



Samford Valley Steiner School Improvement Plan



2017 and 2018



Our Mission

To be a living and contemporary embodiment of the spiritual, cultural, and educational impulse of anthroposophy that contributes towards social renewal in the world.



Our School

Samford Valley Steiner School offers an inspiring and comprehensive education for children from Pre-Prep through to Year 12. Our school is located on 20 acres of leafy, natural bushland, in the semi-rural Samford Valley. This picturesque destination is approximately 24km/35 minutes' drive from Brisbane, in South East Queensland, Australia.

It is our intention at SVSS to be true to the spirit and intentions of the educational impulses and anthroposophical insights offered by Rudolf Steiner. We are continually striving to provide and develop a curriculum and learning programme that; is inspired by a deep understanding of human development; embraces and reflects the universal values of freedom, equality, peace and democracy; and values diversity and individual worth. All curriculum content and experiences offered to young people during their schooling are purposefully and consciously considered in light of how and when the activity or knowledge will best support the child's natural development. Teachers at SVSS work to create a school where goodness, beauty and truth permeate the pedagogical, physical and social fabrics.

Steiner Education is holistic in nature and at SVSS we strive to develop equally the faculties of, willing, feeling and thinking – hands, heart and head– within each child, so strong foundations are laid for academic and social success and initiative and moral strength in adult life. We seek to bring an integrated approach to knowledge; subjects are interwoven into Main Lesson Blocks which bring to the students a holistic view of the world and allow them to establish a balanced relationship to themselves, others and the world.

At SVSS we view ourselves as a community of learners; teachers, parents, and students, striving to achieve individual, communal and global growth and understanding.

The plan here introduced will guide the strategic direction for growth and improvement of the school in 2017 and 2018. The goal of the next two years of development at SVSS is to consolidate and extend the considerable strengths currently in practice. The improvement plan is focussed upon the following areas of our school;

- ❖ The students
- ❖ The staff
- ❖ The community
- ❖ Our unique environment

The plan has been developed based on input and feedback from the College of Teachers, School Board, Senior Leadership Team, Faculties, students and parent community. Feedback has been gathered during 2016 via surveys, conversation and formal development planning processes. A management operational plan is in place to implement the specific measures determined within this document.



Our Students

The welfare and best interests of the young people within our School will always be our primary focus. Our educational philosophy views students as young human beings gradually unfolding and developing on their journey to adulthood. Therefore, we place significant focus on nourishing the social and emotional development of the students as well as on academic rigour and achievement. This is achieved through a carefully designed and implemented curriculum based on the developmental needs of the students at different ages.

It is recognised that strong and loving student/teacher relationships are the key to maintaining a healthy social climate and successful learning experiences and this concept lies at the foundation of classroom management and teaching practices in the school.

Our school aims to provide an educational environment that serves the search for freedom of the human spirit by emphasising the balanced and disciplined development of the child as a whole human being.





Our highest endeavour for students in each sector of our school:

Early Childhood

- ❖ To provide an early years' experience that protects the kingdom of childhood, allows the child to develop a trust in the goodness of the world and honours the young child's need for connectedness to this world, through nurturing rhythms, quality sensory experiences and engagement in the real work of childhood; play.

Primary School

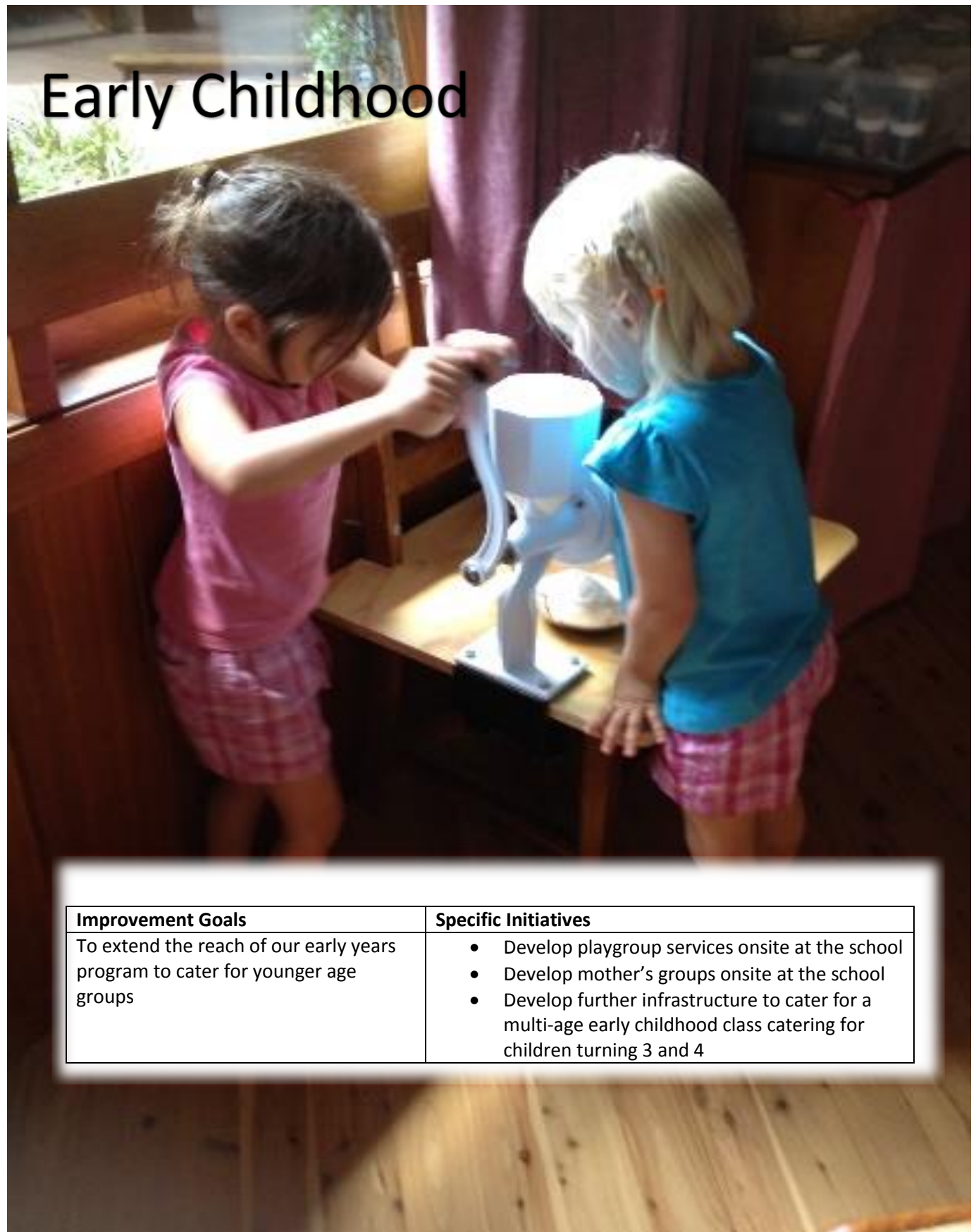
- ❖ To provide an education, that is based on loving relationships and is enlivened by an artistic approach, that nourishes and supports the child's developing imagination, enriches the feeling life and gives the child a strong sense of the beauty of the world.

High School

- ❖ To provide an education based on meaningful connection to the self, the world and the other that promotes and develops discernment, stimulates and encourages independent thinking and cultivates an appreciation for and commitment to truthful and ethical thought, feeling and action in the world.

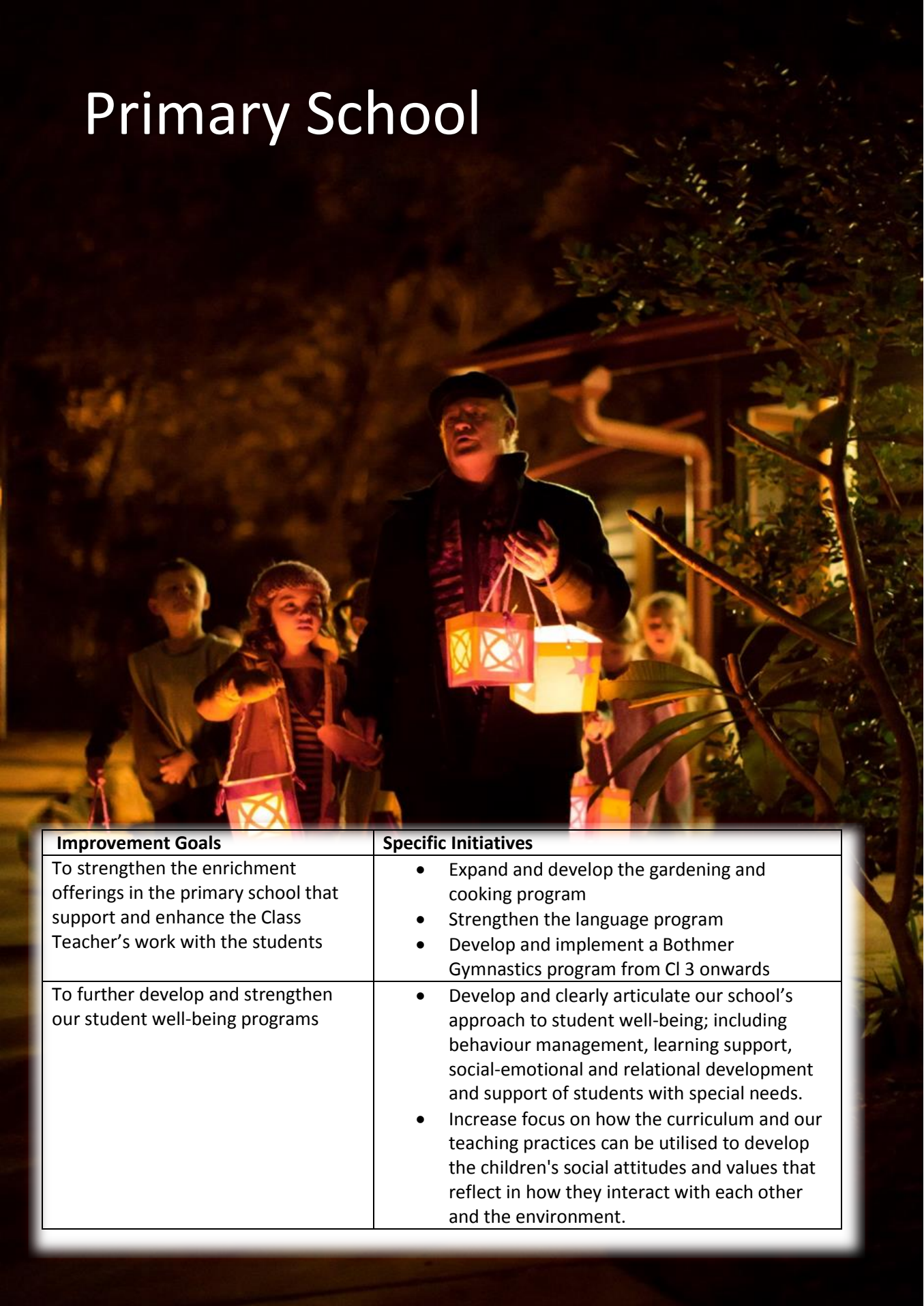


Early Childhood



Improvement Goals	Specific Initiatives
To extend the reach of our early years program to cater for younger age groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop playgroup services onsite at the school• Develop mother's groups onsite at the school• Develop further infrastructure to cater for a multi-age early childhood class catering for children turning 3 and 4

Primary School

A photograph of a man and children at night, holding lanterns. The man is in the center, wearing a dark coat and a cap, holding two lanterns. To his left, a young girl holds a lantern. In the background, other children are visible, also holding lanterns. The scene is illuminated by warm, orange light from the lanterns and background lights.

Improvement Goals	Specific Initiatives
To strengthen the enrichment offerings in the primary school that support and enhance the Class Teacher's work with the students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand and develop the gardening and cooking program• Strengthen the language program• Develop and implement a Bothmer Gymnastics program from CI 3 onwards
To further develop and strengthen our student well-being programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and clearly articulate our school's approach to student well-being; including behaviour management, learning support, social-emotional and relational development and support of students with special needs.• Increase focus on how the curriculum and our teaching practices can be utilised to develop the children's social attitudes and values that reflect in how they interact with each other and the environment.

High School

Improvement Goals	Specific Initiatives
To ensure we can continue to offer and further develop a robust and authentic Steiner curriculum to Class 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the Steiner Senior Certificate offering levels 1 -3 in the senior school; including offering electives in classes 11 and 12
To further develop and strengthen our student well-being and pastoral care programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and clearly articulate our school's approach to student well-being; including behaviour management, learning support, social-emotional and relational development, pastoral care and support of students with special needs.• Develop a program for training guardians further in student pastoral care
To further strengthen and embed artistic opportunities for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employ a Creative Arts co-ordinator to oversee and develop the arts program and drive arts projects within the school
To offer our senior students opportunity to take up a gesture of leadership in our school and to further facilitate student feeling of connectedness and belonging to school right through the high school years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a school sailing club in which the senior students teach the younger students to sail using the boats built in Class 10• Strengthen the role and standing of the Student Representative Council to improve student and staff 'buy-in' to this aspect of the school• Embed processes to gain and utilise student feedback as a driver for growth and improvement

Our Staff

The dedicated staff of SVSS strive to offer an education that is true to the spirit and intentions of the educational impulses and insights offered by Rudolf Steiner. Staff acknowledge that to achieve this, ongoing study into the nature of the human being as both a spiritual and physical being is required. Teachers work with the Australian Steiner Curriculum but know that this Framework must be transformed and enlivened by seeking an ever expanding understanding, through personal and professional development activities, of the self, the children before them, our unique time and place and an understanding of the spiritual basis of the curriculum and our work. Our teachers work with an understanding of the health-giving and healing nature of this unique education to nurture the social, emotional, academic and soul needs of the child.

Teachers at SVSS work to create a loving and nurturing environment in which each child's unique gifts and potentials can unfold; an environment in which the qualities of goodness, beauty and truth permeate the pedagogical, physical and social fabrics. Teachers strive to develop equally the faculties of willing, feeling and thinking within each child so that strong foundations are laid for initiative, happiness and moral strength in adult life. Teachers seek to cultivate group belonging, respectful relationships and a valuing of diversity and individual worth.



Our highest endeavour in relation to our staff is to support each individual member of our faculty to...

- ❖ be a person of initiative and courage
- ❖ be worthy of imitation, authority and emulation
- ❖ unfold to their full potential
- ❖ love their work

... So that they may be in full service to the students and our task to provide a living education for social renewal.



Staff

Improvement Goals	Specific Initiatives
To ensure that all teachers have opportunity to broaden and strengthen their understanding of the pedagogy and underlying philosophical ethos of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased school directed Professional Development days (8 per year) in the following identified focus areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening our collective picture of the depth and width of our educational approach and curriculum ➤ Challenging the 'culture of the desk' and other "traditions" of education
To utilise the skills and knowledge of our experienced staff to contribute to broader educational dialogue and thus promote the benefits of Steiner Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff to undertake focussed action research
To ensure that SVSS continues to be able to access quality teachers trained in Steiner Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue and expand the teacher intern program Continue and further develop the Art of Education program Continue to offer a rich conference program throughout the year
To ensure that Eurythmy continues to be supported as a central curriculum offering at SVSS and in the broader Australian Steiner school context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a staff succession plan for Eurythmy at SVSS
To strengthen collegiality and further the collaborative working of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake facilitated processes in faculties to determine shared agreements around expectations: student, staff and parent Undertake professional development in faculty around staff rights and responsibilities i.e. right to freedom/self-determination in teaching work within the boundaries of the group agreed standards/expectations (individual rights balanced with responsibility to the collective) Completion of comprehensive policies and procedures to support consistent (not rigid) holding of agreed expectations and processes Continue to embed mentor and structured collegial partnership programs

Our Community

The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the community finds its reflection and in the community the virtue of each one is living - Rudolf Steiner

The Samford Valley Steiner School community, like our education, is based upon the fostering of healthy relationships. We seek to actively engage our community in our mission to contribute towards social renewal. At SVSS we view ourselves as a community of learners – teachers, parents, and students – striving to achieve individual, communal and global growth and understanding.

We seek to embrace all members of our community, students, former and present parents, alumni and friends of the school, and ensure that the voice of each has opportunity to be heard and the contribution of each is valued. We strive to communicate and interact with our community in a way that fosters ever strengthening relationships, trust and meaningful connection.



Our highest endeavour in relation to our community is to...

- ❖ consciously and actively build healthy relationships
- ❖ be proactive, timely, relevant and generous in our communications
- ❖ continuously expand our outreach
- ❖ consciously promote a culture that values diversity and individual initiative grounded in a strong and shared vision

... to facilitate the development of an engaged, active and connected community that surrounds our students and supports our task to provide a living education for social renewal.



Community

Improvement Goals	Specific Initiatives
To create a healthy and shared culture of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, articulate and embed clear processes and pathways for healthy flow of communication/information between all organs of the school • Complete and make accessible clear processes and policies related to communication: electronic communication, meeting hygiene, complaints management
To continue to expand and grow our community and extend the reach of Steiner Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulate our points of difference as part of marketing strategy and education for current stakeholders • Improve management of retention throughout the student years and increase retained connection and involvement of school alumni • Establish a second campus and Distance Education program to expand our community
To foster increased engagement in parent/community education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer and invest in current parent education initiatives e.g. Cuppa Time, Parent Info Evenings, access to school doctor • Create a comprehensive framework for a parent education pathway from Kindergarten – Class 12 to be delivered by Class Teachers and Class Guardians. • Create and deliver a focussed Outdoor Education parent education program to ensure continued parental support and trust in this key aspect of the SVSS curriculum
To ensure a balance between investing inwardly and looking/reaching outwardly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support an 'International Ambassador' role to keep us abreast of and involved in international perspectives and bring international speakers to the school • Foster and strengthen bi-lateral relationships with local aligned community groups, other Steiner Schools, universities, SEA, ISQ
To support the development of Eurythmy as a central curriculum offering in the broader Australian Steiner school context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engage with SEA and the National Eurythmy Development Group to support a National Eurythmy training

Our Environment



As human beings we have a role and responsibility as stewards of our natural world and environment. At SVSS we seek to engage students with their living environment in such a way that they develop a strong appreciation for and meaningful connection to the natural world and as such will enter adult life with a commitment to ethical stewardship of the world. We seek to recognise and fully utilise the unique opportunities presented by our school's location to support the development of this commitment.

We are committed to continuously improving and embedding sustainable practices into our school operations, classroom practices, the development of our grounds and buildings and our individual and group activities.

We seek to create a school environment that is aesthetically beautiful and provides much opportunity for students to interact in creative ways with the living world through play and work.

We seek to honour, respect and understand the unique world view of the traditional custodians of our land. We seek to ensure that our students have opportunity, through our curriculum and meaningful interactions with indigenous people and communities, to strengthen their understanding of Aboriginal perspective and culture.



Our highest endeavour in relation to our environment is to...

- ❖ create many daily opportunities for our students to experience and interact with the wonders of the natural world
- ❖ develop a sense of ethical stewardship in our students as future custodians of the world
- ❖ ensure our daily practices reflect our commitment to respectful and sustainable interaction with the natural world.

... so that our school, students and community are active, positive and aware contributors to global sustainability.



Environment

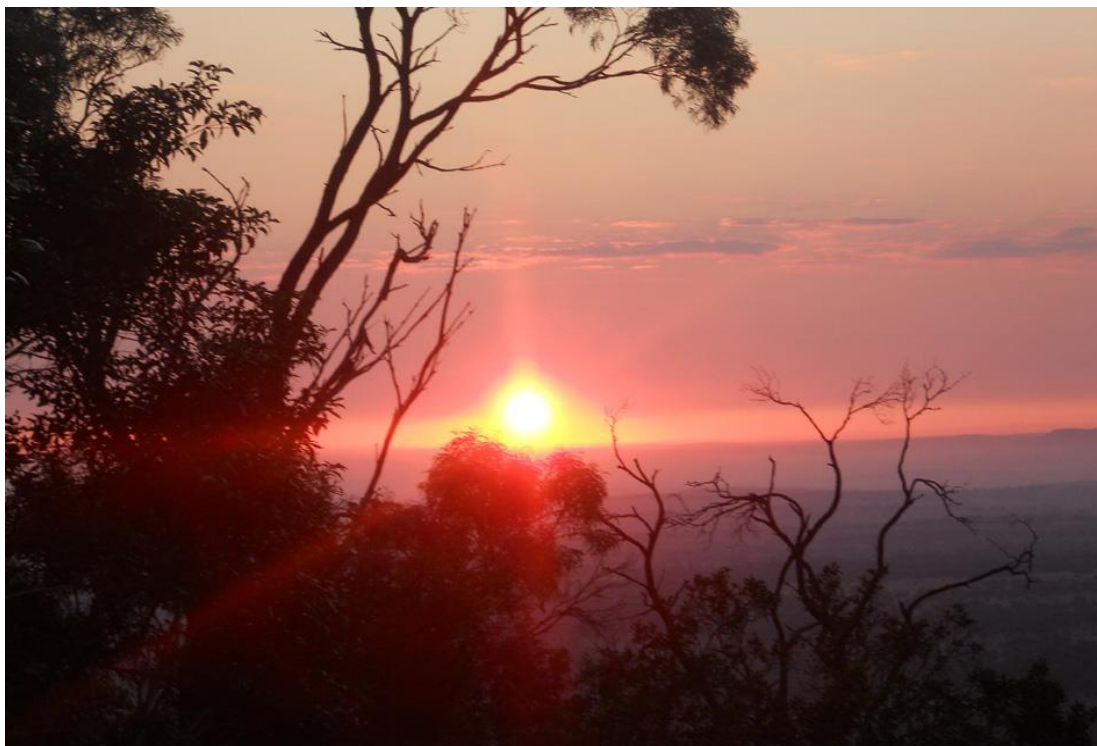
Improvement Goals	Specific Initiatives
To embed sustainable consciousness and practice into all school operations, classroom practice and individual and group activities in and around the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and commence implementation of a whole school sustainability plan and policy; covering infrastructure development, grounds, operational practices, and curriculum enrichment activities• Establish and embed healthy processes and practices for litter management within the school; with focus on recycling and maintaining tidiness and cleanliness of the school grounds and classroom spaces.

To increase opportunities for students to engage with the natural world and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen and continue to invest in the gardening, agriculture and outdoor classroom programs• Develop an Outdoor Education parent education program that includes parent camp experiences to gain parental 'buy-in' and support for the importance of this aspect of our education• Develop a whole school landscape plan that focusses on creating more usable and interesting play spaces within the natural landscape
To ensure that our students have opportunity to experience, understand and value the unique world view and relationship to the natural world, of the Australian Aboriginal people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide regular indigenous speakers and workshops to students• Develop meaningful school relationships with local Brisbane indigenous people• Include a Central Australian experience into the high school camp program that focusses on Indigenous culture and awareness

Measures of Success

To determine the success of our continuous striving for school improvement we look for the following measures:

- ❖ SVSS is a school of choice for conscious parents.
 - With full cohorts of students in each year level
 - With strong and consistent retention of students and staff
- ❖ SVSS is known and respected as a school of excellence.
 - The wider community understands the vision and nature of the school
 - The wider community knows and understands the key points of difference offered at SVSS
 - SVSS has an acknowledged voice in broader education circles
- ❖ SVSS has a strong and engaged community characterised by healthy relationships between all stakeholders.
 - The school is proudly promoted by all stakeholders
- ❖ SVSS students enter the world feeling capable, hopeful and able to pursue any future path they should chose.
- ❖ SVSS attracts, develops and retains teachers of excellence who are inspired and committed to working in full service to the education and well-being of our students.



The plan at a glance...

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Students	
To extend the reach of our early years program to cater for younger age groups	Develop playgroup services onsite at the school Develop mother's groups onsite at the school Develop further infrastructure to cater for a multi-age early childhood class catering for children turning 3 and 4
To strengthen the enrichment offerings in the primary school that support and enhance the Class Teacher's work with the students	Expand and develop the gardening and cooking program. Strengthen the language program. Develop and implement a Bothmer Gymnastics program from CI 3 onwards.
To further develop and strengthen our student well-being and pastoral care programs	Develop and clearly articulate our school's approach to student well-being; including behaviour management, learning support, social-emotional and relational development and support of students with special needs. Increase focus on how the curriculum and our teaching practices can be utilised to develop the children's social attitudes and values that reflect in how they interact with each other and the environment. Develop a program for training guardians further in student pastoral care.
To ensure we can continue to offer and further develop a robust and authentic Waldorf curriculum to Class 12	Implement the Steiner Senior Certificate offering levels 1 -3 in the senior school; including offering electives in classes 11 and 12.
To further strengthen and embed artistic opportunities for students	Employ a Creative Arts co-ordinator to oversee and develop the arts program and drive arts projects within the school.
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Staff	
To ensure that all teachers have opportunity to broaden and strengthen their understanding of the pedagogy and underlying philosophical ethos of the school.	Increased school directed Professional Development days (8 per year) in the following identified focus areas: Strengthening our collective picture of the depth and width of our educational approach and curriculum. Challenging the 'culture of the desk' and other "traditions" of education.
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Environment	
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