

"2008 Annual Report:
Educational and Financial Reporting"
provided for the
New South Wales Board of Studies

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education

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ABN 87 011 024 ACN 073 011 024

Updated 25 June 2009

INTRODUCTION

“Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, and let them go forth in freedom.”

Rudolf Steiner

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education is one of approximately 900 Steiner schools in more than fifty countries and was first registered in 1996. It was founded by an enthusiastic parent group with the inspirational backing of Alan and Susan Whitehead.

The school's vision statement reflects the school's aims:

“ Rainbow Ridge School will offer a universal education in balance and harmony with the environment, embracing Rudolf Steiner's philosophies and research and growing with the changing needs of time.”

The school is situated 10 km from Nimbin, 43km from Lismore and Kyogle occupying 2.5 hectares of bushland at Lillian Rock Road in Northern NSW. There is a balance of forest, extensive playgrounds and school gardens. Environmental awareness is extended to the buildings, which also includes solar energy and composting toilets.

The most recent Certificate of Registration for Kindergarten to year 6 was approved in 2008 for the maximum five year period.

The school is incorporated (not for profit limited by guarantee) with ASIC. In summary, the objectives of the school, as set out in the Memorandum of Association of Rainbow Ridge School are:

- To adhere to and foster the educational philosophies, principles and research of the late Dr Rudolf Steiner in the application to the education of children and training of teachers.
- To respect the individuality of the child and foster the full development of their capacities and talents.

- To maintain high academic standards consistent with the preceding objects.
- To provide a safe and supportive environment for all who learn and work at the school.
- To strive for co-operation and provide opportunities for close relationships to be formed between teachers, students, parents and local community and foster parental involvement in aspects of the day to day work of the school.

The school's College of Teachers, Administration, Board of Directors and other staff endeavour to work together with the students and parents in constructive and co-operative ways to create a positive, fruitful social environment to achieve harmony and develop everybody's best potential.

This Annual Report to the NSW Board of Studies, Department of Education and the School Community provides reliable and objective information about the 2008 school year. In previous years the school's Annual General Meetings have always served a similar function.

This Annual Report provides information for the following reporting areas:

- Chairperson's Report including School determined improvement targets
- College of Teacher's Report
- School performance in state wide tests and examinations
- Teacher Standards
- Teachers' professional development
- Average teacher attendance and retention rate
- Enrolment policy and profiles and retention rates
- Summaries of the Student Welfare and Discipline Policy
- Actions to promote respect and responsibility
- Description of parent, student, teacher satisfaction
- Summary financial information.
- Summary of school's Communication Guidelines (Grievance Policy)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT FOR 2008

One year has passed on the Rainbow Ridge Board of Directors (BOD), with much water passing under the bridge.

The RSSA Review, completed last year, was a useful tool to identify focal areas for the BOD. We looked at clarifying and formalising existing structures within the school. The school adopted some changes to try to address some of the issues outlined in the review.

Firstly Christina Rubsamen was recognised in the executive role as education administrator. The BOD would like to thank Christina for the vital role she plays binding our community together as its central hub.

Secondly; the 2009 school budget process was formalised identifying key areas of spending and identifying responsible authorities. The BOD retained authority over full and part time employment at the school. While the educational administrator was given authority over recurrent expenditure in consultation with the College of Teachers (COT).

Employment contracts for 2009 were simplified into three categories. Employees that had Co-ordination roles, Independent workers and Assistants. This brought all teachers on to equal salaries and hopes to foster a sense of equity amongst staff. Agreement on working conditions was established in draft contracts and position descriptions. These remain under review.

2009 has started full of funding opportunities. Two major projects, the extension to the administration area and the development of the hall have been identified as priority projects for funding.

Thank you to all involved at Rainbow Ridge especially my co- directors for the positive energy and intention they bring to each meeting. Your love and effort will see the school bloom.

Paul O'Reilly
Chairperson
Rainbow Ridge Board of Directors

COLLEGE OF TEACHERS REPORT FOR 2008

A year of change, new arrangements and gradual consolidation was how 2008 could be summarised for the teachers.

The year started with the school roll at 70 students and finished with 58 students. The drop in numbers was due in part to the rather sad departure of a long-standing teacher Marg Ryan who withdrew due to illness in the second term. A relief teacher, Peter Calkin, was found who was then able to take on the class, eventually making the commitment to take them through to the end of 2009.

The third term was an extremely busy one with our inspection by the NSW Board of Studies for school registration in the first weeks, followed by an Open Day and then a Spring Festival.

The registration inspection went very well, thanks to the enormous amount of preparation work done by the administration staff and teachers and the result was an extension of a five year period of registration before the next inspection would be due; the maximum term possible.

The Open Day that followed was very successful with music, stalls and a great turnout of people and managed to raise over \$2000 in funds. Some of this money was subsequently used to purchase a gazebo for further school promotion activities. The 2009 roll rose quite dramatically, particularly in the kindergarten, and this is thought to have been partly as a result of such a lovely open day.

The kindergarten had an official opening of the new extension with the Federal MP Janelle Saffin, and the Mayor of Kyogle present. The children were involved in the talk by Janelle and were able to ask questions.

The teachers have taken part in some excellent professional development this year and this has also benefited the parent community who have been treated to some wonderful education evenings. Highlighting amongst our visitors was the arrival of Dr Lakshmi Prasanna, an Anthroposophical doctor and pediatrician from India, and her partner Michael, a Cranial Sacral therapist. Their stay of two weeks left our whole community uplifted with teachers, parents and children all receiving consultations, treatment and advice from the pair. A regular arrangement has been made for ongoing visits once every 4 to 6 months.

Other professional development included talks by Lisa Romero, an Anthroposophical homeopath, Bothmer Gymnastics workshops by Tom Hungerford from Melbourne

Steiner School, pre-school gatherings at Cape Byron school, Bio-dynamic workshops, painting courses, and kindergarten teacher courses.

The teachers and community have also had the benefit of regular Eurythmy classes with Patrice, a leading Curative Eurythmist, who lives locally.

In school the children put on plays, had swimming lessons and enjoyed the rich school environment, and Class 5 had the privilege of being the first class to take part in the Class 5 Ancient Greek Olympics which was held at Tyalgum Ridge. This was a fantastic event with 175 children attending from schools all over Northern NSW. Laurence worked extremely hard and created a new garden area and Class 2/3 also worked hard to start the first beds and make the first compost.

The College of Teachers wishes to acknowledge the Board of Directors for their outstanding work last year that put the school in such healthy shape for 2009. Thank you all so much.

Peter Calkin,
Chairman of College of Teachers 2009

Actions to Promote Respect and Responsibilities

The loving authority of the primary class teacher instills respect in the students. This is done through the understanding of child development and a commitment to all the children in the class. From an early age the teacher works by example and implementing care and responsibility for work and materials and respect for self and others. The teacher endeavours to bring out the best in every child and supports areas of difficulty. Stories of different kinds support the moral development including respect and responsibility. According to the age group students are asked to look after their belongings and included in the process of tidying and cleaning of the room at the end of the lesson and also at the end of the day. Students take on tasks to be of service to others for example; older students become buddies of class one students and help and support them, prepare and serve food. Students take part in community and environmental activities.

SUMMARY OF ENROLMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education aims to embrace children and their families irrespective of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference and marital status and integrate them into our school community. The school endeavors to provide children with age-appropriate learning experiences as well as an environment that serves the freedom of the human spirit by emphasizing the balanced and disciplined education of the child as a whole being. The school's vision statement is as follows:

"Rainbow Ridge School will offer a universal education in balance and harmony with the environment, embracing Rudolf Steiner's philosophies and growing with the changing needs of time."

The purpose of this document is to summarize the enrolment policy and processes at Rainbow Ridge School. We encourage parents to inform themselves about our educational approach before proceeding with the enrolment.

An information package describes the school's nature and can be obtained from the school.

Parents may obtain an application for enrolment form as part of the school's information package from the office or download one from the school's website.

The school's website address is: <http://www.rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au>

Application for Enrolment

Staff will acknowledge the application within two weeks. A fee of \$50.00 is to be paid to Rainbow Ridge School with the enrolment application and a \$25 confirmation fee is due when the child becomes formally enrolled. Enrolment at Rainbow Ridge is dependent on the outcome of the enrolment procedures including an interview and additional assessment (if required) to determine whether the school can meet the child's needs.

Special Needs and/or Disabilities

Parents should disclose their children's special needs e.g. physical, emotional, behavioural, sensory, learning difficulties or other relevant information at the time of application/registration. The school will require reports and assessments in order to determine whether it can meet the child's special needs.

The selection criteria are not intended to discriminate against students with special conditions. However, as a private school, resources that can be made available to support children with specific learning difficulties are limited, affecting the provision for such students. The school follows the Disability Standards for Education

introduced by the Commonwealth Government which have been formulated under the paragraph 31(1)(b) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. (see Special Needs Policy)

Offer of Enrolment

If a place is offered a letter of acceptance will be sent, along with the Enrolment Agreement form.

The child is formally enrolled when the administrative requirements are met and fee(s) are received and processed by the office.

The enrolling class teacher will make contact to arrange the child's first day at the school.

One Term's Trial System

All students enrolling at Rainbow Ridge School are initially accepted for one term, until both parents and teachers have had the opportunity to see how the student is settling in. This allows the school to evaluate whether the child is benefiting from what the school has to offer and is someone with whom the teachers can work. It also gives the parents the opportunity to evaluate whether or not this is the right choice of school for their child. In some cases this trial period might be extended; if the situation requires it, the parents or the school may terminate enrolment before the completion of the term.

Enrolment Procedure

1. Initial enquiry: - enrolment package sent incl. covering letter (see template) and Application for Enrolment Form
2. Optional visit to the school
3. Fee of \$50.00 paid with the completed and signed Application Form
4. Interview arranged with the family (parent and child/ren) and two teachers with the purpose to:
 - meet with the teacher
 - ensure parents are fully aware of the differences between Steiner and other educational options
 - enable parents to assess whether the school is in fact appropriate for their child/ren
 - determine whether Rainbow Ridge School can meet the needs of the child
 - inform parents of the administrative requirements
 - discuss the Parent Information Booklet with the opportunity to ask questions

5. Consideration process at the College of Teachers for approval for enrolment
6. Letter of offer for enrolment
7. A fee of \$25.00 paid with signing the Enrolment Agreement Form and other administrative requirements.
8. Teacher will arrange child's first day at school

Administrative Requirements

Enrolment related payments and other related general information:

1. a) Enrolment Application and Agreement fees
b) Fee structure (including fee concessions for siblings), maintenance levy and student accident insurance contribution
c) Other expenses such as excursions and special materials might occur.
2. All payments are due at enrolment and during the first four weeks of following terms.
3. Individual arrangements regarding payments may be negotiated with the administration
4. Tax deductibility is possible for Building Fund donations.
5. Four weeks notice is required for withdrawal of children from the school otherwise charges may be incurred.
6. If the obligations of tuition payment are not met, the school retains the right to a process of debt collection with an appointed agency if necessary.
7. Complete and sign all additional forms required at enrolment and hand out the school's Communication Guidelines.
8. Discuss parent involvement at the school including community contribution and tuckshop.
9. Register any objections regarding inclusions on parents and skills/services lists.
10. Clarify any remaining questions and inquiries regarding the school's operation.

Please note that this process will take a minimum of two weeks to complete.

SUMMARY OF THE SCHOOL'S DISCIPLINE POLICY

Rainbow Ridge uses a holistic approach to discipline.

Children's life circumstances are considered and emphasis is put on empowering children to develop self discipline and respectful relationships with themselves, others and their environment.

When children's behaviour is disruptive or inappropriate it is dealt with on an individual level within the classroom by the teacher and logical consequences are implemented. If behaviour continues the school has a formalised procedure of intervention set out in the discipline policy.

During 2008 continuing emphasis was placed on consistency and a whole school approach to implementation of the policy. A system of points to record positive as well as inappropriate behaviour was put in place. All teachers used this system and rewards and consequences were given once a child/class had gained/lost a certain number; this made the monitoring of behaviour more measurable.

Meetings with students and parents and behavioural contracts were thus able to be implemented and followed through.

A whole school preventative approach was also implemented by introducing the virtues program in weekly assemblies.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDENT WELFARE, PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

Rainbow Ridge School aims to develop in its students the skills needed to participate as a responsible citizen in today's society. It aims to encourage each student's personal development and individual well being in accordance with guidelines provided in the Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning - Student Welfare Policy of the NSW Department of School Education (1996) and the indications from Rudolf Steiner.

The school's aim is to create a safe and supportive environment for everyone coming to learn, work and play.

Respect for each other and our surroundings is emphasised by our teaching methods with the support from our discipline policy.

Teachers monitor the health and wellbeing of all children in their care and take steps to address issues as they arise in accordance with the school's health, accident and first aid policies.

Where the student's needs cannot be met by the collaborative effort of teachers and parents, referral to outside agencies may take place.

Any information relating to a child who may be at risk of harm must be referred to the school's child protection officer who will follow it up taking the necessary steps.

All the relevant policies have been reviewed and no changes made during the reporting year.

The complete policy documents can be obtained from the school.

We ensure the grounds and school facilities are maintained in accordance with the school's OH&S Policy.

All visitors to the school are monitored and appropriate levels of supervision are provided for the students at all times.

Regular fire drills and evacuation procedures are practised.

TEACHER STANDARDS

The teaching staff in the year 2008 at Rainbow Ridge School is categorized as follows:

Category	Number of Teachers
(a) Teachers who have teaching qualifications from higher education institution within Australia or as recognized within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition(AEI -NOOSR) guidelines	4
(b) Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognized within the AEI -NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teaching qualifications	
(c) Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) and (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.	

The average teacher attendance rate in 2008 was 0.95 FTE.

The kindy teaching position was shared by two qualified teachers and is now filled by one full time staff member due to the other teacher being on maternity leave. At the end of term 2 a teacher had to leave for health reasons and the position was filled temporarily for the rest of the year.

STUDENT, PARENT, TEACHER SATISFACTION

Parents: Parents are very supportive of the teachers and the school in general. They help prepare the school for each new term and offer assistance and support with excursions and class camps. We have a Parent Group where parents discuss issues relevant to the school and student body. We have a parent craft group which meets weekly to support parents interested learning Steiner based craft.

Students: Our students love the fact that we are a small close-knit community and feel very safe and protected. Children coming to Rainbow Ridge thrive because of the creative, non-competitive and individualistic way of teaching. If we lose students it is generally because of families leaving the area. As we are in a low socio-economic area the payment of tuition fees can sometimes contribute to parents leaving the school.

Teachers:

- A supportive work environment with college, board and administration who all aim to
- communicate respectfully and in a constructive manner with each other.
- A well resourced workplace providing good quality materials for the children.
- The school is set on 5-acres of land bound by bushland. It is a beautiful environment to work in.
- The school offers a variety of professional development courses for teachers and support staff.
- The teachers create a nurturing environment for children to grow and develop. They are supported through the curriculum with other support where necessary such as music therapy, eurythmy and the extra lesson.
- Child studies are an important aspect of our work as teachers and provide a supportive opportunity for development and learning for teachers.

STUDENT POPULATION AT RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL IN 2007

(School Census Data - August 2008)

<u>Enrolment Profile at Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education in 2008</u>			
Faculty	Total of Student Numbers	Female	Male
Kindergarten	17	7	10
Class 1	17	15	2
Class 2	4	3	1
Class 3	8	3	5
Class 4	8	5	3
Class 5	3	0	3
Class 6	1	0	1

The average student attendance rate per year was 89%.

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education has registration for Stages 1 to 3 and the students sometimes leave after year 6 to attend local high schools or leave the area to attend Steiner high schools.

Educational Reporting

National Assessment Program - Numeracy & Literacy 2008

	Reading	Writing	Language Conventions	Spelling	Numeracy
Class 3	2/4	1/3	3/4	1/4	3/3
Class 5	3/5	3/5	1/4	3/5	2/5

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION AT RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL

Communication is the key element in any relationship. The manner we speak to each other, listen to and understand each other determines how well we work and function together.

The school provides both formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate communication between those with an interest in the student's education and wellbeing.

This may include communication between some or all of the following: student, parent or guardian or other significant family member of the student, teacher, counsellor, representative of an appropriate government, welfare, health or other authority.

To create and maintain a positive, constructive and harmonious atmosphere at school a framework is designed providing information of the appropriate procedures.

The school has developed a number of flowcharts giving guidelines for communication channels depending on the information, enquiries or concerns involved.

Throughout the year it has been an effective tool to guide processes to work through difficulties and we are committed to do so promptly, including mediation if necessary to resolve conflict.

One of our aims for the year has been working continuously on improving communication skills and we have worked with the model of 'Compassionate Communication' as well as the 'Virtues Programme'.

For ongoing avenues for dialogue with students, parents and staff, the weekly assembly with all students, the school's weekly newsletter (providing actual, ongoing educational and organisational information), the teacher/parent meetings and College and Board of Directors meetings give opportunities to share, discuss, liaise and inform.

An ongoing programme of professional development in and outside the school has been a priority in the yearly planning as well as parent education workshops.

Teachers are available after school for appointments and interviews.

The office is open weekdays from 8.45 am to 4.00pm and staff are always available to answer questions and help inquiries.

The following Guidelines for Communication are given out on commencement of employment and enrolment for staff, parents and students.

GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION AT RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL

Communication is the key element in any relationship. How we speak to each other, listen to each other and understand each other determines how well we function and work together.

The School will provide both formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate communication between those with an interest in the student's education and well-being. This may include communications between some or all of the following: student; parent or guardian or other significant family member of the student; teacher; counsellor; principal; representative of an appropriate government, welfare, health or other authority.

Contacting the school

- The office is attended five days a week. You can contact office staff with enquiries and/or questions and fee payments

Contacting teachers

- Teachers will be available to talk with parents on Tuesday afternoons between 3.15pm and 4.00pm.
- Unless it is unavoidable it is asked that no staff, pupils or visitors interrupt any classrooms during lesson times.
- School hours are between 8.45 am and 3.20 pm. It is essential that any discussions with teachers within these hours only occur if an appointment has been made and the teacher clearly agrees to have the conversation at that time.
- If discussions are held within these hours please conduct them in a quiet spot out of the main corridor.

School's newsletter

- The school provides a weekly newsletter with ongoing actual educational and organizational information. This is also available as a download from the website.

Teacher/parent meetings are held at least twice a year or whenever required

Communicating enquiries, questions or concerns

- The school has developed a guideline for communicating queries, concerns or confusions within the school. This guideline may be found on the following flow charts. Please read it carefully and keep it for further reference.

New enrolment enquiries

- All new enrolment enquiries are to be forwarded to the prospective teacher/s. The teacher should also be given the name and phone number of the caller in order to contact them as soon as possible.

Presentation of external communication

- The school must ensure that every document is of a professional standard and within the following guidelines
 - Document must be on Rainbow Ridge letterhead.
 - Document should be proof read for spelling and grammar by someone of an English speaking background.
 - All letters are to have prior approval or authority of the college of Teachers (educational matters) or the Board (administrative matters).
 - All information needs to be confirmed by the relevant teacher before going to print to avoid inaccuracies.

Chart S is for students, chart P for parents, chart E for employees.

To create and maintain a positive, constructive and harmonious atmosphere at school the frame work below is designed to provide some guidelines.

In the case of an issue or conflict arises please follow the channels as set out below.

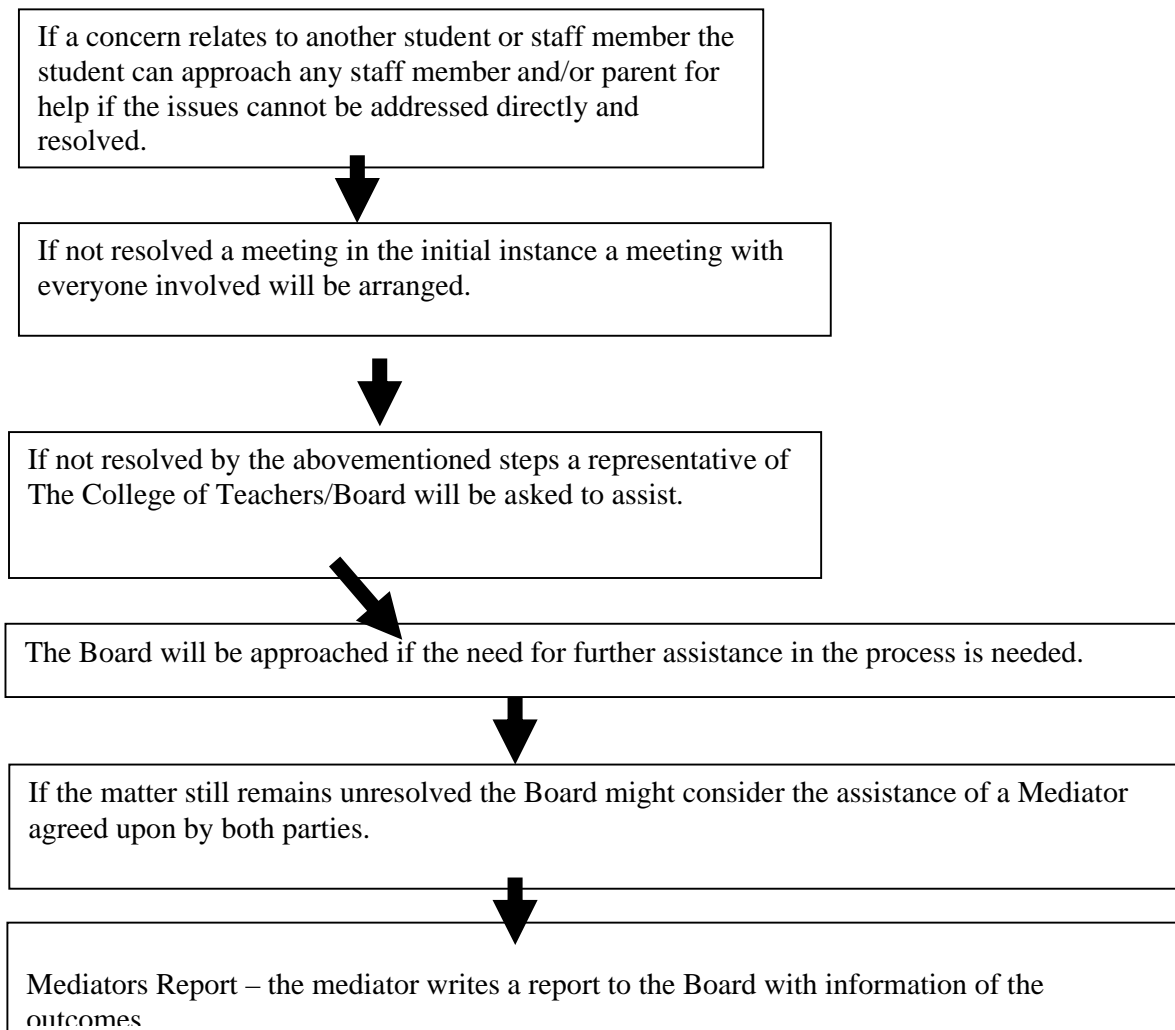
RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION
AND RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS WITH STUDENTS

Within any community issues if not effectively communicated and listened to may lead to conflicts. It can damage the community if it remains unresolved.

The framework below is designed for students to provide a way of working through issues.

A resolution for all concerned will maintain harmony within our wonderful school community.

Chart S

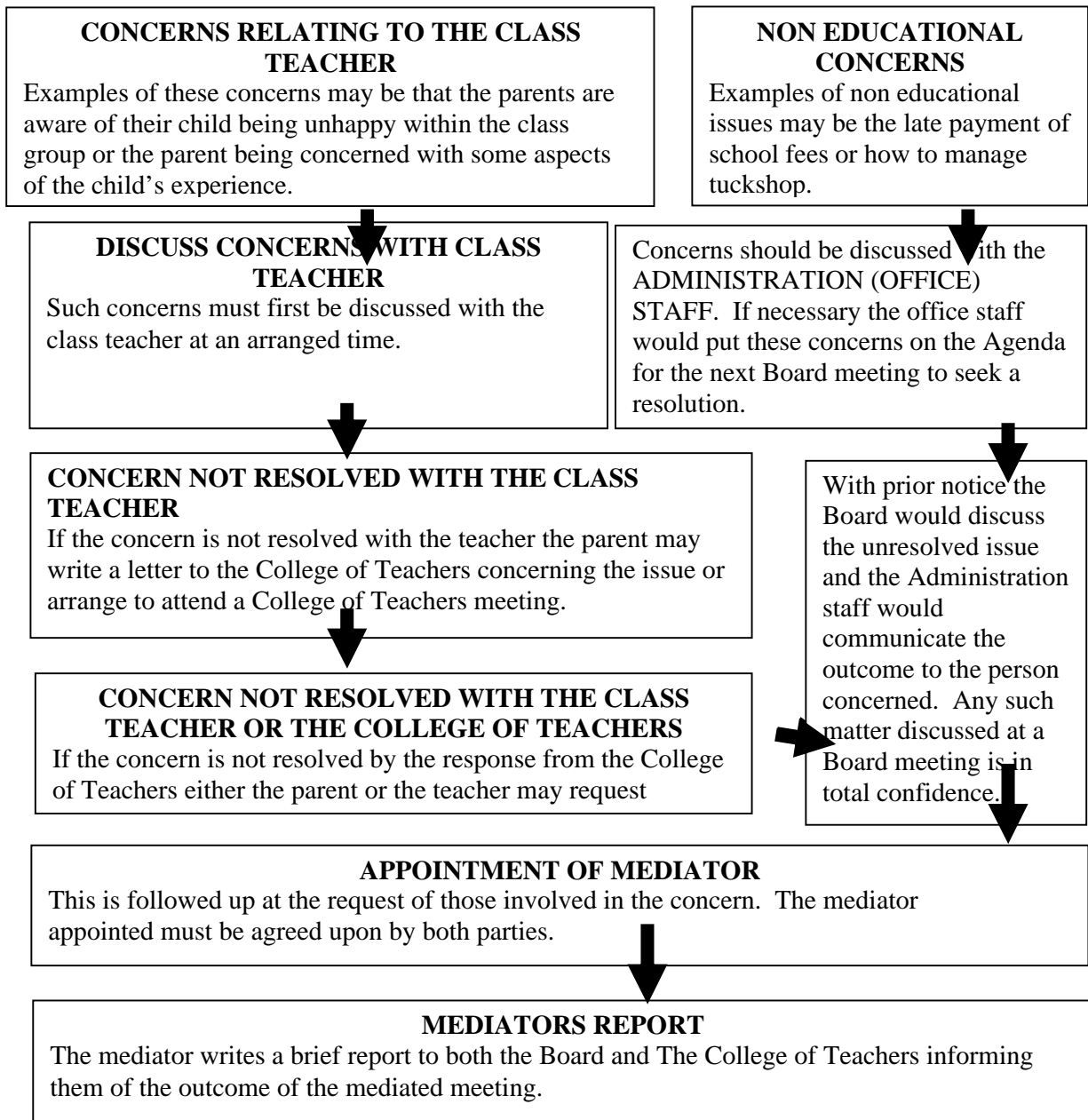


RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL PROCESS OF
COMMUNICATION AND RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS FROM PARENTS

Within any community issues if not effectively communicated and listened to may lead to conflicts. It can damage the community if it remains unresolved.

The framework below is designed for parents to provide a way of working through issues. A resolution for all concerned will maintain harmony within our wonderful school community.

Chart P

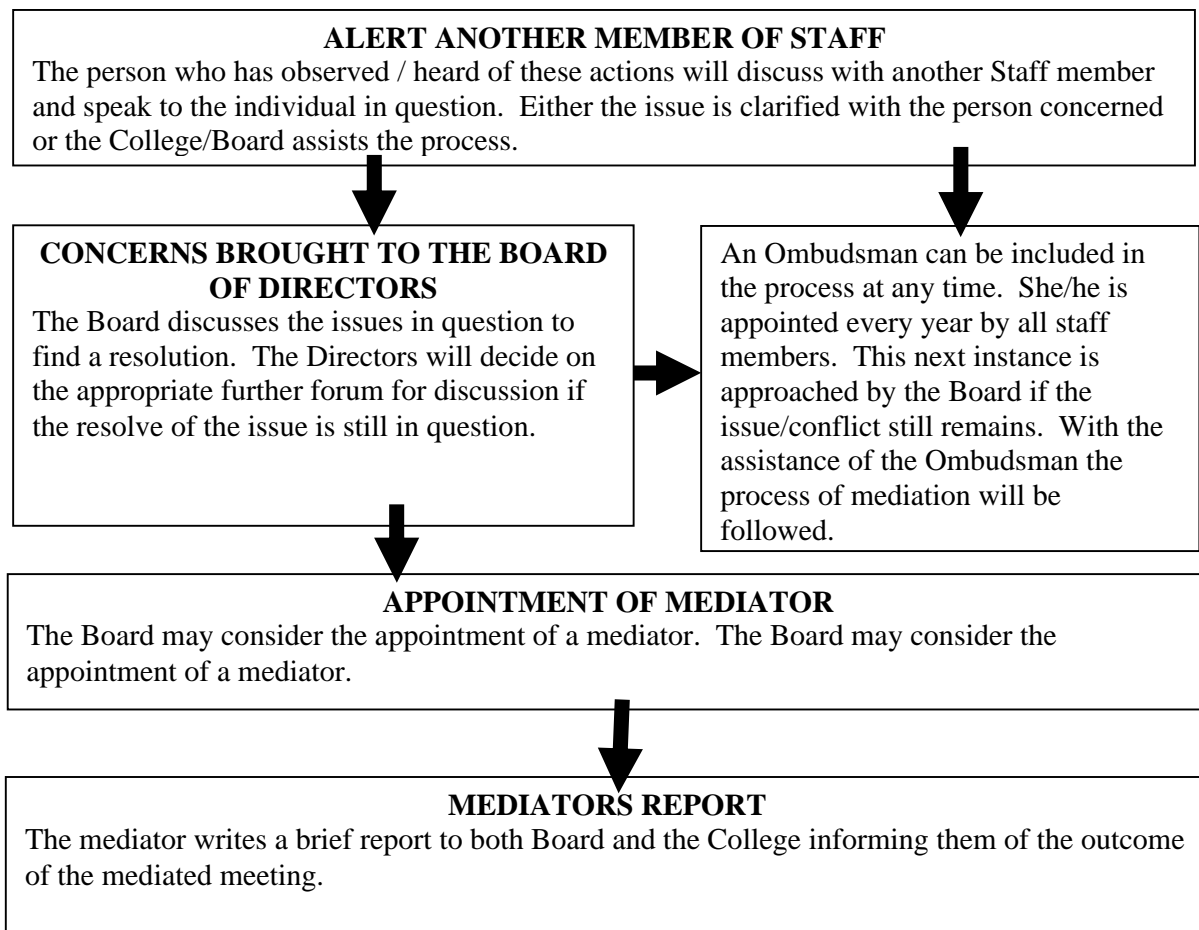


RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL PROCESS OF
COMMUNICATION AND RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS FROM STAFF MEMBERS

Within any community issues if not effectively communicated and listened to may lead to conflicts. It can damage the community if it remains unresolved.

The framework below is designed for staff to provide a way of working through issues. A resolution for all concerned will maintain harmony within our wonderful school community.

Chart E

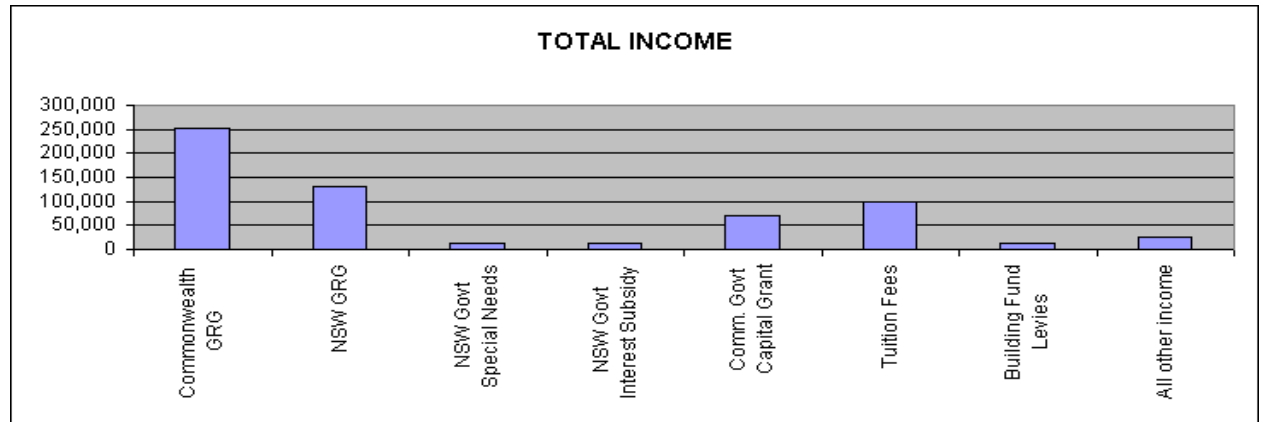


RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL
FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2008

RECURRENT/CAPITAL INCOME

Commonwealth GRG	252,579
NSW GRG	130,684
NSW Govt Special Needs	12,000
NSW Govt Interest Subsidy	12,833
Comm. Govt Capital Grant	69,500
Tuition Fees	97,915
Building Fund Levies	12,202
All other income	26,199

TOTAL INCOME 613,912



RECURRENT/CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Salaries - Teaching	240,000
Salaries - Administration	71,235
Salaries - Aids & Assistants	26,579
Wages - Maint. & Cleaning	32,851
Superannuation	
Contributions	33,103
Insurance	13,009
Tuition expenses	9,806
Depreciation	26,793
Interest	17,864
Doubtful debts expense	22,408
All other expenses	86,048

TOTAL EXPENSES 579,696

