

Position Title: Teacher

Location: 10 Lacey's Road, Hurstbridge, Victoria 3099

Work Load: Full-Time

Contract duration - 1 Year, with view to ongoing

### Description of the Learning Co-operative

The Learning Co-operative (Co-op) is an independent, alternative primary school situated on over 15 acres of bush in the semi-rural suburb of Hurstbridge, Melbourne. The Co-op has been operating since the early 1970s and caters for about 20 to 30 children. We are a parent-run cooperative with a full time paid Coordinator who works alongside the parents in the daily operation of the Co-op.-

The Co-op is a unique, dynamic environment made up of a community of diverse families committed to the fundamental belief in the goodness of each individual. As a respectful community, we care for and acknowledge ourselves, our environment, our traditions and the Indigenous history and peoples of our land. We are a compassionate community with a strong sense of social justice.

We believe that, when provided with a positive and supportive environment, children have a natural curiosity and desire to learn. For most of the day Co-op children choose how to spend their time. They may, for example, play, read, work on projects, talk with friends, participate in an adult-inspired activity, make music, dance, go on excursions, make cubbies, create, or play fantasy-role-play games. They may do these things on their own, with other children, or with an adult. We believe that the Co-op environment empowers individuals to have meaningful input into their own learning and personal development.

The Co-op is committed to the process of consensus. Each individual's opinions, thoughts and feelings are respected, acknowledged and validated in the process of making decisions about what is best for the group. Adult and children's meetings are an integral part of our processes, and decisions are made and issues resolved through these meetings.

The Co-op provides more than just schooling; it is a village-like community that gives children and parents access to a wide variety of role models and support. We value the unique talents, abilities and ideas of a wide range of individuals.

### **The role of the Teacher**

The teacher will work in a collaborative team environment with parents in the teaching of the students. However, the teacher's role differs slightly from that of parents in that they, along with the co-ordinator, provide continuity for the children on a daily basis. The teacher also brings

their expertise in education to the community. The role of the teacher is multi-dimensional, and includes the following aspects:

### **Interaction with the children**

The Teacher

1. Has a natural rapport with children – is able to gain their respect and form strong relationships with each child.
2. Ultimately respects each child, accepts individual development and recognises the child's ownership of their own learning.
3. Has an overview of where each child is at with regard to social, emotional and academic development. The teacher will understand what is happening with each child in regard to group and family dynamics.
4. Plays a nurturing role to all children and shows compassion, love and understanding. The teacher will take an active interest in each child, and will understand their unique ways of expressing themselves.
5. Supports and models a non-authoritarian conflict resolution process that respects differences and empowers the children to develop solutions that meet everyone's needs.
6. When necessary, is able to negotiate boundaries with children and can understand the reasons underlying a wide range of behaviours and address their causes.
7. Facilitates a safe environment (emotionally and physically) while also understanding that healthy risk taking is important for children's growth, development, and wellbeing.

### **As a facilitator of learning**

The Teacher...

1. Understands the importance of play to the growth and development of the child, and understands that Co-op is part of a lifelong learning process.
2. Is inspired to work within an emergent curriculum. Fosters diversity and variety and can embrace the learning opportunities provided by such a diverse and interesting group of people.
3. Embraces and encourages child-inspired learning and activities. Understands that children will learn best when they have the flexibility to learn at their own pace.
4. Aims to produce resilient, well rounded, socially competent children who understand themselves as learners and love learning.
5. Facilitates learning in a non-invasive and non-coercive manner, focusing on the process rather than the outcome. Understands that the amazing social learning of Co-op happens in tandem with the exploration of academic, artistic, and cultural learning.
6. Shares the facilitation of learning with parents, and respects and guides parents, when needed, in their role as facilitators of learning. Offers feedback to the parent group or individuals with regard to activities and interests of children.
7. Will facilitate excursions at short notice in response to the spontaneous interests of children. Participates in planning and undertaking camps, excursions and incursions relevant to current interests.

8. Engages in professional learning in alternative education, and other areas of interest.
9. Works with children and their families to ensure that they feel prepared for the transition to high school.

### **Interaction with adults**

The Teacher...

1. Assists parents in their development of constructive relationships with the children.
2. Has an understanding of, and empathy towards, each individual and family situation.
3. Attends and actively participates in regular parent meetings in the evenings (at least fortnightly).
4. Respects and participates in the implementation of decisions made by consensus at these meetings.
5. Offers feedback to the parent group or individuals with regard to activities and interests of children.
6. Is available to discuss issues with parents with sensitivity and confidentiality as appropriate.
7. Will play a role in presenting the Co-op when prospective parents and families visit.
8. Understands that they will be and are willing to work/teach alongside parents throughout each day.
9. Needs to be flexible working in this environment.
10. Can see the value and passions the parent group bring to the children and in collaboration with the parents and coordinator helps to foster a positive learning environment for the students.

### **Curriculum**

The Teacher...

1. Oversees the curriculum, through monitoring the activities of each day, and recording how they meet the curriculum.
2. Keeps informed about current educational issues and shares their findings with the adults.
3. Has an active role in the school review process, which takes place about every six years.
4. Assists in the promotion of the Co-op, as required.

### **Key Selection Criteria**

1. **Teaching excellence:** passion for and commitment to alternative approaches to education, including working within an emergent curriculum. Sound knowledge of child development through the primary years and the importance of play to social, emotional and academic learning. Demonstrated ability to initiate and support inquiry-based and play-based approaches to learning that provide rich learning experiences for children. Ability to foster children's understanding of themselves as learners, and facilitate a passion for learning.
2. **Relationship building:** excellent communicator, and able to work exceptionally well with adults and children. Fosters respectful dialogue and supports community cohesiveness. Demonstrated ability to work with a diverse range of people. Is able to work with empathy to resolve issues through non-authoritarian conflict resolution processes that respect differences and empower the children to develop solutions that meet everyone's needs.

3. **Administrative skills:** demonstrated understanding of the legal and regulatory context in which independent schools operate, and ability to monitor and fulfil these requirements. Excellent planning, preparation and organisational skills.

4. **Core competencies:** Playful, community minded, creative, passionate, patient, flexible, committed, honest, inspiring, excellent planning, preparation, interpersonal and communication skills.

Other requirements 1. Current Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT) registration or equivalent 2. A current Victorian Drivers Licence.  
A probationary period will apply during the first twelve months of employment.

Applications are to be sent by email to [info@hurstbridgelearningcoop.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@hurstbridgelearningcoop.vic.edu.au).  
Contact: Fenja Schulze 0433 420 402

Please attach a short CV and a response to the key selection criteria. Enquiries are welcome via email, or by phone on 03 9718 1481

Closing date: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017