



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024–2027

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Dharug and Gundungurra people, the traditional custodians of the land on which our school stands. We pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging.

“ *In essence, the lyrebird is a symbol of poetry, song, language and inspiration. Known as the peacemaker, it signifies the releasing of the true voice, and of listening for truth.* ”

—Barbara Fitzgerald, Korowal Principal 2013–2022





KOROWAL SCHOOL

EMPOWER, INSPIRE

Why do we exist?

Our Mission

We empower & inspire learners to develop their unique strengths.

What do we do?

Our Vision

Relationships are central to who we are. We connect ideas and people to actively develop learner agency and empathy.

What guides our actions?

Our Values

Care | Curiosity | Challenge |
Creativity | Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

Korowal School is progressive and innovative – we respond to the evolving needs of our society. Our core philosophy places children at the centre of the school. Following extensive research, consultation and planning, we have prioritised several initiatives to strengthen our students' capacity to thrive now and into the future.

Our school's Strategic Plan is our guide and is, in many ways, an extension of our previous plans. It ensures we stay focused on key areas we have identified as priorities between 2024 and 2027. It outlines the goals that we want to achieve and a path to getting there.

Our mission is to educate and, to us, education is more than examination results. A model that develops the whole person is the foundational philosophy of the school. We guide students to understand how they learn best and to see the connections between learning and the world around them.

Our Mission Statement reflects our core purpose as a learning organisation dedicated to supporting the success of every student. The continual development of our educational model is our priority through strategic projects and supported by sound governance, resource allocation, and systems and processes. The dedicated work of our outstanding staff, individually and collectively, drives and sustains us.

Our School name, 'Korowal', is an Aboriginal word meaning 'to stand alone', or 'the strong one'. After 45 years of Korowal's development, we are building on our longstanding foundation, as we expand programs and evidence-based pedagogies. We continue to develop communication and critical thinking skills of our students and staff by bringing focus to learning 'through talk' and 'to talk', through our Oracy, Inquiry-Based Learning, and Open Dialogue programs and Restorative Practice.

We are committed to forging connections to place and community by inviting and enhancing partnerships with parents, community members, and experts enriching our programs and extending opportunities within our learning community.

Future graduates will be compassionate and empathetic adults, individuals capable of advocating for themselves and others and able to communicate with confidence and clarity.

Learners will understand their own agency, be capable of making informed choices, and capable of working with others to solve problems. They will be competent in sustaining meaningful relationships and hold an awareness of their responsibility to contribute to a just society and environmental regeneration.



OUR FOUNDATIONS

Several essential structures provide organisational stability at Korowal. The values and ethos of the school are our foundation and our strategic imperatives help us to achieve our objectives as represented in our Mission Statement. The systems that enable this are Governance, Business and Financial Management, and Educational Programs. With these secure cornerstones in place, our school continues to thrive.

Governance

Our School Board ensures that the school is compliant in all matters. The Board establishes strategic direction, reviews school performance, ensures that policies and procedures are in place for the safety and wellbeing of all, and tracks our annual budget forecasts and enrolment targets. The Principal, as Chief Executive Officer, reports to the Board around strategic priorities and compliance matters. Our first priority is child safety.

Business and Finance

The school operates with a three-year business plan, to operationalise the Strategic Initiatives. From this, the annual Business Plan and annual Budget are created. These detail how we resource the strategic priorities within a 12-month period.

Education is our core business and providing quality teaching and learning is central to all that we do. The Business Plan supports the implementation and development of these, as well as maintaining infrastructure and resourcing needs for current and emerging priorities.

Our main sources of income are government funding and school fees. Additional income is sought through grants, fundraising, and contributions to our Building Fund and Scholarship Fund.

Educational Programs

Korowal has 45 years of experience delivering holistic educational programs. Our approach is successful. It is balanced. It focuses on developing students' academic, social and emotional capacities. The outcome is graduate students confident in themselves and their abilities.

Since the school's origin, respectful relationships are at the core of who we are. This is complemented by our partnerships and local, national, and global networks.

Integral to the development of students' academic and social capacities are the practices of Inquiry-Based Learning, Oracy, Open Dialogue and Restorative Practice. Each of these enhance the communication skills that enable students to emerge as confident, curious, creative, and competent young people ready to be the change they want to see in the world.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

The imperatives outlined in this Strategic Plan are interrelated. Inquiry as a Way of Being, Social and Environmental Impact and the process of Championing Agency & Voice (Dialogic Practice) will drive students to realise their values and priorities. They will build informed ideas and belief in their own abilities. They will set achievable goals and direct their energies, knowledge, and skills towards their achievement.

INQUIRY AS A WAY OF BEING

Our Goals

To create a model of inquiry that develops numerous interconnected skills, dispositions and processes that guide learners' thinking. Inquiry-based learning is a pedagogical approach that puts students at the centre of the learning process, encouraging them to explore, ask questions, and explore different possibilities and perspectives. To provide supportive, safe classroom cultures where learners are positioned as inquirers who are comfortable sharing ideas, asking questions, and making mistakes that assist them to "move from the known into the unknown."

(*The Power of Inquiry*, Murdoch, K., 2015).

What we will do

- Explore varying models of inquiry
- Engage external experts via professional learning and school visits
- Implement inquiry-based practices and embed these across the Primary and High School programs over three years
- Develop the skills of collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking
- Encourage students to investigate real-world issues through interdisciplinary case studies
- Communicate the plan to students, parents and staff

How we will do it

- Implement a staged approach to inquiry-based learning
- Provide a framework and toolbox for the various types of inquiry; Structured, Controlled, Guided and Free Inquiry
- Use the principles of Universal Design for Learning, together with appropriate individualised plans, to support the success of diverse learners
- Teach research, critical analysis, self-management, social and communication skills
- Develop a skills progression (research, critical and creative thinking, reflection, self management) that supports independent learning
- Apply goal setting and metacognitive/ reflective tools
- Use Oracy skills to present understanding and provide multimodal opportunities for all students to show their learning
- Develop a pedagogical toolkit to support inquiry
- Develop student-centred, authentic assessment practices
- Map and evaluate how inquiry learning equips students to become lifelong learners by nurturing wonder, curiosity, and mastery in the classroom
- Continue to model collective inquiry in Korowal's professional learning groups

“*Inquiry is not a ‘project’, an ‘initiative’ or an ‘innovation’ but a professional way of being.*”

(Timperley, Kaser, & Halbert, 2014)



AGENCY AND VOICE

Our Goal

This goal is about empowering students to set goals, learn about and adopt habits that will help them be successful in all areas of their lives, and to evaluate and reflect on their strengths and areas for growth.

Agency is “the principle that students have the ability and the will to positively influence their own lives and the world around them.” It includes “... the capacity to set a goal, reflect and act responsibly to effect change. It is about acting rather than being acted upon; shaping rather than being shaped; and making responsible decisions and choices rather than accepting those determined by others.” *OECD Learning Compass 2030*.

This will be realised through the explicit teaching and championing of Oracy, Open Dialogue and Restorative Practice.

What we will do

- Build student capacity to advocate for themselves and others using the principles and practice of Oracy, Open Dialogue, and Restorative Practice
- Build student capacity to present projects in a public forum both at school and in the wider community
- Implement a peer mentoring & leadership model for High School and Year 6 students
- Consistently engage students in restorative practice to model conflict resolution and respectful relationships that contribute to a positive school culture

How we will do it

- Provide structured approaches to developing student voice through the key strands of Oracy: physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social/emotional learning
- Elevate the quality and structure of talk, the quality of speaking and the quality of listening
- Cultivate vocabulary, and develop skills in critical analysis, creative thinking and public speaking
- Provide opportunities for students to present work to authentic audiences
- Practise dialogic pedagogy (encouraging discussion and dialogue between teachers and students)
- Collaborate with students and families in Open Dialogue as our way of supporting students' academic, social and emotional wellbeing
- Continue to develop and evaluate the Oracy, Open Dialogue and Restorative Practice programs

“When students are agents in their learning, they are more likely to have “learned how to learn” – an invaluable skill that they can use throughout their lives.”

OECD Learning Compass 2030





SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



Our Goal

To educate, research, review and implement systems that support regenerative environmental practices and social justice.

What we will do

- Implement a service learning program that provides students with opportunities at school and within the community
- Integrate and educate on climate change and social justice to encourage student-led projects and initiatives
- Transition the high school to solar power (phase 2)
- Implement further waste management strategies
- Continue to develop the food forest and use of food produced in canteen
- Investigate regeneration of the creek on the campus
- Continue to develop links with networks such as HICES Sustainability Network
- Students take responsibility for maintaining their classrooms and common areas
- Implement a water-safe strategy to utilising existing water resources

How we will do it

- Encourage and support student-led initiatives and projects for sustainable practices and social justice
- Partner with social enterprise to create more service opportunities
- Increase awareness among students and families on regenerative environmental practices
- Investigate research grants and partnerships for solar funding and land and water regeneration
- Review Korowal's power and water usage costs and volumes. Research and implement alternatives
- Evaluate Korowal's waste and water management systems and identify areas for improvement
- Update Korowal's procurement policy and procedures in line with our environmental and social aims

“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.”
—Maya Angelou

CURIOSITY

We value a love of learning as a lifetime pursuit towards knowledge and understanding.

KOROWAL

CARE

We value our commitment to respectful relationships and the wellbeing of every individual.

“... growth, change, and progress all take patience and hard work. We can add the idea of resiliency into this mix, because struggle and outright failure are integral parts of these processes.”

VALUES

CHALLENGE

We value challenge that keeps us engaged, and motivated and leads to deep learning.

CREATIVITY

We value exploring the unknown, inventiveness, and taking risks to create new ideas, products, and solutions.

COLLABORATION

We value listening, sharing and working together as equals to ensure our individual and collective success.



COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

Our goal

Continue to develop and maintain rich partnerships within our community locally, nationally and globally to forge friendships, broaden our student offerings, and promote Korowal's educational success.


What we will do

- Develop opportunities for community workshops at Korowal
- Create a parent and family body to support social & fundraising activities of the school
- Build connection with local community organisations
- Connect with schools regionally, nationally & internationally
- Increase the educational profile of the school locally, nationally and internationally
- Develop partnerships with universities in NSW and nationally

How we will do it

- Create opportunities to share knowledge and become informed of education at Korowal through a series of information sessions, workshops and forums
- Facilitate student participation in local & regional community events
- Expand the Open Dialogue network in partnership with the Open Dialogue Centre
- Share praxis and professional dialogue with schools
- Conduct workshops about Open Dialogue and Oracy at Korowal School
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan by engaging local community group and perspectives of Dharug and Gundungurra peoples
- Further develop representative sport, academic and performing arts opportunities through existing school networks (HICES, AWS, AICES and CIS)
- Participate in educational conferences, both nationally and internationally





LEARNER ATTRIBUTES

Korowal learners:

- Listen and act compassionately
- Communicate confidently
- Seek mastery to grow
- Adventure into the unknown
- Live with integrity and make informed decisions







KOROWAL SCHOOL

Innovating education with care | K - 12

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