

CRSS Draft Strategic Plan 2027–2028

Discussion Document

About this document

This is a consultation document of the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School strategic plan for 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2028.

It builds on the four pillars of the unimplemented 2026–2028 draft, the five workstreams of the 2026 Annual Plan, and the Education Review Office (ERO) School Report of 11 August 2026, and is written to meet the Education (School Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2023 as amended in 2026.

- Goals, strategies and priorities are proposals to test with students, whānau, staff, mana whenua and the proprietor, not final decisions.
- Annual targets sit in the 2027 Annual Implementation Plan (due 31 March 2027), not in this plan.
- The community-facing version will be the existing tree design plus a one-page summary; this document is the full working text behind it.

Our vision

We support our students to become independent in their life purpose and direction, creative and free in their thinking, balanced in their feelings, practical and purposeful in their will.

This vision is carried forward unchanged from the 2026 plan.

Theme: From strong foundations to excellence. 2026 was a year of rebuilding culture, communication and systems. This plan uses those foundations to lift learning outcomes, deepen partnerships and return the school to full governance.

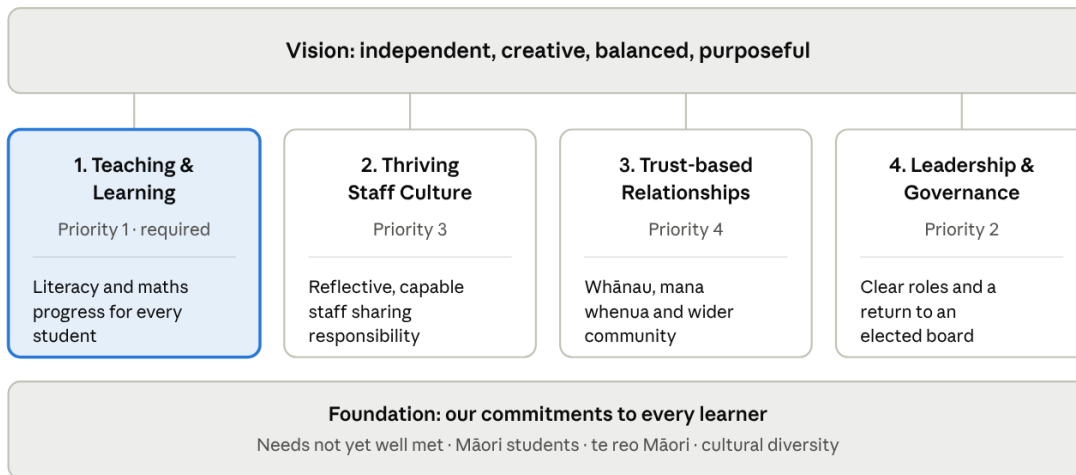
Our special character

As a state-integrated Steiner school, CRSS educates the whole child through Head (thinking), Heart (feeling) and Hands (doing), following a curriculum shaped by stages of child development. This plan delivers the New Zealand Curriculum through that approach: the special character shapes *how* we meet national expectations, not *whether* we meet them.

Our goals at a glance

Four goals carry the vision; Goal 1 is the required literacy and mathematics achievement goal and the first priority.

Four goals, led by literacy and maths, carry the vision



Goal 1: Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Every student makes strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics, within a rich Head, Heart and Hands education.

This is our educational achievement goal under the regulations, and our first priority.

What success looks like by the end of 2028

- More students are at or above curriculum expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at each assessment point, and the gap for Māori students and students with learning support needs is narrowing.
- Every teacher can show where each child is on the CRSS Learning Journey and what comes next.
- Parents receive clear, plain-language information about their child's progress in literacy and maths.
- Upper School students meet the NCEA literacy and numeracy co-requisite on time.
- At least 80% of students attend regularly (the Government expectation), and chronic absence is falling.

Why this matters to us

ERO (August 2026) judged achievement, progress, reading and writing, and mathematics as doing well: most students meet or exceed curriculum expectations. It also found a recent drop in senior literacy, particularly for boys; junior gaps in literacy for boys and numeracy for girls; reading stronger than maths at junior levels; and fluctuating results at NCEA Level 2. Only a small majority of students attend regularly, below the 80% expectation, and chronic absence is rising.

Our strategies

1. **Complete and embed the CRSS Learning Journey (Years 1–13).** Map literacy and mathematics progressions against the New Zealand Curriculum, showing how the Main Lesson sequence builds them year by year (continues the 2026 workstream).
2. **Strengthen explicit teaching of foundations.** Daily, structured practice in phonics, spelling, handwriting and number knowledge, sequenced to fit the CRSS developmental approach.
3. **Adopt one planning and assessment framework.** Use Ministry-specified assessment tools at agreed points, moderated teacher judgements, and Steiner child observation together, so evidence is reliable and holistic.
4. **Identify and respond early.** Termly review of achievement and attendance data by class and group, analysed the same way across the Lower and Upper Schools, with tiered support (see *Our commitments to every learner*). Focus first on the gaps ERO identified: boys' literacy (junior and senior), junior girls' numeracy, and NCEA Level 2.
5. **Support NCEA literacy and numeracy.** Targeted preparation and multiple opportunities for Upper School students to meet the co-requisite.
6. **Lift regular attendance to 80% (ERO priority).** Review and refine the Attendance Culture Framework by November 2026; continue weekly monitoring, early contact with whānau and targeted support for students with chronic absence; evaluate impact every six months and adjust.
7. **Grow teacher capability.** Professional learning in literacy and mathematics pedagogy alongside Steiner pedagogy and curriculum integration.

Link to the national curriculum

This goal gives effect to the English and mathematics learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Mātaiaho, and to the Expanded New Zealand Curriculum for students with complex learning needs. Artistic, practical and social learning (Heart and Hands) remains part of how we teach these areas, not separate from them.

Goal 2: A Thriving Staff Culture

A reflective, supportive and capable staff who share responsibility for every student's learning.

The 2026–2028 draft repeated the Teaching & Learning bullets under this pillar; the strategies below replace them.

What success looks like by the end of 2028

- Staff describe the culture as professional, collaborative and safe to raise concerns in.
- The CRSS Staff Ways of Working are visible in meetings, feedback and everyday decisions.
- Every teacher runs an inquiry linked to a strategic goal, and the evidence shows its impact on students.
- New staff are confident in Steiner pedagogy and the New Zealand Curriculum within their first year.

Why this matters to us

A reflective, supportive and capable staff is essential to creating a school culture where every student is valued, supported and able to thrive. By continually developing our professional practice, learning from one another and taking collective responsibility for student learning and wellbeing, we strengthen the quality and consistency of education across the school. This shared commitment builds trust, fosters collaboration and ensures that our distinctive Steiner education continues to evolve to meet the needs of all learners.

Our strategies

1. **Embed the Staff Ways of Working.** Use them in induction, coaching, observation and team agreements (continues the 2026 workstream).
2. **Link professional growth to the plan.** Teacher inquiries in the Professional Growth Cycle connect to Goal 1 and to culturally responsive practice.
3. **Build a coherent professional learning programme.** Balance Steiner pedagogy, literacy and maths pedagogy, te reo Māori and tikanga, and inclusive practice. At its centre is the framework for teachers' capability in mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori that enacts the school's Te Tiriti o Waitangi strategy (ERO priority): developed by November 2026, implemented in 2027, and evaluated annually.
4. **Strengthen induction and mentoring.** A structured first-year programme for teachers new to Steiner education or to New Zealand.
5. **Look after workload and wellbeing.** Review meeting load, reporting demands and planning templates for manageability; act on staff survey findings.
6. **Grow leadership from within.** Clear pathways for staff into middle leadership, supported by the middle leadership development in Goal 4.

Link to the national curriculum

Capable, well-supported teachers are the main lever for delivering the refreshed curriculum; this goal enables Goal 1 and the board's supporting objectives on inclusion and cultural diversity.

Goal 3: Strong, Trust-based Relationships with Whānau, Mana Whenua & Community
Whānau, mana whenua and the wider community are genuine partners in students' learning and the life of the school.

What success looks like by the end of 2028

- Parents say communication from the school is clear, timely and respectful, and they know how to raise concerns.
- Whānau understand how their child is progressing, including in literacy and maths.
- A reciprocal relationship with Ngāi Tūāhuriri is in place, on terms mana whenua have shaped.
- Māori whānau and other communities we rarely hear from are taking part in school decisions.
- The roll is stable or growing, and more Upper School students stay through to Year 13.

Why this matters to us

Strong, respectful and collaborative relationships with whānau, mana whenua and the wider community are essential to creating a connected and inclusive school where every student can thrive. By recognising the knowledge, perspectives and contributions of our community, we strengthen students' sense of belonging, identity and wellbeing, while enriching their learning experiences. Genuine partnerships, built on trust, open communication and shared responsibility, ensure that our school remains responsive to the aspirations of our community and reflects our commitment to both Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our distinctive Steiner special character.

Our strategies

1. **Implement the Parent / Teacher Charter.** Agreed standards for tone, timeliness and channels, with consistent templates and a regular pulse survey (continues the 2026 workstream).
2. **Report progress clearly.** Plain-language reporting on literacy and maths progress that sits alongside the narrative Steiner report.
3. **Build a relationship with mana whenua.** Ask Ngāi Tahu how they would like the school to engage, and take their lead on pace and form.
4. **Hear the voices we rarely hear.** Annual whānau hui for Māori whānau; conversations through trusted parents with Pacific and other communities; personal contact with families of students with learning support needs.
5. **Report back on the plan.** A short "how we are going" update to the community each term, showing what we did with their feedback.
6. **Grow the school community.** Continue roll growth, open days, alumni engagement and Upper School retention work from the 2026 Annual Plan.

7. **Use the festivals and EOTC programme** as shared community occasions and as links to local places, partners and marae.

Link to the national curriculum

Partnership with whānau and mana whenua underpins the local curriculum and supports the board's objectives on equitable outcomes for Māori students and reflecting New Zealand's cultural diversity.

Goal 4: Effective Leadership & Governance for Growth

Stable, transparent leadership and governance that return the school to a fully elected board and keep it there.

What success looks like by the end of 2028

- An elected board is in place, inducted in its responsibilities and in Steiner education.
- Leadership roles, decision rights and consultation pathways are clear and understood by staff and parents, and middle leaders apply the same expectations and practices across the Lower and Upper Schools.
- The board receives regular, reliable reports on progress against this plan, finances, property, health and safety and risk.
- The school's emergency response and business continuity plans are tested and current.

Why this matters to us

ERO (August 2026) judged leadership, school improvement and governance as working towards. It found senior leaders set clear, evidence-based priorities and the school has made significant improvement since the Commissioner and current Principal were appointed, but middle leadership is still building capability, practice is not yet consistent between the Lower and Upper Schools, and data is not yet analysed and used consistently for schoolwide planning. ERO judged governance under the Commissioner to be effective and focused on rebuilding capacity for community governance.

Our strategies

1. **Deliver the Governance Transition & Capacity-Building Plan.** Competencies, recruitment, induction and a clear Board–Principal partnership (continues the 2026 workstream).
2. **Develop middle leadership (ERO priority).** Define middle leader roles and expectations, provide coaching and professional learning, and evaluate the impact of middle leadership on student outcomes from February 2027 and every six months after.

3. **Implement one schoolwide framework of expectations (ERO priority).** Apply the framework developed in late 2026 so planning, assessment, reporting, communication and pastoral processes are consistent across the Lower and Upper Schools, linked to the CRSS Learning Journey; evaluate annually.
4. **Use data consistently for schoolwide planning.** One approach to analysing achievement, attendance and wellbeing data, so school improvement decisions rest on the same evidence across the school.
5. **Run a predictable evaluation cycle.** Quarterly progress checks on each goal and an annual review that feeds the Annual Implementation Plan and Annual Report, with standard reporting templates for curriculum progress, finance, risk and property.
6. **Report on ERO recommendations.** Track each of ERO's four improvement priorities and report actions taken, or reasons for not acting, in the Annual Report, as the amended regulations require.
7. **Keep property safe and fit for purpose.** Complete prioritised health and safety upgrades and property planning.

Link to the national curriculum

Good governance is how the board meets its paramount objective under section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020: ensuring every student can attain their highest possible standard of educational achievement.

How we have prioritised our goals

Goal 1 comes first because student learning is the board's paramount objective; Goals 2, 3 and 4 are the conditions that make it possible.

Priority	Goal	Reason
1	Excellence in Teaching & Learning	Paramount objective; required achievement goal;
2	Effective Leadership & Governance	Return to an elected board is time-bound within this two-year plan; ERO judged leadership, school improvement and governance as working towards
3	A Thriving Staff Culture	Teaching quality depends on a stable, capable staff; builds on 2026 progress

Priority	Goal	Reason
4	Trust-based Relationships	Essential to all goals; much of the 2026 groundwork (Charter, templates) is already under way

When resources are tight, actions under Goal 1 and the commitments to every learner are protected first. Ideas raised in consultation but not taken up in this plan will be recorded, with reasons, in the "What we heard" report.

Responding to ERO's 2026 review

ERO's August 2026 report found the school doing well in 12 of 16 areas and working towards in four: attendance, leadership, school improvement, and governance. Its four improvement priorities are built into this plan as follows.

ERO improvement priority	ERO timing	Where it sits in this plan	What the plan commits to in 2027–2028
Improve regular attendance	Review strategies within 3 months (by November 2026); evaluate impact every 6 months	Goal 1, strategy 6	Reach the Government expectation of 80% regular attendance; reduce chronic absence; evaluate and report impact each half-year
Develop middle leadership to ensure schoolwide consistency	Evaluate impact within 6 months (by February 2027)	Goal 4, strategy 2	Clear middle leader roles, coaching and evaluation of their impact on student outcomes
Strengthen consistency of processes and practices between the Lower and Upper Schools	Develop a schoolwide framework within 3 months; implement within 6 months; evaluate annually	Goal 4, strategy 3	Implement and evaluate one schoolwide framework of expectations, linked

ERO improvement priority	ERO timing	Where it sits in this plan	What the plan commits to in 2027–2028
			to the CRSS Learning Journey
Implement the school's Te Tiriti o Waitangi strategy	Develop a cultural capability framework within 3 months; implement within 6 months; evaluate annually	Goal 2, strategy 3, and Our commitments to every learner	Implement and evaluate the framework for teachers' capability in mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori

The 3-month and 6-month actions fall before or at the start of this plan, so the plan carries them from development into implementation and evaluation. Progress on each will be reported in the 2026 and 2027 Annual Reports, as the amended regulations require.

ERO also identified a recent drop in senior literacy (particularly for boys), junior gaps in literacy for boys and numeracy for girls, and variable progress at NCEA Level 2. These shape Goal 1.

Our commitments to every learner

These four commitments are required in every strategic plan and run across all four goals.

Students whose needs have not yet been well met

This includes Māori and Pacific students, disabled students, students with learning support needs (including gifted students), students at risk of not meeting curriculum expectations, students in care, and students in the youth justice system.

- **Identify:** a learning support register reviewed each term, using achievement, attendance, wellbeing and teacher observation (including Steiner child study).
- **Respond:** tiered support, from classroom adaptation to targeted intervention and specialist referral, coordinated by the Learning Support Coordinator.
- **Partner:** ask families how they want to be involved, and meet with them at least once a term where support is in place.
- **Monitor:** analyse progress for each group in Goal 1 measures, including the gender gaps ERO identified, and report in the Annual Report, as the 2026 amendments now require.

Equitable outcomes for Māori students

- Analyse achievement, attendance, engagement and wellbeing for Māori students separately and compare with non-Māori students each term.
- Hold at least one whānau hui each year so Māori whānau help identify gaps and shape responses.
- Implement the school's Te Tiriti o Waitangi strategy through the cultural capability framework for mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori (ERO priority; Goal 2), so Māori students experience teaching that responds to their culture.
- Weave local Māori perspectives into the curriculum where they fit naturally, such as Class 4 local history and geography, with guidance from mana whenua.

Te reo Māori teaching and learning

- Audit current capacity to teach te reo Māori across the school.
- Strengthen te reo Māori within the languages programme and daily school life (karakia, waiata, greetings, signage).
- Build staff capability over time through professional learning and recruitment.
- Set out a clear process for responding when parents request that their child be taught in or learn te reo Māori, including partnerships with local providers where the school cannot provide this alone.

Reflecting New Zealand's cultural diversity

- Review school festivals so they reflect the southern hemisphere seasons, Matariki and the cultures in our community, alongside the Steiner festival tradition.
- Check school policies and practices against the cultures represented in our roll (in 2026, 16% Māori and 11% Asian students alongside NZ European/Pākehā and other groups), through the School Docs review cycle.
- Invite families to share languages, stories and celebrations in class life.
- Ask students in the annual survey whether they see their identity, language and culture valued at school.

How we will measure progress

Goal 1 is measured with Ministry-specified assessment tools as the regulations require; the other goals use survey, administrative and qualitative evidence. Progress is reviewed quarterly by leadership and reported to the Commissioner (later the board), and summarised for the community each term.

Goal	Measures and evidence	Source and timing	Baseline
1 — Teaching & Learning	Proportion of students at or above curriculum expectation in reading, writing and maths, overall and by group (including by gender)	Ministry-specified assessment tools (e.g. PAT) at agreed points; moderated teacher judgements; twice yearly	ERO 2026: most students at or above expectation
1 — Teaching & Learning	NCEA literacy and numeracy co-requisite attainment by Year 11 and 12; NCEA Level 2 results	NCEA data; annually	ERO 2026: senior literacy recently declined, Level 2 fluctuating [add 2026 results]
1 — Teaching & Learning	Proportion of students attending regularly (target 80%) and rate of chronic absence, overall and by group	Weekly attendance dashboard; termly summary; impact evaluated every six months	ERO 2026: a small majority (50–64%) attend regularly [add exact rate]
2 — Staff Culture	Staff agreement that the culture is professional, collaborative and safe	Annual staff survey (Term 3)	
2 — Staff Culture	Teachers' cultural capability in mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori, against the framework	Framework self-review and observation; annually	Framework due November 2026
2 — Staff Culture	Teacher inquiries linked to strategic goals, with evidence of impact	Professional Growth Cycle records; annually	New measure

Goal	Measures and evidence	Source and timing	Baseline
2 — Staff Culture	Staff retention	HR records; annually	2025–26 turnover
3 — Relationships	Parent confidence in communication and in understanding their child's progress	Parent pulse survey (twice yearly) and annual community survey	
3 — Relationships	Participation of Māori whānau and other target groups in consultation	Engagement records; annually	
3 — Relationships	Roll and Year 11–13 retention	Roll returns; annually	Roll of 292 (ERO 2026)
4 — Leadership & Governance	Middle leaders' impact on consistent practice and student outcomes	Six-monthly evaluation from February 2027	ERO 2026: middle leadership building capability
4 — Leadership & Governance	Consistency of processes and practices between Lower and Upper Schools	Annual evaluation of the schoolwide framework	ERO 2026: not yet consistent
4 — Leadership & Governance	Milestones of the Governance Transition Plan met on time	Commissioner reports; quarterly	Plan in development
4 — Leadership & Governance	Progress on each ERO improvement priority	Action register; reported in Annual Report	4 priorities from the August 2026 report
Commitments to every learner	Progress of students whose needs have not yet been well met, and	Goal 1 data disaggregated;	2026 data

Goal	Measures and evidence	Source and timing	Baseline
	Māori students compared with non-Māori	whānau hui feedback; termly	

Annual targets for each goal will be set in the 2027 Annual Implementation Plan once baselines are confirmed.

Compliance check

This draft addresses every requirement in the Ministry's *Reviewing your strategic plan* quick reference guide; the remaining work is evidence, consultation and confirmation, not structure.

Requirement	Where it is met	Still to do
Board's vision	Our vision	Test with community
At least 3 goals developed with the community	Goals 1–4	Consult Term 4 2026
At least 1 reading, writing or maths goal	Goal 1	Confirm assessment tools and year levels
How goals are prioritised	How we have prioritised our goals	Confirm after consultation
Links to national curriculum statements	"Link to the national curriculum" in each goal	—
Strategies based on community identities, needs and aspirations	Strategies under each goal	Add consultation evidence
Students whose needs have not yet been well met	Our commitments to every learner	—
Equitable outcomes for Māori students	Our commitments to every learner	Confirm with Māori whānau and mana whenua
Te reo Māori on request	Our commitments to every learner	Complete capacity audit

Requirement	Where it is met	Still to do
Cultural diversity in policies and practices	Our commitments to every learner	—
Measures and evidence (assessment tools for achievement goals)	How we will measure progress	Fill baselines
Readily understandable	Plain language; tree design and one-page summary	Plain-language read-through by a parent
Published online and submitted by 1 March	—	Publish and submit by 26 February 2027

As CRSS is not a Specified Kura Board, a Te Tiriti o Waitangi statement is not required – but should we have one anyway?