

DANDENONG RANGES STEINER SCHOOL

Annual Report 2021

www.drss.vic.edu.au

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Contents

DRSS Board of Governors 2021	3
Chairperson's Report – 2021	4
Introduction	4
General Business	4
Financials.....	5
Processes and Compliance.....	5
In Closing	5
College of Teachers 2021 Annual Report	6
Publicity Fundraising Report 2021	8
Finance and Administration Report.....	9
2021 Overview	9
Income and expenditure	9
2021 School Operating Income.....	10
2021 Funding Income	10
2021 Operating Costs.....	11
Asset improvement.....	11
Enrolments.....	12
Management Team Report.....	13
Parent Survey	13
Written Reports	14
Oral Reporting – 'Reporting Day'	14
Class Parent Meetings.....	14
Overall satisfaction with written information on child's progress	15
Storm.....	15
School Review	15
Strategic Plan	15
Staff	16

DRSS Board of Governors 2021

Chris Key	Chairperson
Aaron Harvey	General Member – Business and Environmental Planning expertise
Glenn Rawlinson	General Member - Steiner Education/Anthroposophy
Jessica Lothian	General Member – Legal expertise (from September)
Robert Glavas	General Member – Legal expertise (until May)
Suzie Brannelly	Deputy Chairperson/General Member – Property expertise
Wolfgang Maschek	General Member – Steiner Education/Anthroposophy
Cath Lanigan	Ex-officio Member (Secretary)
Dana Jindra	Ex-officio Member (College representative)

Chairperson's Report – 2021

Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education.

Rudolf Steiner

Introduction

2021. One could almost just call it “2020 redux”. Thank goodness that by the end of the year our school was open and children were back on site, much to the relief of parents and children everywhere. The Board would like to acknowledge the monumental efforts put in by our school staff, from our teachers, to our aides, to our admin staff, our cleaners, everyone, in supporting the children in their journey through 2021. We also would like to acknowledge the efforts our families went to in supporting their children both in schooling from home and in transitioning back to on campus learning.

General Business

The Board of Governors at the close of 2021 consisted of Suzie Brannelly (deputy Chairperson), Aaron Harvey, Chris Key (Chairperson), Jess Lothian, Wolfgang Maschek & Glenn Rawlinson with Cath Lanigan attending in her role as Business Manager, Dana Jindra as Educational Facilitator and College Representative and Robyn Jacobs as minute taker. It was with much regret that the Board accepted Robert Glavas’ resignation as he pursues his career as a barrister, we thank him for all he’s done for the School both in his time on the Board and in his time representing the school in his official capacity. In the closing moments of 2021, we welcomed Jess Lothian to the Board and look forward to her input over the next year.

The start of 2021 saw the School interview for the position of Educational Facilitator, resulting in us hiring Dana Jindra to the role. Dana previously worked at Little Yarra Steiner School and has been a wonderful addition to the school administration team.

The Board approved works on the Kindergarten, giving the Kinder a beautiful verandah and expanded undercover space, a much needed and longed for upgrade! As I write this, I’m reminded that in 2020 we also approved a verandah for the Class 3&4 building, I feel that perhaps we’re getting typecast as the “verandah approval” Board!



Financials

The Committee continued to work within strict budgetary guidelines to ensure the ongoing viability of the school whilst also maintaining the integrity and excellence of our standard of education. We're pleased to report that the school is in a healthy financial position, and in 2021 continued to maintain our current enrolments and attract new families.

Processes and Compliance

In 2021, the Board was excited to work with Baxter & Jacobson on our new Masterplan. We look forward to having a whole-school meeting in Term 3 to bring the details of the masterplan to the school community.

2021 also saw the first year of our strategic plan, with the school moving purposefully towards many of the "golden arrows" described within the plan. The strategic plan has recently been collated into a beautiful document which will be distributed among all families at the school so you have an insight into the directions the school is heading.

The Board formally adopted business plans for both the Kindergarten and the School, spanning 2021-2025, and reviewed and approved the Emergency Management Plan – quite an important document given the area our school is located in.

Finally, we finished the year with an audit from the VRQA (Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority), the Victorian education and training regulator. Whilst such an audit is never a fun task, our new Educational Facilitator and Business Manager guided the school through this process and this is now almost ticked off for another five years. The Board thanks Dana, Cath and all staff who undertook to assist with the audit process.

In Closing

Once again, another tough year to be involved in a school! But despite all the things the world threw at us, our school has made it through, hopefully just as strong as before.

I will end with what is becoming a standard ending, and not just because I'm too lazy to edit it out – I mean every word! Without the people who make up our community, we wouldn't be the school we are, and I'm grateful to be a part of such a wonderful community, and to have had the honour of chairing the Board.

Chris Key, Chairperson, Board of Governors



College of Teachers 2021 Annual Report

In 2021 we continued our study of Partnerships of Hope by Christopher Schaefer. Our Philosophy Statement was finalised with the College readily accepting Wolfgang Maschek's suggested final amendments. We also completed the lengthy process of updating our College Charter and now have a document that reflects the functions of our group and the fundamental essence of our values and approach. There were many things to consider in this work and our aim to create a document that is a true reflection of our group has been achieved.

Our Golden Arrow Approach to Remote Learning was reviewed, with a particular focus on the use of the Teams Platform in an effort to bring the most simple and streamlined program to the families in our school. This followed feedback from some parents who asked for a more user friendly platform and more consistency across year levels.

Policy work has also been an ongoing process, with reviews of those policies that have a pedagogical bearing. The Admissions Policy was reviewed to determine the best place for official point of entry into the school following advice from the school's lawyer.



College approved the implementation of the Respectful Relationships program and teachers have met to discuss ways in which this can be implemented in a way that reflects the approaches of our school and our current curriculum material.

With a view to meeting the minimum standards of the VRQA audit, College reviewed the school's approach to reporting and assessment. The implementation of the SchoolPro database system resulted in a more effective, timely and efficient reporting processes.

As always occurs in Term 2 in College, we reviewed the Class Teacher journey and heard a detailed picture of the 2022 Class One cohort. Through this process, we sadly accepted our Class Six teacher, Dionne Brown's, resignation as she and her family moved north to warmer weather. Thus began the process of finding our new Class One Teacher. It took two lots of

advertising and interviewing, but in the end, we couldn't be happier with the appointment of Casey Meyen. Casey being a Steiner graduate herself, had worked in the school for some time as a Classroom Aide and had gained lots of experience as a teacher of children on-site during remote learning. We were thrilled to learn she was ready to put her hand up and step forwards into this new role.

College worked with the Management Team to finalise a Staffing Plan for 2022 in light of the ongoing vaccine mandates. We also reviewed the first six months of Dana being in the new role of Education Facilitator and discussed the role of the College Chair and how this might look in 2022 and beyond. A selection process for a new member of the Management Team took place following the news that Karin Penny would step down from this role in order to focus on a 2022 audit of the kindergarten. The tenure of the College Chair position was brought to College by the Management Team and a decision was made to increase this to a two-year tenured position to allow the Chair time to become fully immersed in the role. Emily Hehir was appointed as the new CoT representative for 2022.

It was a busy but very productive year for the College of Teachers. With renewed vigour we look forward to the continuation of a largely uninterrupted year in which we can deepen our study work and move forward as the pedagogical heart organ of the school.

Tamsenne Grogan
College Chair

Publicity Fundraising Report 2021

The Publicity and Fundraising Group is an active working group of the school with seven current members. The group's primary focus is to host events that showcase the school, bring the school community together, and bring in additional funds. The members are parents and staff of Dandenong Ranges Steiner School. In 2021, the Chair of the group was Michaela Tory and the Treasurer was Uri Cohen.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions and school closures, the scope of work for the 2021 school year was greatly impacted. The group continued its focus on social media marketing, virtual tours, talks and information evenings.



In 2021, we did manage to hold a few on-site events including a Childhood and Technology Public Talk, all three of our Education Week Events, our Easter Fundraiser and our Mother's Day Stall.



Sadly, we were not able to host our Father's Day Stall or our annual Spring Fair and Market Day (the school's largest fundraising activity).

The Publicity and Fundraising Group did not make any profit for the school this year as we made purchases in advance of some of our fundraising events but were unable to hold all of the events. We did, however, raise \$1,700 for the

Indigenous Literacy Foundation in 2021 through table and card sales.

The school's new Publicity brochure came out in print early in the year and is being used at all of our Publicity events.

Karen Frazier Walsh

Finance and Administration Report

2021 Overview

2021 was a good operational year, with income of \$3.2m, only slightly down on 2020, and expenditure of almost \$3.1m, up 500K from 2020, leaving us with a modest surplus of \$127,260. Building on the surpluses of the past three years, this still leaves the school in a strong financial position to continue to deliver a high quality Steiner education and look at expanding our programs and facilities in line with our Master Plan and Strategic Plan. Thanks to Finance Officer, Belinda Mackley, again this year for her excellent work in maintaining our accounts.

Income and expenditure

School

School income for the year was almost \$3m, only slightly down on 2020, which was positive given there was no Federal Government Covid-19 subsidies offered as there was in 2020 which inflated our 2020 income.

Tuition fees received in 2021 were \$763,504 - a 46% increase on 2020 when substantial discounts and bursaries were provided to families due to the pandemic. A generous bursary fund was still maintained in 2021 as the pandemic continued to impact families.

Expenditure was \$2.7 million, an increase of 369K largely due to increased staffing costs - primarily more classroom aides (for which we receive government funding) and the new role of Education Facilitator. Property and services costs were slightly down on 2020.

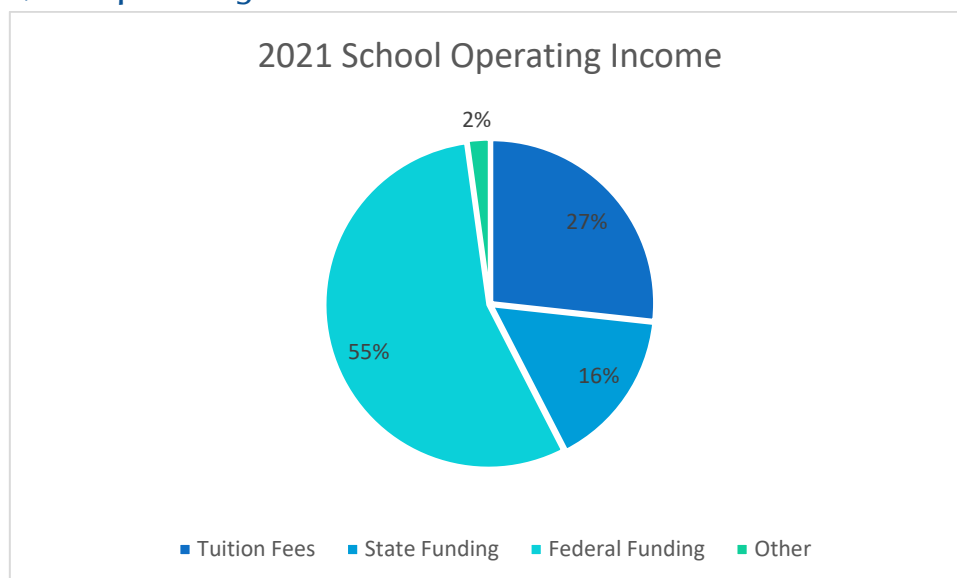
School operations returned a surplus of \$224,825.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten income was up 12% on 2020 with \$248,584 received. The breakdown of income received was very different to previous years with the State Government providing a subsidy to the school to provide free Big Kinder for the year as well as a discount on Little Kinder. Subsequently fee income was low at \$27,713 and grant income was high at \$218,204.

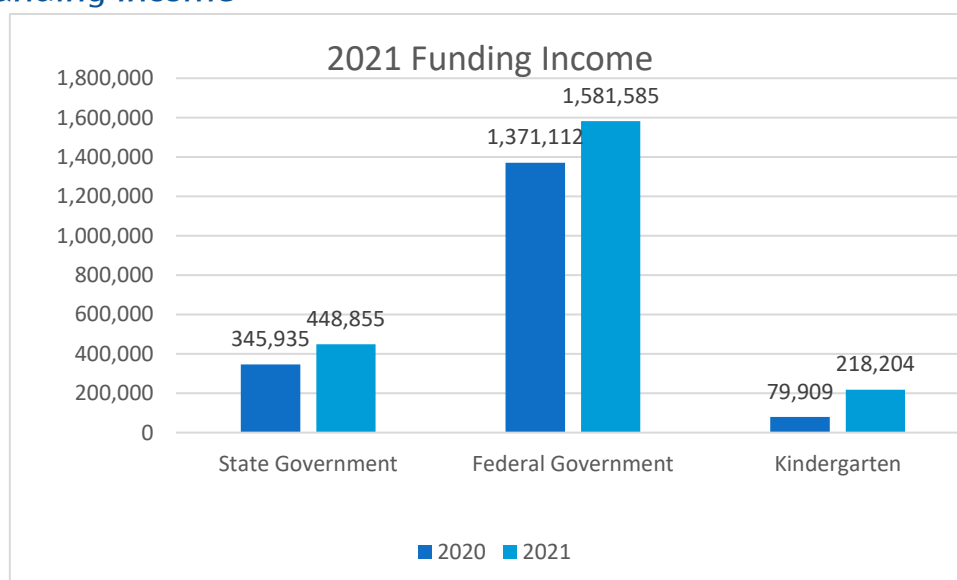
Kindergarten expenses were also up 66% at \$346,149 as the Kindergarten budget now accounts for a percentage of costs which are billed to the school which also cover Kindergarten (eg, insurance, auditor, professional services fees) as well as a percentage of the wages of school administration staff who provides services to the Kindergarten. This means that the Kinder had a deficit in 2021 of \$97,565. The Kindergarten is likely to continue with a deficit each year as we account for the full cost of operating the kindergarten. It is acknowledged in our Fee Policy and Enrolment Agreement that we use some of our school fees to operate the Kinder as it is a feeder for the school – in 2021 81% of Kindergarten children continued on to Prep at our school.

2021 School Operating Income



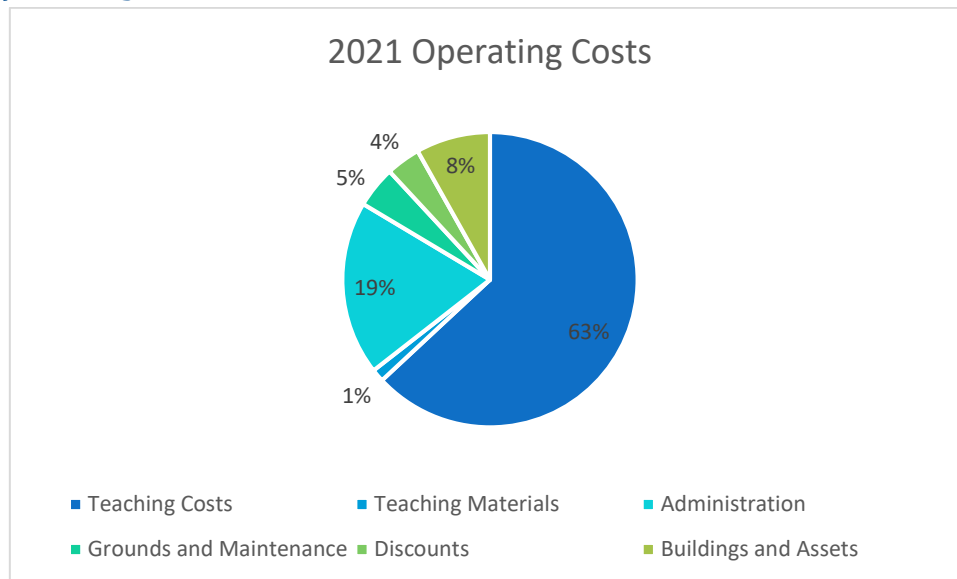
This graph is back closer to where it usually is with tuition fees being 27% of income, and government funding making up 71% of income. We received some regular donations for our Building and Library fund totalling \$4,780 in 2021 for which we are very grateful. Due to the pandemic, fundraising activities were again very limited with an income of only \$1,786. We again didn't charge the Community Involvement Program levy as opportunities for volunteering were so limited.

2021 Funding Income



Kindergarten funding was dramatically higher due to the previously mentioned State Government grants to offer free kindergarten for Big Kinder for the entire year and a subsidy for Little Kinder. State and Federal Government funding were higher due to our increase in enrolments from 134 students in 2020 to 139 students in Prep to Class 6.

2021 Operating Costs



Teaching Costs – 63%

- Teachers who provide classroom instruction
- Learning Support staff who monitor academic and social development
- Classroom Assistants who support students learning and development
- Individual and group music tuition for music program
- Librarian who encourages reading and research

Teaching Materials – 1 %

- Provision of quality classroom materials & food costs
- Craft materials
- Woodwork materials

Administration - 19%

- School office staff who support the school's daily operations
- Office supplies, postage, photocopier costs
- IT support and communications costs
- School insurance, license fees and subscriptions
- External professional services and legal fees
- Bank charges and financing costs

Grounds and maintenance 5%

- Maintaining school grounds including repairs and garden supplies
- School cleaning costs
- Costs of electricity, gas, water and council rates

Buildings & Assets 8%

- Building and asset depreciation expense

Discounts 4%

- Early payment, sibling discount, bursaries, Covid discount

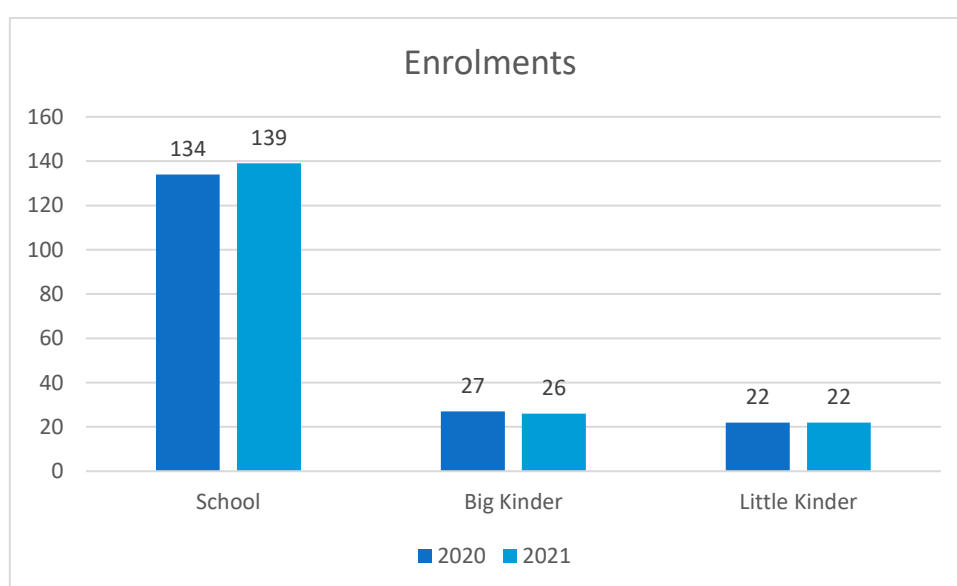
Asset improvement

In 2021 we spent \$144,561 in improving school assets. This was primarily replacing the roof at the Early Childhood campus and creating a new verandah at the Kindergarten (which we

received State Government funding for), upgrading our phone system and connecting both campuses, purchasing laptops for teachers, converting the old toilet in the admin building into a craft room/storage room, and creating an office for Dana as the Education Facilitator. Thanks to Alex McHutchison, Norm Matthews, Wendy McMahon and Robyn Jacobs for their work helping facilitate these projects.

Enrolments

In 2021, at the August census, DRSS had total enrolments of 139 students in Prep to Class 6, compared to 134 in 2020. Early Childhood enrolments were similar to 2020. Big Kinder had 26 children, Little Kinder had 22 children. Playgroup was unable to operate for much of the year due to Covid-19 restrictions. A big thanks to our Enrolments Officer, Karen Frazier-Walsh, who manages our enrolments so well.



Attendance

Student attendance in Semester One was 93%, which met government expectations of more than 90%. Attendance records showed that 77% of students attended more than 90% of the time. In Term 3, attendance increased to 94%, with 87% of students attending more than 90%. It was one of the quirks of the pandemic that there was less absence and higher attendance rates due to students doing remote learning. Teachers record attendance twice daily and the school follows up absences on a daily basis.

NAPLAN

One Class 3 student and two Class 5 students undertook the NAPLAN tests in 2021. The small number of students means the results are too limited to report on.

Cath Lanigan
Business Manager

Management Team Report

We started the school year with great optimism after the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the school in 2020. Unfortunately only two weeks into the year there was a five day lockdown, and that was the start of yo-yoing in and out of school with almost all of Term 3 and 4 in remote learning. Fortunately, Kindergarten continued to operate for all of the year.

Consequently, the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the school was a major focus for the Management Team for much of the year. There were the same issues of supporting student and staff wellbeing, offering an on-site program for eligible children, timetabling staff to work at school, staffing the office, and lots and lots of emails to parents and staff.

There were also lots of new requirements with QR codes, a Covid safe plan, mask wearing, and the big one was the introduction of vaccine mandates. In close communication with College and the Board, and with the support of our new School Chaplain, Cheryl Nekvapil, we navigated this potentially polarising issue as best we could, maintaining the employment of all staff until the end of 2021.

The year ended with us sadly farewelling a number of staff:

- Craft teacher, Maree Cross, Eurythmy teacher, Sumie Nagura and Eurythmy accompanist, Paul Watts who had all worked at the school for a number of years
- Cello teacher, Ida Koenders, who had given 18 years of service to the school
- And new aides Sophia Wilcox and Rana Melville-Smith.

We also farewelled Class 6 teacher Dionne Brown as she finished the journey with her class and moved interstate.

In the midst of all this, we were very pleased to welcome Dana Jindra to the school as Education Facilitator at the start of Term 2. This is a new role for the school, working with the College of Teachers and Management Team to facilitate teaching and learning.

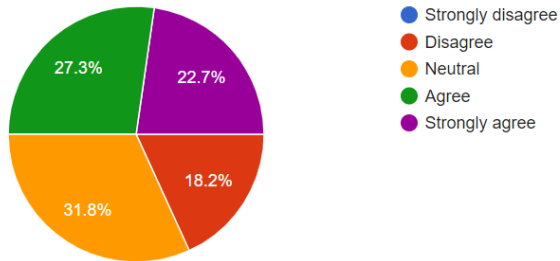
Parent Survey

In Term 2, Dana sent parents an email to complete an online survey to obtain more information about their satisfaction and needs around reporting at DRSS. Questions were also asked around potential parent groups that could be run to increase parental involvement and community connectedness. These two areas were highlighted as having potential for improvement via our last annual parent survey. 22 responses were obtained in this survey from families across a range of classes from Big Kinder to Class Six.

Written Reports

Class Teachers provide me with the information I'm seeking about my child's learning via the end of semester written reports.

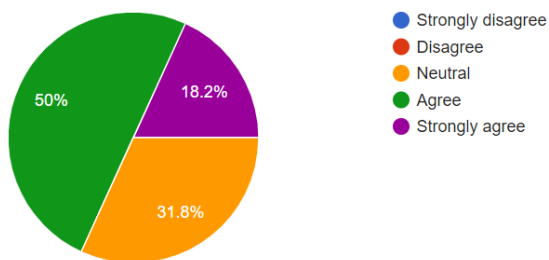
22 responses



Oral Reporting – 'Reporting Day'

Class Teachers provide me with the information I'm seeking about my child's learning via face-to-face meetings on Reporting Day.

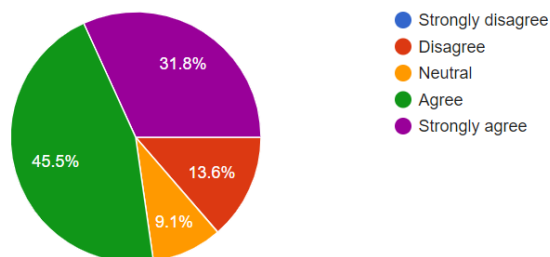
22 responses



Class Parent Meetings

Class Parent Meetings provide me with an opportunity to view my child's work and gain an overview of the curriculum and the Class as a whole.

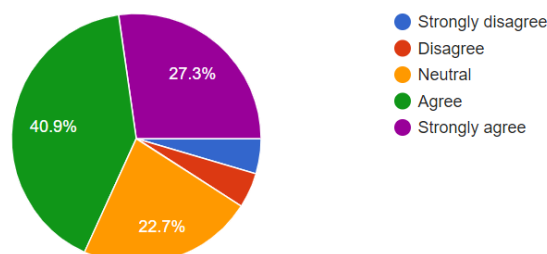
22 responses



Overall satisfaction with written information on child's progress

I'm happy with the level of written information I receive on my child's progress.

22 responses



This survey resulted in a major review of our reports with updated reports with a consistent and professional format were given out at the end of the year. Teachers reported against achievement standards for all subjects approved under the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework providing high quality reports. Other issues highlighted in the survey feedback were also discussed with ideas for fine-tuning class meetings and report writing day taken to the College of Teachers.

Storm

The storm in Term 2 which badly impacted the Dandenongs affected many of our staff and families. Several had houses badly damaged and many were without power for days and weeks. The Kindergarten was closed for several days as there was no power. We made contact with the most impacted families, teachers provided a healing story for the children and a debriefing session with chaplain Cheryl Nekvapil was organised for adults.

School Review

In Term 3 and 4, we reviewed most all of our policies and processes to ensure they met the minimum standards of our regulatory body, the VRQA as part of our five year review with a particular focus on Child Safe Standards, Curriculum, and Emergency Management.

Strategic Plan

Despite being in and out of lockdown we continued work on the school's 2021-25 Strategic Plan and resolved to focus on the areas of: Nature, Care for Country, Parent Engagement, Learning Diversity and Adaptations, Enrolment Strategy and a coherent story we are proud of. Business Manager Cath Lanigan along with our Strategic Plan Facilitator were asked to present a Steiner Education Australia webinar at the Governance, Leadership and Management Conference on our experiences.

In line with our Strategic Plan, our enrolment policies, processes and documentation were reviewed and updated; in consultation with a Waldorf marketing consultant we developed a Marketing Plan, undertook a before and after school care feasibility study; commissioned a Wurundjeri language welcome sign and organised a Wurundjeri speaker for a curriculum

day; a team approach was developed for ILP meetings and classes started being taken outdoors.

In Term 4, we surveyed parents about accessing before and after school care as part of a feasibility study into offering the service. There was strong interest, with 40 families responded to the survey (representing 53 children. The preferred option for families of those canvassed is care being provided onsite (as compared to the other options considered at a child care centre or other primary school). Families were interested in both morning and afternoon care, both regular and some casual and the program was approved for commencement in 2022.

Staff

In 2021, the Management Team was made up of College representatives Tamsenne Grogan, Carol Farmer and Karin Penny, with Business Manager, Cath Lanigan. Dana replaced Carol on the Management Team after her appointment in April.

Our Staff in 2021 were:

Teachers

Class 6 Teacher	Dionne Brown
Class 5 Teacher	Martina Kuhse
Class 4 Teacher	Mara Lupieri
Class 3 Teacher	Tamsenne Grogan
Class 2 Teacher	Emily Hehir
Class 1 Teacher	Marianne Bollmann
Prep Teacher	Ellise Peart
Big Kinder Teacher	Karin Penny
Little Kinder Teacher	Rebecca Rassavong
Playgroup Leaders	Kelly Madden and Kim Roche

Specialist teachers/instructors

Craft Teacher	Maree Cross
Eurythmy Teacher	Sumie Nagura
Extra Lesson Teacher	Lisa Levick
German Teacher	Cornelia Klinger
Music Instructors (Cello)	Ida Koenders, Nora Brownrigg
Learning Support Teacher	Carol Farmer
Music Instructor (Violin/Viola)	Hiro Mukai
Music Instructor (Violin/Viola) and Orchestra	Judy Hamilton
Prep Craft and Woodcraft Teacher	Susan Birch

Assistants and Aides

Class 6	Hellen Andalis
Class 5	Casey Meyen
Class 4	Alex Albanis
Class 3	Michaela Tory, Kyla Seipp
Class 2	Laura Magill
Class 1	Narelle Key, Sophia Wilcox
Prep	Paula Ewington, Katherine Beggs, Rana Melville-Smith, Erin Downie, Bethany Adams
Kindergarten	Katy Baker, Wendy Baiguerra
Eurythmy Piano Accompanist	Paul Watt

Administration and Support Services

Administration Officer	Wendy McMahon
Business Manager	Cath Lanigan
Cleaner (Primary School)	David Rixon
Cleaner (Kindergarten)	Nala Rassavong
Education Facilitator	Dana Jindra
Enrolments Officer	Karen Frazier-Walsh
Finance Officer	Belinda Mackley
Librarian	Hellen Andalis
Maintenance Officer (Primary Campus)	Alex McHutchison
Maintenance Officer (Early Childhood Campus)	Norm Matthews
School Assistant	Robyn Jacobs

This verse written for the school by a Waldorf School Chaplain, Lisa Devine, which sustained us through the year and helped us stay on track with what was needed in the moment.

Help me become the person I have always longed to be. Give me the strength to serve and the knowledge to know where I am needed, the perception to step forward when the time is right, and the tact to withdraw when the job is done.

May I be true to my ideals, flexible in the ebb and flow of life, yet unswerving in upholding the truth. May I find joy in my interactions with others and practise kindness in the face of our mutual shortcomings.

Help me see the eternal in each human being, thus releasing the goodness that this world so desperately needs. I offer myself as an instrument of the higher intentions of this school, for I believe in the future.

Staff 2021



- Cath Lanigan, Carol Farmer, Dana Jindra, Karin Penny and Tamsenne Grogan