

Birali Steiner School
2023
School Annual Report



Vision

Birali Steiner School's Vision is to educate the whole child learning through head, heart and hands offering a curriculum responsive to the developmental phases in childhood ensuring a positive foundation for a purposeful and productive adulthood is cultivated.

Mission

At Birali Steiner School, we strive together to deliver an education that honours, nourishes, and develops the creative spirit of the child. Our school aims to kindle in young people, courage, determination, a sense for truth and beauty and a desire for lifelong learning, with an understanding of respect for the traditional custodians of the land on which the school is founded.

We do this by providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences that encompass and emphasise:

- physical development and connection to the natural world
- advancement of the social and feeling life
- development of artistic and creative capacity
- cultivation of living thinking through engaging in academic studies

Our educators bring the Steiner pedagogical approach to life, in our unique Birali context, so that young people may develop a healthy and lively connection to others, their natural environment and their own individuality.

With this foundation, the young person can go forth into the world with a broad and deep knowledge base, a feeling of their own social competency and a benevolent sense of individual freedom.

Our School

Our Birali Steiner School respectfully acknowledges Traditional Custodians of the land on which our school lives – the Gubbi Gubbi People. We also acknowledge a continuous connection to land, culture and learning for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Birali Steiner School offers an inspiring and comprehensive Steiner education for children from Prep through to Year 10. Our architecturally designed school is located on 26 acres of natural bushland, at Beachmere. This picturesque destination is approximately 1 hour drive from Brisbane, in South-East Queensland, Australia.

Birali Steiner School is an inclusive, sustainable and beautiful school with a community of passionate people who are committed to learning, supporting each other and working together. We provide a nurturing environment where children can thrive and have opportunities on many levels to find their inner and outer potential.

Steiner/Waldorf education is now over 100 years old and is the fastest growing education movement in the world, in over 65 countries. It is an education for global citizenship: providing students with the opportunity to foster courage, imagination, resilience and enthusiasm to be positive and effective contributors to society and the environment.

We value mutually supportive relationships for students, staff and families. Each staff member strives to be the best role model they can be for the young people in our community. We strongly uphold the philosophy, ethos and child developmental principles given to us by Dr Rudolf Steiner who was a scientist, philosopher, architect and social reformer. Out of his developmental picture, a whole school movement and curriculum was born, which is increasingly more relevant for the world today, as we work together to ensure an ethical future. In everything we do, we hold the child in the centre, as we strive to develop the three faculties of thinking, feeling and willing.

Our Birali Community value experiential learning, respect towards each other and the environment, and a commitment to celebrating together as a community with festivals and community events. We view ourselves

as a community of learners: teachers, staff, families, and students - striving to achieve individual, communal and global growth and understanding.

Birali College

The Birali College is working toward a clearer understanding and shared vision focussed on ensuring that Birali Steiner School always retains at its core the inspiration of Rudolf Steiner and the Anthroposophical insight that is needed to deliver a comprehensive Steiner education to students. It is through the shared responsibility of the teachers and staff and their joint contribution, via membership of the developing Birali College, that Birali Steiner School will be highly regarded.

The developing Birali College role is pivotal to building the vision for Steiner education as it is applied locally at Birali Steiner School, and to develop and maintain the rhythms of school life over the year.

There are key elements to the role of Birali College, particularly developing the broad pedagogical picture at the School across P-10.

The development of this picture across all the classes will be based upon the teachings of Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophy). The Birali College continue to work diligently toward developing their shared knowledge, and to ensure that all members are able to contribute to the efficient and informed development of the pedagogical visions needed across the learning environment of the school.

The Birali College contributes to the cultural understanding of the school. This is particularly relevant to Artistic Engagement, such as celebrating Birali Festivals and through Birali Performances.

Early Childhood

“The preschool years, the kindergarten years, are the most important of all in the education of the child ... It is absolutely essential that before we begin to think, before we so much as begin to set our thinking in motion, we experience the condition of wonder.” - Rudolf Steiner

We strive to create a warm and loving environment for our early years’ program offered through our Pippi Room (Prep) and Birali Playgroup sessions, which honours the young child’s need for connectedness to this world, with nurturing rhythms, quality sensory experiences and engagement in the real work of childhood: play.

Primary Years

At Birali Steiner School, the traditional Waldorf School practice of having one teacher accompany the children through their Primary School years is valued. Over this extended period the teacher and children develop a meaningful relationship that fosters an environment of trust and security within which the child can relax into their learning.

Our Primary School teachers work consciously in all they do to first and foremost protect and develop this imaginative capacity. Academic learning is enlivened through an artistic approach and embedded in practical experience and activity. Every day children are immersed in story, art, music, movement, and verse along with the more traditional academics.

The Main Lesson is a key point of difference in Steiner Schools. The first two hours of every morning are dedicated to study of the same topic or theme for a period of three or four weeks. The central theme of the Main Lesson is progressively explored through a broad spectrum of integrated activity; each day building on the previous.

Main Lesson blocks may be focused on Mathematics, Language, Humanities, Science, however each will encompass a variety of experiences including movement, singing, painting, drawing, modelling, drama, narrative, practical activity and formal academic work. The children create their own Main Lesson Books which

serve as a personal record and recount of their learning through drawings, words and other visual representations.

High School

The aim of our High School is to provide an education for adolescents that inspires love of learning, develops freedom of thought, and fosters self-confidence in an atmosphere of academic rigor and artistic fulfilment. Adolescence is when the student really begins to take hold of their independent thinking. We encourage them to think independently: to observe, to research, and then to come to conclusions and judgements.

In High School, students' care and guidance is passed from the Primary School Class Teacher to a group of specialist teachers, including the Class Guardian. This new emphasis on specialist teaching means that the young person meets a range of experienced and passionate Specialist Teachers, who can bring the full depth of knowledge in an enlivened and extended way.

The High School curriculum is designed to encourage the emergence of world citizens. The Main Lesson Structure established in the Primary School years is preserved throughout the High School and students continue to explore a full range of academic subjects in an integrated and creative way. The work of the secondary teacher in High School is to unfold Main Lessons that are thematic, experiential and that develop discernment and independent, lively thinking within the discipline of the subject. These lessons include: Mathematics; English; Physics, Chemistry, Biology; Visual Arts, Drama, Music, LOTE, HPE, Gardening and workshop lessons in Handwork and Woodwork.

Individual Enrichment

Rudolf Steiner gave lenses through which to observe the children. He advocated observing and 'seeing what is'. Through close observation, teachers are able to see how children learn, to see their gifts and through observing their behaviours, to see their challenges.

In 2023 increased enrichment support was offered across the school as increased needs were identified. The Individual Enrichment Team space has been continuing to grow and develop with wider access and utilisation. The ideal is for children to be in their class and the Individual Enrichment Team to upskill the Teacher Aides and collaborate with Teachers. The NCCD process also requires significant oversight and coordination, providing support for Teachers who are collecting the data as evidence.

The Individual Enrichment Team work closely with the teachers and then strive to support the diverse needs of the children. The role of the Individual Enrichment Team is to help integrate children with additional needs, identify which therapies or targeted programs can support individual children and collaborate with Teachers and Teacher Aides. They help to monitor and review the student's needs and process and meet with parents when required.

Festivals

Throughout history, festivals have been interwoven with life and the cycles of nature. Rudolf Steiner presents the annual festivals in a seasonally and globally encompassing context. He describes processes, which are taking place in nature during the four seasons spring, summer, autumn and winter. Steiner states that the earth is a living organism, which is performing a rhythmic life together with the seasons. For the description of this rhythmic life, he uses two metaphors connected to human life. On the one hand, he compares it with the processes of sleeping and waking, and on the other with those of inhaling and exhaling.

Festivals play an essential role for the school community. Celebrating festivals brings a sense of rhythm and anticipation. Celebrating festivals together is also a way of keeping time. They help the child to increasingly find orientation in time.

Our Birali Festivals are developing a pattern and rhythm which is creating positive connections between our school, our students and our community.

Music and Instrumental Program

“Music is an art imbued with power to penetrate into the very depth of the soul, imbuing man with the love of virtue.” - Rudolf Steiner

Primary Classroom Music begins from Class 1 and continues to Class 10 as a weekly specialist lesson. The Music Program at Birali begins in the Early Years in Pippi Room through the use of songs and games to help gradually develop the child’s response to pitch and rhythm. The timing around the introduction of each new musical concept is considered and sequential, so that by the time the children reach Class 3 and are entering the next stage of development, they are ready to take on the physical learning of an instrument with well-prepared aural skills and the reading and writing of music notation. As well as developing strong musical skills, the program seeks to instil in the children a love of music and allow them to experience joy in music making that is the birthright of every human being.

Birali Steiner School offers a variety of opportunities to engage with music through the introduction of musical instruments. In Class 1 and Class 2, the students begin with the Pentatonic recorder before transitioning to the Descant Recorder in Class 3. All students participate in our Strings Program as they begin the Violin in Class 3 before moving to additional stringed instruments in future years. Other instruments introduced in the Upper Primary Grades include Marimba, Xylophone, Violin, Cello, Ukulele and Piano. This range of instrumental experiences allows the students to choose between a variety of elective instruments in High School. Instrumental work is delivered in small groups, one on one sessions, ensemble groups and whole class delivery.

Outdoor Education *(including camps and class excursions)*

The Birali Outdoor Education program continues to develop with Birali teachers ensuring that, wherever appropriate and possible, these form an integral and inclusive aspect of all our students’ education, starting with weekly ‘Nature Day’ for the Pippi Students.

A lot of time and effort goes into tailoring outdoor education programs suitable for Birali Steiner School students, ensuring that each activity aligns with and responds to the Steiner Curriculum requirements, and is underpinned by Anthroposophical understanding. The elements of each camp or excursion are also planned so that these might best meet the learning focus and individual needs of our students. During planned camps or excursions, our students experience a high level of interaction and connection, of effort and reward, of fun and challenge. Through our Outdoor Education Camp and Excursion program, students are presented with a wide variety of experiences to help with their overall growth and development.

The open, natural environment of Birali Steiner School supports the engagement of our students in open space and bushland activities, which encourage a love of our local environment. Additionally, our students are able to participate in a Gardening Program - and from that Cooking Programs encouraging each of us in a healthy lifestyle approach, and supporting students in their positive healthy choices.

Social Health, Wellbeing and Student Engagement

The aim of our Birali approach to student health and well-being is to support the development of a strong, inner moral compass in all students that allows them to make ethical behavioural choices as adults.

A need for constant and consistent positive and gentle guidance flows, from very young children to older children, to developing self-discipline and taking more individual responsibility for their behaviour and actions. Teachers strongly focus on and support this process and movement by using classroom management techniques to facilitate positive engagement in learning related to the various stages of child development.

Students learn social skills in different ways at different ages. Their individual level of skill will depend on their experience, environment and developmental maturity. Teachers’ responses to acknowledging positive engagement and supporting inappropriate or challenging behaviours which might disrupt learning or the well-being of other students, need to reflect this, and be differentiated accordingly.

Environment

The Creative Spirit Fair was a highlight of community engagement for Birali in 2023. All of the class parent groups helped to manage a stall at the Fair, with older students also assisting. The student performances on the Main Stage were well received by the guests and the school tours at the Fair were very well attended resulting in a high volume of enrolment enquiries and applications.

Community engagement continued to grow as teachers worked closely with their Class Carers to facilitate community engagement opportunities.

Other community events continuing in 2023 included; community singing and instrumental groups which meet weekly, termly Working Bees, Parent Meet & Greet and the continuation of our Parent Craft group.

In Term 3, Birali hosted the Greek Olympics – an inter-school sports event where students in Class 5 from our neighbouring Steiner Schools come together for a 2-day sporting event following their Ancient Greece Main Lesson studies. This was an amazing achievement for our growing school, to host 150 students for this event!

To continue our growth, an application was submitted in March for Stage 5 - a Science Classroom, an Art classroom, High School Staff work room, amenities and related facilities to commence the first part of our future High School buildings. The school was successful with this application, receiving confirmation in December for approximately 50% funding.

Due to the rising costs of construction, Birali chose to delay the construction of the Library and combine it with the Stage 4 construction (with BGA funding from 2022 application). To assist with the required teaching space necessary in the interim, a rental classroom was placed near the Administration building.

The council approvals for the combined projects (Stage 3 and 4) were received in December 2023 with the works aiming to be completed by the end of 2024.

Warmly,

Chloe Ann Francis

Principal

Moreton Bay Birali Steiner School - Board Chair Report to the AGM

2023 – A review

The Board's overall goal is to prioritise the development of the school through diligent, compliant, engaged, and relevant Birali Board governance. Within this we focus on the governance matters of financial oversight, compliance, and risk management. During the year we worked in consultation with the Leadership team on progressing the Strategic Plan and endorsing and updating policies. 2023 saw a stability at Birali with a strong Leadership Team in place, competently lead by Chloe Ann Francis.

During the year there were many significant achievements, of particular note were:

- The successful Year 7 to 10 Curriculum Review carried out by the Queensland Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB). This was a very comprehensive review, including a site visit and we were pleased to learn that Birali met all the necessary requirements with positive feedback from NSSAB.
- In addition to the Curriculum Review, Birali also submitted their cyclical review plan to NSSAB. Every five years NSSAB assesses whether each non-state school in Queensland has met the legal obligations required for accreditation. In June 2023 we submitted a plan outlining how we proposed to demonstrate compliance and the final report will be submitted to NSSAB for review later in 2024.
- In May 2023, the school celebrated its 10-year anniversary, a significant achievement. Along with this, we also saw the first graduating year 10 cohort at the end of 2023.
- In accordance with the Master Plan, further BGA applications were submitted for the Secondary Visual Arts Classroom, the Secondary Science Room, plus the Covered Outdoor Learning Area.

As the school continues to grow, the Board keeps a clear oversight on the finances of the school. In 2023, we approved a loan with NAB ensuring we have the necessary funds to meet the future building program (refer to the Treasurer's report for details).

2024 - the year ahead

Key focus areas for 2024 are:

- Strategic planning. The Board will be working with staff members to create the 2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan, focusing on the key areas of Student Learning, Student and Staff Wellbeing, Community and Environment, and Governance. Within each of these areas will have an identified goal, objectives, strategies, and measures of success.
- Building projects: Work should be starting this year on the stage 3 and 4 buildings which will bring much needed space to meet the growing school.

Acknowledgement

I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the Board's gratitude to the Birali community. The spirit of Birali is alive and well thanks to all. A big thank you to:

- All the staff at Birali for their professional dedication to the education and care of the students.
- Birali Leadership team for their guidance of the school and staff and driving the school growth.
- Volunteers – parents who keep the community vibrant.

Board Membership

All Board members give tirelessly and willingly to ensure the effective governance of the school and I am thankful to all. In 2023 Amanda Schiavo and Joel Berlin fully stepped into their Board role and we were grateful

for their fresh perspectives. Kimberley Fawkes stepped down as Treasurer in August 2023 after steadfastly holding this role while coping with a heavy personal workload. Thank you, Kimberley, for your dedication. We were fortunate to have Rob Birse willingly take on this role while Jane Francis continued to bring her expertise and experience to the secretarial role. At the end of the year, we welcomed a new Interim Board Director, Cynthia Erskine who brings much knowledge in the risk management sphere.

The following table provides a summary of the intentions of the current Board Directors for the May 2024 AGM

Board Role 2023	Name	3 Year Term Expiry date	Intentions at AGM 2023
Board Chair	Joan Weir	2025	Continuing Board Member
Board Secretary	Jane Francis	2026	Continuing Board Member
Board Treasurer	Rob Birse	2026	Continuing Board Member
Board Director	Kimberley Fawkes	2024	Renominating for a further 3-year term
Board Director	Amanda Schiavo	2026	Continuing Board Member
Board Director	Joel Berlin	2026	Continuing Board Member
Board Director	Cynthia Erskine	2027	Nominating for a 3-year term

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Kind regards

Joan Weir
Board Chair

2023 Annual Report data

Contextual Information¹

School Sector: *

Independent

Year Levels Offered:

Prep to Class 10

Co-educational or Single Sex: *

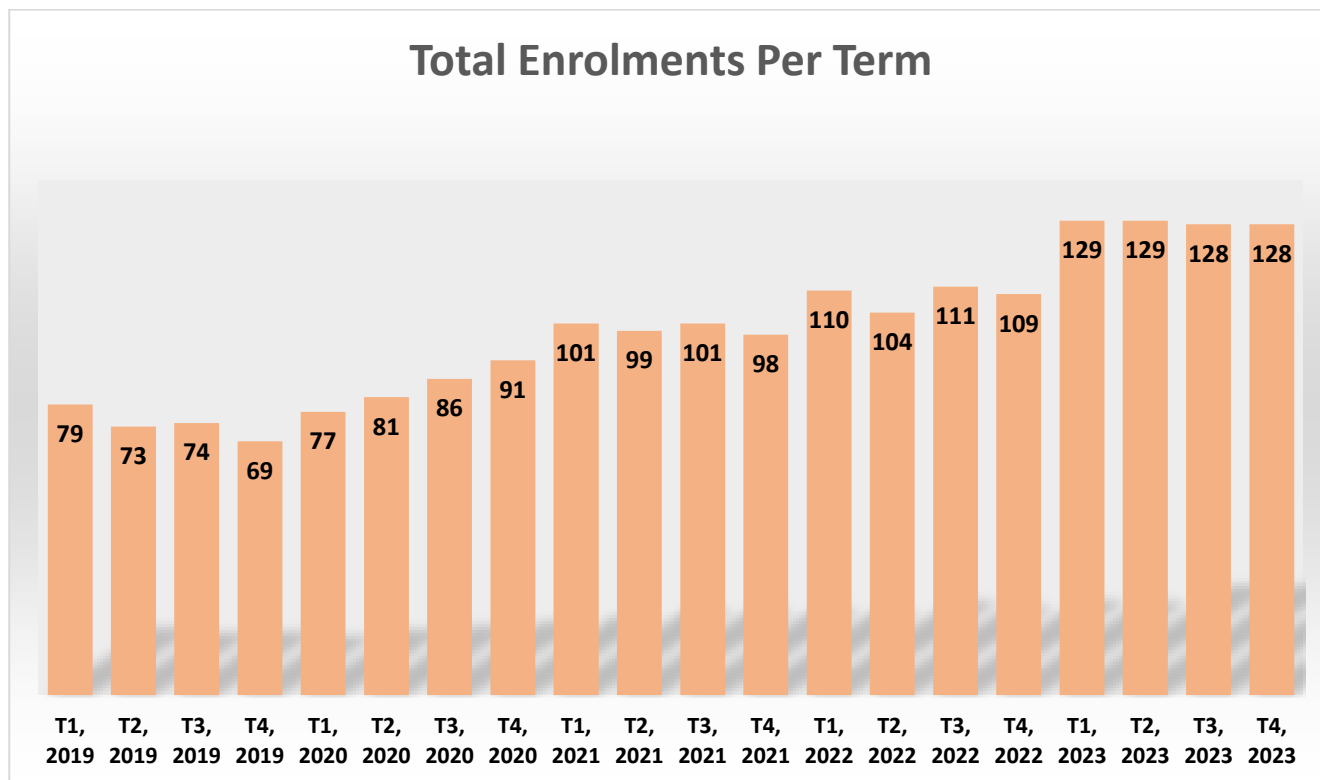
Co-educational

Characteristics of the Student Body: *

Birali Steiner School is a diverse community which draws upon the rich culture of nationalities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Asian, European and Pacific Islander students.

¹ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(a)

Total Enrolments:



Workforce Information

Staff Composition, Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff: *2

Full Time Teaching Staff – Teachers, Teacher Aides, Specialist Support = 5
 Part Time Teaching Staff – Teachers, Teacher Aides, Specialist Support = 18
 Casual Teaching Staff = 3
 Full Time Non-Teaching Staff – Administration, Maintenance = 3
 Part Time Non-Teaching Staff – Administration, Maintenance = 7
 Currently no staff identify as indigenous.

Highest Qualifications of all Teachers: *3

Qualification	Number of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school who hold this qualification
Doctorate or higher	0
Masters	4
Post-Graduate/Graduate Diploma	6
Bachelor	13
Diploma	0
Qualification in Steiner Education	6
Undertaking Qualification in Steiner Education	1

² Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(c)

³ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(b)

Funding Information

School Income Broken Down by Funding Source *4

Please refer to the My School website for Financial data - <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/52666/finances>

Social Climate

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School *5

Where schools already undertake annual surveys of parents, students and teachers for the purpose of marketing and school improvement, include relevant summaries of findings here, in plain English.

If a school does not currently undertake any such surveys, consideration might be given to such a project; or alternatively, the school should consider any other data or information that it may have which could be the basis of a report on parent, student and teacher satisfaction. For example, letters and testimonials from parents; enrolment retention rates over time; increasing enrolments over time; teacher retention rates over time.

Student Enrolments: During the 2023 school year, the enrolments at Birali Steiner School continued to trend upward. This pleasing pattern has been evident from the formative days of Birali Steiner School.

Satisfaction Data: The Birali Steiner School communication process - *Feedback@Birali* - offers opportunity for Birali community – parents, staff members and interested stakeholders- to submit suggestions for improvement or resolution, concerns and compliments to the Birali Steiner School Principal or Birali Board Chair for their attention.

In 2023, a Birali Steiner School Parent Survey was conducted gather the perspective of parents in relation to their satisfaction with the school.

Student Outcomes

Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school: *6

The average student attendance rate for the whole school in 2023 was at 86.4%

Average student attendance rate for each year level: *7

Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
89.7%	87.4%	87.8%	86.3%	86.4%	90.9%	86.8%	84.0%	80.2%	80.9%	52.9%

A description of how non-attendance is managed by the school: *8

⁴ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(g)

⁵ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(f)

⁶ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(i)

⁷ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(i)

⁸ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(ii)

Non-Attendance: Students with less than satisfactory Attendance Rates are identified by their Class Teachers. Communication is undertaken with parents to provide possible advice, assistance or strategies to the family to improve the student attendance.

Continuing concerns regarding non-attendance are referred to the Birali Steiner School Well-Being Officer for support to the student and family.

Should the matter of non-attendance continue to be unresolved with the child successfully attending at school, the family are contacted by a member of the School Leadership to support and advise on how to address this concerning ongoing non-attendance matter.

NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5 and 7 and 9 in 2023 *⁹

Please refer to the MySchool website for information on NAPLAN data - <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/52666/naplan/results>

Privacy and Interpretation of Data

The fundamental principle for reporting performance information is to support school improvement throughout Queensland and to provide a profile of all schools to the community. While the reporting initiative is a valuable move towards sharing education information, it brings with it responsibilities in the areas of personal information and privacy. The reporting of student achievement information needs to be managed according to appropriate privacy provisions and needs to ensure that publicly available information is accurate and easily interpreted.

There are many Queensland schools that have small enrolment numbers, particularly at individual year levels. For this reason, care needs to be taken not to identify individual students. Care also needs to be taken in the interpretation of information where trends may be volatile. When reporting on small numbers or 'cohorts' of students, an annual variation in enrolment of just one or two students can have a significant effect on data from one year to the next. This is where setting information in context is of prime importance.

When publishing information on student achievement and school performance:

- Careful consideration should be given to the nature of reporting where there are fewer than five students in a group, cohort or reporting field;
- Information should not be published where all persons in a particular group have achieved identical results, irrespective of group or cohort size.

All published information must:

- Maintain the privacy of individual student information;
- Minimise the likelihood of false assumptions and conclusions being inferred from the data.

School principals may decide that it is not possible to report certain data publicly in ways that maintain student privacy or minimise misinterpretation of performance. Where a decision is made not to report specific data for these reasons, a narrative or descriptive comment on student achievement or school performance would meet the requirements of the Annual Report.

Year 12 Outcomes: *¹⁰

This is not currently applicable for Birali Steiner School.

⁹ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(e)

¹⁰ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(h)(i)