



Inspiring a love of learning.

**EDUCATION
REPORT 2023**



**Blue Mountains
Steiner School**

"The heart of the Steiner method is that education is an art – it must speak to the child's experience. To educate the whole child, the heart and the will must be reached, as well as the mind."

RUDOLF STEINER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Messages from key school bodies | 03 |
| 2. Contextual information and characteristics of the student body | 09 |
| 3. Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing | 15 |
| 4. Senior secondary outcomes | 16 |
| 5. Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications | 17 |
| 6. Workforce composition | 19 |
| 7. Student attendance, and retention rates | 21 |
| 8. Enrolment Policies | 23 |
| 9. Other School Policies | 29 |
| 10. School-determined priority areas for improvement | 31 |
| 11. Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility | 35 |
| 12. Parent, student and teacher satisfaction | 39 |
| 13. Summary financial information | 43 |

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Dharug and Gundungurra people, the traditional custodians of the land on which our school stands.

We pay our respect to elders past and present and acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the education of all people on this land.



1. MESSAGES FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR ANETA ZYDZIK-PLUCINSKA

I am pleased to present to you this year's Chair's Report for Blue Mountains Steiner School. This 41st Annual General Meeting takes place on the 28th of May 2024.

2023 proved to be a challenging year where the 13 consecutive interest rate rises, higher cost of living and ambiguity regarding the future level of interest rates, has understandably put financial pressure on School families and community in general.

However, despite rougher sea, we are taking all necessary measures to navigate towards calmer waters. Considering that change is one of the constants in our lives, it is through flexibility, agility and adaptability that we ensure to continue providing uninterrupted and thriving education experience for our children and working environment for our teachers and other staff members.

Council Members

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Aneta Zydzik-Plucinska, Chair | Francine O'Dea, Head of College |
| Cameron Lownds, Deputy Chair | Catherine Cox, Head of Preschool |
| Andreea Lupuleasa, Treasurer | Vicky Critchley, Parent Representative |
| Martin Buckmaster, Principal | Amanda Bonney, Community Representative |

I would like to thank all the Council members for their contributions this year. Only you truly know how much energy and good will you have dedicated and I thank you for every bit of it.

As we close the year, I pass the responsibility and privilege of being the BMSS Council Chair to Sharmila Agnihotri, while I scale back my activity to Parent Representative, to be able to give my psychotherapy and hypnotherapy practice its deserved focus. Welcome Sharmila!

I would also like to thank Vicky Critchley for all her help over the last few years.

I am also happy to announce that while we thank Catherine Cox for her contributions to our Council, we welcome two new College Representatives: Isabelle Bruderlin and Julie Humphreys. Welcome Julie and Isabel!

Priorities

This year we focused on two key areas:

1. FINANCIAL EVALUATION AND STRATEGY

One of the significant measures we took was the appointment of Edstart to collect K-6 fees. Through Edstart we can ensure timely fees income for the School and greater flexibility for our families to manage their payments. While we already took some immediate measures to actively manage financial performance of School and Preschool, we continue working on a long-term strategy to allow financial sustainability of both.

2. SCHOOL REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION RENEWAL

We have updated all required policies and procedures for School registration and accreditation which has been an enormous task that required many long hours of preparation. We also made some of the documents more user friendly, i.e. Enrolment Policy and Contract and Fees Policy.

My sincere THANK YOU to everyone that was actively involved in the project.

Outlook

Going forward, we will continue planning and implementing measures for financial sustainability. We will also evaluate the marketing strategy and its execution to secure steady enrolments for the years to come.

Furthermore, we will be also looking at Council as a whole and see how we can further improve its operation and make sure that the time and energy its members devote as well as our wonderfully diverse skills are utilised in the most effective ways.

Needless to say, we are very proud of our Steiner ethos, heritage and philosophy and we will continue to provide an engaging and supportive learning environment for our students, so they thrive both mentally and academically.

What's more, we will also ensure that this ethos is reflected in our daily operations and management, so our Teachers and other Staff members can also flourish both mentally and professionally.

Lastly, but not least, we are grateful for the ongoing support from Parents and Carers, and we are looking forward to all the enriching activities next year.

I am looking forward to what we can achieve next year, as I am certain that with our love for the School, passion, combined talent, expertise and flexibility Blue Mountains Steiner School will continue to prosper.

For the love of learning.

Delivered by **Aneta Zydzik-Plucinska** at the 2024 AGM

REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL MARTIN BUCKMASTER

A Verse for Our Time

We must eradicate from the soul all fear and terror
of what comes towards us out of the future.

We must acquire serenity in all feelings and sensations
about the future.

We must look forward with absolute equanimity
to everything that may come.

And we must think only that whatever comes
is given to us by a world-directive full of wisdom.

It is part of what we must learn in this age, namely,
to live out of pure trust, without any security in existence.

Trust in the ever-present help of the spiritual world.

Truly, nothing else will do if our courage is not to fail us.

And let us seek the awakening from within ourselves,
every morning and every evening.

- Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925)

Every year presents new challenges to work through – 2023 was no exception. What helps most when we need to draw on courage is to be open to what each member of community has to give the other. Good community working restoratively makes all the difference when overcoming difficulties.

I would like to thank the Board, staff, students, parents and carers for making our school a wonderful place to come each day. We help the children to become their best and in turn the children help us to do our soul work as educators. We are blessed to be on country surrounded by spirit that builds our resolve to nurture the self, our place and community.

As always, our work is guided by our five strategic goals as set out in the [BMSS 2021-2026 Strategic Plan](#). Here is a brief progress report.

Progress

EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT LEARNING

- Restorative Practices were embedded across all levels of our school: in classrooms, between students, teachers, and assistants; in staff meetings; in parent/carer meetings; and at the leadership level to support teachers in the delivery of excellent programs.
- We continue to focus on building Restorative Practices into the culture of our school by running a series of Parent Education Workshops, all of which, so far, have been extremely well-received. Research shows children excel when their significant carers are involved and engaged in their education.
- Class 1/2 had two teachers and an assistant, for the first time in some time, enabling them to focus on stage-appropriate literacy and learning while still maintaining a play-based learning environment.
- Student surveys continue to help us track student experience and learning outcomes, so we can quickly see and respond to any issues that may arise.
- Teachers attend Professional Development so they can continue to support students, and stay up to date with the latest education research and technology.

EXCELLENCE IN STEINER PEDAGOGY IN A MODERN WORLD

- College revised our Child Observation Studies approach and prioritised this practice as an important pedagogical tool for all teachers.
- College is maturing its understanding of its role in the school's leadership.
- College and staff attend the Professional Study Group.
- College continues to encourage and support teachers to attend Professional Learning and Development.
- College met weekly throughout 2023, with the direction and assistance of Kathryn Tang each meeting started with a short painting exercise. This artistic activity provided a meditative and reflective segue into verses and short meditations which open the weekly meetings.

ENGAGED SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- It has been a slow recovery for parents, carers and families to re-enter their Parent Support and Class Representative roles since the pandemic.
- The Parent Coordinator role, currently held by Stephanie Smith, assists in encouraging and supporting families to engage.
- We continue to offer multiple feedback channels, and regular surveys so we can stay informed and respond appropriately.
- Restorative Practices training has played a large part in healing any damage caused by the COVID years.
- Festivals and Fairs proved to be very popular to bring families back into the Steiner fold.

BEAUTIFUL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- The Play Group kitchen, main room and the Kindergarten were all renovated or given a fresh coat of paint, making these environments much more welcoming.
- A thorough maintenance audit was completed, with a view to a maintenance register being set up.
- Filling a part-time Maintenance Role has contributed immensely to the functional and aesthetic capacity of our school, including fixing gates, pruning, construction, repair and gardening maintenance.

ROBUST GOVERNANCE, RESOURCING, AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Staff continued to support the work of Council throughout 2023, revising and reviewing policies that affect governance and the effective management of the school.
- A comprehensive review of governance and operational procedures and policies was completed in 2023.
- All Policies and Procedures were digitised and uploaded to CompliSpace's PolicyConnect platform ensuring ongoing compliance obligations are met.
- EdStart education payment company software was rolled out with 100% uptake, helping stabilise school fee income and supporting families with payment plans.
- IT and Compliance systems were strengthened as a result of the policy work.

Outlook

Our focus remains on maintaining and developing the progress and momentum already achieved, despite the challenges ahead.

I thank all involved in contributing to the school for your hard work, openness, and commitment to creating the conditions for our children to thrive. Our faith in the spirit of each will continue to hold us together and to serve the children well.

Delivered by **Martin Buckmaster** at the 2024 AGM

REPORT FROM THE PLAYGROUP LEADER KARUNA ELLIOT

Steiner Babies Group

In 2023 our community was served with two differently aged playgroups, supporting new parents on their journey into Steiner education. Steiner Babies - a nurturing, supportive and informative space for pregnant mothers, newborns, young toddlers and their parents – was full most Wednesdays during school terms.

Expectant parents and parents with 2-year-olds are also warmly invited and welcome to attend.

Steiner Early Learning Group

Blue Mountains Steiner Early Learning is an educator-designed playgroup that connects parents and nurtures three essential pathways in children 2-4 years. In 2023 we ran two groups, one on Mondays and one on Wednesdays, both had a 75%-90% attendance rate range on average. The three essential pathways are:

- Creative play to develop imagination and emotional wellbeing through meaningful stories and songs.
- Bush play and the celebration of the seasons to immerse children in the natural environment and create a sense of connection and belonging.
- Exploratory play to encourage the foundations for literacy and numeracy skills through oral and practical learning experiences.

Our aim across all our Playgroups is to create a culture of meaningful connection and provide soul nourishment at this unique stage of new parenthood.

REPORT FROM THE PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR CATHERINE COX

During 2023, despite widespread staff shortages, our Preschool continued to focus on community, relationships, safety, and the active and creative social play of the children. Our ‘homelike’ and natural environment is a nurturing and nourishing space, offering the familiarity of home with the freedom, time and space for movement, creativity, and expression.

We listened to stories, sang songs, watched freshly baked bread being made in the kitchen, and played outside as much as we could. We were lucky to receive a visit from international storyteller, Kiran Shah, for a Lunar New Year Storytelling, and seasonal festivals and Fair Days returned to their normal rhythms after the disruptions of the pandemic years. We celebrated Harvest and Spring Festivals, and our community came together to help with great joy and gusto.

Wattle Glow Early Learning was renamed to align more cohesively with the Blue Mountains Steiner School brand, and from now on we will be known as Blue Mountains Steiner Early Learning.

Our daily rhythms continue to be complemented by the seasons and nature, incorporating a rich and thoughtfully planned program comprising of songs and verses, craft, movement, creative play, storytelling and extended outdoor play sessions. All of which provide the foundation for each child’s journey into kindergarten with the seeds for a love of learning.

In children our future lies.

REPORT FROM THE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS FRANCINE O’DEA

Under the leadership of Martin Buckmaster, Stephanie Cassin, Julie Humphreys, Amy Brownlee, Soumya Tekkate, Kathyn Tang and Francine O’Dea, the College of Teachers met regularly during 2023. College meets with the aim of growing our collegial commitment to each other, strengthening and upholding the pedagogical and spiritual development of the school.

- College upheld our commitment to meet weekly throughout 2023, starting each meeting with the College verse, a short painting exercise, a short meditation and a reading.
- We continued to develop our Professional Study with informative readings and lectures on Steiner Education.
- College continued with its commitment to Child Observation Studies as an important pedagogical tool for all teachers.
- The College of Teachers supports teachers to attend the Early Childhood “Vital Years” Conferences and the Gleneanon Teacher’s Intensives. These courses make an important contribution to the Professional Learning and Development of our teaching staff.
- We continued to support the work of Council throughout 2023 revising and reviewing policies that affect our governance and the effective management of the school.
- All the teaching staff and classroom assistants engaged in the excellent Restorative Practice workshops conducted by Renee Gare. Renee has extended this vital work to our parent body offering both evening and daytime workshops, which have been very well received.
- The College of Teachers would like to thank all the Council members for the contribution they have made to the governance of the school over the last year.
- A special thanks goes to those individuals who have held positions of responsibility on Council, acknowledging the extra work and commitment that these positions demand.

Prepared by **Francine O’Dea** on behalf of the College of Teachers
28 May 2024



2. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

ABOUT BLUE MOUNTAINS STEINER SCHOOL

Blue Mountains Steiner School (BMSS) was founded in 1983 by a dedicated group of parents, teachers and professionals. It is now an established, independent school delivering high quality Steiner programs, thoughtfully adapted for the contemporary world. Our school is on six acres of beautiful bushland in the bustling Blue Mountains village of Hazelbrook, NSW.

We strive to deliver excellence in Steiner education by working with the thinking, will and feeling of the child through a rich and diverse curriculum, appropriately staged developmentally, fostering curiosity for the world and a lifelong love of learning.

Blue Mountains Steiner School is an SEA (Steiner Education Australia) member school. Although we are an independent school we are affiliated with other Rudolf Steiner/Waldorf Schools throughout Australia.

EDUCATION

Our school has delivered over 40 years of holistic educational programs, guided by our core values, representing the four foundational pillars of not just what, but how, we do what we do



CARE

For self, students, community and environment.



CONNECTION

Nurturing the growth and unfolding of each child's curiosity and imagination through our shared work, hope and purpose as global citizens.



CAPACITY

Cultivating students who are positive and see the beauty in the world, are confident in themselves, thoughtful in their observation and self-expression, and who pursue these practices with enthusiasm and creativity.



EXCELLENCE

Achieving excellence through academic rigour, child-responsive teaching and a curriculum that is thematic, developmental and integrated.

Our curriculum is integrated, thematic and developmentally appropriate. Students draw upon elements of the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) when immersed in a Main Lesson over several weeks. Main Lessons were designed by Rudolf Steiner to meet the child at the most relevant time for their development. Within our units, all NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) curriculum components are addressed over the school year.

Our school caters to the needs of families and their children from birth through to Year 6. We offer Early Childhood, Playgroup, After School Care and K-6 Primary School education, with a strong focus on integrating creativity in learning and imaginative play. A creative approach to education supports the development of neural pathways that enhance learning and contribute towards a lifelong love of learning. Students are encouraged to interact, play and learn with other students across all the stages during the school week.



Guiding Principals

Our school follows the core principles as set out by Steiner Education Australia (SEA). These are living principles arising out of a national collaboration of Steiner schools.

1. The recognition of the unfolding spirit of each individual informs all aspects of the school.
2. Steiner Education fosters social renewal by cultivating individuals who serve an ethical world future.
3. Anthroposophical insights into child development guide the educational program and practice. Aspects of the Core Methodology include
 - a. Direct experience informs the development of living concepts, particularly as part of the phenomenological approach to scientific study.
 - b. Teachers give an overview of the whole, then move to the parts.
 - c. Early childhood teachers enact play-based learning, the class teachers extend learning artistically and imaginatively and the secondary teachers cultivate aesthetic and ethical discernment.
 - d. Goodness, Beauty and Truth are ideals that are embedded within the education.
 - e. Imagination and creativity are nurtured through music, the arts and storytelling.
 - f. Rhythm and repetition applied within the day, week and year are enhanced by a creative breathing dynamic within lessons.
 - g. A focus on development of healthy life habits.
 - h. Main lesson structure is employed over several weeks to facilitate deep learning.
 - i. Observation is a key foundation for assessment.
 - j. Individual 'Child Study' is a collegiate form of supporting each student.
 - k. Being in Nature and using natural materials are valued experiences.
 - l. Staff creatively strive towards ongoing deepening of Steiner pedagogy.
4. Steiner schools support creative freedom to teach within the shared agreements of the School's collegiate.
5. The conscious establishment of human relationships fosters individual and community health.
6. Spiritual development for sustaining professional growth is an ongoing activity for the collegiate of teachers and staff and is supported by the Board.
7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.

If you would like to know more, please see: [Core Principles for Australian Steiner Schools](https://steinereducation.edu.au/about/core-principles-for-australian-steiner-schools/)
<https://steinereducation.edu.au/about/core-principles-for-australian-steiner-schools/>

Facilities

Blue Mountains Steiner School comprises nine buildings, including a library, a large recently upgraded Ball Court, bush mini-oval, amphitheatre, water flow features, music and drama rooms, breezeway, Gaga Ball Pit, Giant Swing, organic produce garden and kitchens to bake in. Students are given access to facilities according to the timetable, except during morning tea and lunch, when all students can access the playground.

Transport

Blue Mountains Steiner School is accessible by train and bus from most mountain towns between Mt Victoria and Lapstone. We also run a private extended bus route in the mornings and afternoons between Lapstone and Hazelbrook.

Outdoor Education and PDHPE (Personal Development, Health, and Physical Education)

Our program offers students the opportunity to experience a range of movement-based activities and sports, including Eurythmy, dance, gymnastics, Futsal, basketball, netball and circus skills, as well as outdoor excursions, bushwalking, and other physical challenges such as obstacle courses. Students in the upper Primary years can participate in inter-school sporting events such as Futsal Gala Day, the Greek Olympics, Cross Country, and Swimming Fun Day.

Students may also undertake a structured series of outdoor adventures in our Outdoor Education Program, with annual school camps, outdoor challenges and skills and overnight camps. Primary students regularly take advantage of structured hiking opportunities in the Blue Mountains National Park, which is right on our doorstep.

Each class, from Year 2 through to Year 6, participates in an annual camp ranging from in-school sleepovers for Year 2 students, to outdoor education adventures for the remainder of primary.

Learning Support

At BMSS the Learning Support Team involves a whole school planning and support process. It is formed with the purpose of addressing the learning support needs of an individual student and groups of students through the coordination, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of educational programs within our school.

Inclusion is about ensuring that each student feels welcome and that their unique needs and learning styles are attended to and valued. The purpose of all education is to ensure that students gain access to knowledge, skills, and information that will prepare them to contribute to Australian communities and workplaces.

Who is involved:

A prime function of the Learning Support Team is to determine that the needs of students in the school are being met. This is achieved through the team facilitating collaborative planning between teachers, support staff, parents and students.

Membership of the Learning Support Team is determined according to local needs. However, in general, the team may include:

- Principal
- Class Teachers and Teacher's Aides
- Extra Lesson Teacher
- Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator
- College representatives
- Parents and Carers participate as necessary.

Participation will vary according to the needs and function of the team at a particular time.

Literacy and Numeracy Programs

Our highly skilled Teacher Aides are invaluable resources to our students, and each composite class has a dedicated Teacher Aides who develops a wonderful working relationship with the students and the class teacher. They work individually with students identified with additional support needs receiving NCCD funding and assist and encourage the whole class during lessons, playtime and excursions or camps.

Teacher Aides deliver individual literacy support to develop spelling skills and reading confidence, provide concrete materials to students during mathematical work if required to deepen concept understanding, and work with the class teacher to support students with additional scaffolding and differentiation needs. They are also essential in helping to notice subtle areas of social dynamics that could benefit from support, as well as preparing and collating resources and assisting students in activities.

Movement Programs

Healthy physical development and movement supports the ability to learn. We bring movement into our classrooms through morning circles, games, finger and hand games, drama, dance, music, art, singing, craft, play and chores, as well as gardening, bushwalking, bush play and sport. This provides the foundation for all learning – cognitive, emotional and social.

In Steiner education the first seven years of the child's education focusses on nurturing and strengthening these foundations for learning. The senses of touch, balance and proprioception are essential for developing body geography, spatial awareness, fine and gross motor skills and physical coordination. These capacities mature during the primary school years along with academic learning.

We support our students through 1:1 Extra Lesson sessions, which include fine and gross motor skill development, sound therapy, and left/right body/mind integration to support the child's development of their body geography and spatial awareness.

Parent Education Program

Developed in collaboration with Glenside Steiner School Parent Education Initiative, our Parent Education Program offers a handful of deeply informative online and/or in-person seminars per term, on a range of interesting and helpful topics, including child development, holistic living, self and family care, and anthroposophical tips and tricks for natural healing.

Throughout 2023 we also engaged Renee Gare, a Restorative Practices facilitator and mentor, to run a series of parent education workshops (3 per term) to support families as they navigate parenthood in these complex times

Characteristics of the Student Body

In the 2023 Census, BMSS reported 84 enrolments from Kindergarten through to Year 6. The ratio of male to female students was 39 to 45. Among our 84 enrolled students in 2023, 5% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 0.05% came from a language background other than English.

BMSS consciously cultivates a culture of inclusivity, with many conversations, circles and learning opportunities throughout the year. We endeavour to support students and their families from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. We embrace and continue to provide support for students with additional learning needs.



Playgroup

At Blue Mountains Steiner School, we hold two different aged playgroups to support new parents with their journey into Steiner education. Glow Babies is a nurturing, supportive and informative space for pregnant mothers, newborns, young toddlers and their parents. Expecting parents through to parents with 2-year-olds are invited to attend.

Wattle Glow Playgroup is an educator-designed playgroup that connects parents and nurtures three essential pathways in children 2-4 years:

- Creative play to develop imagination and emotional wellbeing through meaningful stories and songs.
- Bush play and the celebration of the seasons to immerse children in the natural environment and create a sense of connection and belonging.
- Exploratory play to encourage the foundations for literacy and numeracy skills through oral and practical learning experiences.

Our aim across all our Playgroups is to create a culture of meaningful connection and provide soul nourishment at this unique stage of new parenthood.



Preschool

Blue Mountains Steiner Early Learning is a 32-place Long Daycare for children aged 2 to 6 years old, operating Monday to Friday, 7.30am - 5pm, 48 weeks of the year. We operate across two rooms, sharing these spaces with our three learning groups - Orchids, Banksias, and Boronias, and working alongside Kindergarten. We also share a large and beautiful playground.



Primary School

The school has four classrooms in the Primary School housing three composite classes (Class 1/2, Class 3/4, Class 5/6), one movement room and a Library for Kindergarten and Primary Students. Each combined stream has its own classroom. Dependent on the timetable, classes may move in and out of teaching spaces to allow for Digital Literacy, Outdoor Education, PDHPE, Art, Music and Languages.



3. STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

Student performance on NAPLAN has previously been provided to ACARA for publication on the My School website and is available for viewing > <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

4. SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

As an Early Learning Centre and Primary School this section is not applicable to Blue Mountains Steiner School.



5. TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, ACCREDITATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

In 2023 we focused on introducing, training and implementing Restorative Practices across the whole school, including in the classroom between and with students, teachers, assistants, staff, leadership, parents, carers and extended family, in addition to the usual governance and compliance required training.

Professional Learning Activities (PL) were open to all school staff. Sometimes professional development sessions were held at the start of Faculty Meetings. Weekly sessions varied from short briefings up to 45-minute sessions. Generally, all full-time teaching staff attended weekly Faculty Meetings. Board members, part-time teachers, support staff and other staff members, both casual and part-time, were also welcome.

Board members', part-time and casual staff attendance varied between being regular, or in line with their FTE hours or compliance requirements (depending upon the staff members' interest in the training and the topics offered). College Meetings are also held weekly for full-time teachers where a range of pedagogical studies is undertaken.

The total spend on professional development activities for 2023 was \$26,960.83 which was higher than the 2022 spend of \$15,252.55.

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS COMPLETED IN 2023:

- First Aid, CPR Refresher, Asthma and Anaphylaxis
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Child Safety Standards
- Fire Safety and Lockdown Drills
- Restorative Practice Coaching and Observation Skills – whole school
- Steiner Class Teacher Intensive Glenaeon Lecture Series 2023
- Glenaeon Teacher Intensive Programming and Integrated Curriculum Year 5 and 6
- GLaM (Governance, Leadership and Management) SEA 2023 - Business Managers' Meeting - "Leading for Sustainability and Diversity"
- School Leadership
- SEA Marketing Masterclasses
- AIS – Course for School Renewal and Registration
- Presentation of Requirements for Registration to the teaching staff
- Developing the Work of the College with Peggy Day
- College Days – Restorative Practice with Renee Gare and Policy Development
- Weekly Faculty and College Meetings including readings, lectures, pedagogical discussions and child studies
- Study Group - Steiner's "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds" weekly meetings
- Conducting a Child Study with Kathryn Tang
- Completed Accreditation for Proficient Teacher E-tams
- Teacher Appraisal and goal setting
- Numeracy and Literacy NESA new outcomes
- Working with the Mathematics Curriculum Stage 3
- Music and Movement for Teachers (an extension during the Glenaeon Intensive)
- Early Years Conference
- Information evening for parents of children transitioning to Class 1 in 2024
- Parents and Carers Information Evening.

Teacher Accreditation

| Level of Accreditation | No. of Teachers |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Conditional | 0 |
| Provisional | 2 |
| Proficient Teacher | 7 |
| Total number of teachers | 9 |

| Category | No. of Teachers |
|--|-----------------|
| i. Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines | 8 |
| ii. Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications | 1 |



6. WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

This description of the Blue Mountains Steiner School workforce is extracted from the information published on the ACARA website from the August 2023 census.

| Workforce | Total |
|---|-------|
| Teaching staff | 8 |
| Full-time equivalent teaching staff | 6.5 |
| Non-teaching staff | 12 |
| Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff | 8.7 |

Staffing loads

| Business stream | Load |
|-----------------|--|
| Playgroup | Leaders – 3 x 0.1 P/T |
| Preschool | Leader – 0.8 P/T Casual staff – 0.6 ECT x 2; 0.5 P/T |
| Primary School | Kindergarten - 1.0 F/T Class 1/2 - 2.0 F/T + 1 Assistant Class 3/4 - 1.0 F/T Class 5/6 - 1.0 F/T Teachers Assistants 2 x 6 hrs. x 5 days/week NCCD - 1.0 Teachers Aid PE Teacher - 0.2 Language Teacher - 0.2 Leadership/Welfare/NCCD supervisor - 0.8 Learning Support – 0.4 Bus Driver - 5 days p/w P/T Office Administrator – 1.0 F/T Accounts – 0.2 P/T Cleaners - contract Communications and Marketing – 0.4 P/T |

Staff

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| Freya Baska | Class Casual Teacher/ Kindy RFF | Sandra Killelea | Accounts Manager |
| Zenith Benetatos | OOSH | Laura King | Playgroup leader |
| Amy Brownlee | Class 1/2 Teacher | Jasmine Marshall | Early Childhood Teacher |
| Isabelle Bruderlin | Class 1/2 Teacher (on Maternity Leave) | Jess McCann | Language Teacher |
| Martin Buckmaster | Welfare, Principal, Business Manager | Lee Newton | Teacher's Assistant |
| Meredith Cadd | Teacher's Assistant | Francine O'Dea | Kindergarten Teacher |
| Steph Cassin | Class 5/6 Teacher | Lindsey Pacchini | PE teacher |
| Annie Cohen | Garden Coordinator | Diva Perez | Casual Early Childhood Educator |
| Catherine Cox | Early Learning Director | Karen Perry | Office Administrator |
| Rowena Doig | Playgroup Leader | Rhiannon Phillips | Casual Early Childhood Educator |
| Karuna Elliot | Playgroup Co-ordinator | Emily Pospisil | Early Childhood Educator |
| Paul Glass | Maintenance | Deborah Shaw | Marketing and Communications Coordinator |
| Winter Horam | OOSH | Stephanie Smith | Parent Group Coordinator |
| Michael Holmes | Early Childhood Teacher | Kathryn Tang | Student Learning Support |
| Alannah Howard | OOSH | Soumya Tekkate | Class 1/2 Teacher |
| Donna Hume | Early Childhood Educator | Nyla Thomas | School Bus Driver |
| Sabrina Irani | Early Childhood Educator | Katherine Turner | Casual Teacher |
| Nat Karnjhanacheewaa | Early Childhood Educator | Melinda Turner | OOSH |
| Rika Kaula | Early Childhood Educator | Juliana Umpierre | Early childhood teacher; Playgroup leader |
| | | Sayoko Yanai | Casual Teacher |

7. STUDENT ATTENDANCE (AND RETENTION RATES AND POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL – N/A)

ATTENDANCE

As a registered non-government school in accordance with the Act, we must keep a register of enrolments and daily attendances of all students using the minister's common code of recording. At Blue Mountains Steiner School, these registers are maintained in electronic form approved by the Minister for Education.

Blue Mountains Steiner School complies with all regulatory bodies and keeps all necessary documentation on student attendance, including participation in student attendance audits.

In New South Wales, all children from six years of age are legally required to attend school or be registered for home schooling. Children are expected to attend all school activities on time. Absences are required to be explained in one of the following methods:

- A note or email to the school
- A form via the BMSS school mobile app
- A telephone call to the school
- A verbal explanation to the school

Application for Exemption from school is formally submitted to the Principal for consideration.

ATTENDANCE DATA

During 2023 the average student attendance rate (across grades K-6) for the year was 85.7%, which is slightly higher than the daily attendance for 2022. Attendance is still slightly lower over the year in comparison to pre-2020 due to mandatory exclusion from school if a child had any flu-like symptoms. In previous years, a child might still attend school if they had very mild symptoms.

Attendance is also generally lower across most of the grades in Term 2 and early Term 3, 2023 which could be attributed to the school's location, which experiences marked seasonal changes and extreme changes in temperature, particularly going into the winter season.

This attendance information is calculated for the entire school year for each grade. The whole school attendance rate for students for the 2023 school year was 85.7% and is broken down according to year group in the graph below. Leave can consist of sick leave, extended sick leave and other approved leave.

| Year | Attendance Rate % |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Kindergarten | 86.3 |
| Class 1 | 85.4 |
| Class 2 | 89.5 |
| Class 3 | 84.4 |
| Class 4 | 87.4 |
| Class 5 | 88.2 |
| Class 6 | 78.5 |
| Class 5 | 85.7 |

MANAGEMENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

The school implements policy and procedures for the management of student non-attendance. Parents/carers of students who are absent are requested to notify the school to explain the absence, and parents are regularly reminded of the procedure via the school newsletter.

The school follows up where an explanation of the absence is not received from the parents. Absences are monitored and where there is an attendance issue (unsatisfactory attendance) the school will meet with parents/carers to resolve the issue. Mandatory reporting procedures apply where absences are extended, or when a student may be at risk.

[Refer to the school website for current Policies and Procedures.](#)



8. ENROLMENT POLICY

POLICY

This Policy has been set as a guide to help make the choice of sending one's child to the Blue Mountains Steiner School as conscious as possible for the prospective parent or guardian and the school. Here is a summary of our Enrolment Process below:

Enrolment Process

1. ENQUIRY

Initial enquiries are directed to the Office Administrator for an information pack or to sign up to attend an Open Morning/Tour.

2. OPEN MORNING/TOUR

All prospective families are encouraged to visit the Primary School for an Open Morning or Tour.

3. APPLICATION

An Enrolment Application should be submitted to the Office Administrator, to secure a position on the School's waiting list. The form must be accompanied by relevant documentation and the Enrolment Application Fee.

4. WAITING LIST

Once this information is received and processed, the child is placed on the waiting list.

5. INTERVIEW

Prospective families and students will be invited to attend an interview with the appropriate Head of School and undertake any appropriate standardised testing. .

6. OFFER OF A PLACE

Once it has been determined that a place exists in a year group and any relevant support or enrichment programs, prospective students are formally offered a place. Parents are asked to confirm acceptance of that place by paying the non-refundable Confirmation Fee and signing the Conditions of Enrolment.

7. ORIENTATION

Once it has been determined that a place exists in a year group and any relevant support or enrichment programs, prospective students are formally offered a place. Parents are asked to confirm acceptance of that place by paying the non-refundable Confirmation Fee and signing the Conditions of Enrolment.

Blue Mountains Steiner School is an inclusive co-educational K-6 primary school providing an education underpinned by the philosophy and values of Steiner education and registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

This policy gives guidance to those within the Blue Mountains Steiner School community and to those who would join it, concerning enrolment criteria and procedures. While the policy is as comprehensive as possible, there will inevitably be some situations which are not specifically covered. In such instances, it is the Principal's responsibility to decide the appropriate course to take in the circumstances.

Throughout this policy, unless the context requires otherwise, reference to parents includes guardians or any other person who has applied to have a child entered on the waiting list or enrolled at the School and, where the child has only one parent, means that parent.

New enquiries

Administration will send prospective parents enquiring about the School's enrolment procedure:

- A Prospectus
- A Fee Schedule, detailing the school fees and payment options
- An Enrolment Information brochure containing:
 - > Information about the Enrolment Procedure and Standard Collection Notice
 - > An Application for Enrolment
 - > A copy of the Conditions of Enrolment

Waiting lists

The Office Administrator is responsible for the maintenance of waiting lists for entry to the School.

Entrance to the School is normally in Pre-School or Kindergarten. Entrance at other year levels is limited to vacancies which may occur from time to time. Entrance may be accommodated at any time throughout the school year depending on circumstances.

Names of children will be entered on the appropriate waiting list when their parent(s) or guardian(s) return:

- a. the Enrolment Application form (signed by both parents)
- b. the non-refundable Enrolment Application Fee of \$75 per child
- c. a copy of the child's birth certificate or current visa confirming student citizenship or permanent residency status
- d. copies of the child's last two school reports (if existing); and latest NAPLAN results (for Years other than Pre-School and Kindergarten)
- e. a copy of an up to date immunisation certificate
- f. all medical, psychological or other reports about the child in their possession or control, and
- g. other information about the child which the School considers necessary.

Failure to provide all required information may result in the School declining to enter the child's name on the appropriate waiting list or delaying such entry, and may also result in the School declining or delaying the child's enrolment.

Assessment

The School will undertake an assessment process at some time decided by the School after a child's name has been entered on the Waiting List. As part of the assessment process, the School may ask the parents to provide more information about the child.

Any assessments or reports required from non-school personnel will be at the parents' expense. In considering all prospective enrolments, the School may ask parents to authorise the Principal or his or her delegate to contact:

- a. the Principal of the child's previous school to obtain or confirm information pertaining to the child or the child's enrolment;
- b. any medical or other personnel considered significant for providing information pertaining to the needs of the child.

Where information obtained by the School suggests:

- a. a profile of wilful misconduct, illegal activities or strong anti-social behaviours that indicate that the child's enrolment at the School is likely to be detrimental to other students, the staff or the School; or
- b. the parents may not be able to meet the financial commitment required by having a child at the School, notwithstanding that the child be the sibling of a current student, the Principal may decline to proceed any further with the enrolment process.

Disability

While the School will not suit all children, there is no reason in principle that children with disabilities cannot be eligible to enrol. Indeed, the School has, since its inception, enrolled students with disabilities. Please refer to the Schedule – Disability of this policy for the School's policy regarding disability. The School will follow this policy when assessing an application for a child with a disability.

Interview

When a position becomes available, the School will at its discretion invite the parents of a child on the waiting list to attend an interview with the Principal and class teacher. At the interview, among other things, the School will

- a. inform the parents of their responsibility to the School in relation to fees and will ascertain their ability to afford the current fees;
- b. will seek to establish that the expectations and commitments of the parents are consistent with the vision, values, goals, policies and resources of the School.

School reserves rights

The School reserves the right not to offer any child a place at the School or to defer the offer of a place to any child in its discretion but particularly when the parents, having been aware of their child's specific educational needs, decline to declare those needs or to withhold relevant information pertaining to their child.

The School also reserves the right to terminate an enrolment where the parents have not declared or have withheld known information pertaining to their child's needs.

The School reserves the right to determine the appropriate year of entry for each student.

School's considerations when considering making offers of a place at the School, the School gives preference to:

- a. brothers or sisters of students already at the School; and
- b. siblings, sons or daughters or grandsons or granddaughters of alumni of the School.

The School also considers: evidence of a place at a similar independent school elsewhere in Australia if a family relocates from interstate; a student's willingness and ability to contribute to the wider life of the School; evidence of good leadership and good character and the date of lodgement of the Enrolment Application.

Offer

At the satisfactory conclusion of the assessment process, the School may make an offer to the parents to enrol the child. To accept the offer, the parents must within 30 days of receiving it deliver to the School:

- a. a signed copy of the Conditions of Enrolment which confirms acceptance by the parents of the then current Conditions of Enrolment;
- b. the non-refundable Enrolment Fee of \$400 (this is a per family fee).

Failure to reply within the required time may result in the position being withdrawn and re-offered to another child waiting for entry to the School.

The Enrolment Fee is additional to tuition and other fees.

Change of year of entry

Parents may request the Registrar to change the year of entry for a student. Such requests must be in writing and approval is at the discretion of the Principal or his/her delegate. If a change of year of entry is approved, the student's name returns to the waiting list for the new year of entry, retaining the initial application date. The assessment process, including the interview, will recommence. If the Enrolment Fee has been paid, it does not need to be paid again.

Kindergarten age of entry

ENTRY INTO KINDERGARTEN

At Blue Mountains Steiner School we prefer children to have turned five during the year prior to them commencing Kindergarten

In respect of any prospective enrolment, the School reserves the right to have members of its staff visit the child's preschool, early intervention centre or (with the parents agreement) the home, to more accurately assess the learning needs of the child.

Schedule – Disability

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- *Disability Discrimination Act*
- *Sex Discrimination Act*
- *Race Discrimination Act*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act*

These Acts make it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability, sex, or race by refusing to enrol them at the School. The School is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the law in this Enrolment Policy.

Definition

Disability, in relation to a child, means:

- a. total or partial loss of the child's bodily or mental functions; or
- b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the child's body; or

- f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the child learning differently from a child without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a child's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;
- h. and includes a disability that:
 - i. presently exists; or
 - ii. previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - iii. may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
 - iv. is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

Disability Policy in the Enrolment process

Where a child has declared education support needs or a disability or other information has come to light indicating a possible need for education support services or for some measures or actions to assist the child to participate in the School's courses or programs or to use the School's facilities or services, the School will make an initial assessment of the child's needs. This will include consultation with the child or the child's parents. In addition, the Principal may:

- a. require the parents to provide medical, psychological or other reports from specialists outside the School.
- b. obtain an independent assessment of the child.

Where information obtained by the School indicates that the child has a disability, the Principal or his/her delegate will seek to identify the exact nature of the child's needs and the strategies required to address them. Having obtained this information, the Principal will determine whether the child, if enrolled, would require some measures or actions to assist the child to participate in the School's courses or programs or to use the School's facilities or services that are not required by students who do not have the child's disability. Where the Principal determines that the child would require some such measures or actions, the Principal will seek to identify whether those measures or actions required are reasonable in that they balance the interests of all parties affected. In assessing whether a particular measure or action for a particular child is reasonable, the Principal will have regard to all the relevant circumstances and interests, including:

- a. the child's disability;
- b. the views of the child or the child's parents about:
 - i. whether the particular measure or action is reasonable;
 - ii. the extent to which the particular measure or action would ensure that the child was able to participate in the School's courses or programs or to use the School's facilities or services on the same basis as a child without the disability;
- c. the effect of the adjustment on the child, including the effect on the child's:
 - i. ability to achieve learning outcomes; and
 - ii. ability to participate in courses or programs; and
 - iii. independence;
- d. the effect of the particular measure or action on anyone else affected, including the School, its staff and other students;
- e. the costs and benefits of taking the particular measure or action.

The School will take measures and actions that are reasonable but will not necessarily take measures or actions that are unreasonable or that would impose unjustifiable hardship on the School. In determining whether taking the required measures or actions, even though they are reasonable, would impose unjustifiable hardship on the School, the Principal will take into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including:

- a. the nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by any persons concerned (including other students, staff, the School, the child, the family of the child, and the School community); and
- b. the effect of the disability of the child; and
- c. the School's financial circumstances and the estimated amount of expenditure required to be made by the School; and
- d. the availability of financial and other assistance to the School.

Where the Principal determines that the enrolment of the child would require the School to take unreasonable measures or actions to ensure that the child is able to participate in the School's courses or programs, or to use the School's facilities and services, on the same basis as a student without a disability, or would cause unjustifiable hardship, the Principal may decline the offer of a position or defer the offer.



9. OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

Please refer to the school website for current Policies and Procedures.

<https://bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au/about-us/policies-and-procedures/>

10. SCHOOL-DETERMINED PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The [Blue Mountains Steiner School Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#) recognises existing strengths and charts a clear path forward to maintain and strengthen the school and our community into the future.

VISION

Together, through a connected and supportive school community, our children grow to be resilient, creative, independent and prepared for an ever-changing world.

MISSION STATEMENT

We deliver quality Steiner education, adapted to the developmental stage and needs of the whole child. Our holistic curriculum combines Steiner pedagogy with academic excellence to immerse each child in ideas, nature and culture. This fosters in the children a lifelong love of learning, an appreciation of beauty and intellectual curiosity, and respect for their physical, emotional and spiritual wellness. We focus both on the individual child and the cultivation of a caring, vibrant school community where children feel seen and heard and know that they truly belong.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our strategic goals are to maintain and develop:

1. Excellence in student learning
2. Excellence in Steiner pedagogy in a modern world
3. Engaged school community
4. Beautiful school environment
5. Robust governance, resourcing and economic sustainability.

The Strategic Plan and Annual Progress Reports can be found on the website:

<https://bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au/about-us/about/>



BLUE MOUNTAINS STEINER SCHOOL



Blue Gum Building
CLASSES 5/6

Lilly Pilly Building
CLASSES 3/4

Banksia Building
CLASSES 1/2

BALL COURT

Wattle Building
WATTLEGLOW
PRESCHOOL

The Knoll

Fuschia Building
CRAFT ROOM

LIBRARY

Tea Tree Building

Boronia Building
KINDERGARTEN

Waratah Building
OFFICE

Eucalypt Building
PLAYGROUP

Clearview Parade

11. INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

KINDERGARTEN

Circles

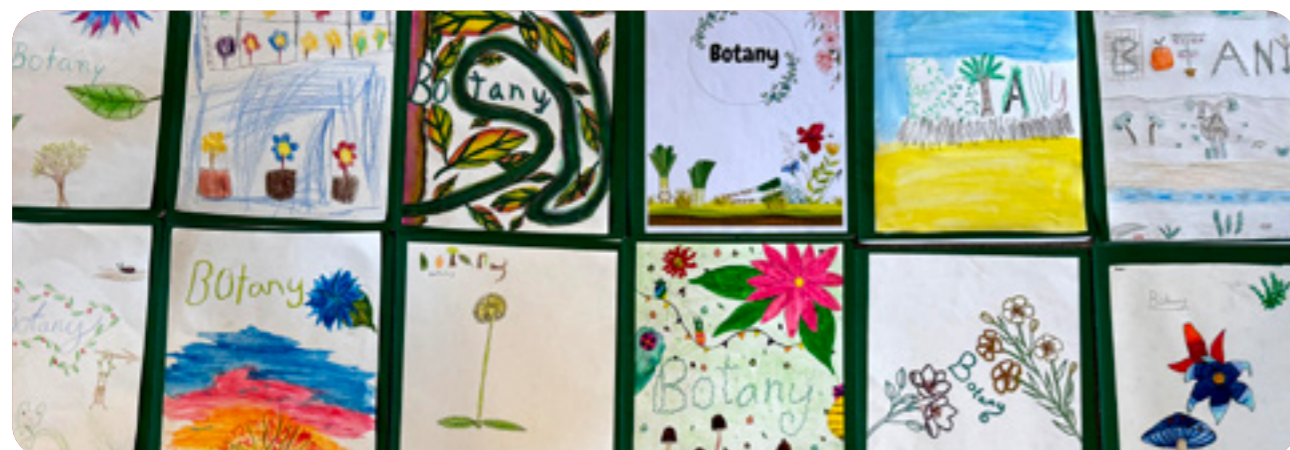
Our Kindergarten students meet and work together in a circle formation. They are encouraged to help and support each other whilst they engage in learning activities either at a large circular table or around a circle mat on the carpeted floor. Gratitude practices before mealtimes, and discussions which can include restorative practices happen here too. In the Morning Circle, the children greet the day and each other with verses, songs, gestures and an Acknowledgement of Country in Dharug language. These daily routines and rituals build a foundation of respect for each other.

Bush Kindy and Care for the Environment

The Bush Kindy program includes observing and participating in smoking ceremonies and cultural incursions and brings a love of country and care for the bush. Packing up and tidying the classroom, everyday chores and gardening in the playground embed caring for the environment into the curriculum and develops a capacity for responsibility. Taking the daily class roll to the office is a shared responsibility.

Buddy Reading Project

Class 4 students read to the Kindergarten children, sharing their reading, oracy and book skills, building confidence, learning mentoring skills and fostering connections that support the Kindergarten children when they join the primary classes in the following year. The Kindergarten teacher regularly bakes a small, baby bread roll for the buddy readers as part of the afternoon baking activity with the Kindergarten children, to show appreciation and to thank the Class 4 students for their care and efforts reading and connecting with the younger students.



PRIMARY SCHOOL

Morning Circles and Assemblies

Verses connected to greetings, Morning Circle, and class activities all support bringing respect for each other and the work of the primary school. Gratitude practices are always part of our mealtimes. Children share the responsibility of running weekly school assemblies and pay respect to the Dharug and Gundungurra people. Whole school discussions promote respectful, caring cultures for the classroom and the playground.

Festivals

Students and teachers, with the support of parents and carers, take time and care to prepare and practice for seasonal festivals throughout the year. Festivals are woven into the curriculum, along with stories, poetry, dance, and music to strengthen the children's connection to their environment and community. The content of main lessons, festivals and language lessons embeds diversity into the children's learning. The Class 6 farewell dinner and celebration is hosted by Class 5 students and families.

Caring for Country and the Environment

Bushwalks are woven into the weekly rhythms of all classes, from Kindergarten through to Class 6. Students learn about caring for country in cultural immersions and care for the school and each other by being responsible for recycling, composting, cleaning and putting out rubbish.

Buddy reading Project

Class 4 students read to Kindergarten children, sharing their reading, oracy and book skills, building confidence, learning mentoring skills and fostering connections that support the Kindergarten children when they join the primary classes in the following year.

Peer Support

Classes 1-6 participate in multi-age Peer Support groups led by our senior students. Activities include a program that fosters skills-building in areas such as positive communication and resilience, and games and projects caring for our beautiful school grounds.

WHOLE SCHOOL

Incursions related to the following events include smoking ceremonies, walking and connecting to country with Kamilaroi Man Paul Glass, and making damper.

Uluru Statement of the Heart

We acknowledge the original spiritual sovereignty of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commit to consideration and support of their aspirations towards the future as expressed in the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Restorative Practices

Restorative practice is a whole school teaching and learning approach that encourages behaviour that is supportive and respectful. It puts the onus on individuals to be truly accountable for their behaviour and to repair any harm caused to others as a result of their actions.

Festivals

Connecting to seasonal rhythms supports connection and respect for ourselves, each other, the world and humanity. We celebrate the end and beginning of every season.

Harmony Day

Harmony Week is about inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, from the Traditional Owners of the land to more recent arrivals (<https://www.harmony.gov.au>). It also coincides with the International Day for the Elimination of Racism.

At BMSS, we honour not only the day, but the whole year, by sharing stories to celebrate the cultural diversity of Australia.

We encourage families to initiate conversations at home with children about their own cultural backgrounds. Thinking about such questions as: where they were born, where parents grew up, where grandparents, great grandparents or ancestors were from or lived. Families may even like to share a story or experience with children, which, if they feel comfortable, they can later share with the class.

We might also encourage any child who feels comfortable to wear or bring with them traditional clothing, jewellery, household items etc. of cultural significance to them. If they do not have any we invite them to wear orange to show their support of these values. They may also wish to bring an item of food to show the class. Italian and Japanese language and culture is woven into cooking, craft and special celebration days such as Harmony Day as well.

Reconciliation Week

During Reconciliation Week classroom focus may include specific books, cultural incursions, Dreaming stories and displays.



12. PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

PARENT SATISFACTION

The 2023 Annual Parent Satisfaction Survey provides the school with invaluable feedback about what parents value and would like us to keep doing, and what could be improved.

EARLY LEARNING (PLAYGROUP AND PRESCHOOL)

The Preschool Survey received 16 of 39 responses - a 41.03% response rate - with the following overall Quality Area ratings:

| Quality Area | Rating (1-5) |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Educational program and practice | 3.3 |
| 2. Children's health and safety | 4.4 |
| 3. Physical environment | 4.2 |
| 4. Staffing arrangements | 3.4 |
| 5. Relationships with children | 4.5 |
| 6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities | 3.7 |
| 7. Governance and leadership | 3.4 |
| Average Score | 3.84 |

Overall, the satisfaction score was 3.84 out of 5, which demonstrates that we are doing more right than wrong. The 2022 survey was calculated slightly differently, so we have decided not to compare apples with oranges. From now on we will use the same standard rating system.

Four themes stood out as positives in both the quantitative and in the narrative comments:

- Relationships between educators and children
- Child health and safety
- Homelike and natural campus and learning environment
- Opportunities for parents and community to be involved

Some responses highlighted issues that parents and carers believe can be improved. The preschool commits to reviewing the following issues in 2024:

- Communication
- Staffing arrangements
- New parent onboarding

PRIMARY

The Primary School Survey received 23 of 39 responses - a 78% response rate. A summary of the total responses grouped by key area, follows:

| Quality Area | Rating (1-5) |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Primary School Parent Communication and Support | 4.5 |
| 2. Primary School Programs | 4.4 |
| 3. Teacher Quality | 4.6 |
| 4. School Leadership and Management | 4.1 |
| 5. Overall School Experience | 4.3 |
| Average Score | 4.38 |

Some things parents and carers really liked were:

- Respondents expressed how grateful they were to have found "such a beautiful school" where relationships are at the heart of the learning environment
- Communications have improved immensely in recent years
- People love getting involved with festivals, fairs and working bees
- Outdoor education and natural campus and learning environment

Some of the responses included issues that parents and carers believe can be improved:

- Respondents would like to be more involved in the school community
- Parents and carers expressed a wish for more notice for events, incursions and excursions, see quote below: *"It would be great if we had dates and times for festivals, class plays etc. right from the beginning of term so that this can be accommodated for in work commitments."*
- Communications could be further streamlined, especially the newsletter
- Some parents would like to hear more about how their child needs extra support in a subject more often throughout the term, not just at report times.

TEACHER SATISFACTION

BMSS has long been an attraction for teachers who highly value our stunning natural environment, imaginative, creative, inclusive and supportive culture of teacher collaboration, and core values of care, connection, capacity and excellence.

Our high retention rate and long-serving teachers and staff (some have been with us for over 20 years) is an indication that they are not just satisfied, but happy in their roles here. Every year we run an informal poll, with some of the learnings shared below:

POSITIVES

- Despite a challenging employment and housing landscape, teachers report they are happy with their work and the teaching environment at Blue Mountains Steiner School
- College continues to mature and holds the foundation steady for the school
- Embedding Restorative Practices PD at all levels of the school continues to build skillsets and support teachers
- Teachers take part in ongoing extra-curricular Steiner Pedagogical studies.

LEARNINGS

The faculty have noted some areas for ongoing improvement:

- A whole-of-school communications plan would contribute towards a more cohesive calendar
- Leadership capacity within College could be strengthened
- Integrated developmental literacy and numeracy programs across all stages continue to be improved
- A more sustainable workload
- Ongoing training for skills-sharing with colleagues



STUDENT SATISFACTION

VOICE OF THE CHILD SURVEY FEEDBACK

BMSS believes involving children and young people in any planning and decision-making processes that will affect their lives strengthens and improves the outcomes for students and the school.

As the direct recipients of the education programs offered by our school, we believe students are best placed to identify what is and is not working for them. BMSS views children:

- as experts in their own experience with opinions that may differ from adults
- as key stakeholders in the strategic planning process
- as rights-holders, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- through a strengths-based lens, focusing on what they can do
- with evolving capacities to contribute to consultations in ways that suit their preference, age and stage of development.

As a result, in 2023, we trialed the School Satisfaction Survey, developed and conducted by Restorative Practices Facilitator and Mentor Renee Gare. Renee ran sessions on Tuesday 12 December 2023 in Classes 3, 4, 5 and 6 asking the children 17 questions and ranking their responses on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the most dissatisfied and 5 being the most satisfied.

POSITIVES

- Most students reported that they liked coming to school “most of the time”
- Many children reported having friends at school
- Sport and outdoor education seemed to be very popular with students
- Relations between children and teachers seemed positive and warm “most of the time”
- Students felt their class teacher listened to them “most of the time”.

LEARNINGS

- Language and music seemed to be less popular for students in Class 5/6
- Peer support was not a favourite by a majority of the class
- Some students did not like participating in festivals, perhaps we could give them more lead time to enjoy the learning.

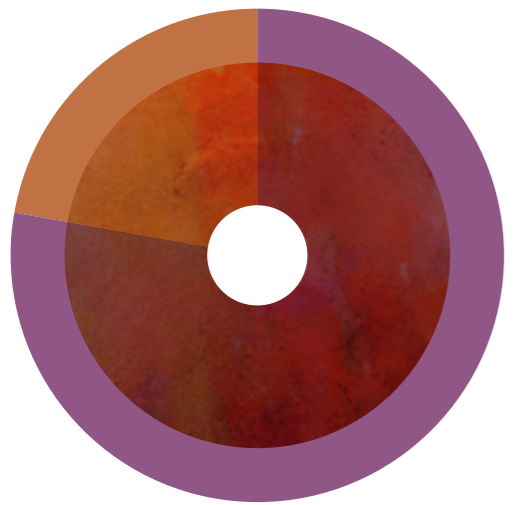


13. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION



RECURRENT INCOME JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2023

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----|
| Fees and Private Income | \$840,329 | 30% |
| State Government Recurrent Grants | \$1,150,270 | 42% |
| Commonwealth Government Grants | \$773,090 | 28% |
| Government Capital Grants | \$0 | 0% |
| Other Capital Income | \$0 | 0% |
| TOTAL | \$2,763,689 | |



EXPENDITURE JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2023

| | | |
|--|--------------------|-----|
| Salaries, Allowances and Related Expenditure | \$2,115,234 | 78% |
| Non-Salary Expenditure | \$594,605 | 22% |
| Capital Expenditure | \$0 | 0% |
| TOTAL | \$2,709,839 | |







Blue Mountains Steiner School

PLAY GROUP | EARLY CHILDHOOD | K-6 | AFTER SCHOOL CARE

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