

# Theme Seven: Vetting, Supervising, Developing and Training Staff

## **Recommendation No.15: Maintain sufficient high-quality boarding house staff.**

“We recommend the Dilworth Trust Board provides both adequate staffing, and the best quality staff for boarding houses.”

### **Progress to date**

Significant work has been undertaken in respect of safeguarding and this recommendation is being observed with respect to staffing of boarding houses at the School.

Recruitment practices for all staff appointments were reviewed and revised in 2018. Induction processes for all boarding staff have been reviewed and improved since 2021. The process is constantly evolving as the School seeks to improve its practice. The induction programme will be part of the Boarding Review currently underway as part of the wide-ranging School transformation initiative ‘Project Reset’. Since 2021 there has been significant focus on the establishment of a quality performance and development review process for all boarding staff.

In almost all cases, boarding roles are advertised externally to ensure the best fields of potential employees are gathered. Child safety policies must be signed at initial induction and again annually (with child safety questions also asked at exit interviews), and regular face-to-face safeguarding training is undertaken by all School boarding staff.

Boarding staff are included in the mandatory continual Professional Learning and Development Programmes, including safeguarding, and learning around how to better administer their roles. The employment and vetting practices that are referenced in the Inquiry Report are in effect at the School.

The staffing ratios will be under consideration as part of the Boarding Review. Any changes in design and desired staffing ratios will be communicated to the Trust Board in late 2024.

### **Next steps**

The School’s Boarding Review is scheduled for 2024, and on a three-yearly basis thereafter.

The School has decided to undertake psychometric testing for all non-teaching boarding staff from 2024. The testing will be administered by an external agent. The School will also ensure that all staff checks and vetting processes are applied to School Chaplains recruited in consultation with the Anglican Church.

The Trust Board will also review international best practice with respect to staffing of boarding houses to ensure its policies are sufficient. The Trust Board will also adopt and implement a Board oversight policy with respect to boarding.

## Recommendation No.16: Engage quality teaching staff.

“We recommend:

- a. The Dilworth Trust Board engages the best quality teaching staff available and provide full continuing training and support for them.
- b. The Dilworth Trust Board provides adequate support for teaching staff and students engaged in individual tuition.”

## Progress to date

The Dilworth Trust Board and the School are committed to continuing to attract and retain the best qualified teachers, and to continuing to provide ongoing training and support.

Current recruitment practices ensure that the best possible fields for teaching roles are generated, attracting candidates nationally and, in some cases, internationally. In the last three years, Dilworth staff have presented at multiple national and international conferences, raising the profile of the School in the education sector, and resulting in heightened interest in teaching roles. With the current teacher shortage, consideration is being given to making a concerted effort to recruit offshore. Dilworth joined the Auckland Schools’ Teacher Training Programme (ASTTP) in 2021 and is now one of 40 partner schools. This programme is an ITE (Initial Teacher Education) partnership with Waikato University that provides school based teacher training. The School also remunerates staff above the State collective pay scale, as well as being sensitive to the costs associated with living in Auckland. The School is willing to negotiate, where appropriate, a housing allowance to attract quality candidates to its Auckland campus. Both mechanisms remove potential barriers to recruiting quality staff.

Dilworth has a generous professional learning budget and with the appointment of the Director of Teaching and Learning, there have been processes implemented that track and report on its expenditure. School wide professional learning priorities are identified in the Annual Plan. Dilworth’s staff development and training programme is extensive and well-supported.

Support for teaching staff and students engaged in individual tuition is well established, and follows good practice requirements, which have been audited and certified by external safeguarding expert, Child Wise. Practically, this looks like:

- No teacher is able to run a tutorial or lesson with fewer than three students present – this is communicated procedure.
- Staff must communicate with their Line Managers and obtain approval to run sessions outside School hours. These sessions are communicated with senior leadership. Minimum student numbers are required.
- Individual music tuition only takes place during School hours and these lessons are conducted in suitably public spaces with appropriate visibility, and with the presence of other staff in close proximity.
- Academic tutors from outside the organisation must conduct their sessions in the dining hall which has complete visibility, or in the common areas in boarding houses.
- No staff members are able to work with students (of the appropriate numbers as previously stated) behind closed doors that do not have visibility to the outside. In 2018, senior staff, in conjunction with a psychologist, walked the School to assess whether all learning and living spaces were visible. As a result, recommendations were made, and the Board immediately directed and funded significant remedial work involving the addition of glass to many of the doors on both main campuses. In 2020, as part of their review of the School, Child Wise conducted a virtual tour of all three campuses checking the safety and visibility of all spaces. In 2021 the Headmaster and key operations staff walked the School with the same intent. In 2023 the Dilworth Safeguarding Committee once again walked the city campuses in pursuit of any areas with obscured visibility.

- Staff are unable to take students alone in cars by themselves. If the need to do so arises, such as a health emergency, Dilworth has provided a School vehicle that must be used that is equipped with a camera. All mini vans are equipped with cameras. Students are required to sit in the back seat. The Headmaster must be notified if such an event takes place.
- Students are also made aware of these protocols and expectations (generally through year level and whole School assemblies) so that they understand what is appropriate and what is not.

## Next steps

The School will continue to focus on recruiting the highest calibre teachers and retaining and rewarding excellent staff.

With respect to its professional learning and development programme, future plans include:

- A Professional Learning Committee will be set up to monitor achievement of whole School professional learning objectives. This will include representatives from HR, Health and Safety, Pastoral Care and Safeguarding, and Boarding working alongside the Director of Teaching and Learning.
- Two Teaching and Learning Projects launch in 2024 – Learning to Learn and Listening to Learn. Learning to Learn will be delivered under a Memorandum of Understanding with Anglican Church Grammar School, Brisbane, and the University of Queensland, and is a bespoke study skills programme based on cognitive science that will be piloted across teaching and boarding. Listening to Learn will involve the development of an in-house project linking High Impact Teaching Strategies with Teacher Observational Practice and Student Voice surveys to enhance and improve teaching practice.

Consideration of how international recruitment can be expanded will be further developed in 2024.