



South Coast School for Children with Autism 2004 Annual Report

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) – formerly Autism Association of NSW – operates six schools located in the Sydney Metropolitan area, the Hunter region, the Central Coast and the South Coast. These schools are schools for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) who require specialised education programs.

The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to enable them to integrate into the wider community and to become as independent as is possible. In recognition of the special needs of students with ASDs, the ratio of staff to students is low. Aspect schools provide educational services for children aged 4 to 16 years. Aspect has a policy of transitioning students with ASDs into more inclusive settings. These settings include mainstream, support classes or special schools. The decision to transition a student is based on the student's ability to cope in a less specialised setting and is made by both families/carers and staff as part of the Individual Education Plan.

All Aspect schools comprise a base school/administrative centre and a range of satellite classes. A satellite class is an autism specific support class operated by an Aspect base school but which is located in either a NSW Department of Education & Training or Catholic Education Office mainstream school. Satellite classes are an important step in the transition of students with ASDs into wider educational settings.

The South Coast School for Children with Autism caters for students from a wide geographical area, Illawarra, Shoalhaven & Bega Valley.

Illawarra

Helensburgh in the north to Kiama in the south and Appin to the west. The base school at Corrimal has early childhood and primary classes. There are four satellites in the Wollongong area. These are located at Towradgi Public School, Hayes Park Public School, Para Meadows School for Specific Purposes and Warilla North Public School. These satellite classes offer placement for students in the kindergarten to high school range within Department of Education & Training schools.

Shoalhaven

Gerringong in the North to St Georges Basin area in the South and Kangaroo Valley in the West. The classes are located on the infants' site of Nowra Public School.

Bega Valley Shire – infants class is located at Pambula Public School.

The school provides a specialised curriculum and community integration programs which are supported by a multidisciplinary team comprising of an occupational therapist, family support worker and school counsellor.

1. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Every student has an individual program developed in consultation with families, after careful assessment of their strengths and needs in all environments. The schools' curriculum is based on the core competencies of autism including social, communication, sensory and behavioural needs which are integrated into the NSW Board of Studies mainstream curriculum – the Key Learning Areas (KLAs). The school uses a multi-disciplinary team approach, working collaboratively with families to develop the best possible outcomes for the students. The school provides information and training workshops to families to help them support their child.

No year 3, year 5 or year 7 students participated in the Basic Skills Test (BST) i.e. Primary Writing Assessment (PWA) or English Lit(ELLA). In 2004 5 students of year 3 age, 2 students of year 5 age and 2 students of year 7 age attended the South Coast School. Their individual student profile achievements are summarised below.

Individual Student Priorities Achievement Summary				
2004				
Year 3				
Achieved 42%	Almost Achieved 27%	Partial 18%	Little/ No Progress 6%	Not commenced 6%
Year 5				
Achieved 62%	Almost Achieved 38%	Partial %	Little/ No Progress %	Not commenced %
Year 7				
Achieved 33%	Almost Achieved 33%	Partial 17%	Little/ No Progress 9%	Not commenced 1%

2. TEACHER STANDARDS

The school employs fifteen teachers in permanent and part time positions. All teachers have teaching qualifications awarded from a higher education institution within Australia.

3. RETENTION RATES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Years compared	Year 7 total enrolment on census date	Year 10 enrolment on census date	Year 7 enrolment at census date remaining in Year 10 on census date	Apparent retention date	Actual retention rate
2000/2004	1	0	0	0	0

As for all of Aspect's schools, the South Coast School for Children with Autism has a policy of transitioning students with autism spectrum disorders into more inclusive settings. The decision to transition a student is based on the student's ability to cope in a less specialised setting and is made by both families/ carers and staff as part of the Individual Education Plan. The success of the schools transition programs reflects the small number of students years 7-10 continuing their education at Aspect Schools.

4. ENROLMENT POLICIES AND PROFILES

STANDARD 1: SERVICE ACCESS

1.1: SERVICE ENTRY

1.1.2: Service Entry: Schools

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) will ensure that children with autism spectrum disorders who require specialised educational placement in an Aspect school and who meet the criteria for enrolment, will have access to enrolment based on relative need and subject to the availability of a suitable placement.

When parents or carers are seeking enrolment for a child in an Aspect school, there must be a match between the child's needs and the capacity of the Aspect school to meet those needs and the needs of the child's family or carers. For example, the placement offered must be age appropriate and directed at providing the child with a school placement in the least restrictive environment possible.

Aspect also recognises that children with an Autism spectrum disorder have the right to access and equity of services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity religion, or language. As a service provider Aspect will respond appropriately and sensitively to the needs of the entire community including people from indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the limit of available resources.

Student Population

All students enrolled at the South Coast School for Children with Autism have been approved for enrolment by the Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Eligibility Committee to determine that they have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

The South Coast School enrolment for 2004 was 59 students (7 girls and 52 boys). Four students were in a secondary class with 88% of the school population aged 8 years and under.

5. POLICIES

Policies tabled below cover;

- A) Student welfare
- B) Discipline
- C) Reporting complaints and resolving grievances

Parents/caregivers may request a copy of policies by contacting the school office.

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- minimizes risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- supports the physical, social, academic and emotional development of students
- provides students welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development

A) Student Welfare

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare are implemented the following policies and procedures were in place (or being developed) during 2004.

Policy	Changes in 2004	Access to full text
Child Care and Protection encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation requirements • Definitions • Guidelines • Procedures • Responding to allegations against employees • Investigation processes • documentation 	Approved July 2004 to comply with current legislation	Issued to all staff Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
Code of Conduct for staff encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work & personal behaviour • Confidentiality & Privacy • Conflict of Interest • Copyright • Acceptance of gifts or benefits • Personal presentation • Public statements • Complaints handling • Legislation 		Issued to all staff on commencement of employment Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
Community Access encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Procedures Staff requirements • Supervision • Risk Assessment 	Amended November 2004	Abbreviated text in Parent IEP Handbook Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation 		
<p>Communication encompassing Formal and informal mechanisms in place for facilitating communication between the school and those with an interest in the student's education and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for all communication in AANSW • Access to decision making in the Association 	<p>Reviewed 2004 Approved February 2004 to comply with DADHC disability standards</p>	<p>Text of class communication in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p>Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin. office</p>
<p>Duty of Care & Dignity of Risk encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles • Definitions • Guidelines 	<p>Approved November 2004</p>	<p>Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office</p>
<p>Education encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning characteristics of people with ASD • Assessment • Features of educational programs for people with autism • Transition • Training and consultancy 		<p>Full text in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p>Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office</p>
<p>Emergency Procedures encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Procedures and Contingency Planning • Legislation 	<p>Amended April 2004</p>	<p>Full text in Our People Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office</p>
<p>Families as Partners encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Collaborative consultation • Sharing of skills, knowledge and experience 		<p>Full text in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p>Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office</p>
<p>Individual Educational Plan encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Process • Structure 		<p>Full text in Parent IEP Handbook</p> <p>Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office</p>
<p>Incidents/ Critical Incidents encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Guidelines 	<p>Reviewed 2004 for approval 2005</p>	<p>Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin. office</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation Guidelines • Procedures • Documentation 		
Medication and Illness encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the unwell person • Procedure • Administering children's medication • Asthma plan • Epilepsy management • Documentation 		Abbreviated text in Parent IEP Handbook Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
Missing Client encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background • Protocol • Prevention • Documentation 		Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
O H & S encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation OH & S Act 2000 & OH & S Regulations 2001 • Consultation • Induction & Training • Incident & Accident reporting • Personal Protective Equipment 	Amended November 2004 to comply with current legislation	Full text in Our People Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
PRN Medication encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Procedures 	Being reviewed 2004 for approval 2005 to be used in conjunction with a behaviour support plan	Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
Student Attendance encompassing	Being developed for approval 2005	
Sun Safe encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines 	Revised policy October 2004	Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
Swimming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment • Staffing • Staff qualifications • Locations 	Reviewed and approved July 2004	Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
Visual Support encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles • Guidelines 	Approved September 2004	Full text in Parent IEP Handbook Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office

B) Positive Behaviour Support for Challenging Behaviour

Positive Behaviour Support for Challenging Behaviour encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Legislation • Individual planning and support • Assessment • Prohibited/ restricted practices • Crisis intervention 	No changes	Full text in Parent IEP Handbook Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder admin office
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C) Policies for Complaints and Grievances Resolution

The School's policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents, students and staff. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

The full text of the School's policy and processes for complains and grievances resolution is provided in the Our People Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy and Our Management Policies, Guidelines & Procedures Policy folder in the administration office.

6. SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

AREA	PRIORITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS
Teaching & learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of uniform literacy assessment tools across the school • improve sensory intervention strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all teachers trained and implementing 'First Steps – Reading Development Continuum' • all teachers trained • gross motor program implemented • sensory strategies implemented in classroom • all classrooms are equipped to support sensory needs of students
Family Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase support to families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 parent information workshops held • 10 "Coffee Morning" parent support group meetings held – numbers increased during the year • Grandparent network meetings held in Corrimal & Shoalhaven • 5 week "Just for Sibs" program held

OH & S compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training in manual handling techniques • training in risk assessment • hazard & risk identification • fire extinguisher training • infection control • facilities and equipment • revision of Non Violent Crisis Intervention strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all staff trained • all teachers trained • all teachers and aides trained • all teachers in school and aides at base school trained • all staff trained • all short term priorities in the plan have been completed – playground audit / playground upgrade • all staff trained
Continuous Improvement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transition survey to parents and receiving schools for students who transitioned 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey completed – 94% of students are still in same transition setting
Student achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transition students with ASD to more inclusive setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22% of student population transitioned in 2004 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6 students transitioned to a mainstream setting ○ 1 student transitioned to a support setting ○ 6 students transitioned to a school for specific purposes
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new satellite class in a primary school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warilla Public School satellite commenced with four students

7 SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

