1, pattern of behaviour or offences involving violence of sexual misconduct representing a risk to children, findings of misconduct involving children or notification made to OCG by the Ombudsman.

3.8 Working With Children Check Clearance

A Working with Children Check (WWCC) means authorisation under the WWC Act to engage in child-related work. An employee will be issued with a number which is to be provided to the School to verify the status of an employee's WWCC.

ⁱ The New Working With Children system commenced in NSW on 15 June 2013. The previous Working With Children system ceased 7 June 2013.

ⁱⁱ As of 15 June 2013, existing employees and volunteers are subjected to a phase in schedule developed by the OCG. This can be found at www.kids.gov.nsw.au (which may be updated from time to time by the OCG).

ⁱⁱⁱ Commencement of Volunteer Statutory Declaration to be in line with the OCG release date.

^{iv} Further information at Part 2 Division 1 Section 6 Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 found at <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+51+2012+cd+0+N>

^v Schedule 2 disqualifying offence can be found at: <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+51+2012+cd+0+N>

^{vi} Further details of obligations of employers can be found in the *Information for Employers* guidelines and/or *Information for reporting bodies* factsheet developed by the OCG found at www.kids.nsw.gov.au