



Steiner School  
Holywood

# Strategy 2025

Updated November 2021







# A message from our Chair

At Hollywood Steiner School, we set our sights high. We began delivering on this Strategy during unprecedented times, despite this, we are very proud of all that we have achieved.

Our school community prides itself on the resilience we instill in our children through the delivery of the Waldorf program. Now more than ever we need to build that same resilience into the very core of the school we all love.

Change is happening, and we are responding to it.

During this period of growth we will be required to adapt. I am confident that by working together we can support one another to rise to this challenge.

It is our ambition that by 2025, Hollywood Steiner School will have transformed itself from a local, hidden treasure, to a school of regional and international standing, recognised for delivering an outstanding creative educational program to each individual child, and instilling a love of learning in them.

I am delighted to share this updated Strategy with you, our parents, teachers, staff, students, stakeholders and friends of the school. This is a plan that is rooted in our collective commitment to providing a rounded education for children.

I invite you to take a read and to be part of the journey and I encourage you to provide feedback on our ideas. If you like what you read and want to get more involved please get in touch.

Esther Haller Clarke  
Chair of Board of Trustees

***"I'm very proud to be Chair of the Board of Trustees, leading an excellent team of highly skilled individuals who are passionate about children's learning and helping Hollywood Steiner School become recognised as an exemplar of best practice in Waldorf education, across Northern Ireland and beyond."***



# Impact

We want our school to have a lasting impact on our community for the coming decades, as we believe we offer a unique integrated education product that is of vital importance to Northern Ireland. We want and expect to make a difference to society's needs, near and wide, with learning programmes that link the Steiner philosophy and Waldorf curriculum to improving people's lives.



*We are looking for impact that aligns with five of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Quality Education, Good Health & Well-Being, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequality and Sustainable Cities and Communities. More than just an increase in audience reach and numbers, we want to demonstrate lasting social, economic and innovation impact as a place of learning.*

## By 2025 we will have:

- Reshaped and extended our Steiner program to double the size of our school with an outreach programme touching new audiences;
- Gained international recognition for our contribution to thought leadership in child centred education;
- Created new partnerships at local and regional level that takes our Steiner education program to a highly visible and influential level in the community;
- Innovated in the sector and created a great place to work and teach;
- Touched the hearts and minds of local and international audiences;
- Improved people's wellbeing and learning.

# Hollywood Steiner School is changing

A new Board of Trustees was appointed to run our school in the Spring of 2019. The new Board was created to bring a new energy to the school and to chart a course for its rebirth and renewal as a Steiner Waldorf School equipped to meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond.

Working across a number of workshop sessions from August 2019 to January 2020, the Board of Trustees has carried out a thorough operational review of the school together with the structure of our governing charitable trust. This review has looked at all the elements of our school life comprising:

- Our culture of working
- Our governance and decision taking structure
- Our curriculum offer and the structure of our school roll
- Our staffing and resourcing model
- Our financial and investment planning
- Our income and funding plan
- The condition of our buildings & campus
- Our regulatory standards and compliance on safeguarding, health & safety and human resources planning

- Our presence and role in the community
- Our partnerships and strategic relationships with others, and
- Our competitive marketplace for the very special educational product we offer.

The review was completed on the 11 January 2020 when the Board of Trustees met to agree the structure of a new strategy for the school. This went out to wider consultation with the teaching and administration staff in February who fully endorsed and welcomed the new approach but alas we were stalled in our progress to take this discussion wider to our parents and friends of the school, by the arrival of the COVID-19 emergency in early March. With the lockdown now looking like it will prevent us from gathering together for the next few months we have decided to move the discussion online in order to sustain our momentum and put actions into place.



**Key Actions** 

# How?



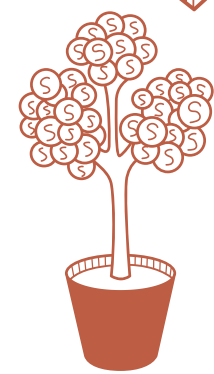
**New Horizons**



**Plan Ahead**



**Engage**



**Grow**



**Funding**





# Our Charitable Objective

*"To advance the education of children based on Steiner Waldorf principles, philosophy, curriculum and teaching approach that places emphasis on the development of the whole child including a child's spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing and social development, as well as her/his academic progress by the provision of a school for children from Preschool age to 17 years living in Northern Ireland and by any other means as the directors consider appropriate."*







# Re-focusing our Charitable Trust

Hollywood Steiner School is constituted as a charitable trust. We do not receive any state funding and rely on our own resources, occasional donations to our charity and our school fee structure for our income. The role of the trust is to resource, enable and direct the work of its employees (our teachers and admin team) to deliver our core charitable objective which is a vibrant, successful, happy and growing Waldorf curriculum from Preschool to 17 years of age. Celebrating and leading the concept of child centred education and active citizenship in Northern Ireland is our core mission as a charity. We strive to continue to protect our school teaching ethos rooted in the Waldorf curriculum.

The operational structure adopted by our charitable trust therefore is critical to its ability to perform its role as the sponsor of our school. The trust must be efficient, outward looking, professionally run and managed and most importantly, it must be assertive and creative in its approach to income generation and financial management. Without a strong financial management structure and a very professional focus on regulatory compliance and income generation our school will not grow and prosper.

Our Trust has a core duty to meet all of the ongoing demands for regulatory compliance that place ever greater demands on our staff to be well organised, well resourced and well trained. It is essential that we are on top of all of our duties and responsibilities to the children and parents and that includes having a school campus that is fit for purpose and of which we can be proud. This is also essential if we are to attract new talent to our teaching team, grow our school roll and continue to expand and develop our unique Waldorf curriculum.



In our review of the operation and performance of our school our focus has fallen on three strategic objectives:

- To grow our school numbers and arrest the recent decline in our school roll
- To plan our future with a strategic focus on a more sustainable operational and governance model that builds our capacity to do more with our Steiner agenda; and
- To engage more with our community – to become outward looking, actively partnering with others and developing our school as a hub for our community.



# Constructing a new strategy for our school

What is clear from the review conducted by the Board of Trustees is that we cannot continue to run and manage our school as we have done before. Change is now an essential component of our development and is critical to our long term sustainability.

Our research has reflected on the lessons and learnings from our international family of Steiner Waldorf schools. Those that are leading the way have streamlined their leadership and decision making structures, professionalised their administration and become more open and outward facing in their orientation.

Reflecting on this, the nature of our own journey and learning from best practice in the world of similar mission driven charitable trust organisations, we have

evolved a new operational model that has balance within our three objectives- our core purpose of delivering educational excellence and good governance to grow our school, complemented by financial sustainability and a new partnership strategy to equip us for the future and an outreach and immersive learning strategy that will enable us to take our Steiner learning philosophy to a much greater audience within our community.

Within the plan  
we have  
**six development  
platforms**

Two for each of our  
strategic objectives



## **Growing our school**

Educational Excellence  
Governance & Leadership



## **Planning our Future**

Financial Sustainability  
Partnership Working



## **Engaging our Community**

Outreach & Community  
Immersive Learning





# Our six development platforms

We are proposing a new operational strategy for the school that will see it pursue six new interlinked development platforms. This will change how the school operates and place a focus on a more proactive engagement with our community and importantly, the construction of some new working partnerships with other organisations and institutions.



# 1 Growing our School

Platform 1 - Educational Excellence is at the core of the plan. This is the heart and soul of the school and is about building and maintaining the Waldorf curriculum at the centre of everything we do.

This is supported by Platform 2 - Governance and Leadership, there to manage the compliance framework and administer the school. These two platforms are about nurturing the Steiner ethos, growing the curriculum, managing our compliance and building our school roll.



**Platform 3 - Financial Sustainability** is about the good housekeeping that the school needs. This is about our budget planning, our income generation strategy, the capital assets plan and the investment and funding strategy.

This is complemented by **Platform 4 - Partnerships** where the school looks to build new relationships with external partners. Institutions and organisations that will bring income to the school and help us reach out to those that will help to sponsor the development of our learning programme. Together both platforms will fix our sights on the horizon and help us to plan a sustainable future.

## 2 Planning our Future



**Platform 5 - Community Hub** is about the school becoming much more outward looking and engaging with others in a targeted programme to grow activity at the school and generate new sources of income. The strategy for our Preschool and Kindergarten is central to this but there are also proposals to engage our powerful alumni, grow our summer school and develop an adult learning programme.

## Engaging our Community

The final **Platform 6 Immersive Learning** develops the idea of hosting a new immersive learning project at the school, potentially in partnership with 3rd level institutions, a centre devoted to the research and development of childhood learning and active citizenship. An innovative concept that would take the Steiner ethos to a new audience and build the reputation of the school as a centre for thought leadership in child centred education.



# We have a plan..

We are delighted to share an updated Strategy 2025 and the planned next steps.

We hope that you have witnessed the positive impacts of the implementation of Strategy 2025 and that our actions for the future give you further encouragement.

Our six strategic platforms each have an individual action plan, which are interconnected. In addition each action plan has its prioritised 'enabling projects' for the period 2020-2025.

The action plan to do list in each platform will be kept under constant review by the Board of Trustees and the school leadership team. We will prioritise and begin to deliver these in a sequenced delivery programme beginning immediately. We will continue to build momentum each year - remaining flexible in our approach with the ability to adjust to major events should they occur, such as Covid 19.



## Funding

Sourcing and securing both private and public funding for our school is a prerequisite of our growth strategy. Without financial backing and sustained income generation for our charity, little of the strategy can be executed. Sustainable financing is therefore absolutely necessary.

The balance between following the money in the form of grants, donations and fees and maintaining the integrity of our unique Steiner offering needs to be constantly refined. In addition to grants and sponsorships, we want to create a Friends of Holywood Steiner School network to widen the patronage of our school and demonstrate to funders how much we enjoy the active support and participation of our community.







# Key Actions

Each of our six platforms has a specific set of actions. These will be incorporated into our yearly business plans to achieve the impact goals we have set ourselves. It is our hope that the priorities will be supported by our community which includes you, the Board of Trustees, the PFA, teaching and non-teaching staff, current students, alumni and our growing school partnership network.



# Growing Our School

## Platform 1 Educational Excellence

### Delivered in 2020/21

- 6 new staff appointments:
  - Headteacher, Development Manager, Finance Officer, Gardening Teacher, Upper School Class Teacher, Kindergarten Assistant and Pre School Assistant
- Staff relief register created
- Parent & toddler group re-established
- Review of the Holywood Steiner School curriculum well advanced. Mapping the alignment of our Waldorf curriculum with the NI skills-based curriculum which will equip us to compare and contrast the Steiner offer to prospective pupils and their parents
- Saralies House brought back into use
- School pupil numbers have increased from 88 in 2019 to 135 in October 2021, and this continues to grow

### Priorities for 2021/22

- Completion of our curriculum mapping by April 2022
- Review and update of our School Development Plan, highlighting the

key priorities for the three areas of school – Early Years, Lower School and Upper School

- Development of a Steiner teacher training strategy as a commitment to CPD, in partnership with the Steiner Fellowship, QUB (St Mary's and Stranmillis) and the network of Steiner Schools in Ireland
- Continuous development and expansion of our GCSE programme with a focus on the arts and creative industry subjects
- Development of additional subjects leading to City and Guilds and/or OCN qualifications
- Expansion of our ICT capacity- updated fibre connection and new ICT equipment

## Platform 2 Governance & Leadership

### Delivered in 2020/21

- New Leadership and Executive team appointed - Head Teacher, Development Manager & Finance Officer
- College of Teachers reformed and active
- PFA constituted and re-energised
- Regulatory compliance audit completed to ensure that we are meeting the highest standards across health & safety, safeguarding and pupil welfare

- New policies and procedures in place across a wide range of subjects
- New administration, financial management and monitoring procedures introduced
- Refreshed strategy for marketing and promoting our school. Significant update of the website, increased traffic to social media sites, paid and non-paid advertising and new promotional material printed. Relationships are building with local press and media outlets

### Priorities for 2021/22

- Refinement of the Board governance structure with the creation of three new working sub-committees devoted to Finance, School Development and HR & Compliance, proactively recruiting new members
- Appointment of a school patron(s)
- Renewed approach to the PFA, encouraging new members and the development of calendar of events aligned to Strategy 2025
- Development of a school campus masterplan, to guide capital investment projects and develop new teaching and play space
- Progression of the ongoing policy & procedures review

# Planning our Future

## Platform 3 Financial Sustainability

### Delivered in 2020/21

- Appointed a new Finance Officer
- Filed our accounts on time for two years in a row
- Up to date with all suppliers
- Delivered a modest staff pay rise
- Established a working annual budget
- Approved an Income Generation Strategy for our charitable trust
- Funded ongoing capital asset improvements- most notably bringing Saralies House back into use
- Secured a range of grants for facility improvements
- Launched a Giving Strategy and Donations Appeal with multiple options to support the school

### Priorities for 2021/22

- Continue to broker relationships with partner institutions and school sponsors
- Maintain a sensitive yet proactive position on debt recovery
- Launch and deliver an Income Generation Strategy

- Maintain a consistent and budgeted reinvestment in our school campus and resources, seeking grant and development funding from a range of sources
- Develop a progressive pathway to appropriate and sustainable professional pay grades for teaching staff at all levels, as income permits
- Continued exploration of and engagement with like minded national and international funding agencies, foundations and charitable trusts that will co-fund our integrated learning programmes and school development strategy eg. Big Lottery and The Heritage Fund

## Platform 4 Partnership Working

- Re-established our school's relationship with the Steiner Fellowship (participation at our 2020 AGM).
- Continued to develop a working relationship with the Department of Education (DENI) in order to maintain our profile as pioneers in the field of child centred education and a skills-based curriculum
- Building deeper relationships with sponsors under their Corporate Social

Responsibility (CSR) programmes to support improvements such as our ICT capability

- Developing new relationship will neighbouring schools with a structured approach to raising the awareness and knowledge of HSS and our unique curriculum
- ### Priorities for 2021/22
- Build stronger links with our network of Steiner schools in Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny and Clare
  - Re establish the joint school 'Olympics' event to build relationships and share learnings
  - Strategically partner with a number of carefully selected and progressive international Steiner schools e.g. Bochum in Germany and the Waldorf School of the Peninsula in California
  - Continue to seek out opportunities to access sponsorship from appropriate CSR funds and corporate business partners

# Engaging with our community

## Platform 5 Outreach

### Delivered 2020/21

- Forest School projects established within our school grounds
- Budding alumni network to encourage ongoing engagement with our charity
- PFA (Parents and Friends Association) re-established with a seat on the Board of Trustees
- Proactively marketing and promoting the school, sharing good news stories and positioning HSS as educational pioneers
- Developed literature and improved the website to ensure people understand what we offer
- Moving conversations about shared provision and use of the campus beyond our Steiner family

### Priorities 2021/22

- We will develop a programme of flagship cultural events at the school (concerts/recitals) as fundraising projects and to raise awareness of our school within the wider community

- We will develop a special programme for our outdoor Steiner School – such as food projects developed in partnership with local community groups (Age NI, Men's Shed etc)
- We will develop our school facilities to function as a community hub enabling markets, fairs, crafts and skills learning and offering rental space for community projects
- A focus on expanding the use of the campus outside of term-time

## Platform 6 Immersive Learning

### Delivered in 2020/21

- Renewed engagement with the Steiner Fellowship on best practice Steiner education e.g. CPD, staff development and trustee training programmes
- Development of a Forest School offering
- Introduction of a diverse extra curriculum programme

### Priorities 2021/22

- Development of a Steiner teacher training strategy as a commitment to CPD. In partnership with the Steiner Fellowship, QUB (St Mary's and Stranmillis) and the network of Steiner Schools in Ireland.
- We will explore the feasibility of developing a Learning Centre at our school (Saralies House) focused on child centred education and co-sponsored by our local education partners. A centre for professional development and training with a strong strategic fit to our Trust's charitable objectives focused on Steiner Waldorf education and active citizenship.
- We will proactively seek out opportunities for our staff, Board, and where appropriate, students, to participate in conferences and panel discussions. This will form the basis of a longer-term plan to host a conference on Steiner education for the 21st Century in conjunction with other leaders in the field of education.

# Strategy 2025

## Keep it live

We want to engage our entire school community in an ongoing and lively discussion about our future, so please tell your friends and spread the word that change is well and truly underway at Hollywood Steiner School.

Strategy 2025 is a live and constantly evolving process engaging with our children, parents, friends, community and all those that we work with to run and manage our school.

Please be part of the discussion and encourage everyone in your circle to get to know us and participate on the journey ahead.

**We would welcome your feedback and comments on Strategy 2025 and its six action plans.**

Please send your comments, in the first instance, to our Development Manager, Valerie McDonough at [valerie@hollywood-steiner.co.uk](mailto:valerie@hollywood-steiner.co.uk)

If you would like to speak with a member of the Board of Trustees, please request a meeting through the email address above or just call into the school office and leave your contact details.



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