

# POSITION DESCRIPTION

## CHAIRPERSON OF PLENTY VALLEY MONTESSORI SCHOOL ASSOCIATION BOARD



### 1. BACKGROUND

The Plenty Valley Montessori School Association was established in 1976 as a not for profit company limited by guarantee. The Association is governed by a Constitution and a Board of Directors elected in accordance with the Constitution. The Association's current trading name is the Plenty Valley International Montessori School.

One of the main objectives of the Association is to operate a School in accordance with Montessori principles and practices of education and human development. This objective has now been expanded to also provide Playgroups, Early Learning (inclusive of Long Day programs) as well as Primary School education in accordance with Montessori principles and practices.

The Association elects a Chairperson at the first meeting following each Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The Association's Constitution sets out the following process to determine who will chair Board meetings:

#### **21.7 Chair of meetings**

*(a) At the first Board meeting, a chair will be elected from the Directors present in person. The person who has been elected as chair may chair each subsequent Board meeting. At any subsequent Board meeting, a new chair may be elected. On the election of the new chair, the new chair will chair subsequent Board meetings. The Directors may elect a Director to chair a Board meeting by a majority vote.*

### 2. POSITION OBJECTIVES

The Chairperson of the Plenty Valley Montessori School Association Board is elected from amongst the Directors of the Association and is responsible for leadership of the Board and for the efficient organisation and conduct of the Board.

### 3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 3.1 Leadership

- Work with the Principal, Committee Chairs and other Board Directors to develop the agendas for Board meetings, and chair these meetings.
- Create a safe environment for Board decision-making by inviting participation, encouraging varying points of view and stimulating a frank exchange of ideas in an effort to provide shared decision-making.
- Oversee the recruitment and retention of the right mix of people to the Board ensuring they have a range of skills, knowledge, experience and commitment to do their job.
- Act as motivator and energise the Board when necessary.
- Respond promptly and comprehensively to concerns raised by other Board Directors.
- Oversee the induction of all new Board Directors, and the debriefing of retiring Board Directors.
- Engage in a succession planning process to ensure the development of future Board Chairs and Committee Chairs.
- Oversee the strategic direction, goal setting and future development of the School.

#### 3.2 Board Governance

- In consultation with Board Directors, appoint Board Directors to key leadership positions, including positions such as chairs of board committees and task forces.
- Create an appropriate environment for robust Board discussion and facilitate constructive debate by effectively managing different views.
- Promote constructive and respectful relations between Board Directors and between the Board and the Principal
- Ensure that adequate committees are in place to address the ongoing and current issues to be managed by the Board.
- Ensure the charters for the Board and its committees are effective and clearly outline their functions, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Undertake effective performance management of the Board.

#### 3.3 Communications

- Develop communication policies and procedures to ensure a frank and comprehensive exchange of information between the Principal, the Business Manager, the Company Secretary, the Chairperson, the Committee Chairs and the rest of the Board Directors.
- Ensure that the Board Directors are presented with relevant information and documentation in sufficient time to enable them to make informed decisions about the resolutions to be passed by the Board.
- Oversee the recording, management and retention of all oral and written communications involving the Board, the Chairperson, the Directors, and the Committees.

### 3.4 Recruitment and Management of Principal

- Act as the prime conduit between the Board and the Principal.
- Ensure that the responsibilities and duties of the Board and the Principal are clearly defined.
- Oversee the recruitment, selection, induction, and management of the Principal.
- Provide support and mentorship of the Principal.

### 3. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

An effective Chairperson should possess and be able to actively demonstrate the following skills (additional to the skills required of all Board Directors):

- Strong **leadership skills** to inspire the Directors and the Principal to develop and implement a shared vision, mission and goals.
- Effective **human resources management skills** that support, encourage and develop the Directors of the Board, and the ongoing relations between the Directors and the Principal.
- Superior **organisational and time management skills** that will contribute to the management of Board business, the achievement of the Committees' goals and objectives, and the efficient running of Board meetings.
- Ability to **prioritise and manage** the competing roles and responsibilities of the Board, including any acute or difficult issues that may arise from time to time.
- Well-developed and highly effective **communication skills** that will generate information sharing, trust, and good relations between the Board Directors, between the Board Directors and the Principal, and between the Board and the rest of the school community.

### 4. INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVENESS

- Is perceived by other Board Directors as being fair, objective, open to all points of views, decisive, and contributing to a culture that focuses on results.
- Is perceived by senior staff as supporting and adding value to their work.
- Is perceived by a majority of parents and other community members as being accessible, fair, constructive, and representative of the interests of the broader school community.

### 5. APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The following implementation guidelines have been developed to guide the appointment of the Board Chairperson.

1. The election of a Chairperson will take place at the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Further elections may be conducted if and when deemed necessary, however it is recognised that continuity in Board Chairperson appointments is desirable in order to achieve long term planning and the achievement of strategic goals.

2. Persons wishing to nominate for the position of Chairperson will provide to the Company Secretary a letter of application and a written submission that specifically addresses the above key selection criteria, one week prior to the next Board meeting. The Company Secretary will circulate applications to all Directors for consideration well prior to the Board meeting.
3. At the Board meeting, non-candidate Directors will form an interview panel to consider each written application and interview each candidate separately. The initial interview questions should be limited to clarification of the written applications. These questions may differ between the candidates. The subsequent questions may be a set of behavioural questions that are deemed appropriate to be asked to all of the candidates. All questions are to be objective in nature and framed to assist the panel in clarifying the skills and experience of the applicant, in line with the key selection criteria.
4. At the conclusion of all interviews, non-candidate Directors will conference and compare responses to each candidate and, if possible, reach consensus before the final secret ballot.
5. At the conclusion of the pre-ballot conference, the Company Secretary will conduct a secret ballot to elect the new Chairperson. All Directors (including candidates) will be invited to indicate their preferred candidate on a Ballot Paper. The Company Secretary will determine which candidate has received a majority of votes, and announce this person to be the new Chairperson.
6. The above process will be conducted in all cases, regardless of the number of Chairperson candidates.