

Norwich Steiner School

Constitution¹

Version 3– 26.02.10

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¹ The School constitution is not a legal document, but is a reflection of the organisational structure. As a limited company and a charity we are legally bound by our memorandum and articles of association.

Norwich Steiner School

Hospital Lane, Norwich, NR1 2HW

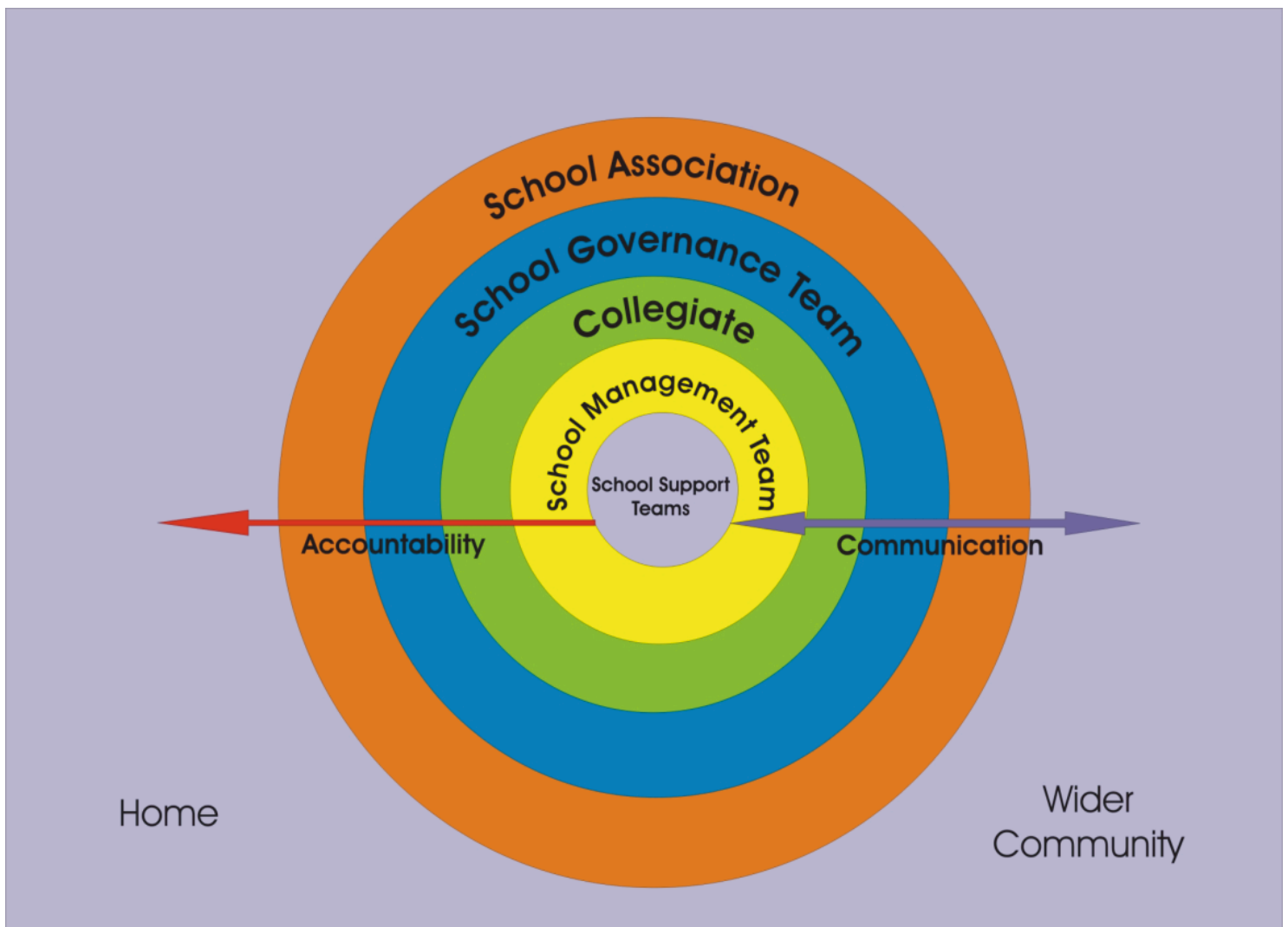
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1. Overall organisational structure²

Rudolf Steiner’s indications on how Steiner-Waldorf schools should be run could be summarised in a contemporary context as:

- modern self-governing learning communities based on shared leadership and consensus decision-making;
- with self-development based on reflective practice at the heart of professional development.

Therefore, the overall structure of the school is as follows:



² For a full explanation of all the terms used in this constitution, as well as detailed background information on how this constitution was created, please see the related document “*Creating/updating a constitution for a Steiner-Waldorf setting*” by J. Wolf-Phillips..

2. School Association

Job specification

The School Association is a heterarchical (i.e. non-hierarchical) *Community of Interest*, and a legal reflection of a representative proportion of staff and parents drawn from across the school, up to a current maximum of members”

The purpose of the association is to

represent the interests of its members

It does this by hosting³ a General Meeting once a year to do the following:

- Appoint members of the School Governance Team;
- Hold them accountable for the effective governance of the school through a review of last year and a preview of the coming year;
- Pass the accounts and appoint external auditors.

Meetings

Under normal circumstances, the Association should only meet once a year at its General Meeting.

The ‘School Association’ (a legal entity) that meets once a year, should not be confused with the ‘School Community’ (a non-legal entity), which can gather together at any time (e.g. a festival, a fundraising event or a consultation meeting called by one of the teams in the school).

Person Specification

The School Association aims to have a proportional representation of parents and members of staff currently involved with the school. Membership is of the limited company the Norfolk Initiative Steiner School, which entails a limited financial liability, and is thus by application. Membership of the School Association automatically ceases when the child/children of the parent or the member of staff leaves the school.

³ The practical aspects of ‘hosting’ (e.g. setting a date, preparing and distributing an agenda, facilitating the event) is either undertaken by the School Governance Team or delegated by them to someone else, and in compliance with the Companies Act 2006

3. School Governance Team

Job Specification

The School Governance Team (Board of Trustees) is responsible for the effective governance of the school.

It appoints (employs) all members of staff.

It delegates responsibility for the effective management of the school to the Collegiate.

The purpose of the School Governance Team is:

To hold an awareness of and make decisions about
what is in the best long-term interests of the whole school,
guided by the school's **Constitution** and **Statement of ethos**.

This involves keeping an appropriate distance from the day-to-day (implementation) and management activities of the school, whilst remaining aware of what is going on.

This is achieved by ensuring that there is good documentation (e.g. team plans, meeting agendas/minutes or reports, policies and procedures), and an effective School Management Team.

Meetings

The School Governance Team should meet six times a year, at the beginning and end of each term.

Person Specification

Ideally, this team should comprise between 3 and 5 people who are able to collectively represent the best long-term interests of the whole school community. To avoid any possible conflicts of interest, all members of this team should be as independent and external as possible. Ideally, they should be people who have no current financial, professional, social, family or other vested interest in the school.

The members of the School Governance Team are Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Limited Company.

4. Collegiate

Job specification

The Collegiate is responsible for the effective management of the school. It has chosen to delegate this task to the School Management Team, which it appoints each year.

Purpose of the Weekly Meeting of the Collegiate:

To maintain an awareness (individually and collectively) of the overall expectations and underlying principles of Steiner-Waldorf pedagogy through:

- **Shared meditative work** (e.g. artistic work)
- **Shared study** (e.g. Child study, Class study, child development, anthroposophy)
- **Co-mentoring** (e.g. Reflection on professional practice, self-evaluation)
- **Responding to consultations** (e.g. is a particular proposal aligned to the school's ethos)

Person specification

The Collegiate comprises staff (pedagogical or non-pedagogical), who are committed and able to help carry responsibility for the inner aspects of developing the education.

Members of the Collegiate should have the skills and qualities needed for the Collegiate's work; or the willingness, ability, and the support of colleagues to develop such skills and qualities.

There should be a clear written process for members joining or leaving the Collegiate.

A member of the Collegiate cannot also be a member of the School Governance Team.

Membership of the Collegiate is confirmed by the School Governance Team.

5. School Management Team

Job Specification

The School Management Team is responsible for monitoring and supporting the work of all the School Support Teams. It is directly accountable to the Collegiate.

The purpose of the team is:

To hold an awareness of and make decisions about
what is in the best medium-term interests of the whole school,
guided by the school's **Development Plan**.

The work of the team involves keeping an appropriate distance from both the School Support Teams as well as from the School Governance Team.

This is because the School Management Team needs to act as a kind of 'bridge', remaining aware of what is important to the school over the long-term, while at the same time also being aware (but not be closely involved in) what is going on in the school day-to-day.

It does this by ensuring that there is good documentation (e.g. team plans, meeting agendas/minutes, policies and procedures), and that the School Support Teams are working effectively and efficiently.

The clearer people involved in implementation can be about their plans, agendas, decisions and minutes, the more autonomous they can be.

Person Specification

Teaching or non-teaching staff or others, appointed each year by the Collegiate using a formal recruitment process. Ideally, this team should comprise between 3 and 5 people who are able to collectively represent the best medium-term and short-term interests of the whole school community.

Meetings

The School Management Team meets once a week.

The School Management Team can arrange to meet with the School Governance Team as and when necessary, although this should not be more than once a term.

6. School Support Teams

Job Specification

Keeping the Team Plan up to date by taking part in the overall school development planning process once a year;

Putting the Team Plan into practice by doing planned tasks and activities;

Doing unplanned tasks and activities as they come up;

Holding meetings and making decisions (keeping written records of agendas and minutes) and/or **writing and distributing updates**.

Person Specification

Any member of staff, current parent, their relatives or other friends/supporters who are active and are positive advocates of the school can apply to become a member of one or more School Support teams (except current members of the school governance team).

The School Support Team can itself decide to invite others (from inside or outside the school) to attend all or part of a meeting or several meetings as a guest, as and when necessary.

Ideally, each team should comprise between 3 and 5 members (this does not include others who may help and/or advise the team).

Recruitment and development of Support Team members

All paid full-time and paid part-time employees:

- i) are **recruited** using a *Recruitment Procedure*,
- ii) are **trained** in how the school is organised and run,
- iii) are **held to account** using an *Evaluation Procedure*, and
- iv) have **their concerns/concerns about them** dealt with using a *Concerns Procedure*.

All volunteer facilitators/chairs of teams are treated in the same way.

Where possible and appropriate, all volunteer members of teams should be treated in the same way (this does not include others who may assist and/or advise the team).

Key areas of activity for Support Teams ⁴

At any one time, there needs to be one or more teams covering at least the following areas:

Pedagogical

- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- Safeguarding Children
- Induction and co-mentoring of teaching staff
- Curriculum development
- Admissions
- Events (e.g. festivals)

Non-pedagogical

- Administration
- Personnel
- Finance
- Legal
- Public Relations
- Health and safety
- Maintenance of existing buildings
- New buildings
- Capital fundraising

- Projects (i.e. specifically defined projects with limited duration, e.g. craft-making for an upcoming event)

For a current list of teams and facilitators, please contact School Management Team.

⁴ For more information on key areas in a Steiner-Waldorf setting, please see *SWSF Code of Practice*.

7. Decision-making

Decision-making methods

Decision-making methods depend on the type of the decision being made. Unless otherwise stated in an already agreed policy or plan, decisions should be made as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Amendments to Memorandum and articles of Association</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A short legal document, summarising the rights of members of the School Association.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 20px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Amendments to the Constitution</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A more detailed non-legal document, summarising how the School Governance Team intends to govern</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> School Association (based on a proposal from School Governance Team).</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision. Qualified (66%) majority voting</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 20px auto;"/> <p><u>Who?</u> School Governance Team (consulting/asking for advice as and when necessary).</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision. Consensus.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Long-term decisions</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Implications for the whole school beyond a single school year</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> School Governance Team (taking the recommendations of the School Management Team into consideration, and consulting/asking for internal and/or external advice as necessary)</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision. Consensus.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Medium-term decisions</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Implications for the whole school within a current school year</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> School Management Team (taking the recommendations of one or more School Support Teams into consideration, and consulting/asking for internal and/or external advice as necessary)</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision. Consensus.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Short-term decisions</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Day-to-day implications for a particular area of activity</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> Individuals/Teams (taking the recommendations of one or more people involved in the work of the team into consideration, and consulting/asking for internal and/or external advice as necessary)</p> <p><u>Method</u> As specified in agreed policy or plans.</p>

Decisions as part of policies

Policies can be made at any level in the organisation.

Policies can be applied to any level in the organisation.

Policies can cover just part of the organisation (e.g. the day-to-day work of an individual or team) and/or cover the whole organisation (e.g. long-term development).

Decisions arising from policy should be made by the appropriate part of the organisation, depending on the time-scale (see table on previous page), unless otherwise stated in the policy.

Decisions about proposals

Sometimes, decisions need to be made that are neither part of day-to-day work nor part of a policy or an agreed plan (for example, a proposal for a new policy or an amendment to an existing one).

Any member of staff, current parent, their relatives or other friends/supporters who are active and are positive advocates of the school or group of the same

who have a proposal or a suggestion for a new or amended policy or activity,

should initially submit it in writing to the relevant Support Team

(sending a copy to the School Management Team).⁵

If the proposal is accepted by the Support Team and only has day-to-day implications, the team can make this short-term decision itself, guided by their Team Plan.

If the proposal is accepted by the Support Team and has implications for the current school year, the Support Team should pass the proposal to the Management Team (with its recommendations and comments). The Management Team will then make this medium-term decision, guided by the school's Development Plan and Ethos Statement.

If the proposal is accepted by the Support Team and has implications beyond the current school year or affects the reputation of the whole school, the Management Team should pass the proposal to the Governance Team (with its recommendations and comments). The Governance Team will then make this long-term decision, guided by the school's constitution.

If an urgent long-term decision needs to be made, the School Governance Team can use email and/or telephone to discuss the matter and make a decision. This would then need to be noted in writing and confirmed at their next face-to-face meeting.

⁵ If the person or group of people bringing the idea to a Support Team believes that they have not been dealt with satisfactorily, they should use the school's Concern Procedure in the normal way.

8. Planning

<i>Name and description of document</i>	<i>Who is ultimately responsible for producing and updating it?</i>	<i>When?</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Constitution</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Overall accountability structure</p> <p>Context, structure, planning, decision-making, handling concerns</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">School Governance Team</p> <p>(in consultation with Collegiate, School Management Team and the School Association; plus external advisors as and when necessary).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Update as and when necessary</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ethos Statement</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Overall long-term development</p> <p>Biography of school, core relationships, core task, core values, long-term vision</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Collegiate</p> <p>(in consultation with School Management Team, School Governance Team, School Support Teams and the School Association; plus external advisors as and when necessary).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Update every 3 years</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Development Plan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Overall medium-term development</p> <p>All Individual/Team Plans</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">School Management Team</p> <p>(in consultation with Individuals/School Support Teams; plus external advisors as and when necessary).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Update every year (summer term)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Individual/Team Plans</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Day-to-day-activity</p> <p>Long-term development intention plus operational plan for year ahead for each Individual/Team</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Individuals/Teams</p> <p>(in consultation with other Individuals/School Support Team; plus external advisors as and when necessary).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Update every year (summer term)</p>

9. Handling concerns

The Steiner-Waldorf movement was inspired by the ideals expressed by Rudolf Steiner and others in the early part of the 20th century. These ideals were based on recognising that each human being is an individual to be valued, and still guide and inspire those working in Steiner-Waldorf settings.

As employers, the trustees (Governance Team) of Steiner-Waldorf settings have many legal duties and responsibilities as well as a responsibility to uphold the founding ideals of Steiner-Waldorf education.

One key legal requirement is to have some sort of ‘concerns procedure’.

Any concerns procedure used should enable the School Governance Team to fulfil its legal responsibilities, while at the same time seeking to uphold the dignity of the human being as indicated by Rudolf Steiner.

There should be clear and widely understood concerns procedures in place covering a comprehensive range of situations including:

Employee concerns - if an employee in a school is worried about anything to do with their work.

Employer concerns - if the employer (normally the school’s trustees) become concerned about the work of an employee.

Dignity at work - if an employee is experiencing behaviour that is unacceptable to them.

Parental concerns - if a parent has a concern.

Pupil concerns - if a pupil has a concern.

These concerns procedures should be used for anyone that has been formally recruited (part-time, full-time or temporary; paid or un-paid).

**For a copy of the school’s Concerns Procedures,
please contact the School Administration Team.**