



GOVERNANCE CHARTER





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ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Objective:

To ensure that the organisational chart is always current and up to date to enable staff and volunteers to clearly understand the management structure in relation to responsibility and reporting. The practical governance of BSS,K&P is delegated to the Committee. The Committee is effectively led by the Chairperson. The Committee may also wish to establish several Sub-Committees to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. The day-to-day management and operations of the School and Kindergarten are delegated from the Committee to the Head of School. It is an essential aspect of good governance that clear boundaries exist between the overall governance of the Organisation, which is the responsibility of the Committee, and the day-to-day management of the school, which is the responsibility of the Head of School, the Management Team and the College of Teachers.

It is pivotal to organisational success and efficiency that the Committee does not impose on the duties and authority of the Head or School or the College, and vice versa. The success of the School and Kindergarten depends largely on the relationships that exist between the key personnel.

Policy Statement:

The structure of the BSS,K&P is shown in the organisational chart. The Business Manager is responsible for keeping the organisational chart up to date.

PHILOSOPHY

Objective:

To ensure that all staff and volunteers understand, acknowledge, and apply the philosophy, vision and mission of BSS,K&P in all aspects of their service delivery.

Policy Statement:

Ballarat Steiner School, Kindergarten and Playgroup (BSS,K&P) is independent, co-educational, non-denominational and open to all. Its philosophy is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner. It is with a “threefold” picture of what it means to be a human being that Steiner teachers work. They see the child as being of body, soul, and spirit, with capacities of thinking, feeling and willing. Our knowledge is made up of numeracy, literacy, science, art, and moral/spiritual values.

We believe Steiner education, in its style, structure and curriculum, seeks to do justice to the whole human being, teaching skills without destroying initiative, allowing self-expression without impinging on the rights of the community. Eventually, it will set the individual in the world as a free moral person, able to give purpose and direction to their own life.

The total experience and each individual subject are taken with these aims in mind. Steiner education is based firmly on the needs of the children, preparing them to be adults of the future who will, in turn, create a healthier society. Here at BSS,K&P, we aim to provide an education of the highest quality so that our students become balanced adult individuals, having developed clarity of thinking, sensitivity of feeling and strength of will, to enable them to participate fully and constructively in contemporary Australian society. Our philosophy statement is available to our community via our website and our notice board.

We will:

- Inspire within the children a love of learning, a morality that strives for goodness, an appreciation of beauty and a pursuit of truth.
- Offer our students the knowledge, skills and means to work competently in the world, and the desire to extend that learning throughout life.
- Offer our students values, which will enable them to find a path in life.
- Inspire a sense of wonder at and a healthy positive connection to the world, arising from a knowledge of and responsibility toward the individuality of themselves and of each other.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Objective:

To maintain an appropriate level of members with a range of skills to provide clear and effective strategic decision-making and governance practices.

Policy Statement:

The Committee shall govern the affairs of the BSS,K&P as set out in the Rules of the Association. The Committee shall be made up of the Office Bearers and elected members to a combined maximum of eleven members as shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the BSS,K&P.

- The Committee shall have as its Executive Committee the Chairperson, Vice- Chairperson, Public Officer and Secretary.
- The Office Bearers and other members of the Committee shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting. Committee has the power to co-opt and as such, any casual vacancy occurring in the Committee may be filled by a member appointed by the Committee as dictated by the Model Rules.
- Each member of the Committee shall hold office from the date of their election or appointment until the next Annual General Meeting.
- Retiring Committee Members are eligible for re-election.
- The Committee shall meet monthly, or as often as necessary to conduct the business of the Association but not less than once in each quarter.
- A yearly schedule of Committee meetings will be published in the newsletter in February for the forthcoming year. Deviation from the dates publish will occur due to members changing availability.
- A member of the Committee shall cease to hold office upon resignation in writing, removal as a member of the Association, or absence from three successive Committee Meetings without approved leave of absence.
- The Committee may function validly provided its number is not reduced below the quorum. Any five members of the Committee constitute a quorum. Should Committee numbers fall below the quorum the remaining Committee members may act only to appoint new Committee members.
- Questions arising at any meeting of the Committee shall be decided by the majority of votes of those present. In case of an equality of votes the person appointed to chair the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- The Committee shall ensure that the Association operates in line with:
 1. The Associations Incorporation Act 1984
 2. All Funding Agreements
 3. Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten rules of Association.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE:

Policy and Planning:

Objective:

To ensure that clear and consistent policies, procedures and practices are available for all staff and that organisation and strategic goals are agreed to and understood. Unlike traditional corporations, schools operate on a not-for-profit basis. School and Kindergarten stakeholders, such as parents, students and staff, both present and past, have long term personal and emotional investments, relationships and friendships. Committee Members participate on a voluntary basis. It is pivotal to good governance that the Committee recognises and manages the main stakeholder groups. The management of stakeholders requires skill and tact and relationships must be delicately balanced at all times.

Policy Statement:

The Committee must ensure that all staff have:

- Clearly defined responsibilities that are understood and adhered to.
- The knowledge and skills to deliver high quality and effective services.

Financial:

Objective:

To ensure that financial governance guidelines are in place to enable implementation of sound day-to-day financial management practices within clear parameters.

Policy Statement:

The Committee will ensure that:

- An approved budget for both the school year and the early childhood is determined, and that expenditure is within the budget.
- Sufficient income is available to meet the budget requirements.
- The conditions of Federal and State Government Funding Agreements are followed.
- Funds are properly accounted for, and an audit is completed by May each year.
- Project/grant funding is acquitted as required.

Staffing:

Objective:

- To enable recruitment, selection and development of a skilled and committed workforce and to maximise efficient and effective performance, service delivery, job safety and individual job satisfaction.
- To ensure contemporary human resource management practices are utilised to ensure fair and equitable access to all staff, while providing a safe and healthy environment within legislative requirements.

Policy Statement:

The Committee shall:

- Ensure the recruitment and selection of the best possible staff, following the employment policy regarding child safety regulations.
- Provide staff with support, direction and supervision.
- Maintain OH&S principles and policies.
- Enable negotiation regarding awards, agreements or contract conditions.
- Provide staff codes of conduct.
- Conduct reviews of duty statements and mandates.
- Maintain compliance with award, agreement or contract conditions.
- Conduct regular performance appraisal of the Management Team and the Head of School.
- Ensure annual performance appraisal of all early childhood and class teachers.
- Apply grievance procedures & dispute resolution.
- Ensure staff professional development is appropriate and of benefit to the organisation.
- Ensure exit interviews are conducted when staff cease employment.

Other Responsibilities:

Objective:

To establish resources and agree on areas that require additional involvement of members in governance or management issues.

Policy Statement:

The Committee shall:

- Deal with service issues and problems as they arise and provide the necessary support and assistance
- Nominate a spokesperson to represent the Committee on specific issues.

ROLE OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Objective:

To ensure that all executive vacancies are filled and that the incumbents have a clear and unambiguous understanding and expectation of their role.

Policy Statement:

The roles of various nominated positions are:

1. Chairperson

This section also applies to the Vice-Chairperson when that officer acts in the capacity of Chairperson. The Chairperson shall:

- Act as Chairperson at Committee meetings. When the Chairperson is absent from a meeting or unwilling to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall act as Chairperson. When both these people are unavailable the members present at the meeting shall elect one of their number to act as Chairperson.
- Make sure monthly Committee meetings are held, during school terms.
- Follow up on Committee members non attendance of meetings.
- Draw up an agenda for the meetings with the assistance of the Secretary.
- Prioritise agenda items and if necessary, set time limits.
- Lead the meeting through the agenda, keeping discussion relevant, decision making clear and encouraging broad participation.
- Make sure meetings are run in accordance with the Rules of Association.
- Act as a spokesperson for the BSS,K&P.
- In a case of an equality of votes shall have a casting vote.
- Stay in touch with day-to-day happenings in the school through the Head of School.

2. Secretary or Public Officer, as defined in the rules of the association

The Secretary shall be responsible for:

- Answering all official correspondence as approved by the Committee.
- Ensuring that correspondence is properly filed and up-to-date and is available for any member to examine.
- Compile a correspondence list including letters received and sent and bring to the attention of Committee meetings any correspondence that requires immediate attention.
- Make sure that copies of the minutes are distributed to Committee members before the next meeting.
- Confirm arrangements for visitors and guest speakers, arrange for a committee member to welcome the guest and provide the Chairperson with a suitable introduction to speakers.
- Arrange a suitable note of thanks and/or gifts for guest speakers.
- Co-ordinate any reports to be presented such as those from sub- Committees.
- Maintain the membership register, which contains the name and address of each member and the date on which each member name was entered in the register.
- Insure all items stay on the agenda until resolved.
- Any other requirements as set out by the rules of the association.

After each meeting, the secretary should:

- Write up and circulate minutes.
- Write letters in accordance with any instructions given at the meeting.
- Carry out any other directions of the meeting.
- Write letters thanking guest speakers.
- The secretary is also the custodian of the organisations records (apart from the financial records). Minutes and other key records should be retained indefinitely. The secretary should also report to Committee of any unfulfilled resolutions.

3. Public Officer

This Officer shall:

- Be responsible for maintaining and updating the induction package as necessary and ensuring any new Committee members are given a full and thorough induction.
- Sign correspondence to Consumer Affairs Victoria including:
 - Application for change of name of name or special resolutions
 - Application to extend the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- Lodge with Consumer Affairs Victoria within 1 month after the Annual General Meeting a copy of: the income

and expenditure statements of the BSS,K&P and a statement of the assets and liabilities of the BSS,K&P.

- Authenticate documents or proceedings of Association for Consumer Affairs Victoria.
- Receive formal notices from Consumer Affairs Victoria.
- Comply with any other responsibilities of the Public Officer as specified in the Association's Incorporation Act, 1984 No. 143, including notifying the Registrar of the following:
 - The name of the association.
 - The registration number of the incorporated association.
 - The telephone number of the public officer.
 - The date of appointment of the public officer.
 - The signature of the public officer.
 - When the office of public officer becomes vacant, the Committee must, within 14 days after the vacancy arises, appoint a person to fill the vacancy.
 - A person is incapable of being appointed as a public officer unless he or she is at least 18 years of age and is resident in Victoria.
 - The public officer must, within 14 days after their appointment, give notice in writing, in the form approved by the Registrar, of his appointment and of his or her full name and address in Victoria together with the prescribed fee.

4. Head of School

The Head of School shall:

- Ensure receipt of training schedules from associated organisations such as ISV and SEA for the year ahead.
- Actively research any other relevant trainings available.
- Stay within governance training budget provided by the Business Manager.
- Assign and organise appropriate trainings to Committee members and ensure they attend and provide written reports from these trainings.
- Manage and make recommendations on the issue of succession.
- Be responsible for providing a list of possible mentors for Committee members.
- Maintain a running file on all Professional Development business attended to during term in office.
- Ensure a thorough handover occurs when office is vacated.

Together the Committee will be responsible for the following:

- Ensure the governance of the Association remains compliant in every respect.
- Be responsible for gaining knowledge of any changes to minimum compliance standards.
- Ensure that the Head of School is maintaining compliance in other areas.
- Have a working knowledge of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic).
- Ratify all policies and recommend updates or new policies as required.
- Attend any relevant professional development recommended by the Committee.
- Assist the Chairperson and office holders in undertaking their duties.
- Act as a spokesperson when requested by the Committee.
- Manage and support staff when requested by the Committee.
- Be a member of, and/or chair advisory Committees and/or task groups as required.
- Bring a report to the Committee on the issues being considered by an advisory Committee or task group where a staff member is not available to do this.
- Any other tasks which may arise.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Objective:

To ensure that: -

- The Committee sets and abides by clear standards for its own performance and behaviour.
- Committee members meet their legal and moral obligations to the organisation and its stakeholders.

Policy Statement:

Committee members and former members of the Committee shall agree to:

- Adhere to the code of conduct for the school and kindergarten regarding child safety.

- Adhere to the child safe policy at all times.
- Not knowingly or recklessly make improper use of information acquired by his or her position in the association to gain, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary benefit or material advantage for himself or herself or any other person, or to cause a detriment to the incorporated association.
- Not knowingly or recklessly make improper use of his or her position in the association to gain, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary benefit or material advantage for himself or herself or any other person or to cause detriment to the association.
- Abide by the philosophy of BSS,K&P.
- Observe all the rules of BSS,K&P such as those specified in the Rules of Association, the Associations Incorporation Act, and any others set by the Committee or the membership of BSS,K&P.
- Follow any policies and practices set down in the BSS,K&P's Policy and Procedure Manual and Governance Charter.
- Attend Committee meetings whenever possible and if unable to attend send an apology.
- Not act on BSS,K&P matters without the consent of the Committee, and this includes not interfering in the day-to-day operations of BSS,K&P.
- Adhere to the accounting procedures of BSS,K&P.
- Represent BSS,K&P in a responsible way.
- Gain an advantage for themselves or someone else through their position.
- Not cause detriment to the Association.
- Not discuss confidential issues with people outside the Association or with staff or members without the consent of the Committee.
- A person who obtains information because they are, or have been a member of the Committee must not improperly use the information to:
 - Gain an advantage for themselves or someone else through their position.
 - Not cause detriment to the Association.
- Follow the grievance procedures set down by the Committee which is set out in the Model Rules. Where disputes occur between members (in their capacity as members) of the committee; or disputes between members and BSS,K&P, they will be referred to the due process for grievances as set out in the Model Rules and the Grievance policy.
- Not abuse, physically or verbally, staff or members of BSS,K&P.
- Leave the Committee meeting where a matter is being discussed which relates to an employee who is a close relative (close relative and the Committee member's wife or husband, defacto, or blood relative to the level of grandparents of the Committee member and his/her wife/husband/defacto). They shall not be permitted to speak to or vote on any such matter:
- Not speak on, or vote on, any matter in which he/she has a pecuniary interest, and which comes before the Committee or at any Committee of the Committee.
- A person must not refuse or fail, without reasonable excuse, to comply with a requirement of an inspector to produce relevant documents or to give reasonable assistance to the inspector.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Objective:

To ensure that:

- There are clear guidelines to protect against conflicts of interest by members of the Committee.
- There are clear guidelines for members to disclose any conflicts of interest
- There are clear guidelines for the committee how to effectively manage conflicts of interest
- To observe and keep current on legislation regarding conflict of interest
- Engage in school business activities in a fashion designed to avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety
- All members of the Committee disclose actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest
- All members of the Committee disclose relationships that may cause actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest

Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to make all board members aware of this policy.

Legislation

The obligation to act in the best interest of the association comes from a variety of sources. As a Non-Government school and kindergarten, we are an incorporated association, which brings us under Victorian Associations Incorporation Acts. Our school and kindergarten are also registered as a charity, which brings them under the governance requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Act. Furthermore, the VRQA mandate the management of conflicts as a condition of registration and renewal of school registration. Non-compliance with a source of obligation may lead to de-registration (as a school and/or a charity) or other sanctions. Associations Incorporation Act 1981- requires that Committee Members must avoid actual or potential conflicts between their interests and those of the Association and not exploit business opportunities for themselves at the expense of the Association.

Policy Statement:

To sit on the Committee of Management, you have a duty to act in the best interests of the school and Kindergarten. As not all human beings are altruistic, laws are in place which acknowledge that if personal "interests" may be affected by a committee decision, you may have a conflict in deciding between those personal interests and what is in the best interests of the school. Legislation then requires that the Committee must take steps to manage that conflict, so that the school's best interests are protected. But what exactly is an "interest"? And how can the Committee demonstrate that members are acting in the school's best interests? Conflicts of interest can be actual, potential, or perceived, and any or all of them can cause enormous harm to a school's reputation, operation, and even its continued existence.

The obligation imposed on a school Committee member is complex. They will often have to deal with actual, potential or perceived conflicts relating to:

- The best interests of their own children who attend the school.
- Family members, or strong relationships, who are employed by the school.
- Balancing faith-based interests with more general educational or secular requirements.
- Accountants versus the educationalists versus the marketers, in allocating budgets; and
- In country schools, the likelihood that every business with which the school may have dealings will be related to a committee member in some way.

Managing conflicts in schools: What do we do?

A member of the Committee who has any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a contract or proposed contract with the association:

- Must, as soon as he or she becomes aware of his or her interest, disclose the nature and extent of his or her interest to the Committee; and
- Must identify and disclose any conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting
- Must disclose the nature and extent of his or her interest in the annual statement submitted to the members of the association at the next Annual General Meeting

However, the above does not apply if the pecuniary interest exists only by the fact:

- That the Committee member is an employee of the association; or
- That the Committee member is a member of a class of persons for whose benefit the association is established; or
- That the Committee member has a pecuniary interest in common with all or a substantial proportion of the members of the association.
- A Committee member who has any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a contract or proposed contract must not take part in any decision of the Committee with respect to that contract.

However, this does not apply in relation to a pecuniary interest:

- That exists only by the Committee member is a member of a class of persons for whose benefit the association is established; or
- That the Committee member has in common with all or a substantial proportion of the members of the

association.

In particular, Committee members may not:

- Apply the school's property either for their personal benefit or for the benefit of any other person without the authority of the full Committee.
- Benefit financially, or in any other material way from the outcome of a decision made by the Committee.
- Cause any relative, partner or friend, or any organisation in which they have equity or of which they are an employee or a board member, to benefit from their position on the Committee.
- Make unauthorized use of confidential information belonging to the school.
- Intentionally gain an advantage (directly or indirectly) for any person or causes detrimental to the school.

The Committee requires full disclosure from Committee members in situations where they, their relatives, partners or friends, may benefit financially, or in any other material way, from a decision made by the Committee.

The Committee may not employ any staff member related by blood or marriage, to a committee member except by a unanimous vote of the full Committee.

A Committee member with personal financial interest in a sale, lease, or contract with the school, which was entered before the Committee member took office and presents an actual or potential conflict of interest, shall immediately notify the Committee of such interest. It shall thereafter be the responsibility of the Committee member to refrain from participating in any discussion or action relating to the sale, lease, or contract by the Committee.

If at any time a committee member believes that he or she may appear to be unable to maintain professional objectivity on any issue, because of a personal situation, employment, or other reasons, the member must notify the Chairperson and must not vote on the matter or be present when the matter is being considered by the Committee.

Determination as to Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

The determination as to whether a conflict of interest exists is to be made by the Committee. Any Committee member who has an actual or potential conflict shall notify the Chairperson of such conflict immediately. The Committee member shall thereafter cooperate with the Committee as necessary for the Committee to make its determination.

When a Conflict of Interest Exists

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the Committee (excluding the Committee member disclosing and any other conflicted Committee member) must decide whether those conflicted Committee members should:

- vote on the matter (this is a minimum),
- participate in any debate, or
- be present in the room during the debate and the voting.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a committee member from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth the Committee considering whether it is appropriate for the person conflicted to resign from the Committee.

In deciding what approach to take, the Committee will consider:

- whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- the Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten's objects and resources, and
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the Committee (excluding any conflicted Committee member/s) who are present and voting at the meeting. The action and result of the voting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the register of interests.

Compliance with this policy

If the Committee has a reason to believe that a person subject to the policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances.

If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the Committee may act against them. This may include seeking to terminate their relationship with the Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten.

If a person suspects that a committee member has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they must take relevant action, such as discuss it notify the Committee, or the person responsible for maintaining the register of conflict of interests.

CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

Objective:

To ensure that:

- Proper meeting procedures and protocols are followed and adhered to.
- The minimum requirement of members is present when ratifying decisions affecting the organisation and its stakeholders.

Policy Statement:

Committee Meetings

For the conduct of meetings, the Committee shall ensure that:

- The agenda is drawn up by the Chairperson and circulated to all Committee members by E-mail one week before the Committee meeting.
- Minutes of any meetings must be recorded and passed by the Committee when presented at the following meeting.
- Committee meetings will be held monthly during school term. Other meetings may be arranged by the Committee as required. In the event of it becoming necessary to change meeting times each member of the Committee must be advised of such change.
- Committee meetings should be attended by all Committee members.
- The Management Team will provide written reports one week prior to monthly meetings.
- Guests may be invited to attend meetings (by the Chairperson) for a specific purpose.
- Any Committee member who does not attend three (3) consecutive Committee meetings without providing a reasonable excuse, can be expelled by a majority vote of the Committee. Where a committee member knows that he/she will be absent from the Committee Meetings for an extended period of time that member should apply, in writing, to the Committee for leave of absence.
- Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Constitution. The agenda for Committee meetings will include:
 1. People present and apologies.
 2. Review of agenda for Conflict of Interest.
 3. Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting.
 4. Business arising from the minutes.
 5. Correspondence.
 6. OH&S issues
 7. Reports - general business.
 8. Issues/problems arising in operation of school and kindergarten.
 9. Planning/review.
 10. Confirmation of date of next meeting.
 11. Close.

Staff issues raised at a meeting will be discussed only in the presence of Committee members.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Objective:

To ensure that an Annual General Meeting of BSS,K&P is held at least once in each calendar year as specified by the Act and the rules of the association

Policy Statement:

Except for the first Annual General Meeting of BSS,K&P, the school must, at least once in each calendar year and within the period of 5 months after the expiration of each financial year of BSS,K&P, convene an Annual General Meeting of its members as set out by the model rules of the association

CREATING A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION:

Objective:

To ensure that BSS,K&P is a child safe organisation with a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children is a paramount consideration when developing policies. We must have a zero tolerance to child abuse across the culture of the school, kindergarten, staff and community. This commitment must be shared, openly and transparently, by all members of the school and kindergarten community, including staff, contractors and volunteers, parents and families, visitors and children. It is the responsibility of the Committee, to ensure the association has the appropriate policies, procedures and culture in place to:

1. Safeguard against the risk of child abuse.
2. Respond effectively if abuse is suspected or confirmed.
3. Ensure children involved in child safety are safe.
4. Review the effectiveness of the child safety strategies and revise them when necessary.

Policy Statement:

BSS,K&P Committee will have a culture of child safety by undertaking the following:

- Develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school and kindergarten which reflect a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- The Committee delegates the allocation of roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies to the Head of School, although the Committee is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of these strategies.
- The strategies in place will include but will not be limited to a clear and public commitment to child safety and a child safety policy, which clearly outlines and communicates to staff and community members the strategies which create a culture of child safety in our school and kindergarten.
- The Head of School will put the strategies into practice and inform the school community about these practices and the people responsible through newsletters, class meetings, staff meetings and on the website and parent handbook.
- Effectiveness of the strategies will be reviewed through annual teacher reviews, parent feedback at class meetings and the annual parent survey and students feedback in class discussions. The Head of School and the College of Teachers will also collect feedback from staff and CRTs and give that feedback to the Committee.
- The Committee will oversee the annual checklist review undertaken by the Head of School regarding child safety and ensure the results are presented to the Committee at the first meeting every July and any actions required will be monitored by the Committee. This checklist is attached to the child safe policy.
- The Committee will undertake a 360 review of the Head of School through staff feedback and the annual parent survey.
- The Head of School will report to the Committee on the continuing education of staff members through termly full staff meetings where child safety will be discussed.
- The Committee will ensure that the annual teacher reviews will assess the teacher's suitability for child-connected work and any assistants working within that classroom.

- The Committee will ensure that all staff are reviewed by the Head of School or Management Team for suitability for child-connected work.
- The Committee will require and monitor that all members of staff and volunteers within the organisation sign and adhere to the code of conduct and that there are clear lines of communication given to report any observed breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- The Business Manager will report to the Committee in the first meeting in February that all legal staffing requirements are met, including VIT registration and WWC, and all staff have signed the Code of Conduct and meet the requirements specified in them. If a staff member has not met those requirements, they will not be permitted to attend the workplace until it is completed. Refusal to sign and adhere to the Code of Conduct is grounds for dismissal.
- Child Safety will be an agenda item on both the regular College and Committee meeting agendas.

INCLUSION:

Objective:

To ensure that the school is inclusive to all children and families, with no regard being taken for race, culture, ability, gender or age.

Policy Statement:

The school culture will support, respect and promote:

- That discrimination is not tolerated within our school, kindergarten or community.
- Cultural safety for Aboriginal children. We will work in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. We will educate staff at the school to ensure cultural identity is valued within our kindergarten and school.
- Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website, parent handbook and newsletters.
- The safety of children with a disability, by ensuring our school and kindergarten is accessible to everyone, within the limitations and capacity of the school to meet the student's needs, and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of all staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.
- All children with special needs and from different backgrounds to participate in school as much as possible.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

Objective:

To ensure that financial governance guidelines are in place to implement sound day-to-day financial management practices within clear parameters.

Policy Statement:

The following principles apply:

- An annual budget should be developed by the Business Manager for presentation to the Committee in the second last month of the calendar year.
- Monthly financial statements should be presented by the Business Manager to the Committee for endorsement.
- All monies received must be recorded in a receipt book and deposited in the BSS,K&P accounts.
- Teachers are responsible for their class budgets.
- Budget information should be presented by the Business Manager to the Committee for endorsement. The Business Manager should highlight any issues requiring consideration by the Committee.
- Community members must be informed that there is a chance a small percentage of their school fees may be used to support the early childhood.
- Assets register recording a description of the goods, the date of purchase, where purchased, and cost must be maintained. All equipment purchased with a value in excess of \$1,000 must be recorded.
- An annual audit shall be undertaken each year by a qualified auditor appointed by the Committee.

The financial management of BSS,K&P is the responsibility of the Committee.

INSURANCE

Objective:

- To ensure that all staff, volunteers and clients are appropriately covered by insurance when associated with BSS,K&P.
- To ensure that all equipment and premises belonging to BSS,K&P is covered by insurance.

Policy Statement:

BSS,K&P will comply with all legal requirements with respect to all insurance. The type of insurance cover and level of insurance cover will be decided by the Committee on the recommendation of the Business Manager.

1. Insurance Cover

Insurance cover will include:

- Broad form liability to the value of at least \$10,000,000 covering public liability, product liability and professional indemnity.
- Workers' compensation.

General insurance covering:

- Property- fire.
- Contents - theft and burglary (replacement cost).
- Glass.
- Directors' and officers' liability.
- Volunteer insurance - personal accident.

2. Contractor Insurance

The Business Manager should check that any contractors are covered by their business or professional insurance.

3. Workers' Compensation

Under the terms of the Accident Compensation Act, 1985, BSS,K&P staff are insured for any injury they might sustain in the performance of their duties including travel to and from work provided they are travelling in a direct route.

4. Volunteer Insurance

The Committee has taken out a volunteer insurance policy to ensure all volunteers for any injury they may sustain in the performance of their duties.

COMMITTEE MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Objective:

To ensure that: -

- Vacancies on the Committee attract appropriately skilled and competent applicants.
- The process of recruiting and selecting new Committee members will identify those candidates that are best qualified, and addresses associated risk factors.

Policy Statement:

- Confirm the number of Committee positions to be filled.
- Confirm the desirable role, structure and focus of the Committee in line with strategic planning objectives and current contractual requirements.
- Create a 'needs matrix' by identifying strengths, weaknesses and challenges then assessing the present Committee against those requirements.

- Finalise a recruitment profile for available positions against the 'needs matrix'.
- Identify suitable candidates through an agreed recruitment process that are best qualified and match the identified position.
- Short list potential Committee candidates.
- A selection Committee will interview a final group of candidates and decide on who is offered a committee position.
- Implement an orientation process to ensure that each new Committee member can contribute to the Committee's thinking and therefore become an effective member of the team in the shortest possible time.
- Assess and review the Committee's performance and composition on a regular basis in line with organisational changes.
- Maintain the 'needs matrix' and a Current Committee profile to assess if the present composition fulfils emerging requirements and what new skills or experience is required should a new Committee be sought.
- Maintain a List of Prospective Committee in line with the needs required as identified in the needs matrix.

COMMITTEE MEMBER INDUCTION

Objective:

To ensure that: -

- The Committee provides all new members with a clear and comprehensive induction program.
- Governance development opportunities are available to the Committee as a whole and to individual members as required.

Policy Statement:

The Committee includes an amount in the Annual Budget to meet expenses for Committee Training and Professional Development.

The Training Plan should give particular attention to the following issues:

- Understanding Financial Reports.
- Strategic and Business Planning Concepts.
- Effective Operations of Committees.
- Effective Meeting Procedures.
- Performance Evaluation strategies for Committee members & Management Team.

Training will be provided through the following processes: -

- Conferences.
- Workshops (in house & external).
- Publications.
- Seminars.
- Guest speakers.

As part of the induction process, new Committee members will: -

- Receive all governance documentation outlined in the induction pack.
- Receive internal training on financial and administrative processes.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION of COMMITTEE

Objective:

To ensure that: -

- The Committee sets clear standards for its own performance.
- Committee members meet their legal and moral obligations to the organisation and its stakeholders.

Policy Statement:

The focus of performance evaluation is the development of increased governance capability. To achieve this objective, the Committee:-

- Undertakes an annual performance review evaluating its performance against its own written policy expectations.
- Implements Governance performance processes to evaluate the contribution of individual Committee members.
- Identify and provide Committee member development and education through addressing the following competencies: -
 - a) Ability to focus on longer term strategic planning rather than immediate operational issues.
 - b) Independence of thought and action in the role.
 - c) Knowledge of the school, its business, and marketplace.
 - d) Strong conceptual and analytical skills in the areas of finance and key strategic issues.
 - e) Ability to delegate to others, e.g. Management Team or sub-Committees, as appropriate
 - f) Ability to ask questions that go to the heart of critical organisational performance matters

The Chairperson will be responsible for ensuring the annual review occurs.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Objective:

To ensure that practices are adopted to identify, analyse, evaluate and treat incidents in areas that have the potential to result in claims or organisational vulnerability and to minimise the likelihood of these incidents occurring. The areas include, but are not limited to: -

- Governance activities.
- Financial management.
- Contract variation and management.
- Asset management.
- Child Safety.
- Staff management practices.
- Industrial relations issues.
- Insurance coverage.
- Occupational Health & Safety.
- Competition to business activity.
- Adopted strategies or procedures to deal with risks.
- Compliance issues.
- Delivering the educational program to students and assessing their participation in the educational program.

Policy Statement:

Committee members recognise that risk is an unavoidable element in all organisational activity and that the characterisation of organisational risks is a key activity on the Committee's work program.

This includes the Committee setting the framework for the management of organisational risk including the level of risk allowable in certain activities or projects. This is achieved by ensuring that internal risks are identified, managed and monitored by the Committee.

Organisational Risks include:

- The safety of children regarding child abuse.
- The cultural safety of aboriginal children and children from culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The safety of children with a disability.

The Risk Management process involves five key steps:

1. Establishing the context

To recognise a risk, it is necessary to identify all risks that might impact on the school's objectives and capabilities

as well as factors external to the school such as a changing legal environment, moving social standards etc. To identify and prioritise the areas of attention, the following questions are asked:

- What relationships does the school have and how important are these?
- What laws, regulations, rules or standards apply to the school? What are the aims and objectives of the school?
- Who is involved with the school and kindergarten - internally and externally? What are the school and kindergarten's capabilities?
- What are the current risk management strategies?

2. Identifying risks

This is an inclusive process and involves management, staff, members, volunteers and other stakeholders. It requires an open environment providing an opportunity for everyone to input ideas such as a brainstorming workshop. All participants are reminded that there are no right or wrong risks and that they should all be identified.

Following this, a checklist is developed using the following questions as a guide to assist in evaluating and considering solutions:

- What can happen?
- When, where why and how might this occur?
- Who and what might be involved?
- What are the effects and who is affected? What are we doing about this now?

3. Analysing risks

This step requires significant estimation and scenario planning. The criteria used to reach this point are based on Likelihood and Consequence. What is the likelihood of the risk occurring and what is the consequence of that outcome?

A grid that identifies the rating of both the likelihood and the consequence/severity of the risks can provide a good starting point to approach the management of risks in some order. Look at the adequacy of existing controls and then decide which risks are to be treated or accepted.

4. Evaluating and Treating risks

A review of the output of this analysis will result in objectively assessing the risks. This involves determining whether the level of risk is acceptable or unacceptable and the evaluation of risk will enable priorities to be established that equate to an appropriate level of risk. The next part of this process involves determining what action is appropriate to treat each risk.

Treating risks involves deciding about what will be done with the identified risks. Treatment should be appropriate to the level of the identified risk and generally any cost of treatment commensurate with the potential benefits. Options include:

Accepting the risk- If the risk is minor or the cost to avoid it beyond the school's capacity to pay, it may be necessary to consider accepting the risk if it is core to our very existence.

Avoiding the risk- Decide whether to proceed with any unacceptable risk or choose an alternative that has acceptable risks that still meets our aims.

Reducing the risk - Look at alternative solutions that reduce risk such as rules, policies or training that can be looked at to reduce risk.

Transferring the risk- Risk Transfer usually occurs through insurance. Other alternatives such as contracts, use of sub-contractors, leases, personnel contracts, disclaimers and warning signs may be used to transfer risk.

5. Monitor and Review

The final step in the risk management process is monitoring and review through a regime of both monitoring

(continual assessment of what has been implemented) and review (a periodic assessment of the effectiveness and environment).

FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

Objective:

To ensure that: -

Financial governance guidelines are in place for the Head of School and Business Manager to implement sound day-to-day financial management practices within clear parameters.

Policy Statement:

The Committee acknowledges that its role is financial governance and that the Business Manager is responsible for the day-to-day financial management of the organisation. In carrying out this duty, he/she must ensure that nothing is done, or authorised to be done, that in any way could cause financial harm or threaten the school's financial integrity. While recognising the necessity for maximising the management decision-making parameters, the Committee's delegation imposes the following constraints on the Business Manager's decision-making prerogatives. The Business Manager's prerogatives do not extend to:

- Use of school funds, the entry into contracts or acceptance of liabilities, other than for the furtherance of Committee-approved purposes and priorities.
- Expenditure of more funds than have been received in the financial year, unless off set by Committee approved borrowings or approved withdrawals from discretionary reserves.
- Allowing undisputed invoices from suppliers of goods and services to remain unpaid beyond trade credit terms agreed with those suppliers.

To assist the Business Manager in performing his/her duties within a clear and unambiguous framework, the following processes are in place: -

- The Committee understands that it exercises greater leverage of the budgeting process by setting and monitoring compliance with criteria for the financial planning or budgeting processes than by adopting a set of numbers. The budget is the Business Manager's planning and working document. The criteria for the development and ongoing management of the budget belong to the Committee.
- The Committee ensures the ongoing financial viability of the organisation, and the fiscal integrity of the Business Manager's actions by monitoring actual performance against criteria set by the Committee.
- The Committee through the Business Manager ensures that it receives reports that provide assurance of the integrity of the financial processes, systems and reporting.

The Committee establishes and the Business Manager manages the relationship with the external auditor.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATION

Objective:

To ensure that: -

- Over and above this commitment of voluntary hours that no member should suffer loss of income for his/her involvement.

Policy Statement:

The following terms and conditions apply to the tenure of the Committee of BSS,K&P

- Access to IT and office equipment as needed including use of computer, printer and modem to facilitate ease and access for communication and decision making.
- Provision of photocopier, filing cabinet, shelves and other office needs as appropriate subject to same conditions as above.
- The capacity to claim reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses – phone and internet expenses attributable to Committee duties.
- The capacity to attend relevant conferences, governance training or other training deemed by the Committee to be relevant to the school's needs as a Committee Representative including coverage of expenses, fares, conference fees, accommodation and meals.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Objective:

To ensure that: -

- The Committee sets the organisation's strategic direction that is appropriate for the circumstances and understood by management.

Policy Statement:

It is acknowledged that the Committee's role is to create the future, not to manage the organisation. To achieve this objective, the following steps are implemented:

- The Committee schedules an annual meeting where together with the College of Teachers, Business Manager and any relevant staff, a wide range of strategic governance and organisational issues are workshopped resulting in the strengthening of teamwork within the Committee and between the Committee and Staff.
- Once the Committee has set the strategic direction, the Management Team is delegated the task of preparing and implementing an organisation-wide strategic plan and the various operational or business plans that are needed to ensure the achievement of desired strategic results.
- Strategic thinking is used by the Committee to continually assess the external School environment, to identify and understand key issues and to determine key results and to relate school competencies and capabilities to the tasks and challenges faced in the achievement of those results.
- The Committee regularly schedules time for strategic thinking around specific strategic issues into its meetings.
- The Committee engages in strategic thinking and performance evaluation each time the Management Team reports to the Committee, and reviews the future relevance, appropriateness and attainability of strategic goals and objectives against the current environment.
- Committee members maintain their familiarity with, and capability of using contemporary strategic thinking tools and processes.

STRATEGIC PLANS, POLICIES AND CONTRACTS

Objective:

To ensure that: -

Committee decisions regarding Strategic and Business Plans, Policies and Procedures, and Contracts and Tenders are made in line with the principles of the Risk Management Policy, and enhance the adopted BSS, K&Ps' Mission, Vision and Values Statements.

Policy Statement:

Tenders and Submissions

- Tender documentation is reviewed by the Head of School and the Business Manager and nominated Committee representatives. If it is agreed that the tender is appropriate, the submissions are developed by specific working parties relevant to the tender and will include members of the College of Teachers, nominated Committee representatives and delegated appropriate staff.
- Tenders will address all criteria specified and include all information required. The final document will be reviewed by the Management Team for correctness then organise for the tender to be collated and presented as specified.
- The tender is dispatched in a timely manner to meet set deadlines using an appropriate delivery method.
- One hard copy will be kept in the locked cabinet in the office with the original specification or brief.



Governance Framework.

It is paramount to good management to have a framework that is evident and transparent for all who are working within it – for us to understand the freedom and constraints within our working environment. It should be, and is, organic - changing as our needs change. There are some of us who remember our current constitution being voted in at the annual AGM in 2010 as the school had outgrown the previous one. Hopefully this will happen again and again as we change and grow!

Currently, as is the legal requirement, we are an incorporated association known as BSS,K&P. Our two levels of governance are the Committee which is the legal guardian for the school, and the College of Teachers. Both the Committee and the College work under the framework set out in the Association Model Rules. These rules are specific to our School, developed by members of our staff and community, and adhere to the legal requirements the Government insist we obey, to be registered as an Association. It is a funding requirement by the Commonwealth Government that a school be registered as an association or a company to receive funding monies from the Government – State or Federal.

These association rules, which are available see or download from our website, dictate the structure of the Committee. The association rules dictate that the governance Committee be made up of two teachers, selected from the College of Teachers, by the College of Teachers, the education facilitator (Head of School), two parents, elected by the parent group, the Business Manager, an automatic responsibility, and the option for three other members to be invited by the Committee members, to bring expertise to the Committee. The 'Powers and Duties' of the Committee are laid out in the Rules of the Association. They incorporate such things as; ensuring the purpose of the association, particularly about the vision and mission statements of the school, are carried out through planning, leadership and support for the long-term development and welfare of the school and the association. The Committee is the employer of the staff of the school, and as such needs to ensure all obligations and responsibilities that lie with that role, fiscal and ethical, are honoured, including managing, and maintaining the real estate and other assets belonging to the school, incorporating OH&S into the culture of the school and buildings, and ensuring the budget of the school and Kindergarten be ratified and monitored to ensure responsible fiscal policy.

The College of Teachers comprise the central educational Committee of the school and kindergarten. They are responsible for guiding the spiritual and educational direction and development of the school, to achieve approved programs for preschool and school age children in accordance with the Vision and Mission of the school within the spirit of Anthroposophy and the principles and methods of Rudolf Steiner.

I hope this helps in understanding the framework of the school, and please do not hesitate to talk to either a member of the Committee or the College of Teachers for further clarification.

“Structure of Steiner Schools” by Dianne Moore

This is an excerpt from the Steiner Schools in Australia website: <http://steiner-australia.org/> which may help clarify the general structure of Steiner Schools in Australia.

Waldorf or Rudolf Steiner schools are structured very differently to the majority of schools today. A basic core difference is that Steiner schools are not hierarchical, nor do they have a Principal. They are independent, self-governing entities and therefore, each one will have individual characteristics. However, most of them follow, to some extent, the pattern of the first Waldorf School that was formed in Stuttgart Germany in 1919.

The indications for this school in Stuttgart were given by Rudolf Steiner himself and a brief look at the establishment of this school's historical context will go a long way to explaining the reason behind these indications. The year 1919 was a time of unimaginable chaos in Europe following the end of the First World War. With the end of the war, the old order was destroyed, and it opened the way for a new social impulse. This social impulse had already manifested in the French revolution with its cry of "Liberte, Egalite Fraternite". Rudolf Steiner, a remarkable writer, lecturer, and scholar, who possessed extraordinary insight and faculties, took up this social impulse. He put forward proposals for a three-fold organisation of society that reflected the needs of the human being. These could be characterised as follows:

1. To gain the basic material necessities of life.
2. To be able to live with our fellow man.
3. To have freedom of thought.

This three-fold social order became the structure and principle for the first Waldorf School. The structural organs within the school which relate to the above characteristic needs, or the human being and society are:

1. The economic sphere.
2. The sphere of Rights.
3. The spiritual / cultural sphere.

The Economic sphere is that organ that ensures that the school has the 'basic material necessities of life'. It deals in concrete questions and necessities, ensuring that the school is financially stable and that all its fiscal responsibilities are being met as well as ensuring things like the execution of financial policies such as payroll, tax, and insurance. In its basic form, it would be the sole responsibility of the administrator, business manager or the bursar. As the school grows it will be the Administration section of the school, which could include the administrator / bursar, business manager, clerical staff etc.

The organ within the school, the 'Sphere of Rights' acknowledges that the school is part of the larger community and as such has needs which need to be met. These include all the legal requirements of the environment with all the laws and regulations that govern the running of the school. Different schools have different names for this organ of the school. Some schools call this organ 'the Management Committee'. It usually consists of parents, an administrative representative and one or more teachers. The parents usually bring a field of expertise to the group, but without exception all have a strong commitment to the vision and future of the school. Its primary task is to ensure that, within legal and financial constraints, the school fulfils its mission. The board of management Committee is run via a system of mandates. That is, a system whereby members are authorised to be responsible for tasks. The mandate system is opposite to the hierarchical structure, in that mandates exist when all are on equal standing and have equal rights, with just different responsibilities. Decision-making is run along democratic principles, where people with equal rights discuss issues until consensus is reached.

The third organ of Steiner schools lies in the Spiritual / cultural sphere and is called 'the Faculty' or 'College of Teachers'. Members of this group include everybody who looks at his / her task as pedagogical (the function, work, or art of a teacher). It is the area where freedom is highly valued, and every member of that organ must have the opportunity and freedom to express every point of view related to spiritual life. Spiritual considerations are consciously cultivated. There is an on-going commitment of the members to work within the school, to work with the colleagues in the school and a determination to maintain the quality, depth, and professionalism of the teaching. The organ is responsible for, and oversees all programs and curriculum requirements, and the members' tasks include the study of pedagogical texts, working on the festival life of the school, learning how to study a child, class discussions and so on. Decision-making is made again by consensus so that although everyone may not agree on a certain point, the process has been one in which every person has made the best effort to find the truth and each person is satisfied with the decision.

It can be seen that the three organs of a Steiner school work together, each with its own area of responsibility. Rather than a bureaucratic system of organisation, the school is a partnership, with people who are responsible to each other and to the school. These people take responsibility for their actions and do not 'pass the buck' to an overriding authority, such as a Principal.