

## Theme Two: Ensuring Professional Oversight of School Performance

### **Recommendation No.2: Establish continuous external review and oversight of school performance.**

“We recommend that the Dilworth Trust Board establish a system of continuous external review and oversight of the school’s performance with professional and reputable external educational consultants.”

### **Progress to date**

Since 2018, Dilworth School has implemented extensive changes to enshrine student safety and wellbeing at the heart of everything it does, and to support outstanding educational performance. This includes an external review structure across a range of different elements of practice.

#### **SAFEGUARDING REVIEW AND CHILD WISE ACCREDITATION**

In 2019, the School sought the expertise of child safeguarding organisation Child Wise to help ensure that student safeguarding and wellbeing was in line with world-leading best practice. This work resulted in the implementation of a programme of change that saw the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations – and its 10 Child Safe Principles – embedded into the culture of the School and all child safety processes. Recommended by the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, these National Principles encompass not only child sexual abuse but all forms of potential harm to young people.

In September 2022, Dilworth became the first school in New Zealand to gain Child Wise accreditation. The accreditation process determined that Dilworth had either embedded or exceeded the expectations associated with each of the 10 Child Safe Principles. Child Wise’s 10 Child Safe Principles guide the School, providing a robust framework that underpins all its safeguarding and wellbeing initiatives, policies, and practices.

Child Wise operates under ACF (Australian Childhood Foundation) and accreditation involves continuous external review and oversight. The accreditation and evaluation programme involves a mid-cycle review (18 months after accreditation) and a full review at the end of the cycle (three years after accreditation). The School also contracts child safeguarding expertise currently for two days a month to ensure that current practice and systems are best practice and that improvements and changes in the safeguarding field are being implemented at Dilworth.

## HEADMASTER REVIEW

An external performance review process for the Headmaster, conducted by educational experts, was implemented in 2020 and is conducted annually. Feedback is received by the Headmaster and the final report is presented to the Dilworth Trust Board.

## LEARNING AREA REVIEW

The School has eight Learning Areas as well as Learning Support. Learning Area reviews commenced in 2022 under a newly designed framework. The reviews involve an extensive internal audit of documentation and practice. This is supplemented by contracting an appropriately qualified external expert in the curriculum area under review who provides feedback on observed practice and operations and assists with the provision of recommendations. Reviews of each Learning Area will be conducted on a three year review cycle.

## HEALTH & SAFETY REVIEW

A full Health & Safety Review was undertaken in 2021 by an external consultant, IMPAC, a leading New Zealand health and safety expert. In early 2023 Dilworth appointed a dedicated Director of Health & Safety in a senior management role, recruiting a senior staff member with 20+ years' experience working in schools and education with professional level membership of the New Zealand Institute of Safety Management (New Zealand's leading Health & Safety Association practitioners). The expertise of the Health & Safety Director is supplemented with external and technical experts as required.

## LEARNING IN THE OUTDOORS REVIEW

Dilworth has voluntarily undertaken certification under the Adventure Activity Regulations 2017. In 2022, an Outdoors Safety Audit was conducted at Dilworth's Mangatāwhiri Campus in relation to its Learning in the Outdoors programme with a view to being certified under the Adventure Activity Regulations for the start of the 2024 academic year. This certification will involve an annual external review to confirm that the School is meeting its standards. On a three year cycle there is a full re-certification audit conducted by external experts, Qualmark.

## POLICY REVIEW

Substantial work is currently being undertaken on the updating and development of the School's policies. A framework has been established, gap analysis undertaken, and a system for review has been set up. The current review cycle involves internal review by senior leadership team members and where appropriate, depending on the nature of the policy, also approval by the Dilworth Trust Board.

## GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

There is strong governance oversight of all areas of School performance and review, with regular monthly reporting to the Dilworth Trust Board. In addition, there is substantial and regular communication between the Board Chair and the Headmaster so that the Trust Board is made aware of any day-to-day concerns on a timely basis.

## Next steps

### Dilworth will maintain existing external review structures across:

- Child Wise safeguarding
- Annual Headmaster review
- Triennial Learning Area reviews including Learning Support
- Health and Safety
- Learning in the Outdoors

### The School will also extend external reviews across:

- Pastoral care – scheduled for 2024 and three yearly after that
- Boarding – scheduled for 2024 and three yearly after that

Dilworth will further consider whether there are other areas also requiring review, and whether and how external review might be applied to its policy review process.