

# Students Leadership Policy and Procedures

## Values

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The Small School fosters the wellbeing and safety of children and staff.

At The Small School all children's voices are heard and valued.

## Purpose

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To provide all children with the opportunity to practice decision-making, reflective discussion and conflict resolution.

To encourage all children to take responsibility for their actions and their school.

To facilitate the possibility and opportunity for all children to develop leadership, participation and critical thinking skills.

To provide the structures for children to experience ownership of their learning environment, leading to strong engagement with their world of learning.

To enable a combined-age environment which will help children foster strong relationships, compassion and friendship, as well as mentoring roles.

## How the purpose is achieved

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### Participation

Across all school contexts, we create opportunities for children to express themselves and have some say in decision-making in an age appropriate way. Not all aspects of decision-making in the life of the school are

suitable for children's involvement. However, the purpose of this practice is to introduce children to the value of being active in a participatory, democratic environment and the workings of such an environment.

Children are involved in Whole School Meetings and Circle Time. Circle Time is an informal gathering of all students, staff and some parents each morning to begin the school day. It consists of a brief discussion about the day, morning tea and a song.

The Whole School Meeting takes place once or twice per term. More formal meeting procedures will be followed, including having a chairperson, procedures for negotiating consensus and recording undertakings. Children will be expected and encouraged to participate in an age-appropriate way.

Significant conflict between students or a behavioural/bullying problem will be discussed in a more private environment in Special Circles.

Within all of the meeting structures the focus will be on developing communication and conflict resolution skills and on reflection. Children are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and in some instances their progress on a piece of work. Teachers will provide feedback to students to identify and reinforce kind and helpful behaviour.

Adults will model procedures and communication and conflict resolution skills. Most importantly, children as well as adults will be involved in discussing, changing and deciding on some school rules, such as who should help with various aspects of clean-up or how a particular piece of equipment should be used. There will be other school rules such as ones related to safety and supervision, which are non-negotiable. While these will be discussed with children, they will be explained as adult-only decisions. Decision-making is seen as a privilege which comes with responsibilities to participate in relationships with each other and with the school as a whole.

All children at The Small School are encouraged to care for and take pride in their environment and will share responsibility for tidying their workspaces and playground each day. This will be modelled and supported by staff.

Special Circles include children involved in a particular incident, friends or other children who have witnessed an incident and a staff member (teacher or School Manager). Restorative justice principles will be practised in the Special Circles, allowing a child who has been hurt or offended to discuss how they feel, and for a child who has hurt or offended another child to consider their actions while being present to the other child's feelings. Staff will aim to empower children to listen and talk through the situations with the children involved. Special Circle meetings will be documented, and the record placed on the child's Student File.

These meeting structures are not intended to deal with serious or repeated incidents of bullying or serious incidents. Incidents such as these will become subject to the Behaviour Management Policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Serious Incident Policy.

Children with special needs in social and emotional development receive more direct staff support and the appropriateness of Special Circles to address their concerns or their behaviour will be considered by their teacher.

### Leadership

At The Small School all children have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. There is no elected school captain or prefects, but a range of leadership duties which older children are expected to carry out on a rotational basis, allowing for each child to practise being a leader and to experience the rewards, privileges and responsibilities of leadership.

Leadership roles for older children will include chairing school meetings, mediating playground conflict (seeking teacher support if needed), organising and running an activity for the school, greeting visitors and leading the presentation of school performances.

In the combined-age setting at The Small School, staff will encourage older children to help with younger children. This does not include supervision responsibilities, but it does include helping younger children in day-to-day activities, such as helping to find belongings or demonstrating how to use playground equipment.

All children have the opportunity to chair weekly class and school meetings.

### Monitoring the Student Leadership System

The School Manager, in consultation with teachers, is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the school's meeting system, including daily Circle Time, Special Circles and the Whole School Meetings, and for making recommendations for changes as appropriate.

The School Manager and teachers are also responsible for reviewing the shared leadership system carried out by the school's older students. They should identify the skills students learn when they take on leadership roles and consider ways of improving or supplementing the system if necessary.

The School Manager is responsible for ensuring the system of meetings and the student leadership system is reviewed at least annually.