



## Tuntable Falls Community School

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# Parent Handbook

Welcome to school! We look forward to getting to know both you and your child better, and to beginning a rewarding school journey.

Please come and talk to your child's class teacher – they are always happy to answer your questions and to talk to you about your child's needs.

## Our philosophy

We are a community of learners where children, teachers, staff and family work, play, learn and grow together. Sustainability, in all its forms are at our heart, permeating through every aspect of our daily lives. Children are nurtured to be themselves and inspired to be the best they can. We aim to create a safe, natural, loving, respectful child focussed environment where children and adults can have fun learning together in an atmosphere that celebrates life!

We combine the best of past and present ideas about children's education. Our teachers are aware of emerging progressive educational philosophies and are flexible in their approach in delivering the curriculum.

We provide a range of learning experiences appropriate to each child's developmental levels and based upon their interests and ideas.

We promote positive identity and independence in children, and acknowledge children as capable and involved learners.

We are committed to the development of strong relationships with children and their families.

We listen to children and families and use their ideas as a basis for learning.

We are strongly committed to the environment and sustainable practice, the culture and history of our children, families and local community.

We are mindful of how these unique elements underpin how we work with children.

We are conscious and active in our preparation of children for ongoing learning experiences.

We demonstrate and promote high quality inclusion and equity for children and their families.

We are committed to ongoing quality improvement and reflection.



Tuntable Falls Community School offers an innovative and creative high-quality teaching program that is compliant with the NSW Board of Studies.

Our educators demonstrate a sensitive awareness to the very different ways in which children think, learn, and create.

Reflecting our philosophy, our programme is built around the children's interests and ideas and aims to challenge each child on a variety of levels.

We begin the school day at 9.05 after the school bus has arrived from the school bus exchange at Nimbin Central School. We encourage all families to ensure that their child arrives on time, as this is a key learning time in the day and also provides the class teacher with the opportunity to establish the tone of the day and sort out any issues that may interfere with individual and group learning. Morning break is at 11.00am-11.30am, then class activities until lunch from 1.00pm-1.45pm. The School day ends at 2.45pm with the arrival of the school bus.

The school offers weekly creative arts programs including circus, music and drama provided by specialist teachers. We also have a Sustainability and Environmental Education program (SEE).

We are committed to promoting an environmental education that is deeply connected to our natural area.

We regularly go for walks around the Community to add variety to the day and to learn about our

surrounding environment and the Community. We spend time in our school garden to discuss, learn and contribute to vegetable growth.

## Adjusting to school

We work on forming a good attachment with each child and their family, which helps children settle into their new environment.

Kindergarten is a stand alone class, one of a few in the area, and runs for four days per week, Monday to Thursday.

Children handle separation differently. We work with each family to manage this process individually. We will discuss the needs of your child upon enrolment.

## What to bring

- **Food** – for morning tea and lunch, or at other times if your child is hungry. We encourage people to only pack healthy nude food into their children's



- lunchboxes.
- **Water bottle** - We encourage children to drink water throughout the day. The school also provides filtered water and cups for them to easily help themselves if water bottles are forgotten.
- **Shoes** – optional, however for safety purposes shoes are required when using the kitchen, for school excursions and at the teacher's discretion for the garden when using garden tools.

## Healthy, tasty lunches

At Tuntable Falls Community School, we offer freshly made lunches with a preference for local, vegetarian and organic ingredients. These are cooked by parents in the Tuntable Falls Community School kitchen, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each School term week.

Your child's teacher will take orders at the beginning

of the day. School Lunches will be added to your child's fee statement.

We welcome new parent participation and hold an AGM to elect new members in March. Families are always welcome to attend our meetings on a casual basis.

If your child/children are showing signs of illness, please keep them home from school until they are not contagious.

## Staff

Our teaching staff is managed by Joe Landers our Coordinating Teacher who teaches the Upper Primary (Years 4 to 6); Ishta Wilson, Lower Primary (Years 1 to 3) class; Jessica McCaul (Kindergarten); while Ginger O'Brien is our Sustainability and Environment teacher (SEE) Lisa Boyd is our Specialist Teacher who supports students to develop Literacy and Numeracy skills... Teachers are regularly assisted in the classroom by Cath Smith, Amanda King and Heather Jessup. Leif Lyall teaches Creative Arts and Simon Adam is our Circus Trainer.

Our staff are well qualified in Primary education practices and the current curriculum and a record is kept of all staff training certificates and achievements. Roger Chester, bookkeeper and Fiona Campbell, administrator can be found working in the office throughout the week.

All staff have current Working with Children checks, and accredited certificates in Senior First Aid, Anaphylaxis and Emergency Asthma Management, Child Protection, and other related areas.

## Communication with families

It is vital that we work well with families, as it is through this that we can provide the best learning for your child.

We strive to make communication easy and effective, whether it is a casual chat at drop off time or a scheduled appointment for an in depth discussion.

Written communication takes place as notes sent home or in the parent communication book, notices at the sign in area and a fortnightly newsletter.

Please take the time to read the newsletter carefully as it provides important dates and reminders.

In addition to our scheduled parent/teacher meetings, we are available to meet whenever you would like through the year.

## Governance

As a community-based, not-for-profit school, we receive state and federal government funding and are registered to operate by the NSW Board of Studies (BOSTES). We are required by the Board of Studies to make various reporting requirements and have an annual audit. These reports are summarised in an annual report that is published annually on the

school website.

## Management Committee

We are managed by a Management Committee, made up of volunteer members, drawn from the parent body that is elected each year.

## Policies

We have an extensive range of policies that reflect our legal requirements and philosophical objectives. Located in the office, these are available at any time.

We have policies covering a range of topics including: Child Protection, Bullying, Discipline, Pastoral Care, Emergency evacuation, Excursions, Guiding children's behaviour, Medical conditions, Staff code of conduct, Sun protection, and water safety.

The committee annually reviews our policies, and all families are encouraged to comment and be part of the review process.

As part of our confidentiality policy, we keep individual records stored confidentially for the specified time period.

## Fees and payment

We keep fees as low as our funding permits as we believe in keeping alternative education accessible - our fees are among the lowest in the region.

Attendance fees	
\$33	<b>Membership</b> (per family) As an incorporated association, we are required to charge a membership fee. Each family is required to pay this fee upon enrolment. The family remains a member while their child attends the school.
\$50	<b>Annual Fees</b> Books/child
\$50	Classroom/child
\$50	Maintenance/family
\$160	<b>Term Fees</b> Tuition (Reduced to \$80 for second child, free for third or more children)
\$36	Extra curricular Activities (Creative Arts and Circus) eg \$4.00/week for 9 weeks
Other charges	
	<b>Roster &amp; workday contribution</b> Families of enrolled children are invited to contribute to the care and maintenance of the school via weekly roster days and one workday per term.
\$50	Group workday
\$225	Roster days (\$25/day usually over a nine week term)
<i>Families who participate in pre-term workdays and roster days can reduce fee costs by up to \$350 per term per family.</i>	
\$4 each	<b>Other Costs</b> Optional school lunches Generally offered three times per week.
Variable	Optional camps and excursions throughout the year: Costs are kept as low as possible. Information about these, including cost is sent out to families ahead of

	time.
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## How to pay

We prefer payment by direct deposit or direct debit at the beginning of every term. When making this kind of payment please include your child's name in the details. Fees can be paid weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly, and must be complete by the end of term.

Account: 22201729    BSB: 728 728 Name: Tuntable Falls Community School
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The school is dependent on attendance fees in order to pay our running costs. Therefore, non-payment of fees means your child will be unable to attend school and will lose their enrolled place.

If paying becomes difficult, please speak to the treasurer or a committee member to agree on a reasonable payment schedule.

Families will receive four written notices in the case of unpaid fees as follows:

1. Fee statement sent at start of term including total amount owed and the term length in weeks (9-11).
2. Letter sent if payment is more than two weeks in arrears, stating the amount owed and requesting a meeting with the treasurer to make arrangements for fee payment.
3. Letter sent two weeks after previous letter asking for payment and a meeting with the treasurer or the child's place will be lost. This letter will contain a precise and finite deadline for responding.
4. Letter sent after deadline if no response stating that the child may no longer attend the school and that the debt will be referred to an agency.

## Roster Days

As a community and parent run school, your contribution improves our ability to function, and the day-to-day running of the school, as well as giving you a unique opportunity to be involved in your child's education.

Whilst the school has the funding to cover the basics- wages, materials, maintenance, parent contributions manage the school, provide lunches, and perform many small tasks on request that add to the quality of resources and services offered to students at the school. We rely on parents fulfilling their roster day contributions to complete these jobs. But it is not just hard work – roster days can be enjoyable too!

Families are requested to complete one roster day per week and attend the school workday at the beginning of every term. .

If you cannot, or do not wish to do rosters days, then a contribution fee of \$25 per missed roster day, or \$50 per workday will be added to your school fees.

### **Work at time that suits you**

If it suits you better, there are many jobs that can be done outside of school hours. Arrange with Janelle, Fiona or a committee member to do work such as brush cutting, weeding and shopping, at a time that fits your schedule.

### **Lend your expertise**

If you have a speciality that may benefit the school, let us know. For example, if you are handy with electrical devices, computers, carpentry etc, you could fulfil your roster requirement by doing something along those lines.

Write your name and hours in the roster book, located in the sign in area in the office, whenever you do some work to ensure you are properly credited.

## Complaints and feedback

We welcome your feedback as it helps us to improve the service we offer.

We have tried to make it easy for you to tell us what you like or don't like:

- Speak to staff or a committee member directly. Contact information for the committee is available from the office.
- Write a comment and place in the suggestion box located above the notice board.
- Fill in one of the surveys we regularly provide through the newsletter.
- At a parent/ director meeting during second term, or by arrangement at any time.
- Via a formal feedback/complaints form available from the office.

### **Our formal complaints procedure**

Families have a right to make a formal complaint about our service and no person will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of that complaint.

The formal complaints procedure guarantees that we will take seriously any negative feedback and will respond to parents with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement.

Our aim is to hear, understand, respect and respond to families who have a grievance.

If you are uneasy or anxious about any aspect of our service, we ask that you first talk over your concerns with the class teacher or a committee member. Together we may be able to resolve matters to everyone's satisfaction.

If you are still not satisfied, or if the problem recurs, complete a Complaints and Feedback form to initiate the formal complaints procedure. Both the form and our Complaints and Feedback policy are available in the office, or by request from any staff or committee member.

Your complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality and only those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with it will know of your complaint.



## Practical information

We are a community based; independent school located in the beautiful Tuntable Falls valley, on the intentional community, Co-ordination Co-operative.

Founded over 30 years ago, the school buildings and grounds are adjacent to the Tuntable Falls Early Childhood Centre with many new students enjoying a smooth and peaceful transition from the preschool to the school. We operate independently from the preschool, and are separately funded, but enjoy the benefits of sharing the school garden and kitchen and celebrating festivals as part of a larger school community that integrates preschool and primary events to be shared by the whole family.

The school is open from 9am to 3pm, with one extra weeks holiday than the NSW school term.

We attract children from within the community, Nimbin and all surrounding areas. A bus service is available from Nimbin Central.

We can provide an interpreter service for families as needed as well as assistance when filling out the enrolment form.