

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICY

Relevant to:	All staff, all students, all parents
Developed by:	COLLEGE OF TEACHERS, NTSA Governance
Date of Introduction:	FEBRUARY 2020
Date of Most Recent Review:	March 2023
Date for Review:	2025
Approved:	School Board Mar-23
Related Documents:	Assessment and Reporting policy, Monitor and develop student Learning Strategy

PURPOSE

1. To articulate the school's approach to ongoing Professional Learning as part of a commitment to improved student learning, through deepening pedagogical understanding, up-skilling all staff, broadening the scope of the curriculum and enriching the community culture. A high level of commitment to professional learning is expected of teaching staff and is supported by education leadership and professional learning opportunities provided.
2. To ensure that Professional Learning funds are budgeted annually, with allocations to all staff within the organization (teaching, management, administration, governance and grounds and maintenance staff) and to provide to release for teachers to undertake professional learning experiences.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional Development is foundational to achieving ongoing improvement in student learning. Initially Steiner trained educators are sought through the recruitment process. The process of developing a staff Professional Development/Learning Program is based on the Staff Appraisal process, which begins in Term 1. Ongoing reflections at Faculty meetings are included to address the learning needs of the education team to meet the educational needs of the students, to meet the educational compliance requirements and in response to feedback from the parent community.

- a. Teacher Appraisals (3 parts)
 - Part 1 – Term 1 - Identify Professional Development needs in response to the immediate needs of the class/students after school start.
 - Part 2 – Term 2 - Classroom Observation conducted by the Principal – provide feedback and support as well as jointly identify further Professional Learning needs or mentoring.
 - Part 3 – Term 3 - Identify professional learning needs to meet the goals and aspirations of the student learning goals for the following year which may involve an in-depth review and research of an existing program.
- b. Ongoing Internal Professional Learning - weekly
This takes the form of:
 - Reflection on the AITSL & ACEQUA standards for professional practise and identifying areas of weakness
(See ongoing record tool)

- Considering the student issues on a weekly basis, including regular 'Child Study' and identifying how matters arising can be met by the education team to provide optimal support – including arranging professional learning if required.
- (see faculty agenda)

The Professional development /learning schedule for any one teaching year will include:

- Attending Steiner teacher Intensives by class level – one week in summer. Essential for non-Steiner trained teachers with other teacher encouraged to also attend.
- Attending 'Vital Years' conferences for early childhood teachers – bi annually.
- Attending PL sessions offered externally (mostly by IST, SEA) – to ensure educators are competent to deliver inclusive programs and moderate assessment.
- Completing training modules on line – to meet compliance requirements.
- Engaging interstate and local educational and child support specialist trainers to deliver specific topics onsite (shared with Tarremah Steiner school where possible). Usually these specialists can provide valuable information and childhood support to the parent and broader community.
- Sharing professional skills and experience within the College of Teachers meetings as a formal workshop from time to time or in weekly reflections.
- Ongoing study of Steiner pedagogy at weekly 'College Meetings'.
- Artistic development activities at weekly 'College Meetings'.
- Observation days/weeks in other Steiner school classrooms at Tarremah Steiner School or Interstate.

TEACHER MENTORING:

Tamar Valley Steiner School is committed to a high quality of teaching and educational experience in line with the ideals of the Steiner educational approach. The school takes a proactive approach to ensuring that teaching staff have appropriate support and mentoring in addition to professional development. This mentoring will take place a several levels:

- All beginning teachers and teachers new to the school will be provided with a mentor however;
- All staff will work collegially and actively to support their colleagues to improve their teaching
- All staff will develop a personal professional learning plan with clear links to the AITSL Standards
- Professional learning plans will be based on changes to practice that staff wish to initiate or refine – as determined through the ongoing appraisal process
- Professional learning plan targets will be communicated to colleagues
- Wherever possible staff with similar professional learning targets will work together and support each other to achieve their target
- Professional learning plans will be reviewed each twice yearly; in the Term 1 appraisal and following the class observation appraisal
- At times professional learning will be located in the school/classroom to maximise transference of learning
- Professional learning may be used as a means for finding out more about an issue/teaching approach (e.g. a team may be commissioned to visit an exemplary school, to research a particular topic or attend a conference)
- Professional learning activities beyond the school will be used as a means of extending networks and introducing new approaches to the school
- Professional learning funds will be used to release teachers to undertake professional learning experiences within the school.

- The school will organise so that time is available for professional learning activities to be sustained
- Persons attending professional learning will be responsible for reporting back on the activity and its implications for school practice
- The strength of the school's professional learning culture will be reviewed annually
Staff performance reviews will take into account what happens in the classroom and what the teacher is doing to improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

NON-TEACHING STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

It is vital for a school with a specific ethos guiding its primary purpose that all staff carry a living picture of the goals and values of the educational impulse as well as have opportunities to up skill in their specific area of expertise and remain compliant as legislation changes.

As a member of Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) and Steiner Education Australia (SEA) many learning opportunities, conferences and consultations provide learning opportunities streamlined for TVSS staff needs.

TVSS is committed to supporting its support staff in Administration, Grounds and Maintenance and Learning Assistant positions to ensure they provide the school with progressive approaches to all aspects of school operations, safety and compliance.

Our School budget provides all non-teaching staff with an equal allocation of funding for relevant and beneficial Professional Development for all non-teaching staff. We believe this investment is essential not only for staff development and improving knowledge and skills for their job but is also critical for the retention of quality staff within the school to ensure minimal disruption and optimum efficiency.