



# Information for Prospective Members of the Association

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## Swan Hill Christian School's Statement of Faith

(The Nicene Creed)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from Heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made human. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## Swan Hill Christian School's history

Swan Hill Christian School was founded in 1993 as Son Centre Christian School. It began as a Prep to 6 primary school at the John Knox Presbyterian buildings in Campbell St, with 46 students and 2 teachers. The school moved in 1995 to its current location, a beautiful rural environment on the edge of Swan Hill, former home of the Donnington Golf Course, where students are able to enjoy the wide, open rural spaces.

## Purpose Statement

Our purpose is to be an inspired and caring school community that serves and enriches the Swan Hill community as we equip and empower our students to flourish in their journeys of growth. Guided by our Christian faith, we strive to provide values-based education in a vibrant, engaging and inclusive learning environment, respecting and nurturing each student's unique qualities and potential.

## Becoming a Member of the Association

Members of Son Centre Christian School Association seek to apply the biblical direction to *train up children in the way they should go* (Proverbs 22:6) and are committed to shaping the kind of education their children experience. **Members want their children to receive high quality, distinctively Christian education.**

A strong and committed Association is vital to continuing the work of Christian education, as we partner with Christian parents to help them fulfil their mandate of educating their children in Christ.

Therefore, Christian parents and others dedicated to the cause of Christian education are encouraged to join our School Association.

**Swan Hill Christian School is a member-based company limited by guarantee and governed by a Constitution.** A full copy of the Swan Hill Christian School's Constitution is available from the Office.

### **Membership of the Association is important because:**

- You have a vital role in electing suitable Directors who will protect and promote the Purpose and Values of the school.
- It is an expression of your connection with the Purpose Statement and your support for the purposes of the school.
- A faithful, active and prayerful Association ensures that the distinctive Christian character of Swan Hill Christian School is maintained.

### **When a person becomes an Association member they are:**

- Committing to protect and preserve the Purpose of Swan Hill Christian School.
- Committing to governing the organisation by prayerfully and thoughtfully exercising their vote for Board members.
- Delegating to the Board the authority to govern on their behalf.
- Expressing an interest in staying informed and prayerful about the life of the school.

Association members may vote on resolutions at Swan Hill Christian School's Annual General Meeting and should expect to receive audited financial statements along with information about the activities of the school and future initiatives. At the AGM, Association members are responsible for selecting from the membership those who will serve on the School Board.

## Introduction to Governance

Swan Hill Christian School firmly believes that good and effective governance is not simply something we work toward in order to meet secular compliance obligations. Good

governance is a ministry, and by engaging in it, we are maximising our effectiveness as a Christian organisation working in the ministry of education.

## Distinctions between Governance & Management

The Board of Swan Hill Christian School is elected by Association members. **The Board is responsible for the governance of the school.** The Principal is an ex-officio member of the Board. He or she is the Board's chief advisor but they do not exercise a vote on resolutions being considered by the Board. The Principal is responsible for the management function of the school – the day-to-day or operational activities.

Another way to describe the difference between these roles is that the function of the Board is primarily **strategic** and the function of the Principal is primarily **operational**.

## The Board

The Board is the constitutionally elected body who represents the Association in all matters. It is the agent for, and guardian of, the purpose of Swan Hill Christian School. The Board acts strategically with monitoring and control mechanisms in place, to operate and develop the capacity of the School.

### Purpose and Plan

The Board's major task is to ensure that the organisation's purpose for Christian-education is put into practice in the School. Therefore, it is important that the Board articulates a biblical vision for the organisation, develops a strategic plan, makes decisions that enable the plan to be implemented operationally and is in the position to assess progress in reaching the objectives identified in the strategic plan.

### Service

The Board should consist of respected Christian people from the Association, who have a clear understanding of, and commitment to Christ-centred education. Effective Board members show a keen interest in the school. Being a Board member involves a commitment of time and energy. An effective Board provides the educational and organisational context for young people to become " . . . *men and women of God, thoroughly equipped for every good work* . . . ". (II Tim.3).

### Faithfulness

The Board is expected to model faithful Christian living in all its activities as it provides leadership to staff, students and parents. The Apostle Paul exhorts us to bear with one another in love and to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. This means that the Board, elected by Association members, must always seek to cultivate harmony among parents, teachers and students. "*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.*" (Col. 3:15).

## Our National Partners

Swan Hill Christian School is a member of the wider Christian Education National (CEN) family of schools in Australia to whose values and understandings we strongly subscribe. The CEN values are:

- The Bible is central to all that we think and do
- We affirm the close relationship of home, church and school
- Parents have the prime responsibility for the education of their children
- Parents are supported and equipped to effectively govern our schools
- Ongoing Christian teacher development underpins quality Christian education
- A Christian worldview shapes the entire curriculum in our schools
- We are stronger together as a group of schools
- Generosity and sharing are essential to our ethos

In providing education from a uniquely Christian perspective, Swan Hill Christian School is supported by the Christian teacher education body attached to CEN, the National Institute for Christian Education (The Institute or NICE). Swan Hill Christian School regularly supports staff members to receive Christian professional development and post-graduate study, through courses provided by the Institute.

Because of its membership with CEN, Swan Hill Christian School also receives significant support from Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) a representative Christian education advocacy organisation whose mission is to advocate for and protect the interests of Christian schools in the public sphere, both at national and state level.

## Association Membership Application Process

For your convenience the process is explained below. The cost of Association membership is \$10 per person per year.

STEPS	Detail	Application Process
<b>Step 1:</b>	<b>Application form</b> – to be filled in and given to a Board member or handed into the main office.	This must be filled in by the applicant/s on their own or with the appropriate Board Member.
<b>Step 2:</b>	<b>Conversation</b> with a SHCS Board member (or delegate).	You will be contacted by a Board member to arrange a time for an informal chat about the Association and what it entails and how the Association structure works at SHCS.
<b>Step 3:</b>	<b>Recommendation to the Board</b> Your application is recommended to the Board.	This is to comply with the Constitution. Board meetings are held once per month, so this may take a few weeks before you have a response from the Board.
<b>Step 4:</b>	<b>Correspondence sent to you</b>	You will receive official notification of the Board’s decision on your application.
<b>Step 5:</b>	<b>Welcome to the Association</b> (if approved)	You will be asked to attend the next scheduled Association meeting, where you will be officially welcomed into the SHCS Association for Christian Education.
	<b>Participate fully in the life and community of Son Centre</b>  We ask you to pray for the school community and to attend the AGM each year.	Enjoy the life/community of Swan Hill Christian School. We look forward to a fruitful association with your family.

*May the Lord guide you through this important process of Association Membership at SHCS.*