

# WARRAH

LIVING LEARNING GROWING



# Annual Report 2018

## **ANNUAL WARRAH SCHOOL REPORT 2018**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR WARRAH SPECIALIST SCHOOL 2018**

2018 was another important year for Warrah School.

At a practical level the year started brightly with a considerable face-lift for both the indoor and outdoor areas. The establishment of our sensory garden was the biggest outdoor enhancement as we continue to look to adapt to the changing needs of our students. The board had also budgeted for some significant indoor changes which were actioned in the early part of the year. These changes included re-painting of classrooms, library, offices, and the school hall and new flooring in a number of key areas. Together with the inclusion of a new bathroom (donated by FDC Construction (NSW) Pty Ltd) the result was a significant improvement in the cosmetics of the learning environment.

On a more philosophical level 2018 saw the board continue to ask itself the difficult questions regarding our school's relevance in an always changing special education world. Whilst we are immensely proud of our educational program and our status as the only Steiner based special education school in Australia, we also need to be vigilant that uniqueness has the potential to go hand-in-hand with obscurity. Visibility continues to be one of our greatest challenges and 'profile-raising' continues to be very much a work-in-progress. 2018 saw us embark on new initiatives to raise our profile through the use social media as well as continuing to build relationships with other organisations both internationally and domestically. Our links with Hohepa Rudolf Steiner School in New Zealand as well as Redfield School on our own door-step are notable in this regard.

Naturally visibility and scale also go hand-in-hand and once again this year the topic of enrollment levels was never far from our thoughts. Whilst our enrollments in 2018 were stable we remain conscious of the need to do more to safe-guard our future. Ironically though we are also very conscious that scale is double-edged. Our pupils continue to benefit from a high quality, highly tailored and unique therapeutic curriculum that is arguably one of the best kept secrets in special needs education. Our challenge is to gradually increase our scale without compromising on quality.

Alongside scale, wrestling with issues such as the changing student support profiles and the education funding model continue to keep us all focussed. Whilst the funding model saw some positive changes towards the end of the year, it remains a challenge to provide the level of support at the higher end of the needs scale via external funding alone and this highlights the importance of fund raising to ensure we can keep our school fees as low as possible whilst bridging any gaps that may arise.

Complimentary to our own fundraising efforts, the board would like to acknowledge the contributions we have received from a number of external organisations. Our relationship with Dural Men’s Shed continues to flourish and their hard work is truly appreciated. In addition, we would like to highlight the significant contribution we received from Moits who donated a full day of work from over 40 staff to enhance our outdoor environment.

**Moits helping out at Warrah**



**Zac at Dural Men’s Shed**



Finally, and most importantly, the board join with our school community to remember our pupil Alex Raichman who tragically passed in 2018. Alex loved our sensory playground and naming it in his memory ensures he will always remain in our thoughts and in our hearts.

Thank you to all of the dedicated school staff who help create such a nurturing learning environment as well as to my fellow Board members for their support and dedication. We believe our school is truly inimitable and with the help and support of the broader school and Warrah community the board will continue to face all challenges head-on.

**Steve Malin  
Chairperson**



## Introduction

Warrah School is a co-educational, non-denominational Specialist School working out of the educational indications of Rudolf Steiner and offering educational programs for children with an intellectual disability and/or autism, from Kindergarten to Year 12. Warrah Specialist School is registered as a School of a Kind and continues as such to deliver a modern and quality education for students with a disability or special needs using the pedagogical guidelines given by Rudolf Steiner. Being a 'School of a Kind' enables us to ensure each student is provided with the education suited to their personal needs and abilities. Warrah School is guided by its *Vision for Warrah to be known for its unique approach, innovative delivery and outstanding results in the provision of support that serves the needs and aspirations of individuals with intellectual disability.*

The "Disability Standards for Education 2005" articulate the rights of students with disabilities and the responsibilities of the school.

The student cohort is weighted to students with Autism with some students having multiple disabilities and others having a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy, Downs Syndrome and Vision Impairment.

Warrah Specialist School is an integral part of Warrah Society, an organisation for children and adults with an Intellectual Disability and as such upholds the following shared values. Our education is:

1. Based on the Anthroposophical understanding of human development and the principles of Therapeutic Education and Social Therapy.
2. We always uphold the rights and dignity of people with intellectual disability.
3. We uphold the National Disability Service Standards.
4. We strive for the highest standard of professional knowledge in providing quality education, services and support for both children and adults with disabilities.
5. We strive to understand each individual's disability and needs, and provide support that empowers each person to make choices, develop and contribute.
6. We acknowledge and support the innate capacity of each individual to know their own intentions and social needs, regardless of disability.
7. We recognise that although the physical body or soul may have a disability, the spirit of every individual is unique, enduring and free of disability.
8. We support individuals to build and maintain community networks of interest in accordance with their wishes, and encourage engagement and exchange with our local community.
9. We recognise the important principle that all relationships throughout Warrah carry a quality of *mutual* learning and respect.
10. We strive for clarity and transparency in communication and decision making as the foundation for trust, harmony and productive working relationships.
11. We strive to be a Learning Community where learning and continuous improvement are embraced by every individual as well as by the organisation.

12. We enjoy the cultural diversity of the Warrah community and encourage its expression through Festivals, special events and other cultural activities.
13. Our commitment to sound, holistic environmental values is inspired by Warrah's unique natural environment, and Warrah Biodynamic Farm.

Jan Fowler  
Principal



## Principal's Report

2018 began with a strong cohort of experienced staff and assistants and a student group ranging in age from 6 years to 16 years old. We maintained numbers between 17 – 19 and continue to strive to promote the unique education we offer to the wider community. Warrah School provides a comprehensive and tailored education to its students drawing on the bushland environment, farm and local community to ensure learning encompasses life skills, connection to nature, artistic and craft skills and experiences and learning that provides meaning into the student's world. This approach creates a community in which students feel safe, secure and have the opportunity to find their purpose and place in life. We are a "too well kept" secret and offer something we know is of great value to many more than currently attend the school.

Once again we and Redfield College gained much from working together. Students from Redfield College buddied up with Warrah students on our Outdoor camp days and showed leadership and care when supporting students in archery, abseiling, swimming and bike riding. We have also benefited from music and the opportunity to attend the Junior Schools drama production of "The Selfish Giant". Such opportunities benefit all involved and give our students confidence to relate to and participate in larger groups and a wider range of activities than otherwise possible.



We have been pleased to support therapists in Speech, Occupational Therapy and Music provide individual sessions to several students during the school day. We notice how much our students gain from these sessions and also we take the opportunity to learn ourselves in order to build on the work outside session times.

Our focus over the year has been on developing and providing a consistent approach to main lessons, life skills and a new elective programme covering Mud brick making and building, paper making, cooking, gardening, farming, clay work, wood chopping and papier mache amongst the usual program of painting, movement and woodwork. Learning for our students takes many forms and must have meaning for them to engage and develop. Our program seeks to bring learning through a wide range of practical, life skills as well as creating opportunities to make or create something of value to self or others. As these programmes are developed we notice the interest and capability of the students develops also.



This year Warrah was fortunate to be able to host 4 volunteers from Germany for 12 months. The calibre of these young people was impressive and they made an excellent contribution to the staff and students through acute observation, excellent work ethic, music, and active participation on school life. This group returned to Germany in August and we welcomed a new group of 6 volunteers in September who will stay until August 2019.



It was a very distressing time for all when one of our students, Alex Raichman, tragically died. Alex's passion for water, music and nature confirmed and reminded us how important it is to observe and care for the sensitivities many students with high needs have. He delighted in the flight of a bird or the sound and movement of water and as a result heightened our own awareness of the wonder of the natural world. In memory of a very special boy we have named the newly created sensory garden after Alex. It provides us all with the daily reminder that the world we live in and in particular, the very beautiful natural bushland Warrah School is set amongst, enrich our lives daily if we take the time to notice.



As a result of generous donations we have been able to create a very beautiful sensory playground. This has provided students with opportunities to play and have fun while stimulating their senses, offering opportunities to work and enhance gross motor skills by pumping water, balancing on beams, exercising judgement when walking across the stepping stones and of course smelling and tasting the many plants.



The chickens are cared for daily and their eggs contribute to the weekly shared lunch prepared by students. Gardening is an important part of daily life at Warrah and the efforts of students contribute also to the meals prepared.



We were pleased to be able to further the work in Bothmer Gym noting that it has had a considerable and positive impact on our adolescent students. They have been able to develop skills in balance, space and timing resulting in a greater awareness of themselves in their immediate surroundings, a stronger sense of self and an uprightness and confidence within the group. It was also of great value this year that we were able to employ a Therapeutic Eurythmist for a semester. Eurythmy is a core component of the Steiner curriculum and we noticed a vital change in many of our students when they participated in intensive daily or weekly classes. Much of what was learned and gained was able to be integrated into our annual end of year play and brought to the parents as evidence of the growth and gains the students had made.

Enrolments have remained steady and our goal to increase numbers progresses quietly. We have engaged in networking with a wide range of pre school centres in order to make visible what we offer and to give parents the widest choice possible when seeking education for their child with special needs.

A short holiday programme was offered to students and their siblings for the first time proving to be a great success. We plan to further develop this and offer programmes annually at least.



We are a growing community and continue to strive to respond to the needs of our students. Most students have a diagnosis of Autism with others having Cerebral Palsy, Downs Syndrome, and some with Oppositional Defiance, Acquired Brain Injury and Genetic conditions. If Warrah believes we can offer a rich and diverse education to a student we do so with commitment and respect for individual needs. 2018 was a challenging and enriching year for all supported by the curriculum delivery, the integration with the natural environment, the festivals that are a core element in our yearly rhythm and the quality of our staff.

Jan Fowler  
Principal



## **Student Outcomes on Standardised Testing**

No student at Warrah School took part in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy testing at the request of parents. As Warrah School is a registered but not accredited school, namely a School of a Kind, we do not offer students the HSC although would provide opportunity to do so should any individual student with the ability and wish to participate request it.

## **Staff**

### Professional Development

Warrah School provides a diverse and rich programme of professional development to staff both internally and through external providers. The purpose of this is to:

- Provide opportunities to deepen the Steiner curriculum and ethos in order that it permeate the work done
- Ensure a consistent approach to education, learning and student needs is valued and maintained across the school.
- Provide the knowledge required to ensure all safety, medical and physical needs are carried out appropriately
- Enable teaching staff to meet their professional development requirements and maintain their professional status.
- Develop a culture of ongoing professional learning according to the Therapeutic Steiner approach to education and over time become a centre for learning for teachers across Australia.

This year the following Professional Development was provided:

- Mandatory training in First Aid, Manual Handling, Midazolam medication, Epilepsy, and PART.
- Annual 3 day Curative Education Seminar.
- Curriculum practice and Development – termly
- Bothmer Gymnastics
- Therapeutic Eurythmy
- Termly Planning and Review meetings.
- Termly Child Studies
- Painting and Craft Workshops according to Steiner pedagogical principles.
- Child Protection
- Puberty & Sexuality – for the child with a Disability.
- Autism & The Sense of Self.

In addition, individual staff members attended the following professional development opportunities:

- Social Therapy conference, Goetheanum, Switzerland
- Therapeutic conference, USA
- Visit Steiner Special Needs Schools, USA
- Downs syndrome Association Seminar
- Communication – Royal institute for the Deaf & Blind.
- Felting workshop

This year we had 3 teachers at Proficient level, 2 with Masters Degrees in Special Education and Steiner teacher training and a committed, Tafe trained team of Classroom Assistants.

Therapies offered were Music (Nordoff Robbins), Therapeutic Massage, Eurythmy and Riding for the Disabled.

We had the services of our current Chaplain, Rosalind Pecover who attended on a weekly basis offering individual and whole school support as well as supporting our festivals. This work is provided courtesy of the Government's Chaplaincy Grant.

**Riding for the Disabled**



**Nordoff Robbins Music**



**Eurythmy**



### **Workforce composition**

We have 3 qualified full time teachers and 6 part time assistants, an Administrative Assistant and 5 contracted therapists. This staff group is supported also by 4 volunteers from Germany who stay with us for 12 months. These young people have showed themselves to have an excellent work ethic and insight into our young people. The staff team is strong and works effectively together supporting strengths and the need for flexibility.

### **Attendance**

Students are brought to school either by parents (2/18) or by Assisted School Transport. Absences are noted first to the transport driver then to the school usually by SMS or phone call. Given our cohort there are occasions where anxiety indicates a need for a later start for a student on occasion. In these circumstances parents contact the School Principal to notify her of start time and reason.

Student numbers were between 15 and 18 students over 2018. Absences averaged 11% of the school population over the year. These absences were due to behavior issues and illness.

Students who left us at the end of 2017 have enrolled in Warrah Society's Youth Discovery Program, found part time support employment or participate in other services day programmes.

## Theme 8 - Enrolment Policy

<b>Title</b>	Enrolment		
<b>Policy Number</b>			
<b>Version Number</b>	1.1	<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Date last amended</b>	March 2019	<b>Review Date</b>	September 2019
<b>Responsible Person</b>	Principal	<b>Approval Authority</b>	CEO
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to students of Warrah School		
<b>Related Documents and References</b>			

### Policy Statement

Warrah School is a co-educational, non-denominational Rudolf Steiner Special School offering educational programs for children with an intellectual disability and/or autism, from Kindergarten to Year 12. Warrah Special School is a registered but not accredited school which means students in the High School will not be able to achieve a Year 10 certificate (Recognition of School Achievement) or HSC (Higher School Certificate)

#### Disability Standards for Education 2005

The *Disability Standards for Education* articulate the rights of students with disabilities; and the responsibilities of the school or 'standards' and 'measures of compliance' in the areas of enrolment, participation, curriculum accreditation and delivery, student support services and harassment and victimization.

Schools must take reasonable steps ensure that a student with a disability can access the same or comparable opportunities and choices provided by the school 'on the same basis' as those opportunities and choices offered to a student without a disability. This may necessitate the determination and implementation of 'reasonable adjustments'.

In order to be enrolled at Warrah School, a student must be eligible for funding in accordance with the Commonwealth Government's disability funding guidelines for a primary disability diagnosis of intellectual disability and/or autism.

### Procedures

Enrolments should be processed in order of receipt of completed application forms and supporting documentation and with consideration for the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, and other relevant criteria as detailed below.

Usual points of intake for new enrolments at Warrah Special School include Kindergarten and the transition to High School. However, the School will consider the application from any eligible student from Kindergarten to Year 10 or 12.

Criteria used in the consideration of applications will include the following:

There is a suitable vacancy available for the student

- The educational and support needs of the student can be accommodated by the school and are consistent with the principles of Rudolf Steiner Curative Education,
- The educational and support needs of the student are compatible with current and potential programs and with students already in the class, within reason.

The parents and family are required to support the ethos of Warrah School which is based on the principles of Rudolf Steiner Curative Education, to pay fees on time or as agreed in writing and to support all school enrolment policies and procedures.

Assessment for Enrolment.

Warrah School has an Enrolment Panel including the Principal ,and the relevant Class teacher to review all applicants and make recommendations about the allocation of places.

Applications for Kindergarten, Primary and High School programs can be accepted at any time and consideration is given to the date of application in allocating places.

In evaluating an enrolment application, parental advice, external specialists reports, the suitability of the program for the child and the needs of the class as a whole are taken into account.

Enrolment procedures at Warrah School have regard to the following:

All applications and supporting documentation should be processed within the school's enrolment policy.

- Consideration of each applicant's supporting statement / interview responses.
- Consideration of each applicant's educational needs. To do this, the school will need to gather information and consult with the parents/family and other relevant persons.
- Identification of any strategies which need to be put into place to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding the enrolment is made.
- Informing the applicant of the outcome.

Warrah Special School is open to all students regardless of cultural, socio-economic or religious background

## Enrolment Process

All families that make an enquiry are provided with information regarding the school, its fees, structure, curriculum and website and are invited to attend a tour or visit at an agreed time to view the environment and activities and meet the relevant staff. .

All families must attend in person and meet with the Principal or delegate as part of the enrolment procedure. While an initial tour may be made by the parent/s or guardian(s) and/or support person only (e.g. ADHC Caseworker), the student must make a subsequent visit with the parent/caregiver before a formal application for enrolment can be considered. Prospective students must attend a school tour or interview prior to receiving an application form.

Tours afford an opportunity to see the school in action and ask any questions. It is also a valuable opportunity for the prospective student to experience the School, meet other students and visit potential classes.

After the School tour, an Enrolment Application Form will be provided on request to parents/ guardians who wish to make an application for their child to enrol.

The School requires copies of all required documentation including previous psychological, medical and school reports. The School also requires full disclosure of all relevant issues. (eg behavioural; health, history of previous incidents etc)

After receipt of the Enrolment Application, with all supporting documentation required, the School Principal or delegate will contact the applicant to arrange an interview at a mutually convenient time. The interview is an opportunity to meet, discuss the School and its culture, operations and expectations. It is a further opportunity to ask any questions.

The information provided to the School during the enrolment process is confidential.

Priority may be given to siblings of students already enrolled at Warrah School, and to those currently attending other Steiner-based educational programs. Parents, guardians and partners of students are also expected to participate in the Community life of the school and to support the Steiner educational philosophy.

In assessing applications for enrolment, each prospective student's educational and support needs are considered and where necessary, further information is sought in consultation with parents/guardians and other relevant parties such as the AIS NSW.

When a Letter of Offer for enrolment at Warrah School is issued a place for the student may be secured by notifying the Principal of your acceptance. At this time parents receive a copy of the Warrah School Parents' Handbook, which details important aspects of the student's education at Warrah School and how parents and families can support and enhance their child's education. Specific arrangements for the initial attendance, including transition planning, will then be made with the Principal and/or the student's class teacher.

To confirm an enrolment, contact is made with Warrah School's Business Manager to pay relevant fees. (see School Fee Policy).



## Warrah School Fees - Effective 1 January 2019

### Tuition fees

Tuition fees provide tuition 9am to 3pm daily, Monday to Friday for the School Term (excluding Public Holidays and scheduled pupil-free days).

- Primary student to age 12:  
\$995/Term                      \$3,980/Annum
- Junior High School student 13 -15 years of age:  
\$1,290/Term                      \$5,160/Annum
- Senior student from 16 - 18 years of age:  
\$1,648/Term                      \$6,600/Annum

### Activity fees

School activity fees assist with additional costs for school activities such as swimming, hydrotherapy, cooking, craft work, farming, gardening and music.

- |  |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
| a) Primary student to age 12:                      | \$104/Term | \$416/Annum |
| b) Junior High School student 13 -15 years of age: | \$140/Term | \$560/Annum |
| c) Senior student from 16 - 18 years of age:       | \$182/Term | \$728/Annum |

### Please note:

1. All fees are payable within 14 days of the start of term. If you require an alternative arrangement, please contact Warrah's Business Manager on 9651 2411.
2. For families experiencing economic hardship, application may be made to the Warrah Finance Committee for consideration. For further detail, or to make application, please contact Warrah's Business Manager on 9651 2411.
3. This Fee Schedule reflects a 4% (approximate) increase. This increase is consistent with prior years increase and in line with the education component of the CPI which rose 3.1% over the period September 2016 to September 2017. School fees are indexed annually.
4. All families are encouraged to complete a direct debit form for payment of fees. Fees can also be paid by credit card, bank transfer or cheque.

**Enrolment Fee:** \$200

On enrolment, a non-refundable Enrolment Fee is charged and included with the first term's School Fees.

**Bond:** One Term's Fees

The bond will be held for the duration of the student's enrolment at Warrah School.

One full term's notice in writing is required for any student to exit from the School.

The bond is held as a deposit and is credited against fees due for the student's final term. Where a bond has not been paid and a full term's notice is not given, an additional term's fees will be charged.

**Policies for Student Welfare, Anti-Bullying, Discipline and Complaints & Grievances**

***See addendum #1 Student Welfare, #2 Anti-Bullying, #3 Discipline and #4 Complaints & Grievances***

## **Priority Areas for Improvement and Achievement of those priorities.**

Priorities identified are stated below with comment on level of achievement noted.

1. Ensure Steiner Curative Principles sit at the heart of the School's educational approach.  
*A renewed focus on staff training strongly aligned with the practical aspect of the core principles was ensured this year with all training having an element of planning and monitoring integration into the daily plans. The focus was to ensure that we built the capability to meet the individual needs of the whole child while also fostering a strong social sense of community and connection. To support this, we sought out a Therapeutic Eurythmist to work with students and staff and connect with our other specialists. This then strengthened our capacity to gain fuller insights into the needs of the developing child through child studies, reflective practice and deep dialogue. Professionals were brought in from New Zealand and across Australia to support this approach. The annual therapeutic seminar focussed on intensive child studies which brought the concepts into individual learning plans. This work was supported by the input of Dan Freeman, Bothmer Gym Specialist and Barbara Baldwin, Speech Therapist and Therapeutic Educator.*
  
2. Increase enrolments.  
*Some changes in our advertising approach were made to bring greater awareness of the school and its curriculum to the public forum. This was primarily through advertising on local buses, increasing our profile in local papers and social media. Over the year enrolments increased slightly to 17 students.  
We also sought to connect with organisations offering services to children with disabilities and their families in order to ensure parents have choice when making the important decisions about the education and care of their child. This is an ongoing commitment for us.*
  
3. Address Staff Development and Succession Planning.  
*A comprehensive training programme was implemented following consultation with staff and an audit of needs aligned to our goals. This has resulted in more engagement and involvement in planning and student ILP development by staff.  
Succession planning has been identified as a critical need within the school and new staff appointments were made with that in mind. At the end of 2018 no clear successor was identified and so it will continue to be part of the goals and planning for 2019.*
  
4. Consider opportunities for additional Children's services.  
*Initial discussions were held when Warrah was approached to provide short term residential care for children and while it was agreed this was an important service and*

*one which would be worthy of pursuing the timing was not right for immediate action. There are many regulations and requirements to attend to as well as developing an approach to the care that supported and nourished the needs of a young child while giving confidence to parents and regulatory bodies.*

*It was also decided to explore the possibility of holiday care programmes. A first step was made by offering a day programme for students and siblings. While a small step towards an important service it proved to be successful and something we wish to pursue and offer regularly in the short to mid term.*

### **Priorities for 2019**

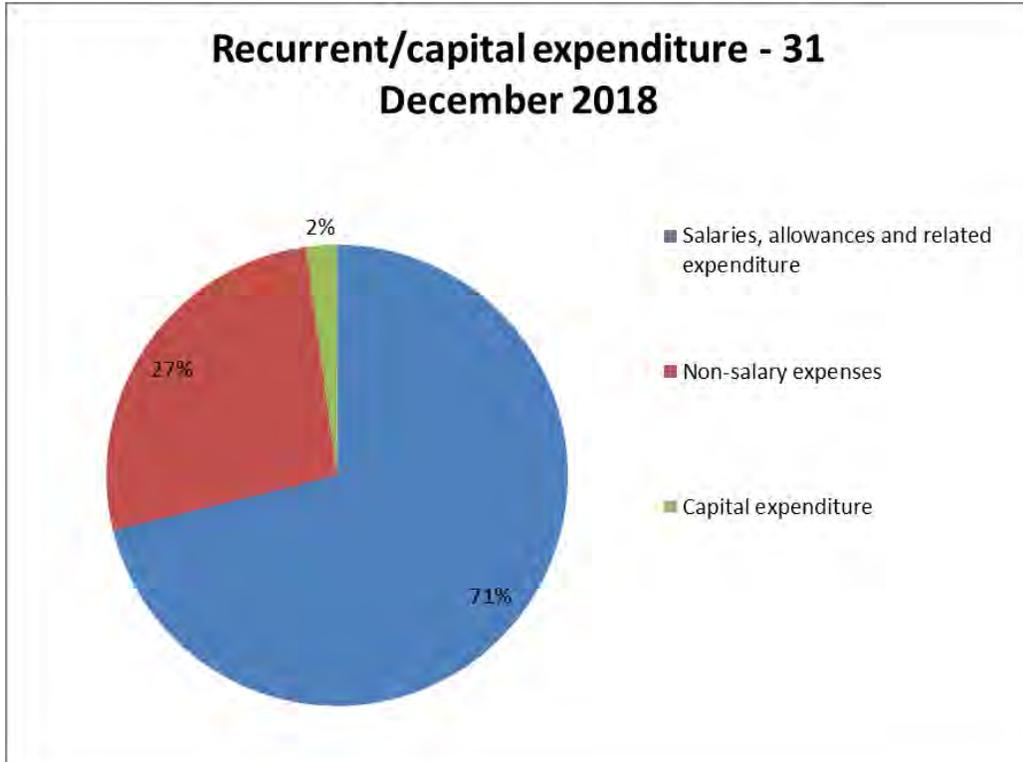
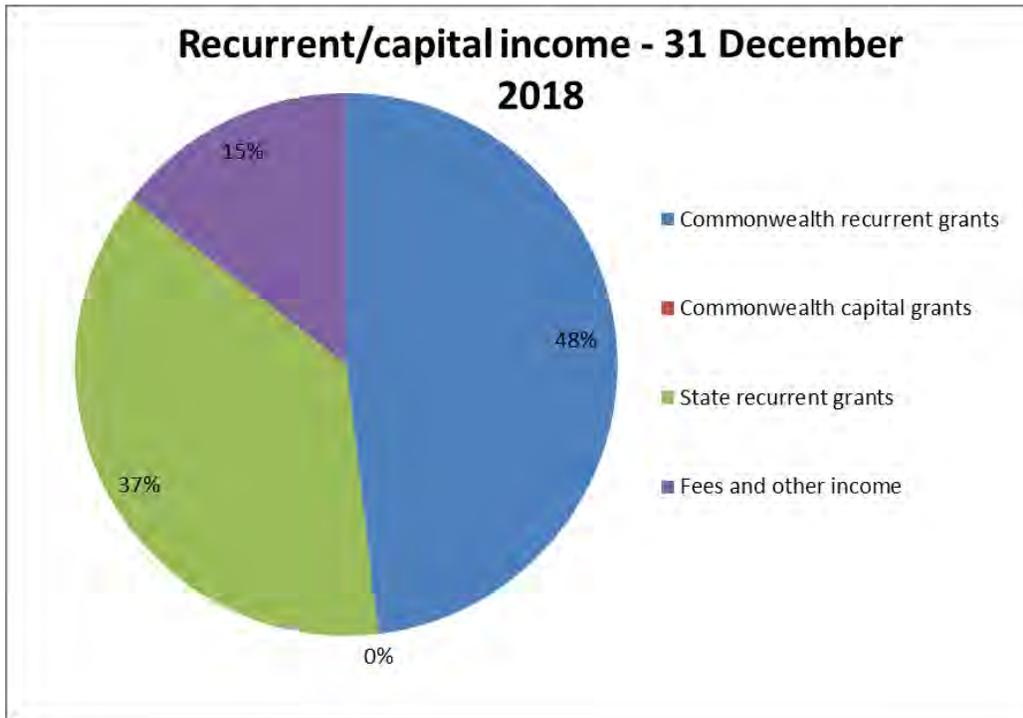
1. Further staff development programming to meet needs of student cohort and deepening of a Steiner pedagogical and therapeutic approach to education.
2. Review of the school curriculum and its delivery.
3. Succession planning
4. Provision of an Annual Holiday programme
5. Increase enrolments and develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.

### **Parent Body**

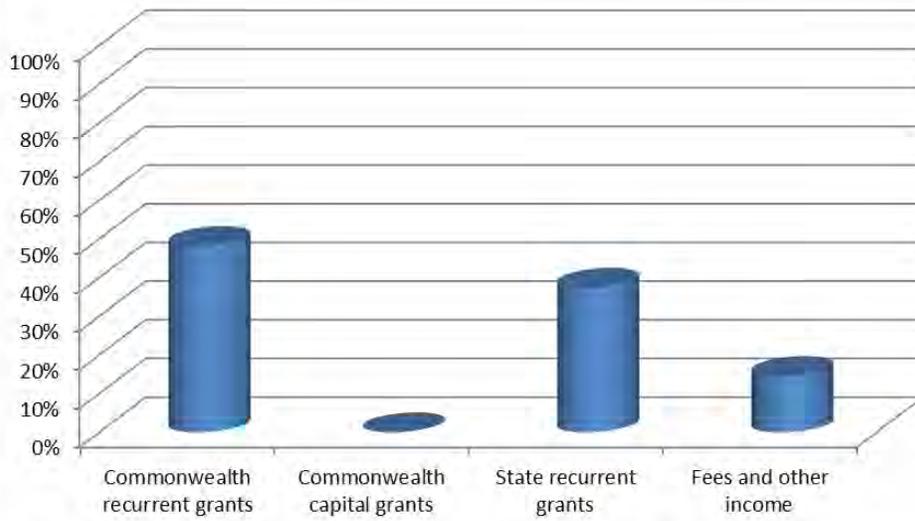
Parents are regularly invited to school events and Warrah School has an “Open Door” Policy to all parents should they wish to observe, help or meet with staff. This year efforts were made to form a Parent Association and indications are that it will meet with some success in 2019. The majority of Warrah School parents express their satisfaction or questions through comments in the daily communication books and at student ILP meetings. Efforts are being made by some parents to engage families in fund raising and event support. The school supports these efforts fully while also recognizing that many of its families have wide ranging demands on them already. We continue to encourage involvement of parents and extended family in the activities and support of the school.



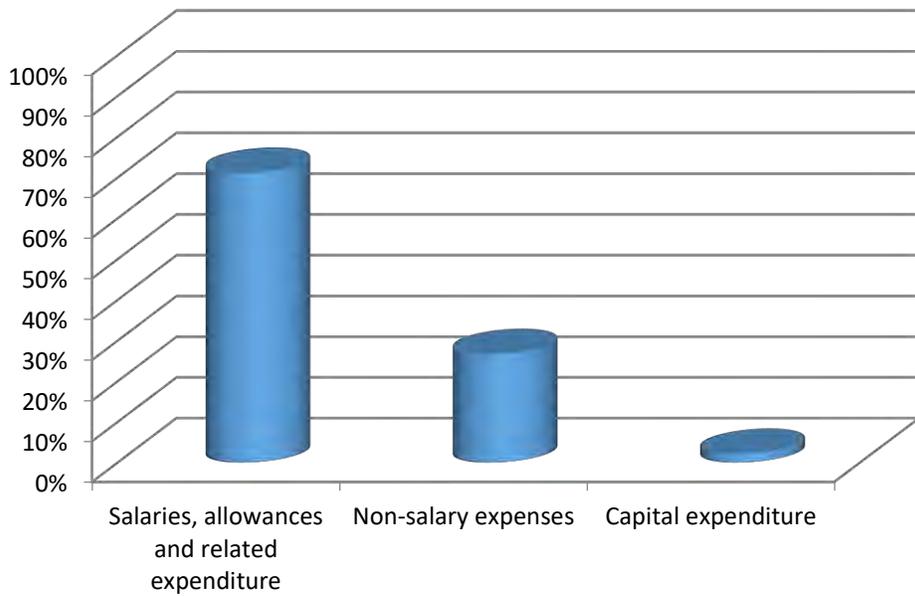
Financial Report



### Recurrent/capital income - 31 December 2018



### Recurrent/capital expenditure - 31 December 2018



## Addendum #1- Student Welfare

<b>Title</b>	Code of Conduct for Care and Protection of Children		
<b>Version Number</b>	1.1	<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Date last amended</b>	March 2016	<b>Review Date</b>	March 2019
<b>Responsible Person</b>	Principal	<b>Approval Authority</b>	CEO
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to Warrah school staff		
<b>Related Documents and References</b>	Child Protection Policy Discipline Policy		

### Policy Statement

Warrah School is committed to the achievement of the highest standards of education in which the security, protection and comfort of students is a high priority.

The aim of this code is to outline the standards of behaviour expected of all employees of the school. The code places an obligation on all employees to take responsibility for their own conduct and to work with colleagues cooperatively to achieve a consultative and collaborative workplace.

#### Resources:

- Recommended Protocols for Internal Investigative and Disciplinary Proceedings 2001
- Responding to Allegations: Protocols for Investigations, [www.aisnsw.edu.au](http://www.aisnsw.edu.au)
- The Working with Children Employer Guidelines: Latest version is at: [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)
- NSW Ombudsman – Child Protection in the Workplace Guidelines Responding to allegations against employees [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/publication](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/publication)

### Procedures

#### Introduction

The care and protection of children according to the parameters set out in NSW legislation is both complex and sensitive. Since the NSW Government introduced its legislation in 1998 there have been a number of significant developments which have resulted in the passing through both Houses of Parliament the 'Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2003'. Both the NSW Ombudsman and the Commission for Children and Young People have re-drafted their guidelines in relation to child protection as a result of these amendments.

The 2004 amendments to the child protection legislation required agencies to develop a Code of Conduct which will apply to its employees. Such a Code should help establish parameters for employees who work in child related employment.

This Code of Conduct has therefore been formulated to identify to staff of independent schools the type of conduct that is required of them in the way they deal with children in the performance of their duties. It is also intended to provide practical assistance for staff members if they encounter ethical problems.

### The Legislative Context

Everyone who is concerned in a professional capacity with the care and protection of children needs to have a clear understanding of the essential elements of the law as it applies to the care and protection of children.

Legislation in NSW relating to the care and protection of children is currently contained in the following Acts of Parliament:

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2000
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young People Regulation 2009
- Ombudsman Act 1974 (Part 3A)

### Duty of Care and Legal Liability

Staff can be deemed legally liable if they have been negligent in relation to their responsibilities under the legislation as it pertains to the care and protection of children.

Generally speaking, a person owes a duty not to injure another as a result of his or her own negligent act or omission. The duty does not usually extend to the taking of steps to prevent injury where one has not caused or contributed to the risk giving rise to the injury.

There exists, however, special duty relationships between some members of our society which give rise to more onerous duties of care. The relationship between teacher and pupil is one of these.

The general law of negligence provides that a person may be negligent if:

- S/he owes a duty of care to the person injured, that is, the standard judged reasonable in all of the circumstances, and
- S/he did not carry out that duty to the legal standard required, and

- The person suffered damage as a result of the failure to observe the duty of care.

With regard to care and protection the following general principles apply:

- Staff must take reasonable care to ensure that their students are not harmed. They have a duty to protect their students against foreseeable risks of personal injury or harm.
- The standard of care is that of a reasonably prudent parent. The degree of care depends on such factors as the age and ability of the students.
- There must be an efficient system of supervision in operation in the school.

Duty of care applies while the students are under the care of the school. This applies equally to school based activities and out of school activities. The same duty of care applies to employees who volunteer their services to the school.

Employees are required to follow good standards and approved practice. An example of good standards or approved practice would be compliance with the school's Code of Conduct.

The following guidelines are to be adopted for the care and protection of students and staff.

#### Supervision of Students

1. Staff must take all reasonable care to ensure that no student is exposed to any unnecessary risk of injury. Staff are to remember that they are in *loco parentis* - the standard of care required is that of a skilled professional.
2. Staff should be familiar with and adhere strictly to the school's evacuation procedures.
3. Ill or injured students should be attended to by the supervising staff member. Should additional assistance be required contact should be made with the central office or nominated person such as the school Principal.
4. Students should not be left unsupervised either within or outside of class. Staff are reminded of their duty of care obligations in this regard. Staff should be punctual to class and allocated supervision. Students in assisted travel programs should be released from their car within 5 minutes of arrival wherever feasible.
5. It is recognised that individual tutors e.g. music, may need to work with students alone in enclosed studios. External monitoring is made possible with a window in each studio door. All classrooms are to have visibility through windows.

6. Staff should remain with students at after school activities until all students have been collected. In the event that a student is not collected staff should remain with the student until collected, or seek advice from the appropriate supervisor.
7. Staff should ensure that they are familiar with and adhere to the school's policy in regard to the storage and administration of medical products to students.
8. Playground supervision is an integral part of the responsibility of staff. It must take precedence over other activities. It is unacceptable to be late. Staff should actively supervise their designated area, being vigilant and constantly moving around, with the focus on the students' safety and wellbeing.
9. Staff should be alert to bullying or any other form of discriminatory behaviour, respond appropriately and immediately and report incidences to the appropriate staff member.

### **Professional relationships between employees and students**

#### Supervision of students

1. Staff should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student. Where staff are left with the responsibility of a single student they should ensure that this is in an open space in view of others. Where this is not possible or practical it should be discussed with the immediate supervisor.
2. Staff should never drive a student in their car unless they have specific permission from their supervisor to do so. In the event of an emergency staff should exercise discretion but then report the matter to the appropriate supervisor.
3. When staff wish to conduct a private conversation with a student they should consider the time and venue carefully to avoid placing themselves in a vulnerable situation. It is preferable to leave the door open. The staff member should not locate themselves between the student and the door.

#### Physical contact with students

1. Staff must not impose physical punishment on a student in the course of their professional duties.
2. When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience staff must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable. Staff should seek reassurance from the student by asking for a volunteer to demonstrate a particular activity.
3. Attention to the toileting needs of young children should be done with caution. It may be appropriate to have the door open. In respect to students with a disability the management of toileting needs should be included in the student's individual management plan.

4. When congratulating a student, a handshake, pat on the shoulder or brief hug are acceptable as long as the student is comfortable with this action. Kissing of students is not acceptable.
5. Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching. Always advise the student of what you intend doing and seek their consent.
6. Sometimes in ensuring duty of care staff may be required to restrain a student from harming him or herself or others using reasonable force. Any such strategy must be in keeping with the school's behaviour management practices or individual student management plans. Staff should report and document any such incidents.

### Relationships with students

1. Staff must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual or heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers. Staff are reminded of:
  - a) the law prohibiting sexual relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years); and
  - b) the law prohibiting sexual relations between a teacher and their student under the age of 18 years.
2. Staff must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in the student. An overly familiar relationship with any student that staff are responsible for teaching, tutoring, advising, assessing, or for whom they provide pastoral or welfare support raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence, dependency, and of equality of treatment. Such relationships may also have a negative impact on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues, and may carry a serious reputational risk for the school.
3. If a staff member considers that a student is being overly familiar, seeking to establish a personal relationship or has developed a 'crush' on them, they should report their concerns to the Principal as soon as possible so that a plan can be developed to manage the situation effectively and sensitively.
4. Staff must always treat students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.
5. Staff may as part of their pastoral care role engage in discussion with students. This is entirely appropriate. However staff must be cautious of making personal comments about a student or asking questions that probe their own or a student's sexuality or relationships. Staff must not hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature where they disclose information about themselves.

6. Social relations between staff and students outside the school can be problematic. Staff should refrain from inviting students to their home, visiting students at their home or attending parties or socialising with students unless they have the expressed permission of the Principal. Staff must be alert to the risk involved in social relations with students and be conscious that their position places extra obligations on them.
7. Staff should not engage in tutoring or coaching students from the school for monetary return. Any tutoring arrangements with students should be reported to the Principal prior to agreement with the student and his/her family/guardians.
8. Staff must not invite students to join their personal electronic social networking sites or accept students' invitations to join their social networking sites.
9. Staff who communicate with students electronically must abide by the terms of the school's computer/Internet policy. Transmission of messages or files which are sexually explicit or offensive are prohibited.
10. Sometimes during the course of their work staff may be in receipt of a gift from a student. In such circumstances where the receipt of a gift could be considered outside of usual custom staff are to inform their immediate supervisor.
11. Any gifts given to students must be limited to a maximum amount of \$15 and be approved by the Principal.
12. Staff should be aware of, and sensitive to, children with culturally diverse or indigenous backgrounds and cultural practices that may influence the interpretation of their behaviour.

### Child protection

1. Staff must be aware of and comply with the school's Child Protection Policy.
2. Staff should notify the Principal or Head of Agency immediately should they suspect a situation involving any form of reportable conduct. It is not a staff responsibility to investigate. Similarly staff should report to the Principal or Head of Agency any suspected case of neglect. This includes self disclosure if the allegation involves the staff member.

For further information about 'reportable conduct' see the school's Child Protection Policy.

## Appropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites

1. Staff must comply with the school's Internet, Email and Computer Usage Policy. This includes:
  - a) exercising good judgment when using electronic mail, following the principles of ethical behaviour;
  - b) using appropriate and professional language in electronic mail messages;
  - c) not sending messages that are harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, threatening, abusive or obscene;
  - d) being aware that Warrah may inspect any and all files stored on Warrah resources to the extent necessary to ensure compliance
  - e) using their Warrah email address and Warrah phones only for any business purpose. Personal email addresses and/or phones are not to be used for any school business.
  - f) not using their Warrah email address for any personal purposes. All information associated with a staff member's Warrah email address is the property of Warrah, and is backed up regularly.
2. Staff must not invite current students or school leavers within 2 years into their personal social networking sites such as Facebook, or accept an invitation to students' personal social networking sites.
3. Staff should not communicate with students on social networking websites for purposes unrelated to their employment without the knowledge and permission of the Principal or Head.
4. Personal details such as email addresses and/or phone numbers are not to be given to any students. Any student found to have accessed and/or used same is to be asked to remove it immediately and the parents and principal informed.
5. Staff must never use the school's networks to view, upload, download or circulate any of the following materials:
  - a) sexually related or pornographic messages or material;
  - b) violent or hate-related messages or material;
  - c) Racist or other offensive messages aimed at a particular group or individual;
  - d) Malicious, libellous or slanderous messages or material; or
  - e) Subversive or other messages or material related to illegal activities.

## Discipline of Students

1. All staff should be familiar with and adhere to the school's Discipline Policy.
2. Smoking is not permitted on the school premises. Furthermore smoking is not permitted at any school function or activity whether these functions/activities are on the school premises or not.

3. Staff should not supply or condone the use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs for themselves or any student in their care.
4. Alcohol is not to be consumed on the school premises or at school camps or excursions. The only exceptions will be those occasions deemed appropriate by the Principal, but in any case will not include occasions where students are in attendance.
5. No student should be allowed to leave or be sent from a class other than for personal hygiene matters. In extreme cases students can be sent to the Principal's office.
6. At all times when speaking with students care must be taken to use appropriate language. Please refer to the School Discipline Policy.

#### Communication Issues

1. Staff are required to respect and adhere to the established lines of communication in the school.
2. Staff should be mindful of confidentiality when in discussion with parents. Staff can never guarantee confidentiality if the matter under discussion requires mandatory reporting.
3. Staff should not speak about another staff member to students or parents.
4. Staff should present a courteous professional manner to students, parents, visitors and other staff members. Confrontation and criticism in public is to be avoided at all times.
5. All matters discussed in staff meetings and staff memos are to be treated confidentially and not discussed with students or parents.
6. The media should not be given access to students or allowed entry to the school without the expressed permission of the Principal. No staff member may speak to the media without the expressed permission of the Principal or CEO.
7. Staff must only use confidential information for the work-related purpose it was intended.
8. Unless authorised to do so by legislation, staff must not disclose or use any confidential information without the express permission of the Principal.
9. Staff must make sure that confidential information, in any form, cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.

10. Staff should always exercise caution and sound judgment in discussing the personal information of students, parents, staff and other people with other school employees. Normally information should be limited to those who need to know in order to conduct their duties, or to those who can assist in carrying out the school's work because of their expertise.

#### Camps/Billets/Excursions

1. In the case of activities involving overnight accommodation of boys and girls, both genders should be represented in the group of supervisors.
2. Excursion information must be communicated to parents.
3. A school mobile phone must be taken on all excursions. The teacher in charge must always have a complete list of student contact numbers with them on the excursion.
4. A co-ordinator will be appointed to oversee billeting arrangements. The co-ordinator will ensure that lines of communication are known to all students, their parents and host families.
5. Students being billeted should have access to supervising staff. The overriding principle is 'to act in the best interests of the child'. If the child expresses discomfort, or unease the child should be removed from the situation immediately.
6. Parents of students to be billeted must complete consent forms and medical information forms. Host families will complete a Volunteers/Student Worker Declaration Form.

#### Duty to Disclose

1. Staff are required to report to the Principal any allegation of reportable conduct.
2. Staff who are the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order or a Reportable Conviction are required to inform the Principal immediately they are in receipt of such an Order or Conviction.
3. Staff are required to report to the Principal or nominee any concerns relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student.
4. If, through their employment with the school, a staff member becomes aware of a serious crime committed by another person, they are required to report it to the Principal, who may be required to inform the police.

***I have read the above "Code of Conduct Child Protection" and agree to abide by the requirements of this document.***

***Name .....***

***Signature .....***

***Position ..... Date .....***

***Principal: Name .....***

***Signature .....***

***Date.....***

## Addendum #2 Anti-Bullying

### Bullying Behaviour

<b>Title</b>	Dealing with Bullying Behaviour		
<b>Version Number</b>	1.1	<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Date last amended</b>	March 2016	<b>Review Date</b>	March 2019
<b>Responsible Person</b>	Principal	<b>Approval Authority</b>	CEO
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to all members of Warrah School		

### Policy Statement

Warrah Special School works with the indications given by Rudolf Steiner aiming to create a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self esteem for all. Bullying behaviour in any form does not belong in such an environment where positive assertive communication is promoted and difference is valued. Warrah School does not tolerate bullying.

Warrah aims to

- To ensure the protection and support of the child who is feeling victimised by assisting them to explore strategies of response towards harassment.
- To change the behaviour of the bully – both for the sake of other future victims and for the sake of the bully’s future.
- To deter or dissuade other students from engaging in bullying.

### Procedures

It is necessary to distinguish between the two main forms of bullying which may be pertinent to the special school situation – *malign* and *non-malign*. (Rigby, 1997). Different approaches may be adopted depending on the type of bullying which is occurring.

*Malign bullying* is that which seeks consciously to do harm to someone.

*Non-malign bullying* is a form of “non-conscious” bullying which is less “obvious” and often of longer duration. The bully may not be as obvious as his/her actions are more subtle. There can be more than one “victim” involved.

## What are the effects of bullying?

Regardless of the “type” of bullying involved, the results for the victim are similar. They can include:

**Emotional** - mood swings, sleep disturbance, depression

**Psychosomatic** – negative body language

**Social** – withdrawal, increase sibling rivalry

**Behavioural** – outbursts of temper, problematic behaviour, decline in work standards, truancy.

## What can we do to prevent bullying?

Teachers make explicit the rights and responsibilities relevant to children through class activities/discussion. More specifically, teachers will:

- help create a climate which changes from “don’t do it” to “it’s O.K. to tell”.
- Involve students in using problem solving for conflict situations.
- Support students to identify bullying, as victim, perpetrator and as witness.

### 1. RIGHTS

#### CHILDREN

- Have a right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- To feel safe at school.

#### TEACHERS

- To teach in a friendly safe and satisfying school.
- To be supported in all areas of behaviour management. PARENTS
- To expect that something will be done about incidents of bullying.

### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES CHILDREN

- To respect others in speech and deed
- Keep our hands and feet to ourselves
- To work out problems in a fair manner
- To refuse involvement in any bullying situations □ To support one another by speaking up.

#### SUPERVISION TEACHERS

- To be thoughtful, courteous and respectful of children at all times
- To reflect in their behaviour, the values that are expected of students
- To make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during supervision duty
- To be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- To take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- To communicate relevant observations to involved teachers, to parents and to college. CLASS TEACHER

- To be aware of and prompt for supervision responsibilities
- To foster appropriate co-operative learning approaches which can promote positive self-esteem and fruitful peer relations
- To be thoughtful, courteous and respectful of children at all times
- To reflect in their behaviour, the values that are expected of students PARENTS
- Being supportive of the underlying philosophy at Warrah School
- Being supportive of teachers in their endeavours to improve student relations and welfare by being aware of signs of distress in their child
- Taking an active interest in their child's social life
- Communicating with their child's class teacher and encouraging their child, if possible, to also communicate with their class teacher or other staff member about a bullying incident
- Encouraging their child *not* to retaliate
- Being willing to attend interviews if their child is involved in any bullying incident.

<b>Definitions</b>
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**Bullying** – It is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It can be the repeated use of:

- physical aggression
- the use of put-down comments or insults
- name calling
- damage to the person's property
- deliberate exclusion from activities
- the setting-up of humiliating experiences
- "ganging up" of a group of children against one child

### Addendum #3 Discipline

<b>Title</b>	Behaviour and Discipline		
<b>Version Number</b>	1.1	<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Date last amended</b>	March 2015	<b>Review Date</b>	March 2016
<b>Responsible Person</b>	Principal	<b>Approval Authority</b>	CEO
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to students and staff of Warrah school		
<b>Related Documents and References</b>	School Rules Incident Report Forms Dealing with Bullying Behaviour Levels of Behaviour Management		

#### Policy Statement

Warrah School strives to ensure that a safe, positive and productive learning environment is maintained for all students.

#### Procedures

***It is the expectation of the School that all students will be supported appropriately to understand and be able to adhere to the School's code of behaviour and all the rules stated in this document.***

1. Warrah School expressly prohibits corporal punishment of students at any time
2. Warrah School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce the discipline at the school.
3. Students are required to abide by the School's Rules and to respond to, with appropriate support as required, the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the School.
4. Where a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct and/or behaviour which causes or may cause harm, inconvenience or embarrassment to the School, staff members or other students, the students behaviour will be subject to review which may entail relevant consequences and/or disciplinary action.
5. The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the School will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. When advised of the allegation the student and parents will be informed of the procedural steps to be followed in dealing with the matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, parent/guardians and students will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
6. The response and ensuing requirements will vary according to the severity behaviour and the prior record of the student. Initially an admonition or "time-out" strategy may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale, the behaviour could result in suspension or exclusion. All such matters will involve consultation and follow fair and reasonable process.
7. Under no circumstance is corporal punishment is permitted

## **Rationale and General Principles:**

*“Wisdom in the spirit”  
the soul  
Strength in the Will  
These shall guide me  
These shall hold me  
In them I trust,  
To them I give my life”*

*Rudolf Steiner*

*“To wonder at Beauty, stand guard over Truth Love in  
Look up to the Noble, Resolve to the Good.  
This will lead me to purpose in living, to right in my doing,  
To peace in my feeling, to light in my thinking.  
And teaches me trust in the working of God;  
In all that there is, in the width of the world,  
In the depth of my Soul.”*

*Rudolf Steiner*

These verses by Rudolf Steiner encapsulate the spirit of our attitude towards ourselves as teachers and towards the children in our school.

The aim of the Student Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy is to support the children to understand how we believe they should act towards themselves and others.

This is achieved by stating and modelling the rights and responsibilities we have for ourselves and for others as well as the rules of behaviour to be followed. In recognition of the specific needs of students with intellectual disabilities, discipline at Warrah School is based as far as possible on providing positive support for the development of appropriate and socially acceptable behaviours in all students.

### **Fundamental to the policy are the following principles:**

1. Behaviour in children with disabilities is most often a language of communication. It is part of our responsibility as educators and as a School to strive to understand what gives rise to inappropriate behaviour
2. Appropriate behaviour can best be developed through a combination of guidance, modelling, co-operation and positive reinforcement
3. Where possible, and with due regard to relevant Duty of Care and W.H.S. considerations, inappropriate behaviour usually declines if it is ignored or appropriately redirected.
4. Socially negative behaviour that risks the well-being of other students, teachers, staff and visitors, must be prevented in the short-term and, where possible, addressed with:
  - a. strategies which seek to replace it with appropriate and positive behaviour in the long-term. Such strategies are usually achieved through a the development of a positive
  - b. behaviour support plan, in consultation with parents/guardians and with external c. professionals if necessary.
5. Students are rarely suspended or excluded from Warrah School for disciplinary or behavioural reasons.
6. However, in circumstances where the overarching legislative responsibilities of Duty of Care and WHS cannot be reasonably maintained, suspension and/or exclusion from enrolment at the school may be required.

7. In the circumstance that the School and parents/guardians agree that the educational approach at Warrah School is not proving effective for their child, the School will strive to provide appropriate and timely advice and support for achieving an alternative placement.

***“The challenge in discipline is that you have to represent both grace and justice at the same time”(S Levy, 1996).*** The child should not be shamed in front of others but inspired to act in an appropriate manner while ensuring in the eyes of others that justice has been done.

**The aim of Warrah School is to promote the discipline of self-control, cultivate virtuous qualities and acting for the welfare of others.**

Discipline is a response to individuals and situations in such a way as to lead to the development of skills that promote responsibility and accountability. Such responses are different at differing developmental and ability levels. While what is an appropriate expectation for one student may not appear appropriate for another student, it is important to give all students, regardless of disability, the possibility to develop the discipline of self-control, to cultivate virtuous qualities and act with an awareness of the welfare of others. Through recognition of the importance of the developmental stages of the human being from childhood onwards, (as given by Rudolf Steiner) correct forms and rhythms are set in place so that the individuality of the developing child is protected and safety is ensured. These rhythms and forms encourage the progression from outer discipline (as in early childhood where through imitation the child is enfolded in a form totally conceived by the teacher) to inner (self) discipline as the child matures to the greatest level of self- reliance possible in adulthood.

It is recognised that in the early years of School, the child is most imitative and open and lives in an implicit confidence of goodness and love. The child models his/her behaviour on those adults most central or significant to his/her life. The adult, therefore, strives to be worthy as example – in thought, word and deed.

In the Primary School years, until adolescence, the authority of the teacher (adult) is fundamental. The child is disciple, (related to the root sense of discipline), and the teacher is author, (related to the root sense of authority). At heart, all children at this age naturally seek the security of this relationship.

Children with a disability often require the security of this firm, loving guidance well into adolescence.

In the High School, the unfolding individuality is nurtured and independence in expression and participation is fostered, with careful regard to each student’s abilities and developmental needs.

The discipline between teacher and child will best operate if the teacher inspires a rich appreciation of the wholeness and beauty of the world, and if a reverent and artistic dimension to life is nurtured. The imparting of knowledge and the inspiration for learning should be thought of as an art in themselves. Also, in Steiner Education, the teacher should have an unquestioned authority that arises quite naturally and is developed over years with his/her class. This authority is not expressed in a fixed way, but is creative and mobile, changing to meet new situations as the child grows older.

The forms and rhythms created by the Class Teacher provide a security that protects and nurtures the child while allowing spontaneity and expression of individuality.

**Warrah School will maintain principles of 'procedural fairness'**, which includes the right to an unbiased decision, by acknowledging the right of any person against whom an allegation has been made to:

- Know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter
- Know the process by which the matter will be considered
- Respond to the allegations
- Know how to seek a review of the decision made
- Make available to students and parents/ guardians/ caregivers in an appropriate format policies and procedures under which the action is taken.
- If a review is requested, the Principal will consult as necessary and reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation and any action to be required and advise the student (and parent/s) of that view. The student (and parent/s) would be advised that if they wish this preliminary decision to be reviewed they may make application for a review to the Principal and submit any information they want to be considered during the review process. The Principal will again consult as necessary and will then either confirm the preliminary decision as final or amend the preliminary decision based on the additional information provided.

### **Levels of Behaviour Management**

Teachers in our school seek to encourage positive behaviour. Because of robust and creative play, there is sometimes a need to be adaptable. Appropriate or acceptable behaviour is that behaviour which supports mutual rights, safety and fair treatment of self and others.

Teachers must at all times reflect in their behaviour, the values that are expected of students to be courteous and respectful to all others.

Teachers must consistently implement the school's behaviour code and individual behaviour support programs, follow through on all breaches promptly, report all incidents and accidents appropriately and act at all times with procedural fairness.

The **Levels of Behaviour Management** document applies to the breakdown of the rights and responsibilities as discussed above. The emphasis here is on leading, guiding, encouraging and instructing.

### **Procedures for fair disciplinary action at any level require staff to:**

- Conduct investigations without undue delay
- Ensure that they do not decide a case in which they have a conflict of interests
- Act fairly and without bias
- Outline the alleged behaviour

- Allow the student to respond if appropriate, and seek support of the appropriate Class teacher if required
- Consider the response
- Make reasonable inquiries or investigations before making a decision
- Write an Incident/Accident Form if required
- Document any actions or decisions taken that will impact on the student or staff member.

Use the **“Incident/Accident Report form”** for reporting incidents.

For incidents that involve ‘bullying’ use this policy in conjunction with the **‘Dealing with Bullying Behaviour Policy’**.

The following proactive strategies will be implemented by staff to encourage acceptable behaviour:

- punctual supervision
- encouraging children to see that alerting a teacher to problems in the play area is not 'dobbing' but helps to create a positive social environment through communication.
- Using discussion, stories, and role plays in class to explore the effects of bullying and or other forms of violation. Additionally, the class curriculum should reflect the importance of peer respect and support, good communication skills and problem solving.
- clear rules communicated in class and through assemblies about what kinds of games can be played where, play ground boundaries etc
- consult with the school appointed Psychologist for the development of a Behaviour Management plan.

## Addendum #4 Complaints & Grievances

<b>Title</b>	Resolving Workplace Grievances		
<b>Policy Number</b>	6.2.25		
<b>Version Number</b>	2.0	<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Date last amended</b>	February 2018	<b>Review Date</b>	February 2021
<b>Responsible Person</b>	CEO	<b>Approval Authority</b>	CEO
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to all Warrah staff and volunteers.		
<b>Related Documents and References</b>	DSS – Standard 6 – Service Management		

### Authority

- Fair Work Act 2009 (Commonwealth)
- Fair Work Regulation 2009 (Commonwealth)
- Industrial Relations Act 1996
- The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)
- The NSW Disability Service Standards (NSW DSS) and the National Disability Service Standards (DSS)
- *Service providers are well managed and have strong and effective governance to deliver positive outcomes for the people they support*  
(Standards in Action 2016, Standard 6, Service Management)
- *Each person receives quality services which are effectively and efficiently governed.*  
(Standards in Action 2016, Standard 6, Service Management, *Practice Requirement 1*)
- *Each person receives quality services that are well managed and delivered by skilled staff with the right values, attitudes, goals and experience.*  
(Standards in Action 2016, Standard 6, Service Management, *Practice Requirement 2*)

<b>Policy</b>
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### Policy Statement

Warrah has a commitment to ensure that that work environment for its staff members and volunteers is harmonious, supportive and productive.

This policy encourages early intervention, collaboration and a focus on solutions. Effective grievance management and resolution contributes to positive working relationships, and can prevent minor issues escalating into more serious matters.

The intent of this policy is not to prescribe a set procedure on how workplace grievances are managed as the process adopted needs to be appropriate to the particular situation. Issues vary, and grievances can involve a range of circumstances, with varying levels of complexity or seriousness.

The policy focuses on restoring effective working relationships by ensuring that each issue is considered individually as it arises, and is managed in the most appropriate way for the circumstances. The policy encourages early intervention, collaboration and a focus on solutions.

### Purpose of this policy

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all workplace grievances are managed in a fair, timely and appropriate manner. The policy:

- Adopts a common-sense approach, with a focus on resolution and fairness
- Provides for matters to be assessed initially to determine the most appropriate pathway for resolution
- Does **not** apply where issues are raised such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or misconduct which need to be managed in accordance with other Warrah Policies (refer to Appendix A).
- Sets expectations for all staff to contribute to a positive workplace
- Identifies what everyone can expect from the process, and their responsibilities
- Encourages self-resolution by those directly involved where appropriate
- Emphasises the need for confidentiality and documenting issues and actions taken requires those managing workplace grievances are competent to do so.

### Procedures

All staff have an important role in contributing to a positive culture by working in a professional and productive manner.

Supervisors and Managers have a responsibility to create a positive culture within their teams, identify, respond to and promptly address issues when they arise.

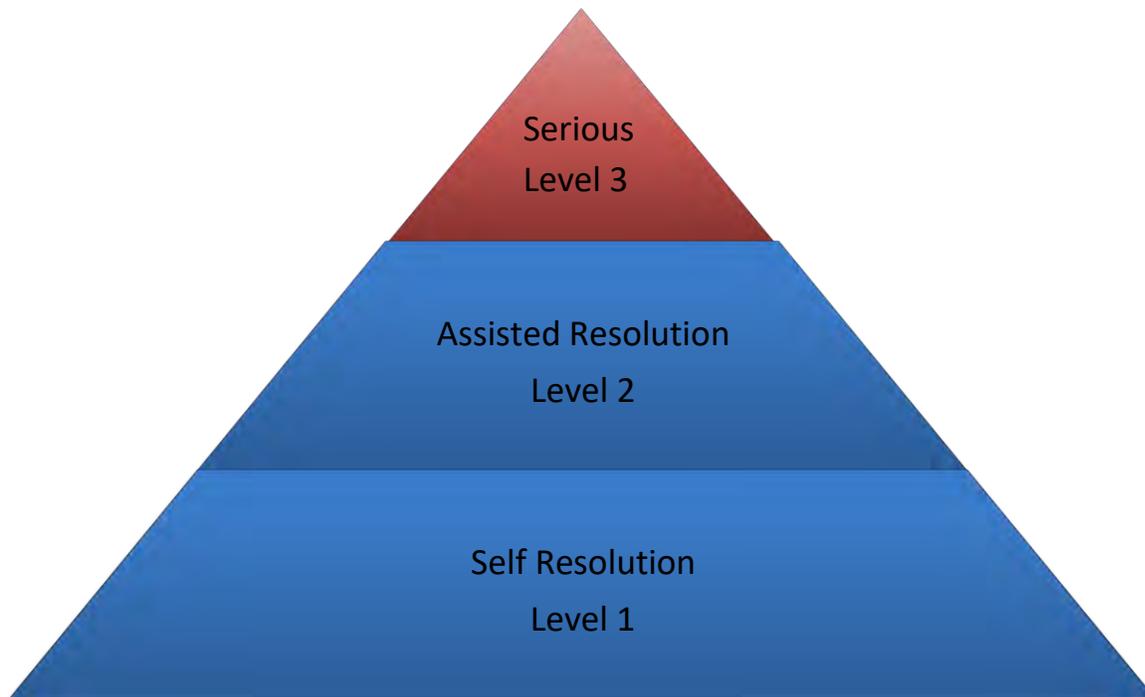
Supervisors and Managers may deal with a range of workplace issues which are not raised as a grievance, but have some of the same features. The manager may choose to use some of all of the techniques suggested for workplace grievances to resolve those issues.

However, when a matter is raised with the supervisor or manager as a workplace grievance, and the staff member seeks for it to be dealt with under this policy, then the manager must follow the steps set out in this policy, noting that the initial assessment may identify that the matter should be dealt with under another policy directive.

### Options for resolution

The nature and seriousness of a workplace grievance and the appropriate options for resolution can be determined by categorising the grievance into one of three levels as per the diagram below.

For the purposes of the policy, **Level 3** relates to serious matters that do not fit the definition of a workplace grievance, such as bullying, harassment, misconduct or performance management matters. Refer to Appendix 1, which lists various policies that deal with these matters.



Workplace Grievance Resolution Model

#### **Self-Resolution – (Level 1)**

Grievances categorised as Level 1 can generally be resolved quickly, locally and directly by the staff member who experienced or observed the issue. Features of these grievances may include:

- One-off or irregular occurrence
- Not serious in nature
- A few low level minor events
- Able to be resolved quickly and easily without requiring the manager's involvement.

It is expected that staff members will promptly address and resolve such matters early and directly with the person they are experiencing the issue with, rather than ignore the concern.

This provides the best opportunity for a positive resolution, as it focuses on maintaining and/or improving working relationships, minimises the likelihood that a minor issue will escalate into a serious one, and lessens the impact of the grievance on the operation of the team and its work.

Where the staff member does not feel comfortable or able to resolve the matter personally, they should seek assistance from their supervisor. Where the grievance relates to their supervisor, they should discuss the matter with a more senior manager who is in a

position to provide advice to them, including determining the best way of resolving the grievance themselves in a low-key manner.

Options for self-resolution of grievances by a staff member include:

- Take no immediate action, but monitor the situation
- Seek support and advice from someone they feel comfortable with
- Seek support from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider
- Seek personal development (e.g. training in resilience, having difficult conversations)
- Have a direct conversation with the individual with whom they are experiencing the issue of concern
- Have a discussion with their supervisor or manager about the matter (or if the grievance involves a direct supervisor, a more senior manager).
- The desired outcome is for the grievance to be successfully resolved by the staff member in a constructive manner. While documentation is not required, keeping some notes about the matter may be helpful should the situation not be resolved or recurs.

Generally, these types of grievances should be resolved as quickly as possible. If the issue is not resolved, assisted resolution (Level 2) options may need to be considered.

### **Assisted Resolution (Level 2)**

Level 2 grievances require the involvement of the supervisor in resolving the matter(s) raised.

The features of these types of grievances may include where:

- The issue is complex
- There are disputed views
- There is a pattern of ongoing behaviour or concern
- Self-resolution options have already been attempted without success or would not be appropriate in the circumstances.

## Notification of the Grievance (Level 2)

At Level 2, the staff member should meet with their supervisor and advise him/her that their assistance is required to resolve a grievance. Where the immediate supervisor is the subject of the grievance, they should notify a more senior manager.

The relevant manager should be notified as close as possible to the issue having occurred, or within a reasonable timeframe following failure to resolve the grievance at Level 1.

The employee should provide information relating to the grievance, including:

- The nature of the issue, concentrating on the facts of the situation
- Any evidence or names of witnesses where relevant
- Any attempts to resolve the grievance at Level 1 and the outcomes of those attempts
- The outcome / resolution the staff member is seeking. Level 2 grievances must be documented in writing by either the person raising the grievance or the supervisor responsible for resolving it. The purpose of documentation is to clearly describe the circumstances and severity of the grievance, and to describe the rationale for actions taken, or not taken in the circumstances.

## Initial assessment (Level 2)

When a manager receives notification of a level 2 grievance, they must undertake an initial assessment to determine the nature and severity of the concern raised, and whether the issue should be managed according to this policy or others (See Attachment 1).

For example, it could be unclear whether the grievance equates to inappropriate behaviour (such as potential bullying, harassment or discrimination), a potential breach of workplace policy or a potential performance issue.

Considering the following will help to determine the degree of severity of the matter and whether it should therefore be managed by other policies or procedures:

- What is the nature and severity of the grievance?
- How often has the behaviour / issue occurred?
- How long has the behaviour / issue been going on?
- How long has it been since the alleged incident(s) took place?
- How many people are involved?
- What are the roles, responsibilities and relationships of those involved?
- How is the behaviour / issue impacting on those involved?
- Has the same matter been raised before?
- What action, if any, has already been taken?

- What are the expectations of the person raising the grievance?
- What are the potential consequences of the matter?

The manager should also carefully consider whether they are the appropriate person to manage the grievance. For example, if they consider they are unable to be objective or impartial, or maybe perceived as such, they should seek advice from their supervisor on who should assess the grievance and manage its resolution. It is acknowledged that it is appropriate for a staff member to be assisted in the resolution of their grievance by a more senior person who does not hold a conflict of interest.

The initial assessment may reveal the matter or level of behaviour to be very minor in nature, which should be managed as a Level 1 grievance, or where it is considered that no action is required. The staff member must be advised accordingly, and may choose to explore Level 1 resolution options or to withdraw the grievance. It should be noted that a staff member may withdraw their grievance at any stage of the process.

Where it is determined that the matter is to be managed by other processes, the manager must advise the staff member (and other party to the issue) in writing of the alternative procedures that will be followed and advising that no further action will be taken under this policy.

Where a matter is to be dealt with as a Level 2 grievance, then the process set out below will apply.

#### Issue analysis and information gathering (Level 2)

Once the initial assessment has determined that it is appropriate to manage the matter as a Level 2 grievance, the details of the matter need to be determined as far as possible. The *Issue Analysis* (see Attachment 2) provides guidance on what information should be sought to determine the most appropriate options for speedy resolution.

Information gathering must:

- Be undertaken fairly and impartially by the relevant manager, or some person authorised by the manager or organisation who is competent to do so
- Maintain confidentiality
- Ensure that the parties are given the opportunity to have their say
- Include speaking to those identified by either party as having information relevant to the issue as considered necessary to form a view
- Include appropriate documentation and records
- Ensure appropriate security of any related documentation.

## Issue resolution (Level 2)

The focus of resolution should be to repair any negative impact caused by the issue or behaviour through communication, openness to others' views, cooperation and reasonableness. The aim is to repair the professional working relationship. The supervisor should attempt to resolve the issue **within 20 working days**.

Techniques used may include:

- Facilitated discussion
- Mediation
- Observation and feedback
- Team communication and development
- Coaching

The supervisor must confirm with the staff member (and other party to the issue) the decision in relation to resolution of the grievance. This confirmation shall be in writing.

The desired outcome is that the grievance is successfully resolved with no further action required, or resolved with ongoing monitoring to ensure the resolution is effective and sustainable.

Where there is no resolution, the issue should be re-assessed to determine if other management responses are more appropriate in the circumstances.

## Request for Review (Level 2)

The parties directly involved in a grievance will be informed as to what actions are being taken, or not taken, and when the matter is regarded as being resolved.

A review of an outcome can only be requested where there are grounds to do so. For example, where new information has become available that may change the outcome, or where there is an explicit deficiency in the process followed. Dissatisfaction with an outcome is not on its own a ground for a review.

Where a review is appropriate, it will be undertaken by a senior member of management or an external party who was not involved in the original decision. This person will consider the issues raised, along with all relevant records regarding the matter. The parties directly involved in the grievance will be advised in writing when the review is to occur and of the review outcome.

## Restoring productive workplace relations

Following the resolution of a grievance, the work environment, productivity and relationships may still be negatively affected. This can impact the parties involved, and may also affect others in the team. It is therefore essential that action is taken to restore relationships and to promote a positive work environment.

The manager should:

- Follow up with the parties involved and encourage respectful and professional interaction
- Set and model expected standards of workplace behaviour, in accordance with Warrah's Staff Code of Conduct
- Monitor the work environment, and identify / address potential issues
- Remain open to comments and feedback from others on ways the workplace can be improved
- Consider lessons learned from workplace grievances.
- Mentoring
- Relevant training
- Team values or charters
- Other appropriate management action.

Staff members should:

- Follow expected standards of workplace behaviour in accordance with Warrah's Staff Code of Conduct
- Take responsibility for ensuring respectful and professional behaviour within the workplace
- Actively contribute to positive problem solving and conflict resolution.

#### Other provisions

##### **Expectations and Responsibilities**

###### Staff

Throughout all stages of the grievance resolution process, staff can expect:

- To be treated with respect
- To receive advice and support from management
- To identify desired outcomes that can be discussed with management
- To have their grievance treated seriously and managed in a fair, impartial and appropriately confidential manner
- To be provided with information on the progress of their grievance and on any decisions made that may affect them
- To have a support person present, if they wish, at any meetings they attend relating to the grievance
- To have access to relevant records taken at meetings they attend to enable them to agree that they are accurate and true
- To be protected against victimisation or harassment because they have raised a grievance

- To be able to withdraw a grievance at any stage of the process
- To be able to request a review of a decision or action in relation to their grievance.

Staff are responsible for:

- Recognising their role in contributing to a positive workplace environment
- Understanding their own behaviour and considering how it may be perceived by, and impact upon, others at work
- Raising matters of concern at an early stage and actively participating in the resolution process in good faith
- Making themselves available to participate in relevant discussions and meetings to resolve the grievance
- Not raising malicious, vexatious or frivolous issues
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
- Accepting that the resolution of the grievance may not always result in the outcome they sought.

## Managers

At all stages of the grievance resolution process, managers can expect:

- To be treated with respect by all parties involved in the grievance
- To receive support and assistance from senior management and HR as necessary
- To be protected against victimisation or harassment for being involved in the management and/or resolution of the grievance.

Key responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the grievance resolution process progresses as quickly as possible
- Providing parties with relevant information about the process as it occurs
- Providing appropriate support to the parties throughout the process
- Protecting staff members from victimisation, harassment or discrimination
- Basing any resolution, decision or action on the best available, relevant information
- Documenting the process undertaken.

## **Confidentiality**

Parties to a workplace grievance may need to discuss their concern(s) with someone they trust, such as a family member and / or colleague not directly involved in the matter, to receive advice and/or support. Wherever possible, these discussions should be conducted in private and away from other staff.

It is important that information relating to the grievance only be provided on a 'need to know' basis and not provided to people in the workplace who have no legitimate involvement in the process. This includes confidentiality of the identity of those involved, as well as the subject matter.

Inappropriate release of confidential information in relation to a workplace grievance can complicate the resolution process and violate the parties' rights to privacy and procedural fairness. Breaches of confidentiality in relation to workplace grievances will be dealt with in accordance with Warrah's Managing Conduct and Performance Policy and Procedure. Where a staff member has had a grievance raised against them, they must be provided with sufficient information to be able to adequately respond to the matters raised.

## **Role of a support person**

During any stage of the resolution process, employees may request the support of another person (a support person) to assist them. A support person may be a friend, work colleague or union representative who can accompany the person to meetings to provide emotional support.

The role of the support person is to provide support to the employee concerned. The support person acts as a witness to the process but may not direct the process, nor answer questions on behalf of or act as an advocate for the employee.

## Definitions

**Grievance** - Any work-related concern, complaint or problem experienced by staff member(s). This may be made verbally or in writing by the staff member(s) and should, in the first instance, be attempted to be resolved in an informal manner. In those cases where the grievance is more complicated or it cannot be resolved informally, the Grievance Policy and Procedures will be initiated.

A **workplace grievance** means a problem, concern, issue or incident raised by a staff member who believes he / she is the subject of unreasonable treatment from the organisation or another person(s) in the workplace. Examples may include, but are not limited to, interpersonal conflict between colleagues, the way work is allocated or managed, the physical workplace environment, application of management policies or perceived unfairness in the workplace.

Grievances may occur from:

- discrimination or vilification;
- victimisation or harassment;
- interpersonal conflict;
- inequitable work allocations or staff development opportunities;
- inadequate workplace communication;

- changes in work processes, clientele or location;
- occupational health and safety concerns;
- performance management;
- client management decisions

Disputes concerning employment conditions should be resolved by using the procedures laid down by the Industrial Relations Commission.

**Respondent** - The staff member who is alleged to have acted unfairly or in an unprofessional or discriminatory manner towards the grievant.

**Managers** - The people identified by Warrah to assist in the resolution of grievances lodged by staff members.

**Conciliation** - A process by which the Manager or an independent person nominated by Warrah discusses the matter with both parties to achieve an agreed resolution to the matter.

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