

School plan 2015 – 2017

Tallowood School 5459 Strategic Directions





School vision statement

'Creating pathways for Life'

Our school is committed to each student achieving maximum independence and engagement for their post school life in their communication abilities, emotional well-being and respect for self and others.

School context

Tallowood School is a Public, Private Partnership SSP School (School for Specific Purpose) located in Kellyville. The school enrolls students from Kindergarten to year 12. The current enrolment is 99 students. All students have a moderate or severe intellectual disability and many students have additional physical and sensory disabilities, autism or other syndromes. The school population is drawn from seven local council areas including The Hills, Holroyd, Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith, Hawkesbury and Hornsby. The school opened in 2004 and is purpose built with a range of facilities. It provides a safe, attractive and caring learning environment for our students. Every student has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP/IEP), designed in collaboration with families and carers, to identify specific learning priorities for each student. Our skilled staff uses a holistic approach to differentiate the Board of Studies NSW Australian Curriculum in the key learning areas to meet the individual learning needs of our students. Our school has a range of innovative programs including work experience, hydrotherapy, Riding for the Disabled (RDA), sailing, Zumba classes, Tallowood farm and community access programs. The school is generously supported by The Hills community.

School planning process

Ongoing consultation, including surveys, questionnaires and group discussions have occurred with parents and staff to determine our strategic directions for our school planning.

Parents and staff were asked to identify their vision for our school. Common themes clarified our purpose in continuing to provide teaching skills for life, through explicit instruction and meaningful and purposeful teaching in a stimulating happy and safe environment.

A number of areas for future planning have included a continued focus on developing individual communication skills for our students to allow choice and decision making. Providing our students with a wide range of interesting and age appropriate learning activities.

All acknowledged the importance of developing 'the whole child'. Their emotional well-being, respect for self and others, maximum independence, physical health and exercise and personal self-care skills.

Parents expressed their need for more shared information on student learning and investigating innovative ways for students to communicate between school and home.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Each student will be an engaged and successful learner with a voice.

Purpose:

To develop a collaborative and supportive learning environment that has high expectations for our students' learning and meets their individual needs and abilities and celebrates their achievements.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Our staff will be high performing and student needs focused.

Purpose:

To develop staff skills and capacities in providing quality teaching and learning programs to raise the level of student achievement.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Our community will be engaged and informed.

Purpose:

To develop partnerships which are connected and effective. To develop productive networks which support student, staff and family well-being.

Strategic Direction 1. Each student will be an engaged and successful learner with a voice.

Purpose

To develop a collaborative and supportive learning environment that has high expectations for our students' learning and meets their individual needs and abilities and celebrates their achievements and successes.

Improvement Measures

- ❖ 25% of students achieve an incremental step as recorded in the communication matrix.
- ❖ 25% of staff independently access and implement the resource package to support learners with complex needs.

People

Staff:

Staff increase their knowledge and skills in differentiating learning activities for student success.

Staff have high expectations of student learning.

Student engagement is a priority.

Dignity and respect will be shown to all students.

Staff will use a variety of teaching strategies.

All staff collaborate to define and promote our school's values.

Parents:

Parents are valued partners in their child's education.

Processes

Staff:

Professional learning in Positive Behaviour Learning (PBL).

Effective teaching practices are shared with colleagues.

Staff know their students and the motivators that facilitate their engagement in learning.

Staff demonstrate an understanding of systems and practices which effect student learning.

Communication assessment informs teaching.

Professional learning to articulate and affirm our school's values.

Current Positive Behaviour learning (PBL) practices are reviewed and improved.

Parents:

Professional learning around skill development strengthened and defined links between school and home.

Products and Practices

Products:

All students have a means to communicate.

A resource package is developed for students with challenging behaviours and diverse and complex needs.

Tallowood School values statement is displayed and embedded in school practice.

All staff has a deep understanding of each student's abilities and work towards extending these abilities.

Achievements are celebrated.

Programing is informed by assessment.

Practices:

Collegial discussions occur regularly to reflect on student achievement and future directions.

Interactive information resource package for students with challenging behaviours, diverse and complex needs.

Students are working on the learning continuum at their own level.

Authentic assessment of student learning.

Positive Behaviour Learning (PBL) is embedded in school practices.

The support resource package is used by staff to support complex cases.

Strategic Direction 2: Our staff will be high performing and student needs focused.

Purpose

To develop staff skills in their effectiveness in providing quality teaching and learning programs to raise the level of student achievement.

Improvement Measures

- ❖ 100% of permanent and temporary staff are meeting the requirements of the Professional Development Framework.
- ❖ Assessment and tracking shows student achievement in 80% of Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) goals.

People

Staff:
Develop mentoring and coaching skills in leaders to foster a supportive culture for ongoing feedback and improvement.

Develop a culture of working collegially and collaboratively.

Research informs teaching and learning practices.

Staff reflect on their teaching practices and change to improve their practices.

Processes

School's current practices are assessed against the Schools Excellence Framework.

The Performance and Development Framework is implemented to ensure the school is a collaborative and supportive workplace committed to ongoing learning by all.

Staff receive feedback on their teaching through collaborative lesson observations.

Beginning teachers achieve and maintain their accreditation requirements and reflect on their current practices.

Stage groups meet collegially to share and plan the design, implementation and assessment of authentic learning activities.

Mentoring is effectively established as a practice.

Professional learning is targeted to further develop knowledge, skills and capabilities of staff.

Professional learning builds on existing strengths and supports career aspirations.

Staff are involved in activities to develop consistent teacher judgement in assessment of students.

Products and Practices

Products:
Professional Development Plans (PDP) results in increased capacities in teaching and leading.

Assessment and tracking of student achievement in all Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) goals.

The school's induction program is documented and implemented.

Class programs document differentiation for all students.

Practices:

All teachers have high quality performance and development aligned to the professional teaching standards that includes professional learning and feedback.

Staff are working effectively in collegial groups.

Formal mentoring is planned and systematic to support colleagues at their professional stage.

Staff are achieving and maintaining levels of accreditation.

Teachers are sharing the development and implementation of differentiated lesson development.

Strategic Direction 3: Our community is engaged and informed.

Purpose

To develop partnerships which are connected and effective.
To develop productive networks which support student, staff and family well-being.

Improvement Measures

- ❖ Parents surveys indicate a 10% increase in levels of effective communication between school and home.
- ❖ Staff surveys reflect a 20% increase in the feelings of being valued and acknowledged.

People

Staff:

Build capacity in staff of communication technologies.

Staff have knowledge of the NDIS process.

Professional learning will enhance effective communication skills.

Contribute to welfare initiatives to enhance staff well-being.

Parents:

Increase parent capacity and knowledge of school communication systems.

Upskilling of strategies used at school to support students.

Knowledge of what is available and how to access the information.

Knowledge of teaching and learning strategies.

Informed and engaged in the NDIS process.

Processes

Staff:

Liaise with the DEC personnel to create an accessible and appropriate web site.

Research and establish an app for the exchange of information between home and school.

Parents:

Increased opportunity for parents to meet with staff.

Parent needs inform information and learning sessions.

Parents take opportunities to promote the school.

Improved knowledge ensures that skills are generalised across home and school

Products and Practices

Products

A comprehensive communication hub, with a range of options, meets the needs of our community.

Staff feel valued and acknowledged. Increased parent knowledge of skill development strategies.

Protocols are clearly documented around NDIS support.

An increase in family well-being and connectedness.

A welcoming culture where parents and carers are active participants in their child's education.

Practices:

Highly developed interpersonal and professionalism in staff.

Staff well-being is supported to meet the daily challenges of educating our students

Effective debriefing process and giving feedback are ongoing school practices.

Parents participate and collaborate in their child's education.

Parents express a sense of belonging and security within our school and engage in open authentic dialogue about their child and family needs.

The school provide links to other services and is a source of ongoing information to support our families.