

Challenging minds. Creating futures.

Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023



Northholm
Grammar

From the **Principal**

Northholm Grammar is a co-educational, independent school established in 1983.

From its early origins, the School's vision was to be a caring school which would foster the worth of the individual, encourage academic and sporting excellence and promote Christian values. Northholm is a family-centred School which looks upon its students, parents/carers and staff as part of a community, striving for a common goal that will cater for the needs of the whole person.

The School Council has endorsed this vision and it continues to improve and refine the educational and pastoral programs in the context of our early traditions. The

Strategic Plan 2020-2023 informs the principles and practices of our Strategic Intent, established after a detailed consultation process. It is designed to equip the students of Northholm Grammar with the skills, values, dispositions and capacities to become life-long learners.

Our exciting journey ahead comes down to the School's capacity to reimagine and renew our desired educational vision. This is based on the identification and realisation of a set of clearly defined, holistic graduate outcomes that are situated in a balanced, Christian foundation and an earlier tradition of academic achievement, strong pastoral care and associated co-curricular accomplishment.

At the heart of our *Strategic Plan* is a need to establish an agreed purpose and meaning that will help our community grow together and strive for an agreed foundational set of goals. We are inspired by the enthusiastic support and participation of our community which has provided a clear message to make the necessary strategic and operational changes to ensure the School's educational success. The *Strategic Plan* articulates the tangible strategies we have designed to achieve our shared vision for our Northholm graduates.

Christopher Bradbury
Principal



Context

In May 2019, Northholm Grammar worked collaboratively with CIRCLE Education to compile an extensive report detailing the information gathered from the Strategic Planning Consultation Process.

The process and the report would prove to be the inspiration for the *Strategic Intent of Northholm Grammar* which would establish the foundational work for the *Strategic Plan 2020-2023*.

Northholm Grammar has been committed to focusing on building strategic efficacy and alignment in planning, practice and culture across teaching, learning, leadership and governance. We will augment the good start that has been made by ensuring that our future detailed planning documents continue to capture the intent and will help to convert ideas into action.

Our strategic direction for the future has supported the vision of the School when established in 1983.

Northholm Grammar delivers a distinctive education that offers a level of care beyond that available at larger independent schools where each child is known, respected, cared for and cared about. Our strategy is part of our story, a way of connecting our past, our present and our future. The *Strategic Plan* gives us a way of taking us from where we are now to where we want to be in the future.

Our aim has been to create aligned and financially sustainable school structures, roles and responsibilities that improve our organisational capacity to achieve the strategic vision for 'Our School' and deliver a whole education for 'Our Graduates' through:

- **Review of context:** Review of recent history and the distinctive culture of Northholm Grammar, existing policies and procedures and budget parameters.
- **Review of existing organisational structures:** Review of existing structures, roles and responsibilities in respect to the School's history of delivering positive educational outcomes within a culture of appropriate financial stewardship.
- **Cultural audit:** Engaging CIRCLE Education to provide an industry-benchmarked audit of school culture and to develop strategic intent.
- **Financial audit:** Engaging Somerset Education to provide an industry-benchmarked audit of school finances.

- **Staff consultation and organisational restructure:** Design and implement structures, roles and responsibilities to align with the *Strategic Intent of Northholm Grammar*.
- **Staff engagement:** Engage staff to strengthen core partnerships, furthering our shared educational aims.
- **Marketing Communication Strategy:** Conduct a review of the School's visual identity with a view to modernise the School brand to be visually appealing and align with the target market.



The Aspiration

Alignment to **shared values and expectations**

We are an independent, co-educational school, situated in a beautiful and inspiring semi-rural environment in Arcadia, in the north-west of Sydney.

Established in the broad Anglican tradition, we welcome families from different backgrounds and provide a holistic education for faith and life. As members of their Houses, our infants, primary and secondary students are known, respected and cared for through our distinctive educational framework. Northholm Grammar is unapologetic for acknowledging, catering for and celebrating achievement and excellence in all domains of school life, academic, cultural, sporting and beyond.

Our framework is built on:

- **Learning through Scholarship:**
Represented by the open book, we are a school that challenges each student scholastically, by encouraging high academic standards and intellectual rigour, providing inspiring teaching committed to personalised learning, and designing and implementing our curriculum purposefully.
- **Caring for Others and Self:**
Represented by the rod and staff of the Shepherd, we are a school that goes out of its way to support, coach and fulfil the potential of each student. This is achieved through strong pastoral care that is characterised by our attentiveness to individual growth, social and emotional development and wellbeing.
- **Living a Faithful Life:**
Represented by the compass of the cross, we are a school that develops the character of each student through inclusive Christian values that are enacted through Chapel services, chaplaincy and educational programs.
- **Contributing to the Community:**
Represented by our motto, Be Traist (Be True), we are a school that promotes in each student a strong sense of belonging, and service to the community through our opportunities for representation, leadership and community engagement.

The Pathway

Personalised experience of the journey for each student

The educational philosophy of Northholm Grammar is achieved through its structure as an all-through establishment (Kindergarten to Year 12).

The School offers a comprehensive and consistent approach to the academic and pastoral development of each student throughout the Primary and Secondary Years through its belief in academic intentionality with pastoral attentiveness. Students enjoy the direct product of the proximity of younger children to older ones through student-to-student mentoring, the provision of excellent role models for younger students, as well as leadership and mentoring opportunities to develop confidence, resilience and character.

Greater opportunities for staff to collaborate supports best practice sharing and cross-phase lesson observations enabling them to learn from one another. A shared educational ethos that supports children throughout the Primary and Secondary Years is enhanced through the quality of data collection, improved tracking and monitoring of student growth, harnessing high expectations for all.

A culture of scholarship is designed to encourage intellectual rigour, independent thinking and the ability to value academic study and achievement. Students are challenged and motivated to develop a love of learning so they can harness the intellectual habits that will allow them to be independent and confident.

Our approach to personalised learning is defined as:

- An educational approach that reflects our School-wide commitment to moral purpose, scholarship and high excellence by challenging, supporting and knowing every student.
- An educational strategy that relates to and builds on the learner's experience, knowledge and cognitive development. We develop student confidence and competence, with the aim of leading autonomy and self-actualisation.
- An educational attitude that focuses on the individual potential of each student (as a learner and a person), developing the individual's learning skills and their ability to master life after school.





The Destination

Integration of graduate outcomes in all aspects of school life

Men and women of character do their best when there is an alignment with the values, dispositions and actions of the School. Our graduates are well-prepared for the next stage of their lives through a whole education which has been based on:

- **Learning through Scholarship:** Determined, disciplined and resilient critical thinkers and problem-solvers who are equipped with detailed knowledge of their chosen field.
- **Living a Faithful Life:** Confident, courageous and well-mannered people of integrity who are formed through inclusive, humble and sincere Christian principles.
- **Caring for Others and Self:** Authentic, interested and respectful team members who are instilled with a deep understanding and respect for the needs of others.
- **Contributing to the Community:** Charitable, generous and selfless citizens who contribute and lead sincerely outside of their immediate sphere.



The Foundations

1. Teaching and Learning (Academic Intentionality)

Our Strategic Direction

We will embrace a culture of scholarship and academic growth by providing strong educational leadership, encouraging the use of research-based teaching practices in all classrooms to ensure every student is engaged, challenged and learning successfully by:

- 1.1 Embedding academic rigour by assisting all students to reach acceptable standards in literacy and numeracy, by setting and achieving high expectations through a challenging learning environment.
- 1.2 Fostering a strong summative and formative assessment program that promotes and maintains an environment reflective of its high expectations that all students will learn successfully.
- 1.3 Developing a school-wide system for the use of data to identify starting points for continuous improvement, as well as monitoring academic growth over time to effectively individualise the learning for our students.
- 1.4 Establishing explicit targets for improvement in student achievement levels that can be communicated to parents, staff and the wider community through the interdisciplinary areas of the Humanities, STEM, Entrepreneurship, Agriculture and Technology and Applied Studies, Creative and Performing Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

2. Holistic Education (Pastoral Attentiveness)

Our Strategic Direction

We will energise the School's holistic approach to the education of our students through the refinement of the Co-Curricular Program, the significance of the House system and the development of our approach to character education and student wellbeing by:

- 2.1 Aligning and embedding all pastoral practice and student wellbeing through our House system including quality mentoring from Tutors and the growth of Inter-House Competitions.
- 2.2 Introducing explicit curriculum-based teaching strategies in our Tutorial Program, based upon the findings of positive psychology and character education research.
- 2.3 Creating greater student leadership, service education and character development opportunities for all students to strengthen student voice, build individual confidence and assist in discovering new talents and strengths.
- 2.4 Cultivating the dispositions of optimism, resilience and grit by equipping our students with tools and strategies to navigate the challenges of life through our Sporting and Creative Arts Program, the Outdoor Education Program and an explicit focus on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education and STEM.





The Foundations

3. Staff Practice

Our Strategic Direction

We will establish The Northholm Institute to become the home for professional learning, leadership development, community engagement and educational research that will enhance our capacity to deliver a whole education by:

- 3.1 Developing and growing excellence in teaching, especially curriculum expertise and pedagogical practice through evidence-based and research-driven professional reflection and continuous improvement through our professional practice initiative.
- 3.2 Developing and growing excellence in instructional and organisational leadership through our leadership development initiative.
- 3.3 Strengthening and reconfiguring our teaching and learning practices through the growth of educational research as a community of inquiry and practice.
- 3.4 Fostering a culture of community engagement through parent and family education, student leadership development and service education.

4. Community Development

Our Strategic Direction

We will actively seek ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents and families, other education and training institutions, local business and community organisations by:

- 4.1 Fostering greater engagement with the broader community by identifying potential community partners based on their capacity to contribute to improved student achievement and/or wellbeing by supporting the educational vision, strategy and operations of the School.
- 4.2 Designing a strategy for development, philanthropy and sponsorship that is aligned with the School's values and strategic approaches to stewardship and governance.
- 4.3 Engaging more closely with parents through the Northholm Association and alumni through Northholm Old Students Union (NOSU) to increase active and focused involvement of these bodies in the community building activity of the School.
- 4.4 Increasing brand recognition beyond the School community, within the surrounding Hills and Hornsby Shires, by developing a digital content management strategy to be visible where people are looking.

The Foundations

5. Governance, Finance and Risk Management

Our Strategic Direction

We will build our approach in the governance, financial stewardship and risk management capabilities of the School which underpin the achievements of the School's objectives by:

- 5.1 Providing financial leadership and reviewing financial planning to ensure short and long term needs can be accommodated.
- 5.2 Defining a program of incremental maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities to project the School's ethos, brand and sense of community more effectively.
- 5.3 Promoting risk management and implementing intervention strategies to support the entire School community.
- 5.4 Developing Work Health and Safety (WHS) practices and structures, as well as reviewing School policies and processes to improve organisational governance and operational effectiveness.





**NORTHHOLM
GRAMMAR SCHOOL**



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