

Little Yarra Steiner School



Strategic Plan 2026-2030

Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings, who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.

Rudolf Steiner

Anthroposophy is the study of the developing human being. It inspires our work and our vision. In economics, a gift is always for the future, and Little Yarra Steiner School found its current home following the gift of land by a local farmer.

Little Yarra Steiner School is independent, co-educational and non-denominational, offering a high quality comprehensive education based on Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy. It is the only private secondary education provider in the Yarra Valley.

Located in the picturesque Upper Yarra Valley of Victoria, the K-12 school is spread over a 60-acre property incorporating a farm, orchards and acres of open spaces. The majority of the existing farm paddocks and the ecologically significant wetlands adjoining the Little Yarra River have been the subject of an ongoing rehabilitation program.

This Strategic Plan builds on the foundation of the previous 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. It contains key focus areas for development and improvement. We have excellent teachers who are committed to our values and philosophy and diligently collaborate to enable our students to thrive. Our renewed focus on the modern day value of the outdoor classroom, coordinated student support and even higher achievements will consolidate and realise the richness of our educational approach.

The school stands in a healthy financial position, supported by robust financial management processes. The Master Plan (reviewed and revised across 2023 – 24) includes planned risk for future capital expenditure, building and maintenance projects. This will enable us to provide the resources, facilities and support for our teachers, staff and parents to unfold their potential.

Our coming generations need to be confident, well-rounded, courageous and discerning to meet the emerging demands of our time. They need a strong sense of themselves and the direction in which they are headed. We recognise that our work carries serious responsibility: to plant seeds for the future, to encourage and support the highest human values and deepest understanding so that today's young people are equipped and ready to serve the greater good for humanity and the planet.

It is with this intention that we present our Strategic Plan to all members of the community, our teachers and most of all to our students as our own gift for their future.

Ms Maria Brouwers
Chair, Board of Directors
Little Yarra Steiner School

Mr John Stewart
Principal
Little Yarra Steiner School

Our Vision:

Working out of Anthroposophy, we learn and grow, inspiring our students to act with courage for the good of humanity.

Our Purpose:

To awaken in our students the capacity to reach their highest goals through the strength of their individuality and intercultural understanding.

Our Values:

Understanding

Our curriculum and pedagogy use content and teaching methods based on a deep understanding of the stages of child development.

Meaning

We strive for students to experience a meaningful and rewarding education leading to a lifelong love of learning. We aspire for them to become accomplished adults able to think independently and critically whilst maintaining a strong sense of personal and social responsibility.

Environmental responsibility

Our educational offering combines the richness of our rural and artistic surroundings with academic rigour and reverence for the natural environment.

Community

We promote a welcoming and inclusive school environment in which the wider community can participate. We acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Woiwurrung language group within the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which the school stands.

Respect

We encourage and foster a culture of respectful relationships and positive student behaviours.

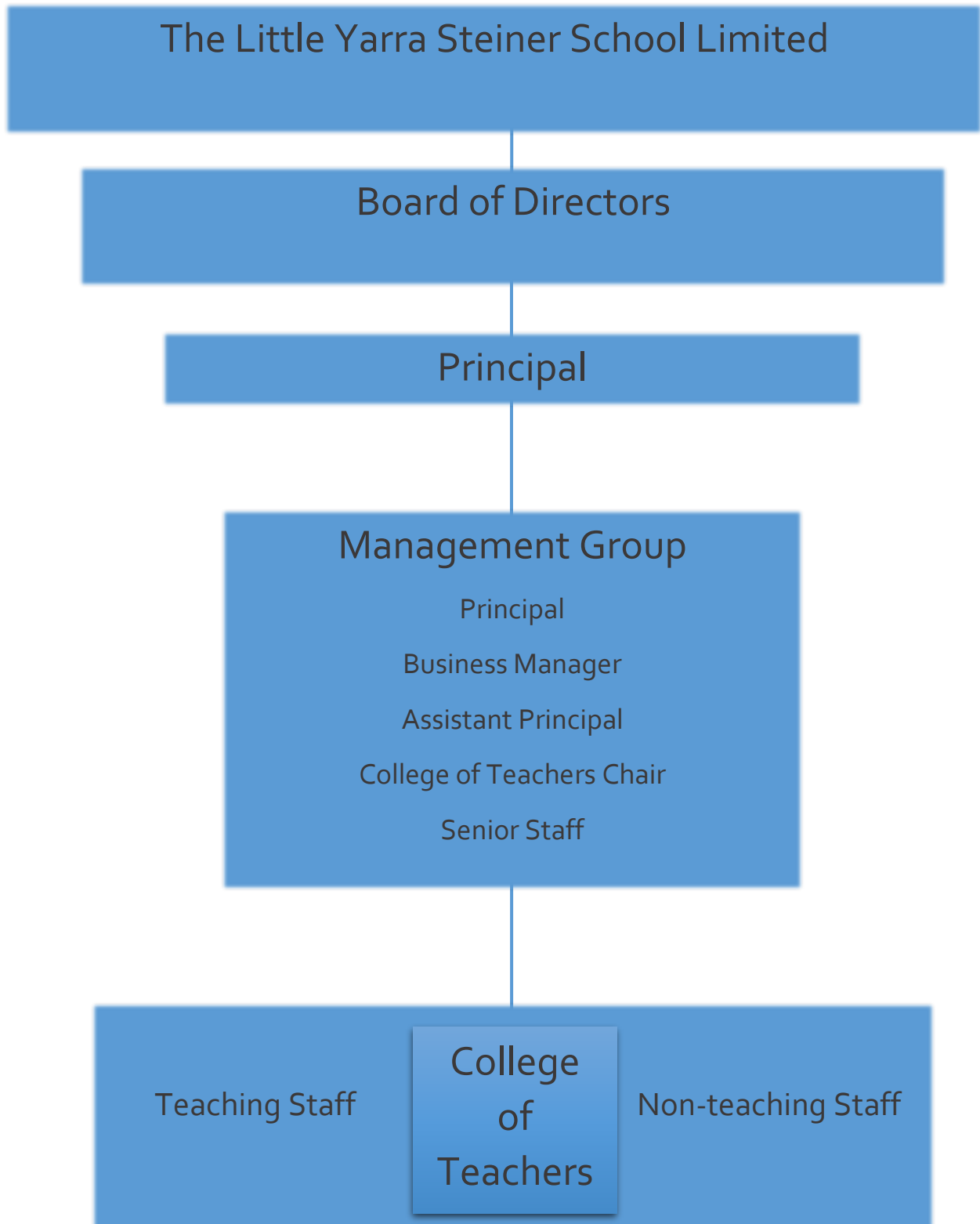
Freedom

We are philosophically committed to the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including elected government, rule of law, equal rights for all, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association, the values of openness and tolerance. We embrace difference and welcome diversity in our community.

Safety

Little Yarra Steiner School is committed to providing a child safe and child focussed environment, where our community are safe and feel secure, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Our Structure



Functions

The Little Yarra Steiner School Limited is the company trading as The Little Yarra Steiner School.

The business of the company is governed by or under the direction of the Board of Directors, elected by the members of the company. The Board drives the School's performance and sets internal benchmarks for fiscal integrity, strategy adoption and adherence to Anthroposophical principles.

The Board appoints a Principal to whom it delegates certain powers, authorities and responsibilities in the operation of the school. The Principal is responsible for the ongoing management of the School in accordance with the strategy, policies and programs approved by the Board.

The Management Group has a responsibility for the operational functions of the school according to the responsibilities of each member. The group comprises the Principal, Assistant Principal, Business Manager, the Chair of the College of Teachers and senior members of staff from a range of disciplines.

The College of Teachers is an advisory committee to the Board. The College of Teachers provides advice to the Board in relation to educational activities and the conduct of the School including pedagogical principles appropriate for the School, continuing Professional Development and training of staff as well as the education and welfare of students and the school community.

The College of Teachers has oversight and care of the spiritual heart of the school. This encompasses Anthroposophical study and discussion, child study and support. Membership of the College of Teachers is open to all staff members, though is not a compulsory aspect of employment conditions. The members of the Management Group are also ex officio members of the College of Teachers.

The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility – these three forces are the very nerve of education.

Rudolf Steiner

Our Criteria for Success

Accomplished students

Have a strong, resilient sense of self

Are compassionate, respectful, creative and independent in their thinking

Display an interest in the world informed by discernment and critical reflection

Have the capacity to attain their personal and academic goals

Exemplary teachers

Inspire and engage students

Engaged in continual learning and professional development

Valued by students, parents, colleagues and school leadership

Well cared for environment

Physical spaces are safe and functional, harmonious, comfortable and beautiful

The grounds, gardens, domestic animals and wildlife are considerately cared for

The natural environment is valued and nurtured

Engaged and supportive community

Respectful relationships are fostered between teachers, students, parents and the community

The Wurundjeri People of the Woiwurrung language group within the Kulin nation are acknowledged as the traditional custodians of the land on which the school stands

We are working out of our Reconciliation Action Plan

There are a range of opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to and participate in the cultural life of the school

Trusted leadership and effective governance

All those in positions of responsibility model integrity for the good of the whole school community

Considerate, timely, clear and effective communication is engaged in by the whole community

Protocols and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain relevant

Sustainable and consistent financial performance

Fiscal responsibility and integrity of financial systems and procedures

Regular review and monitoring of fiscal performance indicators

Planning and review of capital expenditure in conjunction with the Masterplan



Key Focus Areas

1: Whole School Program

Goal: All students achieve their full potential both within the classroom and beyond

- We offer innovative, rigorous and highly engaging academic programs
- We develop programs to enable all students to attain the skills and learning strategies to realise their personal and academic potential

2. Teaching and Learning

Goal: Little Yarra Steiner School's teaching and learning is characterised by innovation, quality and creativity

- Our focus is on delivering programs to our students which are engaging, feature depth of knowledge, rich skills and encourage a progressive development of critical, independent thinking.
- Our teachers are lifelong learners, engaging in ongoing personal and professional development
- We continually strive to deepen our Anthroposophical understanding to further inform and enrich our educational offerings

3. Student Engagement & Wellbeing

Goal: To maintain a safe and caring environment where students feel supported, secure and valued as they undertake their educational journey

- We continue to develop a quality integrated student support department which identifies and supports students, teachers and parents to meet our students' needs
- We ensure effective transition processes are in place as students move through their educational journey
- We offer an inclusive environment in which students are provided a variety of opportunities to be heard as active participants in their educational journey

4. Staffing

Goal: To attract, retain and encourage the development of high quality staff committed to educational excellence

- We partner with teacher training organisations to support a reliable supply of teachers
- We recruit staff with a view to the ongoing growth and development of the educational program at our school as well as building a capable staff cohort to ensure robust succession for the future
- We provide professional development opportunities that enable staff to gain and improve their own skills, knowledge and understanding to develop their capacity for excellence in teaching
- We support and encourage staff resilience, professionalism and morale
- We encourage and facilitate commitment to and active participation in the work of the Departments, Faculties and the College of Teachers across the School
- Our staff are valued, supported and recognised for their work

5. Enrolments

Goal: To grow and maintain enrolments.

- Build and maintain excellent relationships with feeder schools and prospective families, including alumni
- Seek regular feedback through surveys, exit interviews and data analysis, and follow up on suggestions and findings
- Maintain a current and relevant marketing approach through community events, a contemporary website and social media presence

6. Community

Goal: To maintain a high level of satisfaction for existing families and to build and enhance the school's reputation in the wider community

- Foster a sense of belonging to the school community through events, festivals, news sharing, Parents Association and a strong relationship with alumni
- Promote a welcoming and inclusive whole school environment in which the wider community can participate
- Students, staff, parents, alumni and friends are valued and heard in all their interactions within the school. This feedback is collected through a range of channels – surveys, class meetings, parent/teacher interviews, policy reviews etc.
- We provide appropriate, clear communication pathways and relevant information to parents, students and the wider community about the school and its work
- We build on the school's reputation through cultivating the alumni and wider professional networks and educational sector contacts
- We support respectful relationships between teachers, students, parents and the community, and celebrate diversity and inclusion, including sensitivity and awareness of Indigenous peoples and culture.
- We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which our school stands, the Wurundjeri people of the Woiwurrung language group within the Kulin nation

7. Environment

Goal: To strengthen our relationships to the natural and built world by making conscious choices for sustainability and respect for our physical and environmental spaces

- Our educational offering combines the richness of our rural environment with contemporary academic rigour. Our students' educational journey is enriched through participation in environmentally and outdoor focused activities and projects.
- The natural environment is nurtured, physical spaces are safe, harmonious, comfortable and beautiful and the grounds, gardens, domestic animals and wildlife are well cared for.
- We are committed to sustainable environmental practices in our day-to-day operations and in our planning, purchasing, construction and maintenance of educational facilities and resources

8. Administration

Goal: To ensure robust, secure and responsive administrative systems managed by skilled staff able to meet current and emerging requirements and expectations both internally and externally

- Our systems, IT support and services are regularly reviewed and updated

- We have a focus on skills development to maintain best practice, with regular training and support provided for staff

9. Finance

Goal: To deliver quality financial management processes that reflect current industry best practice, able to support long term and capital investment balanced with affordable fees and competitive staff remuneration

- We operate within industry recognised financial key performance benchmarks
- We comply with all financial and legal requirements
- We manage our financial operations prudently
- We maintain and improve school assets
- We cultivate a sensitive awareness of the capacity of the community to contribute to school fees, in harmony with the fiscal demands of the current and future needs of the school

10. Governance

Goal: To actively maintain and develop the Governance of the school

- We focus on the recruitment, induction and retention of quality independent and internal Board members
- We aim for clear, consistent and transparent communication, as well as current best practice policies and procedures
- We engage in appropriately targeted leadership professional development across the Board and Management
- We have clearly articulated succession planning processes in place

