



Little Yarra Steiner School

Music programs can be numerous in some Steiner schools. At Little Yarra Steiner School, a Kindergarten to VCE school in Yarra Junction with 350 students, it is compulsory for all students from Class 3 to Class 8 to play a stringed instrument. Students may also attend additional and non-compulsory music lessons, where extra tuition is given by either staff teachers or private music teachers. Some may attend extra classes to play in the school ensemble, and some students may choose to learn a second instrument.

These variations, however, had led to serious problems in billing parents for music classes and also in paying teachers and tutors accurately. Subsequently, there was often confusion amongst music and administration staff, and some parents.

‘We had an intractable problem,’ said the school’s Education Manager, Jean-Michel David. ‘There were breakdowns in communication and tension between administration and music staff.

‘For example, there was often duplication and even triplication of requests for information.’ With no resolution in sight, five staff members attended a Southern Cross training program in Term 2, 2012. As well as Mr David, there were two Music Coordinators, a staff member from Accounts, and the school’s Marketing Manager.

Through mapping out the problems, the group was able to simplify the issues so that they were more manageable. The school set itself two eventual measures of success: prompt and accurate payments to staff, and prompt and accurate payments from parents.

‘The first major insight was realising that the overall problem was not a particular person’s fault, but a problem in the process,’ said Mr David. ‘We learnt that all parties needed common and accurate information, and that that would help us to cut down the number of steps in the invoicing and billing processes.’

The group saw that it needed to revise and reword forms so that there would be clarity about particular payments for particular music programs.

The school put its new music billing systems into action in Term 3, 2012. ‘It’s been very smooth,’ said Mr David. ‘We now have prompt and accurate payments to staff, and prompt and accurate payments from parents.

‘As well as better processes, we also now have a greater understanding of each other’s roles.’

Mr David added that the school is considering applying the lessons learnt from the Southern Cross training program to other aspects of the school.

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– Jean-Michel David, Education Manager

