



# Casuarina Steiner School

Inspiring the Head, Reaching the Heart

## Annual Report 2020

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# 1 MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

## Report from the Chair

Chair Report 2020

What a year! I don't think anyone could have predicted 2020. I personally remember the first news reports about a virus and likening it to the Spanish Influenza that had such an impact on the world then. I remember exactly where I was. As you may or not know, I have recently located back to Australia after a personal family tragedy. Looking back now, I am glad I am here, in Australia and I think deeply about the many many families that have been affected by COVID 19 globally.

As I sit to write this report and I review our financial position I have to give thanks to the Board and our leadership team who have kept the school thriving, financially, physically and spiritually, and most importantly providing a superior education for our children.

From a Board perspective, in March we did not know what 2020 would bring, or for that matter until July. We have been largely unaffected in our daily life in Coffs Harbour. However, as a school it has had a massive impact. It has diverted attention.

As a school, we need to comply with a range of regulations, some of which kept changing at an unprecedented pace requiring swift changes and adjustments to how we do things. I personally want to thank ALL the staff for the commitment they have given our school to ensure we have been able to meet these requirements. This on the surface is obvious. I actually, don't think it is. The cleaning had to change, the teaching had to change, the invoicing changed, the interactions changed, and that is just a few of the activities impacted. All of this requires time and commitment. Who would have thought in April our teachers were preparing home learning packs and swatting up on zoom. And at the end of the year, it was wonderful to be able to come back into the school for the class plays and main lesson sharing.

Our children, who we serve, they had to adapt to new circumstances. And still do. They are who we serve, and they are who have felt the impact also. I think they will all talk to their children about 2020 and what it meant for them.

So, as a school, we made it. We received additional funding from the government (cash flow boost) and that helped us. The Board made a decision in term 2 to reduce fees for all families by 50%. We changed the process for bursary applications to make it easy for families who were affected by the pandemic to receive a reduction in fees for term 3 and 4. As a Board, we are very committed to supporting our school community to be able to continue to access a quality Steiner education. And we will continue to do this.

At the back end of 2020, as a Board we have initiated the development of a 5-year strategic plan to ensure the school continues to thrive. We ran some focus groups for parents and staff and in 2021 we will finalise the strategic plan with input from all our stakeholders.

I took on the Chair's role in August 2020 from Rowena Bianchino who joined the board in and chaired the school for a number of years. I want to thank Rowena, on behalf of the board for all

the work she did for the school over those years. We also welcomed Beth Foley, Helen O'Calaghan and Miko Smith to the board and it is wonderful to have new perspectives and experience to steer the school. Thank you also to Susan Crocetti, Lana Risi and Belinda Johnson for their continued support as board members.

And finally, I must thank and acknowledge Elsbeth Haenggi for her leadership. It has been a very difficult year and Elsbeth has led our beautiful school, the children, the staff and families to enable a successful year. In my time on the board and as chair, I have learnt a lot about schools, and what is required to lead a school. A lot of activity happens in the background to enable a school to function. It is only with great leadership you will have a successful and thriving school.

It is a pleasure to Chair the school and I look forward to what 2021 brings.

Olivia Jamison

Chair of the Board

## **Report from the Principal**

2020 started as a normal school year but little did we know then what was to come. 2020 marked an extraordinary year in many ways, where students, staff and the community faced unprecedented circumstances through the spread of COVID-19.

Working closely with our leadership team, consisting of the Principal, the College Chair, the Business Manager and the Learning Coordinator, school wide responses to the initially ever-changing situation were discussed and implemented. The organisational side of managing COVID-19 was substantial, especially during the first half of the year. I thank the leadership team wholeheartedly for their tireless efforts to keep our students well and learning, our staff resourced and encouraged, and our community supported through this time.

The shift to home-based learning posed a philosophical challenge for our school that was met with creativity and incredible commitment by all staff and parents. An Education Pack prepared by teaching staff and supported by our support staff, was ready to be picked up by parents each week. This allowed a personal sharing of learning experiences and challenges between parents and teachers. It also provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of our students' wellbeing during this period.

Our Learning Support Team reached out to vulnerable students ensuring their learning and wellbeing was looked after. Additional support was quickly arranged where this was indicated. Music and strings lessons were held via zoom and when guidelines restricted our singing, our choir teacher created a CD for all students to sing along at home.

My gratitude also goes to the Board of Directors for their ongoing and active support in navigating this uncertain time and for their commitment to supporting our school community through financial strategies that allowed all our students to remain at Casuarina.

Many of our traditional whole school events had to be adjusted and festivals were celebrated internally without our community present. Where possible the school organized zoom access to such events. While we were not able to invite our community into the school, many parents maintained or initiated community contact through a range of ways.

2020 saw minor staff changes with one of our former casual teachers taking up a role as a Class One assistant in 2020 in preparation for his role as class teacher in 2021. This turned out to be an invaluable arrangement during the home-based learning as that teacher was available to teach, supported by learning assistants, the composite class of students who continued to attend school. During this time, he achieved his Proficient Teacher accreditation and underwent his first year of Steiner training.

Some staff members had to make changes to their workload due to their parental commitments during COVID.

The end of the school year brought an easing of restrictions to the point where families could pick up their children and attend school events in person again. The school held several feedback sessions for staff and the community to share their experiences of this COVID dominated school year and their suggestions and hopes for the future. These insights fed into the beginning of our strategic planning process that will be continued in 2021.

Elsbeth Haenggi

Principal

## Report from the College Chair

The College of Teachers at Casuarina Steiner School has at its core the care and education of children. The College is the heart of the school community and is strongly committed to the ongoing study of the work of Rudolf Steiner, as well as the continuing development and growth of the school, in all its aspects.

It is also the responsibility of the College of Teachers to ensure that the curriculum, while meeting the requirements of the Australian Steiner Curriculum and the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), offers the highest cultural and moral examples of human endeavour.

Before presenting an overview of the work carried out by the College of Teachers over the year 2020, it is important to acknowledge the unprecedented circumstances which this year presented and their effect on the ordinary running of College and the wider school community. The lack of face to face teaching for a significant period of the year inevitably had some repercussions on both the structure of the weekly College meetings and the nature of the work carried out therein.

For ease of presentation, the following has been divided into three main areas: *Pedagogy and Curriculum*, *Inner Work (Anthroposophy)* and *Other*.

## Pedagogy and Curriculum

### *Mathematics*

The Mathematics NESA and Australian Steiner Curriculum were documents used to review Casuarina Steiner Schools classroom practices. The review provided the College with a deeper understanding of the mathematical progressions in learning. The review focused on pedagogy and methodology in teaching mathematics, in an attempt to establish a more consistent approach to the teaching and learning of this subject area, for optimal student achievement.

Following the work previously carried out internally (inventory of teaching resources and material, sharing of strategies, etc.) and externally (collaboration with a Mathematics Consultant), the College of Teachers looked at the numeracy progression in the primary school, taking into account current research regarding best practice and establishing a more cohesive and consistent approach across the learning stages.

### *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy*

The College of Teachers reviewed our school's Welfare policy, taking into account current and past research on behaviour management. This was initiated after a discussion at College about the importance of consistency around behaviour management, both in the classroom and on the playground. After an initial perusal of the current Welfare Policy, items of interest were discussed and revised, with reference to scholarly articles on the subject to inform future directions and best practice.

### *Remote/home Learning*

Much time at the weekly College meetings was dedicated to ensuring children would receive a quality education during the time they were not present on campus, due to Covid-19 restrictions. Various ideas and formats were considered and discussed, as well as implementing ways to remain connected with the children and the wider school community (e.g. Zoom meetings).

The College of Teachers discussed what they felt was most important for the children in these uncertain times and endeavoured to provide remote learning which would not jeopardise the essence of the Steiner philosophy, while still delivering an education which could be implemented remotely. *Education Packs* were identified as the ideal format, as they offered the children an opportunity to engage with authentic Steiner learning while still taking into consideration families' needs, such as the necessity, for some, to continue working or their time constraints around assisting children with the completion of tasks.

## Inner work

### *Child Study*

The College of Teachers engaged in a 4-week child study. Following deep discussion about the nature and significance of a child study and various formats different schools adopt, as well as reading and discussing articles pertaining to the topics (e.g. Dr Antony Underwood's thoughts), the teachers identified a child deemed appropriate for the study and dedicated approx. 40 minutes of every College meeting (for 4 weeks) to observing, analysing and offering suggestions to better assist the child, in a reverent and respectful manner.

### *Meditation*

Every College meeting commenced with a reading from the book *The Inner Work of the Waldorf Teacher*. More specifically, teachers engaged in a brief meditation based on the introduction given by Rudolf Steiner to the College of Teachers in Stuttgart, in 1967, reflecting on their educational task and the spiritual world around us.

## Other

### *Festivals*

The College continued to support and work together throughout the year to achieve wonderful school-wide festivals, even in the light of Covid-19 restrictions. The school's Autumn Festival was an example of the school community coming together, albeit not always physically, to celebrate nature and giving. The children composed a beautiful mandala with the produce they brought from home, which was donated to the local Soup Kitchen.

### *Storage*

Storage was identified by the College of Teachers as an issue at our school. More specifically, the lack of storage space and the need to have a more efficient way to store and maintain equipment. Teachers identified problem areas and proposed some changes, in collaboration with the Business Manager.

### *Mandates*

The idea of having mandates (previously explored some years ago) was revisited, following the discussion around storage. Teachers were assigned areas of the school for which they are responsible, in the spirit of taking good care of the space and equipment available.

Angelo Pallotta, College Chair

## Report from the Learning Support Coordinator

2020 was a challenging year for schools in general due to COVID-19. The effects of home-based learning, heightened anxiety, and poor school attendance due to COVID symptoms, has affected the learning continuum for some children at Casuarina.

When home-based learning commenced, Learning Assistants and I worked collaboratively and quickly with Class teachers to deliver 'take home learning packs'. The amount of planning and resourcing required to prepare these learning packs was substantial. The teachers and teaching assistants did an amazing job delivering these packs to our families in a timely manner week after week whilst required.

Once home-based learning was established, it was clear that some of our families were going to require more support from the school and in particular our children that had already been receiving learning support at school. The learning support team set up small group and 1:1 Zoom sessions with children and parents to deliver our programs consistently.

During this time some staff, working remotely themselves, juggled their workload and their own children learning from home also. This was challenging for many, and led to some learning assistants reducing their hours considerably in 2020 and beyond.

When school returned to face teaching many children were at different learning levels across classes, more so than usual. It was evident that some children had benefited from home learning, receiving more 1:1 time than usual, whereas some children had only completed parts of their work and had big gaps in their learning. Together, learning support and class teachers worked to help children with learning gaps catch up to where they needed to be and learning programs were adjusted accordingly along the way to accommodate revision where needed.

The school continued to receive funding based on the National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) in 2020 and again this was critical in supporting our children across the school. At the end of Term 1 in 2020 Casuarina Steiner School was audited for the 2019 NCCD. The timing of the audit was challenging, as it fell at the beginning of the home-based learning time. However, Casuarina Steiner School passed the audit successfully.

Overall, we look back to a year of continual growth for our staff and children alike. 2020 was a year of team building between teachers, learning support and parents, and overall, we worked very well together to provide a consistent learning program for all our children.

Allie Anderson, Learning Support Coordinator



## 2 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

### School Context

At Casuarina Steiner School education is built on the premise that:

Education is a journey, not a race  
An integrated curriculum based on child development provides the framework for deep learning.  
Play based learning meets the needs of the early childhood best  
Learning takes place through hands, heart and head  
By protecting the right to childhood we are creating capacities for life

#### Our Vision

*The vision of Casuarina Steiner School is to develop creative young people with a passion for life-long learning, an understanding of the unique contribution they can make to the world and a holistic sense of care for the environment and people.*

#### Our Mission

*Casuarina School is committed to nurture the children in the spiritual, artistic and intellectual environment of Steiner Education.*

*We engage children through educating the head, heart and hands so that harmony in all three may be achieved as the foundation for balanced, responsible and free human beings.*

*We enable children to be innovative and guide them towards self-responsibility while being mindful of the rights of others.*

Situated on the sub-tropical Mid-North Coast, on the edge of natural bush land in the beachside city of Coffs Harbour, Casuarina Steiner School offers a unique education for girls and boys from Kindergarten to year 6.

Featuring architecturally designed buildings set amongst landscaped gardens Casuarina Steiner School provides an education that is based on a balanced approach to learning in the spiritual, artistic and intellectual environment of Rudolph Steiner Education.

Based on the Steiner principles, we offer a nurturing environment to address the changing needs and capabilities of children at each stage of their development. Our methods of teaching ensure deep and rounded learning.

Alongside a very high standard of academic education, our curriculum places great importance on educating the 'head, heart and hands' in every child, thereby educating the whole person intellectually, artistically, socially and morally.

Our students learn to be effective problem solvers, adventurous to thrive in a changing world, strong to face the moral and ethical challenges that lie ahead and creative to bring out the beauty in the world and in themselves.

Casuarina Steiner School has developed a reputation for excellence in music. Our music and strings program are exceptional for a school our size and provides many opportunities for our students to experience and share the social aspects of playing music together. An annual music camp together with students from other Steiner schools is a highlight both for students and the school community.

Our active school community celebrates seasonal festivals and comes together in support of our students' learning. The annual Spring Fair is an occasion when the School provides a showcase of the teaching and learning, as well as a seasonal celebration of our community.



Our students travel to Casuarina Steiner School from a wide range of locations in and around Coffs Harbour.

In 2020 our student population consisted of 53% boys and 47% girls. 3% of our students were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent and 17% have a language background other than English.

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

School ICSEA value            1072  
 Average ICSEA value        1000

	Bottom quarter	Middle quarter		Top quarter
School Distribution	8%	26%	31%	35%
Australian Distribution	25%	25%	25%	25%

## **Our students (characteristics of our student body)**

Average enrolments across 2020 were 103 students, K-6. For further student information please see the My Schools website: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

### **3 STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING**

Casuarina Steiner School offers an integrated education teaching to the 'head, heart and hand' fostering a balanced development of all faculties of our students. Working with the Steiner curriculum we meet the outcomes of the NSW Australian curriculum. We don't teach to the NAPLAN and therefore NAPLAN results are a reflection of our integrated teaching and learning approach.

Our educational philosophy favours ongoing formative assessment over NAPLAN testing or similar standardized testing methods.

As NAPLAN assessments were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19, the most recent information relates to 2019 NAPLAN results which are available on the My School website: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

## **4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER ACCREDITATION**

### **Professional Learning**

Casuarina Steiner School is committed to ongoing professional learning of all staff, which is reflected in the overview below of professional learning activities and courses attended in 2020.

In 2020 the following professional development activities were undertaken:

Steiner Education Professional Learning included:

- Weekly College meetings with focus on Steiner pedagogy, curriculum review, Student welfare and festival preparations
- Steiner Educating Australia Delegates' meetings
- Governance, Leadership and Management (GLAM) conference for Boards and Leaders of Steiner Schools
- Steiner Education Australia Bursars conference
- Steiner Leaders' regional meetings
- Steiner Intensive Teachers Conference at Glenaeon Steiner School
- Programming and integrated curriculum for each year 1-7
- Steiner Education Primary foundation course (Sydney Rudolph Steiner College)
- Masterclass of Early Childhood Education (University of the Sunshine Coast)

#### WHS and Wellbeing professional learning included:

- Child Protection and Protective Behaviour annual training (Creating safer Independent Schools)
- WHS annual refresher
- Behaviour management – getting it right and Keeping it right
- Wellbeing

#### Subject Specific Professional Learning included:

- Programming and planning for science and technology
- Familiarisation: NSW PDHPE K-10 Syllabus
- Kitchen Gardens in Schools

#### Compliance related Professional Learning included:

- AIS annual briefing
- School law update webinar – Children’s guardian and case study
- What is educational data?
- Caught in the Chaos

### Teacher Accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of teachers
Conditional	0
Provisional	1
Proficient Teacher	11
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
<b>Total number of teachers</b>	<b>12</b>

Category	Number of teachers
I. Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education Institution within Australia or as recognized within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	11
II. Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognized within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications.	1

## 5 WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

In 2020 the school was led by Elsbeth Haenggi (Principal). She worked in close collaboration with the Leadership team consisting of the Business Manager, the Learning Support Coordinator and the Chair of the College of Teachers. Teaching staff comprises class teachers and specialist support including Learning Support, Language and Music.

The Principal and the Business manager were supported by the Book-keeper and the Office reception staff.

The remaining workforce consists of Learning Assistants, Librarian, Site manager, Gardener and Playgroup staff.

One of our Learning Assistants is of Aboriginal descent.

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/44009>

## 6 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### Average Attendance Rates

The overall student attendance rate for 2020 is 90%.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Average Attendance</b>
Kindergarten	74.1%
Class 1	88%
Class 2	87.6%
Class 3	91.8%
Class 4	92.5%
Class 5	91.1%
Class 6	n/a

### Management of Non-attendance

Rhythm and form are intrinsic to the school day, and punctuality which engenders a healthy respect for work and study – is considered very important. Students are expected to be at school with enough time to feel relaxed and ready when classes begin. The continuity and rhythm of lessons from day to day and from week to week are important and require attendance from beginning to end. If a student arrives late to class, they must wait for permission from the teacher before entering so as not to disrupt the lesson in progress.

- It is essential that all students arrive at school on time
- It is essential to the curriculum and the class that all students experience the opening of the day together.
- It is expected that students attend school except in cases of illness.
- It is expected that the students complete the full school term with their class before going on vacation.

Attendance is monitored by the Class Teacher and Office Staff. Parents/Guardians will be contacted by the school via phone or SMS on the day of an absence without notice.

Attendance is taken daily at the beginning of the school day by the Class Teachers and the school office is notified where attendance is recorded in the school's database. Reports are generated regularly and provided to the Principal and Leadership Team for review. Any students in danger of falling below the required attendance level are referred to their Class Teachers for follow up. Where this is not successful the principal or delegate initiates the development and implementation of an Attendance Improvement Plan.

The school requires at least two weeks' notice in writing where possible for special leave to be approved. Parents are to complete the Application for Exemption from Attendance at School, available from the office and returned for authorisation by the school principal. Approval may be granted by the Class Teacher in respect of absences not exceeding two days and in other cases by the Principal.

## 7 ENROLMENT POLICY

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

The school aims to treat all children as individuals and respond to each child's individual needs and abilities within these **Guidelines** and also **Guidelines for Enrolment of Students with Additional Needs**.

*The enrolment process aims to*

- Provide in depth information about the school, its culture, educational offerings and school guidelines to enable parents to make informed decisions about enrolment of their child(ren) at the school
- Provide teachers with information about the child and the family's goals and expectations to enable the school to make informed decisions about proceeding with enrolments
- Provide initial support to integrate families into the school, especially those new to the area
- Link families into the community to participate in the life of the school

### **Enrolment Guidelines**

Parents contacting the school regarding possible enrolment will be given:

1. Prospectus and other background documents about the school, including academic courses and the school's philosophy.
2. Application form and conditions of entry into the school. The family will be informed that making an application for enrolment does not guarantee acceptance into the school.
3. Interested families contact the Principal (or nominee) where they will be invited for an initial visit of the school. The Principal (or nominee) will seek to better understand the goals and expectations of the families seeking enrolment and give further information about the school. The Principal (or nominee) will also gain detailed **information** about the child (ren) and their family.
4. At this visit it should be established if the expectations of the parents can be met.
5. Principal (or nominee) will arrange interview with relevant teacher(s) and the family.
6. Teacher and family has interview according to Interview Guidelines.

7. If the student has additional needs, the **Guidelines for Students with Additional Needs** must be followed before a decision is made.
8. If a family seeks enrolment for more than one child into the school, all interviews and processes for all children must be completed before the family is informed of the decisions.
9. If both parties agree, a letter of offer of enrolment will be given to the parents, which contains the conditions of entry to the school.
10. The parents accept the offer, agreeing to the terms.
11. The Principal (or nominee) ensures the following has been completed and advises teacher of the date the student will enrol into their class.
  - Arrange for explanation and the completion of the relevant paperwork including enrolment form, fee agreement, birth certificates, immunisation status, parent skill register, permission forms, and grievance procedure
  - Ensure payment of enrolment fee is made prior to start
  - Pass paper work onto the office for filing
  - Enter the child details into the register
  - Notify teacher when this process is complete

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

- It is in the best interest of the child
- The school is able to meet the educational needs of the child (including children with special needs) within resources available
- The family understands and is prepared to actively support the ethos of the school, including signing a letter of offer of enrolment which contains the conditions of entry into the school
- The teacher considers they are able to develop a working relationship with the parents and the child
- There is a vacancy in the class in accordance with waiting list practice

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

**Contents of Documentation**

- History, philosophy and ethos of the school
- Academic courses
- Enrolment procedures



- Application form
- Conditions of entry

## **Information**

### **Areas to be covered during the initial visit by Principal (or nominee) include:**

- Overview of enrolment process and clarify that acceptance is not inevitable
- Overview of Steiner education
- Conditions of entry into the school
- Physical tour of the school
- History of school
- Legal structure and parent participation
- Participation in the Cooperative
- Working Bees
- Address concerns and myths about Steiner education
- Relevant policies (Student Welfare & Discipline, nutrition, clothing, TV,)
- Adult education and parent library
- Overview of school's fees and systems
- Give the family a child information sheet for completion

### **If the family indicates that they wish to continue the process the Principal (or nominee) will :**

- Arrange an interview with the relevant class teacher
- Provide the family with Prospectus and Handbook and ask them to read before interview, highlighting relevant policies
- Brief the teacher on family and child information
- Provide the teacher with recent child reports and samples of work prior to interview
- Ensure that parents complete a child information sheet for parents to bring to the teacher interview
- Attend the interview as second person for the teacher or arrange nominee to attend if required

## **Teacher Interview Guidelines**

If a family seeks enrolment for more than one child all interviews should be arranged as close as possible to each other so that a decision on all children can be made and conveyed to parents at the same time.

### **Teacher should explain the following:**

- Teaching Philosophy
- Overview of curriculum for the year
- Structure of the School day
- Three-week cycle and daily/seasonal rhythms
- Parent, Teacher, Child Triangle

- Expectations of parents to support TV minimisation, especially no TV before school, nutritious lunches, dress code (Parent Handbook)
- Importance of festivals, camps and excursions and parent involvement
- School Welfare & Discipline Policy, explaining behaviour agreement

## **Interview Questions**

See Parent Interview Questions sheet.

These questions must be uniformly asked at **every** interview.

## **Observations**

- If the child is entering school in an upper primary class, the teacher will seek to understand how this child will affect the existing class and how this class will affect the child. The teacher may ask the child to write/draw/read to ascertain ability level.
- The teacher will observe the child's physical features, speech, posture, walk, and ability to concentrate or listen.
- The teacher will ask the child what his/her likes/dislikes are about school, hobbies, sport etc to try and gain a picture of the child.
- Jump drawings and coordination exercises may be given

## **Follow-up**

In the weeks following enrolment the Principal (or nominee) will maintain contact with new families to assist in their integration into school life. In particular the Principal (or nominee) will:

- Arrange Parent handbook and follow-up letters
- Introduce the family to other families in the school
- Organise New parent orientations as appropriate
- Connect the family with the class carers
- Teacher may find a buddy parent to help the family integrate into the school

## ***Age of entry***

Children are graded according to their age at the time of entry to the school

Children turning:	Five	are eligible for entry into Peach Blossom
	Six	are eligible for entry into Kindergarten
	Seven	are eligible for entry into Year One
	Eight	are eligible for entry into Year Two
	Nine	are eligible for entry into Year Three
	Ten	are eligible for entry into Year Four
	Eleven	are eligible for entry into year Five
	Twelve	are eligible for entry into Year Six

***Priority can be given to***

- Teachers' children
- Siblings of enrolled children
- Families who have actively participated in the school for example through playgroup, festivals, adult education
- Children transferring from other Steiner Schools

All children irrespective of religion, race, gender or socio-economic circumstances, ability or disability may seek enrolment at Casuarina School.

**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 flexibly applied 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 special needs). This will be achieved by working through the individual planning process to identify any reasonable adjustments and think laterally about the school's ability to meet the student's needs.

Where a child is considered to have additional needs as perceived by the parents, Principal (or nominee) or 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 by consultation with the student and/or their associate in the interview process, contact with previous school (if appropriate) and available reports.

If the decision is taken to enrol a student with a disability, any strategies which 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 teacher should be supported throughout this process by the Principal (or nominee).

**Individual Planning Process**

Document that the following has been completed:

- Listen to the family's views and demonstrate that the school is seriously considering relevant issues in regard to 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 (may seek AIS advice and consultation).
- 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 Principal (or nominee) will prepare a detailed analysis of the student's additional needs for the initial years of the student's schooling and consider potential needs in the years following enrolment, being flexible and thinking laterally 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 school's Principal (or nominee) 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 consultation with 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.
- Any final decision and communication will be made by the Principal.

### **Definitions:**

**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 associate (this includes 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

### **Requirements for continued enrolment**

To maintain their enrolment, students are expected to demonstrate satisfactory effort, attitude, behavior and regular attendance.

To maintain an active enrolment, payment of all tuition and other fees and charges must be satisfactorily completed as per the current Fee Schedule for that year.

Students are to take part in all school activities including school excursions, camps and festivals. Students, Parents and Guardians are also expected to support the School's ethos and act within the Codes of Conduct and School Policies and Guidelines.

To maintain an active enrolment, payment of all tuition and other fees and charges must be satisfactorily completed as per the current Fee Schedule for that year.

## 8 OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

The purpose of all policies at Casuarina Steiner School is to promote student learning and well-being and to build positive relationships in the Casuarina School community.

Casuarina School believes in the right of all students and teachers to engage in a healthy, nourishing and inspiring learning and teaching environment.

Collaboration and respect between school staff, students and parent(s) or carer(s) are an important feature of Casuarina Steiner School and the education we offer to our community.

When parents enrol their children at Casuarina School they enter a partnership with the school.

This partnership is based on the commitment to provide students with opportunities to learn and grow within the framework outlined by the Casuarina School Curriculum. Casuarina School's policies uphold this framework.

Policy	Changes in 2019	Access to full text
<p><b>Student Welfare</b> Casuarina Schools approach to student welfare is detailed in the Student Welfare and Discipline Policy. The purpose of this document is to outline how the school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional well-being of all students at all times. It is designed to promote learning and build positive relationships in the Casuarina School community.</p> <p>The policy is premised on the right of all students and teachers to engage in a healthy Learning and Teaching environment.</p> <p>Collaboration between school staff, students and parent(s) or carer(s) is an important feature of Student Welfare at Casuarina and based on principles of procedural fairness.</p>	<p>While routine review was made of the policy in 2020, only minor changes were made.</p>	<p>The full text of this policy can be accessed through the School Office, from the Principal, from the School's website at <a href="http://www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au">www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au</a></p>
<p><b>Discipline</b> The school prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the school.</p> <p>The school doesn't not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.</p> <p>Behaviour management actions are based on procedural fairness. Parents are involved in the processes of procedural fairness when sanctions</p>	<p>While routine review was made of the policy in 2020, no changes were made.</p>	<p>Casuarina's Discipline policy is detailed in the Student Welfare and Discipline Policy document. This can be accessed through the School Office, from the Principal and is available online at <a href="http://www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au">www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au</a></p>

result in suspension or expulsion of a student. Disciplinary actions do not include exclusion.		
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<p><b>Bullying and Harassment</b>          Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated at any level at Casuarina School. The School policy provides processes for responding and managing allegations of bullying, including instances being reported as soon as possible to the Principal and recorded via Incident report. This record is kept and parents are informed to ensure a collaborative and effective resolution of the problem</p>	<p>While routine review was made of the policy in 2020, no changes were made.</p>	<p>Casuarina School Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures are detailed in 'Whole School Anti -Bullying Approach' in the Student Welfare and Discipline Policy document. This can be accessed through the School Office, from the Principal and is available online at <a href="http://www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au">www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au</a></p>
<p><b>Complaints or Grievances Resolution</b>          Casuarina School values the diversity within the school community and it is our intention to work together to achieve harmony and consensus. Our school believes that a strong grievance procedure is one of many mechanisms for achieving harmony and consensus amongst a diverse group of people.          It is not always possible to achieve perfect harmony amongst people of different views. Acceptance, however, of those differences and demonstrating a willingness to work collaboratively are important characteristics of a member of a Steiner School community. The Grievance Procedure adopted by the Casuarina School is based on Natural Justice, which allows all parties to be heard and to hear claims being made.</p>	<p>No changes were made to this policy in 2020.</p>	<p>The full text of this policy is available through the School Office, from the Principal and on the School's website at <a href="http://www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au">www.casuarina.nsw.edu.au</a></p> <p>It is provided to staff via the Staff Handbook. Parents receive this in the Parent Handbook upon enrolment with updates provided and reminders in the school newsletter.</p>

## 9 SCHOOL DETERMINED PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

### Achievement of priorities identified

In 2020 areas for improvement had to be re-prioritized due to the challenges to the school organization through the outbreak of COVID-19.

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Strategic Planning	<p><u>Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a strong P&amp;F and community engagement</li> </ul> <p><u>Sustainability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining premises</li> <li>• Marketing efforts to increase enrolments</li> <li>• Becoming an ECO School</li> </ul>	<p><u>Community</u></p> <p>Due to COVID-19 restriction many of our community engagement plans had to be cancelled.</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A building audit has been done and a maintenance schedule detailed.</li> <li>• Some of our structured marketing efforts were limited by COVID-19 restriction. However, the more detailed insights into our teaching and learning approach during the home-based learning phase had an unintentional positive marketing effect as feedback from community was very positive.</li> </ul> <p>School tours were held frequently outside school hours leading to an increase of enrolments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the school registered as a ECO school the implementation is still in its infancy.</li> </ul>



<p>Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepening the work of the College of Teachers</li> <li>• Embedding collegiate conversations and peer teaching and learning</li> <li>• Teacher accreditation at Proficient Teaching level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2020 the College of Teachers has continued to strengthen their work through regular artistic activities and pedagogical explorations and curriculum reviews.</li> <li>• Collegiate conversations and peer learning took place during weekly College meetings, presentation by teachers to their peers, sharing and discussing of classroom practice and informal conversations.</li> </ul> <p>COVID-19 restrictions and the phase of home-based learning provided further opportunities for staff to work closely together in challenging circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One staff member achieved accreditation at Professional level in 2020. The accreditation process was guided by the AIS who is the school's TAA.</li> </ul>
<p>Curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A structure and procedure for Child Study was developed and implemented through an actual child study.</li> </ul>
<p>Leadership and Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing development of Board members in compliance and risk management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some new board members participated in Governance, Leadership and Management training.</li> <li>• The board was informed of and supported the implementation of COVID-19 related guidelines.</li> <li>• Following that significant impact of COVID- 19 restrictions on our school community and staff, facilitated focus group discussions were held informing the strategic plan for 2021-2014.</li> </ul>

## 10. INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

At Casuarina Steiner School, all students are led to recognise that they are valued and integral parts of the school community with parents and staff providing the care and support students need. We provide and promote activities that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility. The school fosters an atmosphere of reverence and respect through many practices on a daily, weekly and seasonal basis.

Care for the environment is promoted through our Environmental Education Policy as well as initiatives such as Clean Up Australia Day, Tree planting Day and being part of the Water Wise School network. The school's food guidelines promote healthy food and minimization of packaging. Organic waste is composted at the school and the two school gardens provide opportunities to students to grow their own food.

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people is promoted through the curriculum, events with Aboriginal Elders, Acknowledgement of Country, songs, stories and cultural activities.

Programs such as the Peer Support programs, Life Education Van, Buddy Programs, and Festival celebrations enhance and promote school values and ethos. Harmony Day celebrates cultural diversity and difference. A harvest mandala is created by the students each autumn as part of our autumn festival. The produce is then donated to a local soup kitchen. Older students are encouraged to look after their younger "buddy" both in the playground as well as in structured buddy activities. Older classes help to organise school events such as Main Lesson Sharing, festivals and sporting activities.

Class Camps are greatly valued as an opportunity for students to live and learn together in an outdoor atmosphere, developing strategies for co-operation, responsibility and working as part of a team. On camp students must learn how to problem solve, be resilient and flexible, respecting the needs of others at all times. The senior classes run regular camp fundraising events that promote and encourage community. They interact with the parent body and learn to take responsibility for the planning, preparing and holding of community events.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, no Class Camps were run in 2020.



## 11. STUDENT, PARENT AND SATFF SATISFACTION

Casuarina Steiner School strives to be an engaged and a positive part of the wider community that is open to all students, parents and staff. We have a wide variety of communication within our community and in this way make our community open and available to all.

Our Casuarina Newsletter is distributed to all parents and other relevant stakeholders weekly via email and if this is not possible, a hardcopy is available through the Office. All feedback is welcomed.

Parents are able to be involved in and give feedback to the School in a variety of ways, including termly class meetings, Parent and Friends, Craft Group and other interest groups to name a few.

Parents are encouraged to share the educational experiences with their children. They are welcome to attend weekly assemblies on a Monday morning, as well as Main Lesson Sharing events held in Week 5 each term. These sessions are times for parents to see their child/ren present aspects of their current learning as well as to see what other classes are engaging in.

Parents also join classes for craft, reading and other specialist activities. Class meetings are held each term and parent-teacher interviews are available each semester.

### Parent satisfaction

Parent satisfaction in 2020 was gauged through formal and informal feedback sought and provided through parent meetings, parent discussions with management and staff and through the various parent activity groups like P&F, class-carers, craft group and individual interactions between parents and the principal across the year.

At the end of 2020 the school invited the school community to attend facilitated focus groups to discuss and give feedback about their Experience of Casuarina in 2020'. The following key questions were explored and surveyed through a poll:

- When you think of Casuarina this year, what are your top-of-mind thoughts or feelings?

*Surprisingly communicative, gratitude, a safe and nurturing space for my child, disconnected, wonderful teachers, good leadership, completely supported.*

- Overall, how satisfied have you been with Casuarina?

*Approximately 55% of responses were very satisfied, 30% were satisfied and the rest somewhat satisfied.*

- How has COVID-19 affected the sense of community at Casuarina?

*Approximately 70% felt it was a 'mixed bag', roughly 25% felt it had eroded the sense of community and the rest stated no difference.*

- How well has the school managed COVID-19?

*Approximately 55% felt the school managed COVID-19 very well and the rest felt it was managed well.*

Parent feedback and improvement suggestions have been incorporated in the planning for 2021.

### **Teacher and staff satisfaction**

At Casuarina we have a generally high teacher retention rate. Changes in teaching staff in 2020 were minimal.

Teachers and other staff are very committed to the school, its values and curriculum and contribute many hours to extracurricular activities.

Teachers had the opportunity in weekly meetings to discuss issues or concerns with their peers or could arrange to speak with the Principal, members of the Leadership Team or the Board of directors to address concerns. Formal and informal feedback from teachers and discussions with the Principal and Executive indicates that staff were generally satisfied in 2020.

2020 was a challenging and demanding year for all staff. At the end of the year a facilitated focus group discussion was also held with staff. The same questions were discussed and answers pooled as with community members.

Overall, 55% of all staff were very satisfied or satisfied, about 40% somewhat satisfied with Casuarina as a workplace.

65% of all staff felt very supported or supported and 30% somewhat supported by the school.

82% of staff felt very supported or supported and 13% somewhat supported by parents.

65% of all staff stated that COVID both enhanced and undermined community, 20% felt an erosion and 10 % felt it enhanced it.

Teachers described Casuarina as a highly professional workplace, where staff are helpful, parents are friendly, and students are respectful and responsive. They noted the great team effort during COVID and expressed their gratitude for assistant support. They felt supported, encouraged and appreciated.

Areas identified to increase staff satisfaction were 'increasing resources', 'managing demands' and 'cultivating supportive relationships.

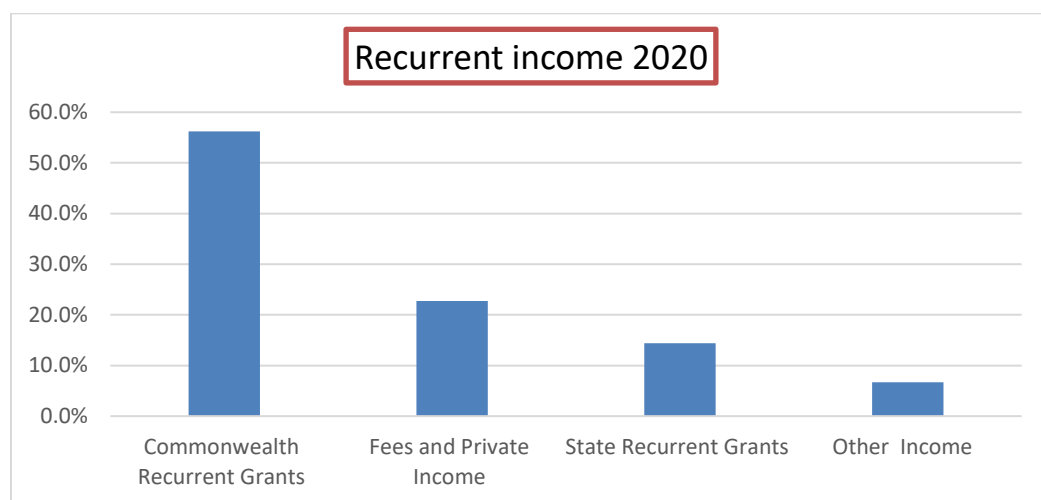
### **Student satisfaction**

In informal conversations with students of all age groups there was a common consent that students enjoy being at school and are excited to learn new things. They are very engaged in learning and enjoy the wide range of activities offered. Students are confident to approach teachers and other staff with their questions and issues and feel heard and cared for.

## 12 SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The following charts show income and expenditure percentages and are a representation of the information provided to the Commonwealth as part of our NSW State reporting requirements and in accordance with our agreement with the Commonwealth.

### Recurrent/capital income



### Recurrent / capital expenditure



