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| 1.1 | 2019 | Approved version |
| 1.2 | 2021 | Significant revision to guidelines, revision to policy to reflect MSSA's 2020 Administrative Restructure |
| 1.3 | 11/10/24 | Minor edits to reflect new roles created at Milkwood since the last review |

Recruitment and Employment

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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

MSSA: Milkwood Steiner School Association

Mentoring: The term 'mentor' is used at MSSA to describe a knowledgeable, experienced or highly proficient teacher who works alongside a new or less experienced colleague. The relationship between mentor and mentee is as colleagues rather than instructor/student, and acknowledges that each staff member has expertise and wisdom which is valued at MSSA. Teacher evaluation is not a function of mentoring.

PURPOSE

This Policy describes MSSA's recruitment processes, staff evaluation, mentoring and professional development. It reflects the value MSSA places on supporting staff, and its wish to engage and support staff who will best address the strategic vision of the school according to its Strategic Plan and operational needs. The rights and needs children, the MSSA community and the health of the school guide the development of this Policy.

SCOPE

This document applies to prospective and existing staff at Milkwood Steiner School, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

POLICY STATEMENT

MSSA will engage in recruitment and employment actions in a fair and equitable manner, in ways which strengthens the school and its staff.

The recruitment and support of staff at MSSA complies with relevant legislation and reflects the school's values, vision and operational needs as determined by the Strategic Plan and Annual Plan.

Milkwood Steiner School's approach to staff appraisal recognises the ongoing emphasis on inner work and personal development, in Steiner Educators' work. It frames the person being appraised as the expert on their own performance and needs, following a model of formal supervision. It attributes responsibility for improving professional performance equally on the staff member and the school.

Confidentiality is maintained for all mentoring and appraisal reports.

Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for managing recruitment, appraisal, mentoring and professional development of staff, consulting with and delegating tasks to appropriate staff members as required.

Teacher Recruitment

Teachers of children of compulsory school age (turning 6 or older) must be registered and financial with the NT Teachers Registration Board (TRB) or must be eligible to be registered with the TRB under mutual recognition.

Staff must have a current Ochre Card before commencing work at MSSA.

Teachers of children under the compulsory school age (six years old) must have relevant early childhood teaching qualifications, with experience, training or deep knowledge of Steiner Early Childhood Education, and be willing to undertake further qualifications if needed to meet the school's registration, legal and strategic needs.

MSSA prioritises staff with qualifications from a registered Steiner education training institution or with extensive Steiner education experience.

Teacher Assistants' willingness to undertake professional development in the field of Steiner education is listed as 'desirable' in recruitment selection criteria.

Recruitment Procedure

In September annually, the Principal identifies the school's teacher needs for the following year drawing on recommendations from Staff.

If the intended staffing falls within the budget, the recruitment process commences.

If the intended change to staffing falls outside budget constraints, the Principal and Finance Manager will prepare a budgeted proposal for new teaching staff. The new budget proposal is submitted to the Board for approval.

If approved by the Board, the recruitment process commences.

Where vacancies occur outside the above planning timeframe, the Principal will assess the recruitment need and commence recruitment process.

The creation of new Positions requires Board approval prior to recruitment.

The application process includes a written application, interview and reference and other checks as required.

The Principal is responsible for

- Reviewing Position Descriptions
- Advertising positions and leading the recruitment process
- acknowledging receipt of applications within 1 week
- creating a shortlist of applicants for interviewing within 2 weeks of applications closing
- Undertaking Referee and other checks
- Notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants of the recruitment outcome
- Inductions for new staff

The Finance Manager is responsible for generating Contracts and Letters of Offer.

The MSSA Board recruit the Principal position using the same recruitment process.

An interview panel for teaching positions consists of at least two people. Panel members may include the Principal, Board members and representatives from the College of Teachers.

Commencement of employment at the school is subject to the applicant providing the school with the following documentation: proof of qualifications, teacher registration, clearance to work with children under s187 of the Care and Protection of Children Act (Ochre Card), which must also include a National Criminal History Check and the signed fixed term contract of employment.

New staff commence employment on a probation period, according to the terms of the Modern Award.

The Principal commences employment on probation for two terms or six months, whichever is the shorter.

Initial contracts of employment are fixed term employment which may be extended or made permanent following a probation appraisal.

Mentoring and professional development

During the recruitment process, prospective employees are asked to identify what the best support could look like for them, entering the school or a new role for the first year.

Their feedback on professional development may be integrated by the Principal into the annual PD plan if the applicant is employed.

When mentoring is considered valuable and necessary to the new staff member, a mentoring arrangement may be established by the Principal to support the teacher's induction.

When a mentoring arrangement is set up, the following roles and responsibilities should be communicated to both parties:

The Principal is responsible for

- identifying appropriate mentors as needed, based on the needs of the new teacher, and the expertise available
- Being the new staff member's line manager.

The Mentor is responsible for working with the new staff member to understand what the best support will look like. This may include:

- supporting learning and growth in professional practices relevant to the new staff member's position description, through sharing resources and strategies, modelling or observations and facilitating best practice
- fostering the new staff member's confidence and independence
- supporting the new staff member to develop their own styles and strengths of practice, informed by best practice
- Notifying the Principal of areas of concern, including concerns for safety and wellbeing

The new teacher is responsible for

- actively develop their professional practice in ways that align with the school's mission and values
- developing skills and strategies for increasing independence in practice

The Principal manages the school's Professional Development budget ensuring equity of access, and is responsive to professional needs arising through the year. Professional development priorities are informed by the school's Strategic Plan, staff Appraisals, and in consultation with the College of Teachers.

Appraisals and Probation Review

Staff members undertake a formal appraisal annually at Milkwood Steiner School, and at the end of a probation period, or more frequently when considered necessary.

The Principal is responsible for managing probation and conversion from fixed term to full time employment.

The Principal facilitates Staff Appraisals.

When appropriate, the Principal may delegate Appraisals to a staff member or external practitioner.

The role of the Supervisor (person overseeing the appraisal) is to facilitate a reflective practice, explore issues arising and support the development of practice.

The role of the person being appraised is to reflect on their practice strengths, and to bringing attention and actions to areas of their practice requiring improvement.

An appraisal includes

1. Observation: Time in the classroom during a teaching period, or access to work books, planning document, assessments and other work samples. For non-teaching staff, this may include observations of interactions in meetings or during work hours, or a presentation of the person's systems and work.
2. Self-appraisal questionnaire: Completed by the person being appraised, with a reflection process facilitated by the supervisor.

The supervisor and the staff member document a written report, which integrates the self-appraisal process, the supervisor's observations and a Practice Development plan.

If while on probation underperformance is noted, the Principal will:

- Assess the underperformance
- Meet with the teacher to outline the detail of the underperformance whilst recognising strengths
- Seek the teacher's contribution to devise a solution including further training or mentoring and counselling or other support
- Commence formal performance management
- Undertake further evaluations as required

- Make a fair and reasonable decision about the teacher's probation by the end of the teacher's second term of service (or not later than six months after commencement).

At the end of the evaluation program the Principal may:

- End the fixed term employment.
- Offer the teacher further fixed term employment (without probation) for up to one year
- Offer the teacher full time (or part time) employment.

The MSSA Board is responsible for conducting the Principal's performance appraisal.

The Principal's performance is measured against the Strategic Plan, Annual Plans and Position Description.

GUIDELINES

Appraisal Guidelines for teaching and administration staff

Stage 1: Observation

Observation: The supervisor and staff member agree on a time and date for work observation. Work observation may include observing the staff member in practice, or accessing student work samples, planning/assessment documents or other relevant documents and systems.

The Supervisor's observations should be documented with reference to:

- Staff member's Position Description, Key Responsibilities, Essential Attributes or Contract
- Strategic Plan

And, where relevant

- Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework's Achievement Standards
- Professional Standards (eg. Australian Professional Standards for Teachers)
- Previous appraisals, Performance Improvement Plans or Annual Plans
- Quality Improvement Plans

Children are not directly involved in appraisals, but documented child and community feedback may be evidenced in an appraisal when appropriate.

Stage 2: Self-appraisal Questionnaire and Interview

A Self-appraisal questionnaire is created by the Principal and Supervisor.

The questionnaire is presented through 'I' statements which are derived from the relevant documents listed.

The self-appraisal questionnaire is completed by the staff member being appraised and is designed to prompt reflection.

The staff member being appraised selects one statement to speak/write to as a 'strengths' and another statement to speak/write to as requiring attention. Alternatively, the staff member may prefer to consider a statement that elicited a sympathetic and antisympathetic response, and explore wisdom gained through this process. The supervisor also selects one or two items to bring into the reflective process, and the questionnaire may be explored through a conversation guided by unconditional positive regard.

Stage 3: Appraisal report and Practice Development Plan

The supervisor and the staff member create a written report, which integrates the self-appraisal process and the supervisor's observations. The report considers the strengths and areas for improvement.

A Practice Development Plan is created, incorporating 3-6 measurable, achievable goals for improvement. A timeframe for review is determined.

The Appraisal Report and Practice Development Plan are filed in the staff member's confidential file.

In cases of misconduct or underperformance of serious concern, the Principal is brought into the process. The Practice Development Plan may note the conditions for continued employment, or a need for adjustments to Position Descriptions and Contracts, in accordance with relevant legislation and relevant MSSA Policies.

Sample Appraisal Questionnaire: Class Teacher

I work effectively with the College of Teachers, Principal and Administration staff.

I plan, implement, document, assess and report on teaching programs aligned to the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework.

I develop Educational Adjustment Plans and other adjustments for individual students based on best practice interventions for inclusion, wellbeing and learning.

I maintain accurate records of class attendance, engage with incident reporting, behaviour management reporting and mandatory reporting as required.

I supervise a range of student activities including support and welfare programs, Festivals, excursions, assemblies and other.

I communicate regularly with parents via email, phone or face-to-face, via parent-teacher conferences (Term 2 and 4) and group information sessions (Term 1 and 3).

I attend relevant meetings, including a reasonable number of planning meetings, at the discretion of the Principal

I ensure appropriate behaviour of students in class, around the school and whilst on excursions or camps.

I care for the classroom and manage the classroom budget, ensuring that the aesthetics, layout and management of the room reflect the cultural values of Milkwood Steiner School and support teaching and learning.

I am committed to the principles of Steiner Education.

My classroom is child-focused

I communicate well

I am well-organized in my work

I love working with children

My practice is inclusive and values diversity

My practice values wellbeing

I practice excellent self-care

I have insight into my support needs

My practice supports/is supported by the work of the school's specialist programs (Indonesian, Farm, Library, Music)

I teach literacy effectively

I teach numeracy effectively

In my class, I support a connection to country, seasons and the natural environment

I incorporate Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and bring Traditional Owners into my programming

I bring artistic experiences to my class effectively

I contribute to other areas of the school's professional and cultural life (eg. CoT, child studies, festivals, adult education, eurythmy, community camps, mentoring)

Milkwood Steiner School's Values, Vision and Mission are embedded in my work.