

2021 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: Niddrie Autistic School (5362)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December 2021 from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- The school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

Attested on 27 April 2022 at 10:41 AM by Paige Davey (Principal)

- This 2021 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

Attested on 03 May 2022 at 02:55 PM by Melanie Mumford (School Council President)

How to read the Annual Report

What does the *'About Our School'* commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school, an outline of the school's performance over the year and future directions.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics and special programs.

The 'Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)' section includes the improvement initiatives the school has selected and the progress they have made towards achieving them through the implementation of their School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan.

What does the *'Performance Summary'* section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

School Profile

- student enrolment information
- the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
- a summary of parent responses in the Parent Opinion Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools

Achievement

- English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum

Engagement

Student attendance and engagement at school, including:

- how many exiting students go on to further studies or full-time work

Results are displayed for the latest year and the average of the last four years (where available).

Considering COVID-19 when interpreting the Performance Summary

The Victorian community's experience of COVID-19, including remote and flexible learning, had a significant impact on normal school operations in 2020 and 2021. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary.

For example, in 2020 and 2021 school-based surveys ran under changed circumstances. Absence data may have been influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Schools should keep this in mind when using this data for planning and evaluation purposes.

How to read the Annual Report (continued)

What does 'NDP' or 'NDA' mean?

'NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'NDA' refers to no data being available. Some schools have no data for particular measures due to low enrolments. There may be no students enrolled in some year levels, so school comparisons are not possible.

Note that new schools only have the latest year of data and no comparative data from previous years. The Department also recognises unique circumstances in Specialist, Select Entry, English Language, Community Schools and schools that changed school type recently, where school-to-school comparisons are not appropriate.

What is the 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum'?

The Victorian Curriculum is assessed through teacher judgements of student achievement based on classroom learning.

The 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' is integrated directly into the curriculum and is referred to as 'Levels A to D'.

'Levels A to D' may be used for students with disabilities or students who may have additional learning needs

'Levels A to D' are not associated with any set age or year level that links chronological age to cognitive progress (i.e., there is no age expected standard of achievement for 'Levels A to D').

About Our School

School context

Niddrie Autistic School has at its foundation a reputation for providing an exemplary education for students with autism from Prep to Year 3. There is a commitment to excellence, which is communicated, to staff, students and families. Members of staff have high expectations and a belief that every child can learn and achieve. The school has profound expertise in developing and implementing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and in assessing and monitoring the learning of students to ensure the goals are achieved.

Niddrie Autistic School is situated 16 kms north of the Central Business District (CBD) in the suburb of Niddrie. The school enrolls students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The philosophy of the school is to provide an intensive program for students with autism to build their social communication and sense of self and others which will guide their inclusion and participation through their early years of schooling and beyond. Our school values are respect, collaboration, diversity, learning as an ongoing process and sharing and growth of knowledge .

To support the needs of autistic children and their families, the school provides initial support for each student as he/she moves to their designated neighbourhood mainstream or special school setting. We are committed to supporting autistic students beyond our school by providing professional learning and advice to our community schools.

In 2021 the enrolment at it's maximum was 96 students, overall with student's exiting to transition 94 students were enrolled at the school in 2021, 18 female and 76 male. 31 percent of students had English as an additional language . The majority of students travel from a wide geographical area and travel to Niddrie by a contract bus service. The enrolment numbers have been consistent for the previous 3 years, we are predicted growth by 1 classroom for 2022 based on the 2021 expressions of interest.

The school's SFOE is 0.413. The school has an Equivalent Full Time (EFT) staff of 44.89 comprised of 1 Principal Class personnel, 2 leading teachers, 2 learning specialists 23.0 EFT Teachers, 18.29 Education Support staff, 1.0 EFT Speech Therapists, 1.0 EFT Occupational Therapist and a business manager. Our team teaching model is essential to the delivery of the specialized program, this is enabled by a classroom teacher ratio of 1.6 teacher to 8 children in each classroom, with all classrooms having 3 educators to deliver the programs.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

In 2021 Niddrie Autistic School de-amalgamated from Western Autistic School to become a 'new' school and a new Principal was employed.

In 2021 all schools worked towards statewide aligned goals, as a 'new' school it's first year of operation we participated in our school review with the focus on the priority goal learning catch-up and extension. Our key improvement strategies (KIS) to support the 2021 priorities were to implement a Professional Learning Community framework to build teacher capability to collaboratively assess each students point of learning in order to inform planning, teaching and evaluation; To align school improvement teams with the school wide goals and to

review the students ILP's for the potential to incorporate an extension goal based on students strengths and individual learning needs alongside the identified areas for growth and development in the foundation curriculum goals.

Teachers explored their understanding of receptive language development via research of developmental frameworks and assessment tools to inform their assessment observation and planning. Students receptive language goals are based on assessment specific to the needs of the individual child. All staff participated in professional learning based on receptive language assessment with Senior Speech therapist Fiona Whelan.

A School Improvement Team (SIT) explored the addition of a strengths based goal in the children's ILP, a foundation curriculum goal based on recognizing and extending the students strengths. The team established a theory to practice statement and surveyed staff and families for their input. After consultation with the school community it was proposed that we formally capture the strengths/interest of the child within the existing structures. A deep commitment to the child centered, strengths based philosophy of the school has benefitted the discussions on how we formally plan and acknowledge the students strengths and interests alongside identifying their learning needs.

COVID19 remote learning settings have been a prominent feature. The school has remained committed to the child at the center philosophy in the delivery of all remote learning. In each short circuit breaker we improved out efficiency in moving quickly into remote learning. Each circuit breaker began with connecting with families via an SSG to discuss and plan the individual home learning plan. This discussion ensured the Individual Learning Plan goals remained the focus whilst being responsive to the family's needs and individual circumstances. Initially we delivered a supervision program at school where the children on site also engaged with the individualized remote program. Along the way we sought feedback from families and staff to continually improve our practice. During Lockdown 3 the interpretation of vulnerable was clarified which enabled more families to access onsite learning. In response to this change the school moved into a hybrid model of onsite and remote learning. This was achieved by educators indicating a preference for onsite or remote work during this time. Predictability and consistency are important for children with ASD to maximise their wellbeing and engagement with education, with this in mind we were able to provide the students with their consistent teaching team and classroom. Moving into lockdown 4 the same settings applied with the addition of families identifying if their child was unable to learn remotely they were able to access schooling onsite. In response we had a marked increase of students returning to school with numbers ranging from 60% up to 86% of students attending onsite by the end of term 3. During this time, which moved into lockdown 5 and 6, the classroom teachers delivered a hybrid program of remote and onsite learning. This was enabled by some remote staff and by supporting staff onsite to also deliver remotely with casual staff.

After consultation with educators a new remote system was implemented in term 4. The new model was responsive to the high numbers of students at school, recognition that remote delivery was different to onsite teaching and learning and required specific skills and considerations. Highly experienced staff available for remote learning delivery became the remote learning team. The remote team connect with the children's family and classroom teacher, they integrate the students ILP goals into the remote program to ensure continuity of learning. This mode recognised and enabled specialisation of remote and face to face learning whilst keeping the wellbeing and learning needs of the child firmly at the center.

Achievement

Given the particular learning needs of our students, we prioritise expressive and receptive communication, functional adaptive and social skills development. These goals are addressed through Individual Learning Plans (ILP) for each student, delivered within the framework of the Victorian Curriculum.

Disruption to student engagement during 2021 was minimised due to the relatively high attendance onsite throughout the year. Students who engaged more in remote learning engaged individually or in small groups with their classroom teacher, enabled by family support.

Comparisons to previous years was not possible due to new data as a 'new' school.

Parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with their child's education via the parent opinion survey responses; I feel confident that this school provides a good standard of education for my child 87%. This school always aims to improve the quality of education it provides 93% Teachers at this school expect my child to do his/her best 93%

As a result of our school review we have developed a clear strategic direction for the next four years which includes, developing a school wide approach to teaching literacy and numeracy for student with ASD, developing a school-wide approach to data collection and analysis to evaluate student learning growth over time through an embedded PLC process, strengthening opportunities for student voice, agency and leadership, strengthening parent/carer participations as active partners in their child's learning and development and developing a whole school approach to seamless transition.

Engagement

2021 presented challenges for student engagement with learning due to the disruptions caused by COVID19. We continued to have a high percentage of students onsite during the third term remote learning period with up to 86% of students returning to onsite learning by the end of term 3. Our COVID safe plan was highly effective in minimising the spread of COVID and disruption to learning when children returned onsite.

Students being engaged with their learning is always a high priority, parents recognised the teachers expertise in providing engaging learning via the parent opinion survey; The teachers are very good at making learning engaging 90%

Engagement with families during 2021, was at a high level, this is reflected in the parent opinion survey; I feel this school values parents' contributions 87% Teachers provide useful feedback and respond to the learning needs of my child 93% I can contact my child's teacher(s) when I need to 93%

Our school had an average of 24.9 days absence per student. It is not unusual for students with ASD to be challenged by attending school due to the high degree of social communication demands. To support their children's wellbeing families may choose to keep their child home for a break from school. Other influencing factors include high rates of absence due to the need to follow COVID safe protocols in 2021, student's even with the mildest cold/flu symptoms did not attend school.

During our school review process students had the opportunity to provide feedback about their schooling. The process that was developed to enable all students to have a voice and participate was highly successful. We will continue to develop means to incorporate student voice into our school wide processes.

Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing of students, families and staff were a priority in 2021. By providing high levels of support during remote learning parents expressed their endorsement of the schools work. This is evident by the high percentage of approval in the parent feedback survey, with an overall school endorsement of 85.2%.

Wellbeing for our students is strongly associated with the development of their expressive communication skills. This has been emphasised in the school's Professional Learning Program, with the development of Professional Learning Communities.

We prioritised our staff wellbeing to deliver the hybrid remote program by employing casual staff to support the successful delivery of both modes. The school invested in staff wellbeing events including online participation in related presentations and frequent wellbeing check ins.

To support student's positive behaviour programs we employed additional education support staff to enable intensive teaching programs to focus on specific skill development for students that were identified as requiring additional support.

Continually improving our knowledge base is essential to us supporting the children's wellbeing, we teamed with Western Autistic School to deliver remote learning to staff and families with renowned educationalist Peter Vermeulen. Family and staff's individual circumstances were prioritised and supported throughout the multiple disruptions to the year.

Our parent opinion survey results in the area of school support indicate high levels of satisfaction; I feel comfortable about approaching this school with any concerns I might have 90%. This school takes parents' concerns seriously 83%.

Student self esteem and confidence is an important factor to their wellbeing, the schools contribution to the students self esteem and confidence was also recognised in the parent opinion survey; The school provides my child with opportunities to build his/her confidence 90%

Respect is one of our founding values, again pivotal to wellbeing, this area is supported strongly by our families opinions; This school treats my child with respect 97%.

Finance performance and position

2021 was Niddrie Autistic School's first year of operation and the school ended the year with a net surplus of \$362,076. These funds have been committed to the ongoing work of improving the school buildings and grounds in 2022, as well as upgrading aging ICT equipment across the school.

Throughout 2021 School Council continued to work with the Victorian School Building Authority on the redevelopment of the school, construction of the new teaching block was completed at the end term 4 2021. As a part of this project, the school received DET grants for new computers (\$58,380) as well as a grant for other consumables (\$36,040) and a furniture grant (\$97,065) that is to be received in 2022. The school expended the majority of these funds to furnish the 12 new classrooms and the various shared spaces in the new building. This included furniture, white goods and ICT equipment, the total amount expended was \$151,555, this expenditure can be seen in the equipment/maintenance/hire

expenditure budget line.

The COVID-19 Pandemic continued to impact Victoria in 2021, which resulted in lockdowns and schools having to move to remote learning. Throughout the remote learning period, the school consistently had a high percentage of students onsite and a small percentage remote learning. This created the need for the school to implement a dual teaching and learning model to ensure all students had the same access to class teachers. To facilitate this, the school was required to employ additional casual staff to ensure there were adequate staff to facilitate both learning models. As a result, \$553,013 was expended on hiring teachers and teacher assistants through an agency.

The school started 2021 without any therapy staff. After numerous unsuccessful recruitment rounds, it was decided to undertake the procurement process to engage a third-party provider. The process was successful, and 2 speech therapists commenced with the school in June 2021. This expenditure and the CRT expenditure can be seen in the support services expenditure budget line and is the highest expenditure item after the student resource package. Even with the COVID-19 restrictions, School Council met regularly via WebEx and members received regular budget updates and finance reports. The school leadership team and School Council continue to manage the school finances within DET policy and guidelines to support the achievement of educational outcomes and the operational needs of the school.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<http://niddrieautisticschool.vic.edu.au/>

Performance Summary

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes.

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrolment Profile

A total of 94 students were enrolled at this school in 2021, 18 female and 76 male.

31 percent of students had English as an additional language and NDP percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Overall Socio-Economic Profile

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE).

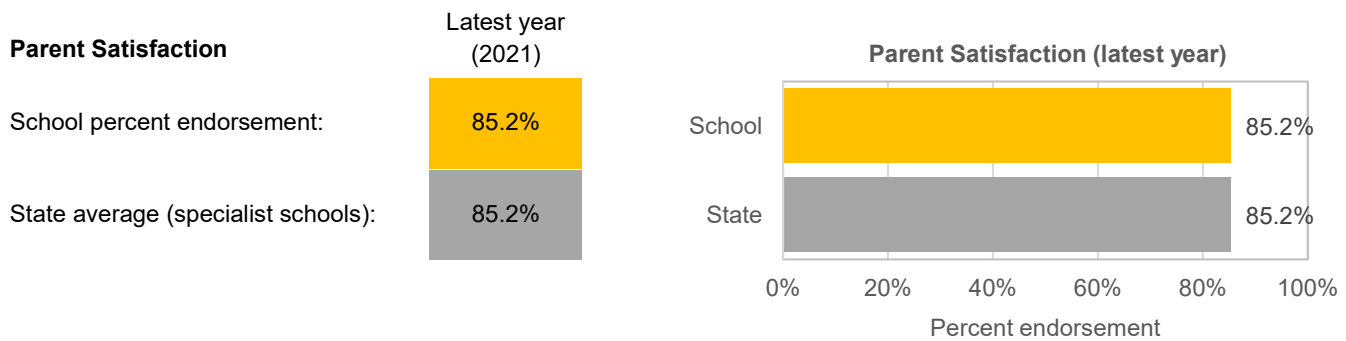
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage, a 'High' band represents a high level of socio-educational disadvantage.

This school's SFOE band value is: NDA

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percent endorsement by parents on their school satisfaction level, as reported in the annual Parent Opinion Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.

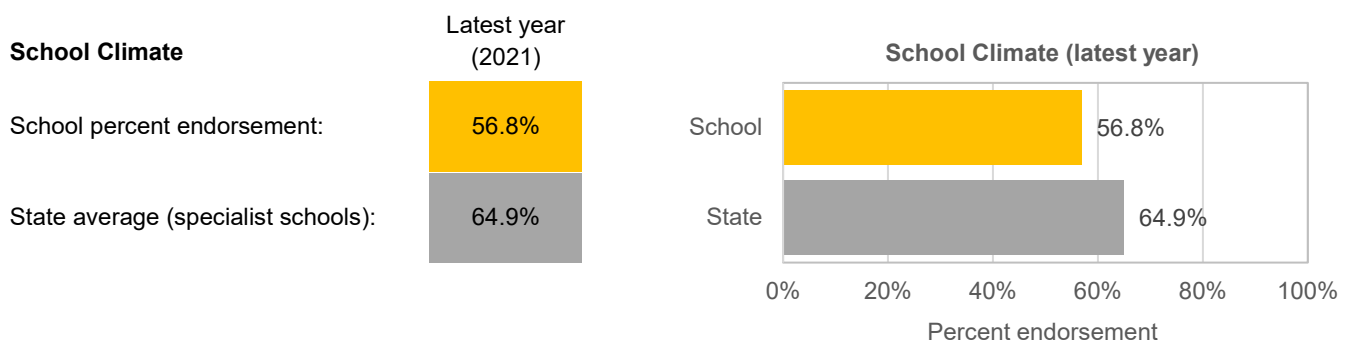


School Staff Survey

The percent endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

Data is suppressed for schools with three or less respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



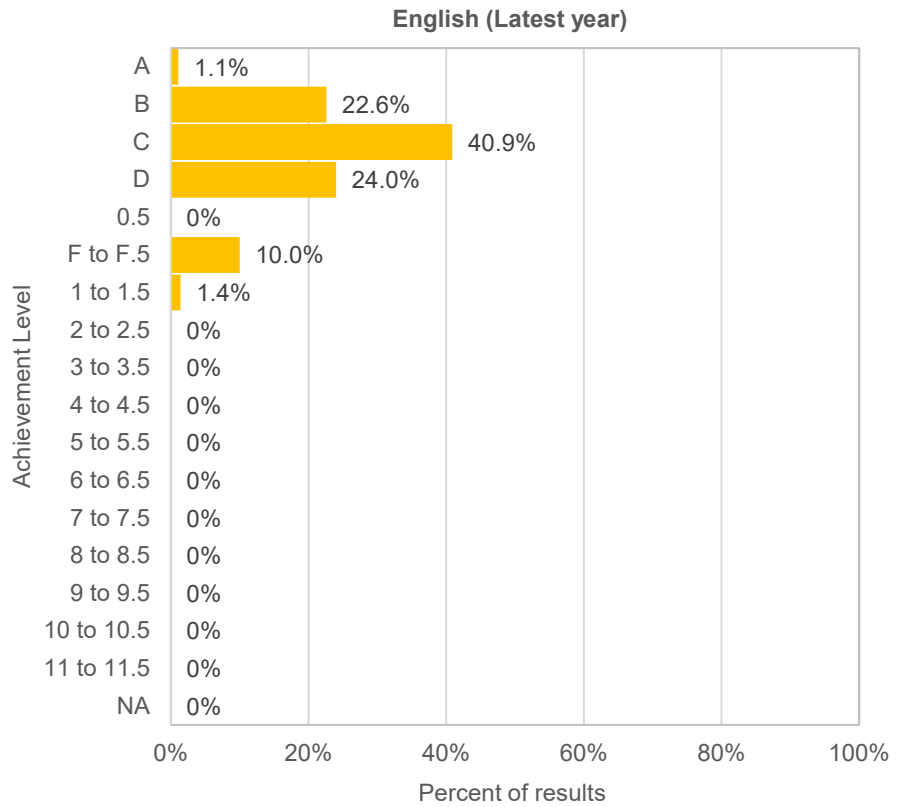
ACHIEVEMENT

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

Percent of results at each achievement level in English and Mathematics.

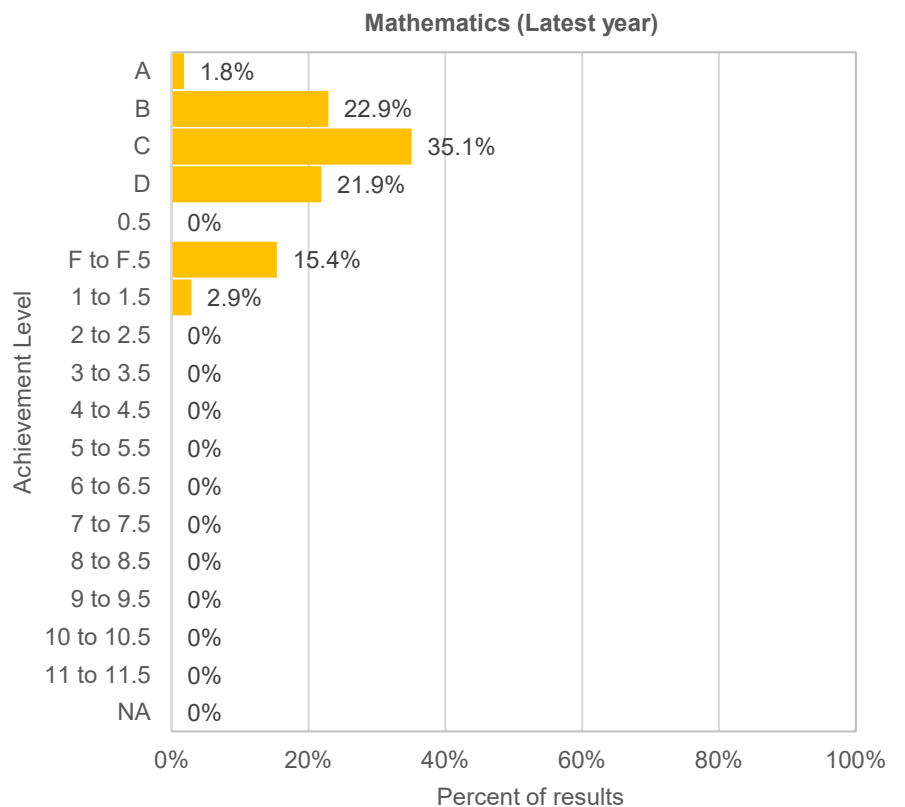
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2021)
A	1.1%
B	22.6%
C	40.9%
D	24.0%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	10.0%
1 to 1.5	1.4%
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
4 to 4.5	NDA
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



Mathematics

Achievement Level	Latest year (2021)
A	1.8%
B	22.9%
C	35.1%
D	21.9%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	15.4%
1 to 1.5	2.9%
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
4 to 4.5	NDA
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



ENGAGEMENT

Average Number of Student Absence Days

Absence from school can impact on students' learning. Common reasons for non-attendance include illness and extended family holidays. Absence data in 2020 and 2021 may have been influenced by COVID-19.

Student Absence	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	NDA	NDA	NDA	24.9	24.9

Students exiting to further studies or full-time employment

Percentage of students going on to further studies or full-time employment.

Note: This measure refers to data from the previous calendar year. Data excludes destinations recorded as 'Unknown'.

Student Exits	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2021

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$4,841,554
Government Provided DET Grants	\$634,704
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$450
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$2,143
Locally Raised Funds	\$1,345
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$5,480,194

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$20,328
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$20,328

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$4,096,773
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$934
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$6,312
Communication Costs	\$3,935
Consumables	\$29,273
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$8,019
Professional Development	\$14,410
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$189,075
Property Services	\$46,993
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$0
Support Services	\$675,821
Trading & Fundraising	\$2,850
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$9,083
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$34,640
Total Operating Expenditure	\$5,118,118
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$362,076
Asset Acquisitions	\$0

- (1) The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.
- (2) Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are as of 25 Feb 2022 and are subject to change during the reconciliation process.
- (3) Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.
- (4) Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$425,098
Official Account	\$12,773
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$437,871

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$165,209
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$231
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$19,866
School Based Programs	\$50,000
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$74,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$50,436
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$60,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$419,742

All funds received from the Department, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with Department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.