

Salisbury School Board announces new principal



The Salisbury School Board of Trustees is delighted to announce the appointment of Ellie Salcin-Watts to the position of Principal. Ellie will take up the role at the beginning of term one in 2020.

Board Chair Emma Thompson says a thorough recruitment process attracted a number of high-calibre candidates.

Thompson says Salcin-Watts has both hands-on and management experience in learning support, and as the school's Deputy Principal for five terms, she has an intimate understanding of the school and its students.

"Ellie's passion for the school is palpable and her strengths are numerous," says Thompson. "As Deputy Principal she has made a positive impact since she joined us last year by ably supporting our former Principal Brenda and by re-invigorating the school curriculum. We feel very fortunate to have Ellie become our new Principal next year. She is absolutely up to the task as we look forward to having our school rebuilt and increase our roll."

Salcin-Watts has more than eight years' experience in special learning environments supporting those with complex needs. Prior to joining Salisbury in 2018, Ellie was the Assistant Principal at Maitai School in Nelson for seven years. She has a Master of Education (Distinction) from Massey University, a Diploma in Applied Mental Health from the Open Polytechnic and a Diploma of Teaching from Auckland College of Education. She also holds a Clinical Psychology – Memory and Cognition Certificate of Proficiency from Massey University and degrees in both Educational Psychology and Music.

Salcin-Watts says she is excited about stepping into the new role in January and is very much looking forward to continuing to build on the school's reputation for supporting and nurturing girls with complex needs to reach their full potential.

"I'm honoured to be offered the position of Principal. I'm very much ready to take up this role," says Salcin-Watts.

"We have a unique environment at Salisbury, with wonderful teaching and residential staff and students. The announcement of a school rebuild in the near future has helped to cement a bright future for the school and I look forward to guiding and supporting the school through

the process ahead. Brenda Ellis created the perfect springboard for me, and I thank her for her mentorship over my time as Deputy Principal.

“The role of Salisbury in providing high quality 24/7 education and care for young women with special educational needs offers a pathway of significant life change for students. The launch of our new school vision – ‘Every Girl Succeeds’ – aligns deeply with my passion and belief in the role of special residential education,” Salcin-Watts says.

“As part of that vision, this year we have really thought about what every girl needs to succeed. Instead of classrooms, we have introduced three student syndicates, tiered to accommodate a very wide spectrum of learning needs. A whole new range of programmes have been embedded into these syndicates accordingly – like play-based learning, yoga and mindfulness, community work experience, and Riding for the Disabled. I’m excited that in my new role I can continue to strengthen the syndicate programme to make sure every girl succeeds,” she says.

Alison McAlpine will continue in the role as Interim Principal until Salcin-Watts takes up the position in 2020. The soon-to-be vacant role of Deputy Principal has been advertised this week.

Thompson says the Board would also like to express its gratitude to Alison for stepping into the helm until a permanent appointment was made.

“We can’t thank Alison enough for her contribution in the Interim Principal role. The school has been very fortunate to have someone with Alison’s knowledge and expertise, supporting the running of the school over the last few months,” says Thompson.