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Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia's largest not-for-profit provider of services and supports working with people on the autism spectrum and their families.

Knowledge about autism has come a long way since 1966 when six families founded Aspect as the Autistic Children's Association of NSW to provide schooling and support. Now, Aspect operates one of the world's largest networks of schools and satellite classes for students on the autism spectrum with an enrolment of around 1000 students across the 9 Aspect schools in New South Wales and South Australia.

We offer evidence-informed services and supports across all life stages and share this evidence-informed Aspect practice and applied research internationally.

At Aspect, we provide people on the autism spectrum with the opportunity to realise their unique potential, as well as providing much needed support to their families, carers, friends and colleagues. Aspect's vision is to provide the best possible opportunities for people on the spectrum. We believe that people on the autism spectrum are a different brilliant.

Message from the Principal

In 2017 Aspect Hunter School provided education for 131 students on the autism spectrum across seven sites. Fifty two students were enrolled at the main school at Thornton with the remaining students enrolled in the satellite program. The satellite program includes classes based at Tarro, Waratah West, Cardiff, Abermain and Port Macquarie. All classes catered for primary aged students except for the Port Macquarie High School satellite which provided education for 15 high school aged students from years 7 to 9. All students at Aspect Hunter School have a diagnosis of autism and the program focuses on developing and implementing an individual plan with goals that become a priority through the delivery of the class program.

The primary focus of the school is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition to less specialised settings. Approximately one quarter of our students transition to a less specialised setting each year. A detailed overview of our Comprehensive Approach, Mission, Vision and Values can be found on our website.

In 2017 Liz Murray resigned as school principal after 26 years of service. Liz's commitment and contribution during this time lead to significant growth and development of the Aspect Hunter School program. In term 4 Lara Cheney commenced in the principal role following Meghan Williams who acted as Principal in term 3.

The teaching teams at Aspect Hunter School demonstrate such passion and enthusiasm for their work and in 2017 supported their students to enjoy school life and achieve positive outcomes whilst working closely with parents and others supporting their students.

We are looking forward to a positive year in 2018 and developing plans to build a high school adjacent to our primary school at Thornton which is due to commence in term 1 2019.

Lara Cheney Principal



Message from the P&F

It has been on honour to once again be President of Hunter Aspect School's P&F. I am so grateful to the staff of Aspect for what they have given my son, Riley. This is my opportunity to give back to the school.

2017 was a huge year for Aspect Hunter School. We were so fortunate to have received some significant financial donations and we also saw a change of school leadership.

We started the year with a donation from Westfield Kotara for \$11,621. This donation was a result of the Christmas Gift Wrapping campaign. Many parents, grandparents and staff assisted in gift wrapping over a two-week period. Westfield Kotara matched dollar for dollar.

In April, Aspect held its Annual Walk for Autism event. The school had its Walkathon at Newcastle Foreshore Park. It was a huge success with the school community. Our students were sponsored to walk and we raised \$24,023.

Once again, ex-Aspect family and P&F members, Shane and Michelle Finlay, hosted the annual Steel City Finance Planners Race Day. The day raised just over \$30,000. The Finlay's continue to be wonderful supporters of the school.

We had a change of school leadership this year. The P&F thanked Liz Murray for her efforts and welcomed our new Principal, Lara Cheney, in September. Lara has been a welcomed addition, with vast experience. Lara officially announced in November that Aspect Hunter School would begin the process of adding a High School. This is a much needed resource in the Hunter and we look forward to seeing it eventuate.

Apart from fundraising, the P&F's also facilitated opportunities to connect and support families. Social nights and parent morning teas hosted by the P&F, provide an opportunity for parents and staff to socialise in a relaxed environment. These events are so important for families.

Finally, I would like to thank Emily Baitch (P&F Secretary) for all her assistance during the year, and the many parents and families who helped that the various activities in 2017.

Leeanne Hawke P&F President





Student performance in standardised national and state-wide tests and examinations

Each student has an individual profile of characteristics that outlines strengths and interests, current levels of functioning and areas for development in the autism-specific areas of learning: social communication, social interaction, behaviours and sensory processing 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.

Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

For NAPLAN results, please refer to My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Record of School Achievement

There were no RoSA credentials issued to students in 2017.

Professional learning and teaching standards

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	6
Conditional	4
Provisional	9
Proficient Teacher	17
Highly Accomplished Teacher(voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	36

Teaching standards

All teachers have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as

recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

Professional learning

The Aspect Hunter School teaching and learning team participated in a professional learning and development program in 2017 which focused on compliance based learning and development and other learning activities related to autism and education curriculum design and delivery. The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2017:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Aspect Comprehensive Approach including; individual planning, learning and participation, transition and inclusion, structured teaching, positive behaviour support, health and wellbeing, specialist collaboration, family and community engagement.	All
Staff Induction – new staff participated in the Aspect New Starters Day and onsite school specific induction programs.	16
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct - face to face workshop and online module.	All
Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (foundation and refresher courses) - a framework for decision making and problem solving to prevent, de-escalate, and safely respond to disruptive or assaultive verbal and physical behaviours	All
Foundations of Positive Behaviour Support online course - an introduction to the theory and concepts of positive behaviour support and its application to working with students with an autism spectrum disorder in the school setting	All
Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	All
Disability Standards for Education - overview of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) and the legal obligations of all education providers	All
CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	All
First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	6
Creating Structured Learning Opportunities based on the methods of TEACCH	All
Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC 2017) – an international autism community conference focusing on the shift in autism research and practice to look beyond the early childhood and school years and focus on the whole lifespan for people on the spectrum	6
Play Based Learning	All
Teaching Emotions and Emotional Strategies	All
Communication Systems in the Classroom	All
KidsMatter Workshop	All

Composition of teaching staff

Composition of Aspect Hunter School staff is documented on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au

No staff is identified as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

Student attendance

Student attendance rates

Year level	Attendance rate %
Kindergarten	82.89%
Year 1	92.68%
Year 2	89.64%
Year 3	80.09%
Year 4	92.95%
Year 5	90.23%
Year 6	89.13%
Year 7	91.39%
Year 8	80.47%
Year 9	87.34%
Year 10*	n/a

(* There were no Year 10 students enrolled in 2017)

For the whole school attendance rate, please refer to the school's data on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au.

Managing students' non-attendance

Non-attendance is managed by the Principal. Meetings with parents can be convened in view of developing necessary supports. Supports may include but are not limited to a behaviour support plan, behaviour contract, changes to program offered (i.e. incorporating more special interest project based learning), and school attendance improvement plan.

Student retention rates

As with all of Aspect's schools, Aspect Hunter School has a policy of transitioning students into less specialised/ more inclusive settings. The decision to transition a student is based on the student's readiness and ability to cope in a less specialised setting and is made in collaboration with families/carers as part of the student's Individualised Plan (IP). The success of the school's transition program is reflected in the relatively small number of students enrolled across the school in Year 3 upward.

In 2017, 39 students transitioned from our school. 15 students transitioned to mainstream schools, 19 to support classes, 4 to special school settings and one to home schooling.

Enrolment

Aspect Hunter School had an average enrolment of 107 students, 19 girls and 88 boys.

Enrolment Policies

Policy - Service Entry: Schools

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides educational services for eligible school aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Policy Purpose

This policy details the processes to be followed to determine eligibility for placement in an Aspect School.

Scope

For all Aspect schools.

Definitions

<u>Eligible school aged child</u> - Eligibility for enrolment in an Aspect school requires a diagnosis of an autism spectrum

disorder by a pediatrician, clinical psychologist or psychiatrist and a recent cognitive assessment by a psychologist.

<u>Aspect School Enrolment Committee</u> - is the school based committee that meets once per term to determine if a child is eligible for placement. It comprises:

School Principal

School Family Counsellor

School Coordinator

<u>Aspect Eligibility Committee</u> - is the Education Committee, convened by the National Director, Aspect Education that clarifies applications sent by the Aspect School Enrolment

Committee.

Procedures

Each Aspect School Principal is responsible for:

- Organising an information meeting once per school term for prospective parents or guardians who would like to enroll their child.
- a. This meeting outlines the school program and application process
- b. Application for enrolment form is available at this meeting.
- 2) Convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee which meets once per school term following the information meeting to review applications submitted.
- a. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect School. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must have the following:
- a current diagnosis which clearly states that the child fulfils the criteria for ASD from a specialist medical practitioner or clinical psychologist, which is not more than 12 months old and
- a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ Testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-111, Stanford Binet V), which is not more than 2 years old.
- 3) Informing the parents of the outcome of their child's application for a placement in an Aspect school.
- a. If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the principal will inform the parents or guardians that the diagnosis has been confirmed and their child's name has been placed on the schools waiting list. If a vacancy arises, the school principal or delegate interviews families that might fill the vacancy regarding accommodations/adjustments for their child.
- 4) Referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification.

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- 1) Convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any applications that require clarification.
- 2) Reporting to Aspect principals the results of the Aspect Eligibility Committee, so that they can inform the parents of the outcomes.

The School Principal will inform the parents or guardians if the diagnosis has been confirmed or not and if confirmed the child's name is placed on the schools waiting list.

A parent or guardian can appeal the decision if the

diagnosis is not confirmed. The principal will consult with the relevant staff, including the National Director, Aspect Education, and inform the family of the outcome of the review.

Guidelines

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) recognises that children with an autism spectrum disorder have the right to access and equity of service 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, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the limit of available resources.

When vacancies arise in the school, the decision about how to fill them is made based on whether the type of vacancy available, for example, a preschool, primary or adolescent group, would be appropriate for the child, a child's age, the length of time a child has been on the waiting list, the availability of alternative placements and the family situation.

References

Legislation

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Community services (Complaints, Appeals and Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Commonwealth)

Education Act 1990 (NSW)

Education Act 1972 (SA)

Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)

National Disability Service Standards

Standard 5: Service Access

Other Relevant Policies

Complaints by People with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Family Members and other Aspect Clients

Contributing to Decision Making

Fee Collection

Fee Reduction

Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality

Registration & Accreditation Procedures: Schools

School Fees and Compulsory Building Levy

Working with Families

Policy - Service Exit: Schools

A student enrolled in an Aspect schools may leave because:

- 1. the student transitions to a new setting;
- 2. the student's parents withdraw their child from the Aspect school:
- 3. a safe working environment for students and staff cannot be achieved; or
- 4. because of the non-payment of outstanding schools fees.

Policy purpose

This policy sets out the guide for Aspect staff when a student leaves an Aspect school.

Scope

All Aspect schools

Procedures

1. Transition

When a student transitions from an Aspect school to another educational placement the Aspect school principal follows the procedure outlined in the policy 02 01 09 Transition of students from an Aspect School.

2. Parent choice to withdraw their child outside the transition process

When parents, guardians or the person responsible informs the Aspect school principal that their child will be leaving the school, the school staff will discuss with the parents, guardians or the person responsible what transition and post-transition support the child may need and what support the school can offer.

The Aspect school principal will consider requests for transition and post-transition support from families and may provide this if resources are available.

Parents, guardians or the person responsible are required to give the school's principal one term's notice in writing of their intention to withdraw their child from an Aspect school. If notice received is less than one term, 1 months school fees will be payable in lieu of notice.

3. Safe working environment

Even with Aspect's very active and specialist intervention to support the student, an Aspect school principal may decide that a school is unable to maintain the enrolment of a child in the school if it cannot achieve an acceptably safe working environment for students and staff. Such decisions will be made as a result of procedural fairness considering the steps outlined in Appendix A.

If an issue arises for any other reason, in which the principal believes that the mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation between the parents, guardians or the person responsible and school has broken down, to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship, the principal will try and resolve the issue at the earliest indication.

If the principal is unable to resolve the issue and following discussion and agreement with the National Operations Director,- Aspect Schools, the principal may require the parents, guardians or the person responsible to remove the child from the school.

4. Non-payment of outstanding school fees

Aspect can make a decision to exit a student for non-payment of outstanding fees as outlined in the policy O8 14 O2 Fees Collection policy.

Guidelines

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides educational services for eligible school aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Legislation

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Commonwealth)

Education Act 1972 (SA)

Education and early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)

Education Act 1990 (NSW)

Equal Opportunities Act 1984 (SA)

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

National Standards for Disability Services

Standard 5: Service Access

Other Relevant Policies

Complaints & Feedback by Aspect Service Users, Family Members & the Public

Discipline - Schools

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Fees Collection

Individual Planning and Review

Positive Behaviour Support

Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality

Prohibited and Restricted Practices

School Fees

Transition of students from an Aspect School

Working with Families

Other School Policies

Common of a discount	Character 2017	A
Summary of policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
Student welfare The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies: • Person centred approach and recognition of values - define and work towards achieving individual's goals and personal lifestyle choices with support and input from those who care about them • Risk management framework - identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks • Duty of care and dignity of risk - ensures that staff understand and implement the principles of Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk, recognising the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks • Safeguarding the people we support - Aspect is committed to appropriately responding to and preventing incidents of abuse, injury, neglect and exploitation of the people we support, in both participation with Aspect, and as a partner of the broader community	Approved by Aspect Governance committee as Aspect overarching policies.	The full text of Aspect policies Person centred approach and recognition of values; Risk management framework; Duty of care and dignity of risk; and Safeguarding the people we support can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect
Anti-bullying For some young people on the autism spectrum, it can be very difficult to recognise bullying. The school seeks to develop supports to assist students to understand that: • bullying is about the misuse of power in • relationships • bullying is when someone experiences • repeated verbal, physical and or social • behaviour that causes harm • bullying is mean and can be very hurtful • there are different kinds of bullying • no kind of bullying is ever OK • bullying should always be reported • adults will do all in their power to take it • seriously and deal with it	No changes were made in 2017.	http://www.positivepartnershi ps.com.au/sites/default/files/p ositive_partnerships_bullying_fact_sheet.pdf
Discipline Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) considers that the behaviour of children with autism spectrum disorders requires support and understanding. Challenging behaviours are best understood and responded to by applying a positive approach as outlined in Aspect's Positive Behaviour Support Policy. Positive Behaviour Support is a comprehensive approach to supporting situations where there is challenging behaviour and combines the science of learning (from Applied Behaviour Analysis) with human rights and values. PBS works in respectful collaboration with individuals and their families to use effective evidence based strategies to increase the quality of life for all involved.	The policy was reviewed in 2017 and was approved as an overarching Aspect policy. The policy was restructured to the new policy framework but there were no changes to the policy.	The full text of Aspect Positive Behaviour Support policy can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect

Summary of policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
Complaints and grievances resolution		
Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management.	No changes were made in 2017.	The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from the School Principal.
Aspect's complaints management process provides a transparent framework for promptly and sensitively addressing and resolving complaints and disputes that may arise from complaints having regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy.		Sansan

2017 school determined priority areas for improvement and comments on the achievements

AREA	PRIORITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS
Teaching and Learning	Embed a focus on student strengths and interests in every lesson every day, linked to our purpose a different brilliant	Staff include in program differentiation a focus on incorporating individual student interests to increase motivation and participation.
Family Support	Term 1 - staff familiarise themselves with entry survey information and meet families to discuss how we can support them. Term 3 - check in with individual families re progress.	Teaching staff reviewed parent entry surveys and provided relevant support by sharing information, connecting families with other service providers and tailoring family workshops to respond to learning priorities.
Staff Development	Identify staff presenting at APAC 17. Submit 18 papers from Aspect Hunter School staff.	18 abstracts submitted and 5 staff presented at APAC 17. A number of staff delivered presentations across the year and delivered education outreach to local schools and early
	Seek and prioritise opportunities to present our ACAE at a range of conferences across the year.	childhood service providers.
WHS Compliance	Staff training in the 18 Principles of the Safeguarding the People we Support policy.	All staff completed training.
Continuous improvement	Work through the Embedding Excellence project to ensure improvements are embedded in daily practice across the school.	With the change in school leadership the Embedding Excellence project was put on hold until the 2018 school year.
	All students to have a green form completed in term 1 which identifies individualised proactive autism specific strategies.	Green forms completed in term 1.
Student achievement	All students to have appropriate visual supports for self-regulation embedded in daily practice.	Self-regulation was a focus of Individual Planning meetings with goals set and supports put in place.
	All Teacher Aides receive training in Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).	Training for Teachers and Teacher Aides in PBS completed.

AREA	PRIORITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS
Extend services to	Deliver Whole School Consultancy with regional communities.	Education Outreach included a focus on schools in regional communities with two consultancies completed.
reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	Participate in Positive Partnerships delivery in Port Macquarie and one other area.	A Coordinator joined the delivery team for Positive Partnerships.

School determined priorities for 2018

AREA	PRIORITIES
Teaching and Learning	Embed the Aspect Comprehensive Approach with particular emphasis on the Five Point Star.
	Redefine the educational program offered at the high school satellite in Port Macquarie
	Gain NESA registration and accreditation for stage 5 and RoSA for the high school satellite in Port Macquarie.
	Develop a new scope and sequence and unit overviews for K-6 for all sites.
	Engage families by providing at least two opportunities per term for parents to be involved in their child's school activities.
Family Support	Provide opportunities for families to attend workshops (at least one per term).
	Achieve a net promoter score of 85%.
Staff Development	Develop and implement an annual professional learning and development program which links to support and supervision processes.
WHS Compliance	Work with Aspect WHS to ensure facilities and practices are compliant and conduct regular audits of environments.
	Improve practice in relation to risk assessments for community access
Continuous Improvement	Establish new whole school programs at the main school site at Thornton to provide new opportunities for students to develop skills and have new experiences.
	Develop a plan for to establish a high school program at Thornton to commence in 2019.
Student Achievement	Increase student engagement and participation in school by drawing on individual student interests to motivate them.
Extend services to reach more students	Commence one new satellite class.
with autism spectrum disorder	Connect with families of children on the school waitlist and offer support and advice.

Respect and Responsibility

Aspect Hunter School wants all students to recognise that they are valued and an integral part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility. There is much scope to develop talents through each student's Individual Plan and to learn through experiences.

The structure of the school's satellite program provides opportunities for students to participate in classes and cultural activities with host school students, which allow them to get to know each other. The satellite program has assisted in promoting respect for the individual and the rights of others.

Aspect Values have been reviewed with Aspect Board of Directors and Management Team in collaboration with our Stakeholders. Aspect value of "We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirror the nine recommended values (National Framework for Values in Education).

Aspect has a commitment to ensuring all team members know and embrace our core values to ensure they are reflected in interactions and relationships with stakeholders. Aspect recognises that in order to achieve this it is important to share information with staff and the community so that Aspect is known not only for the work that we do but also for the values we uphold.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

Every student at Aspect Hunter School has an Individual Plan (IP). The IP is developed in collaboration with the parents and student where a student's strengths, interests, goals and aspirations are expressed by both parents and the student and are incorporated into the plan. The school, student and parents work together to achieve the goals set in the IP.

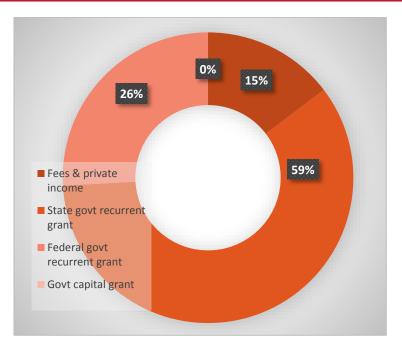
Families were given formal and informal opportunities to provide their feedback to the school. One of the ways is through a customer satisfaction survey. The survey is sent twice a year to Aspect Hunter School families asking them if they would recommend Aspect and what feedback they have regarding Aspect's service. 73% of the respondents to the 2017 surveys indicated they would recommend Aspect while the final survey for the year concluded with a Net Promoter score of 73%.

Aspect holds a biennial Employee Engagement Survey. To note in the 2017 survey is the high result in Passion and Engagement category which is 8% higher than is typical for other non-profit organisations. This means that Aspect's staff love what they do.

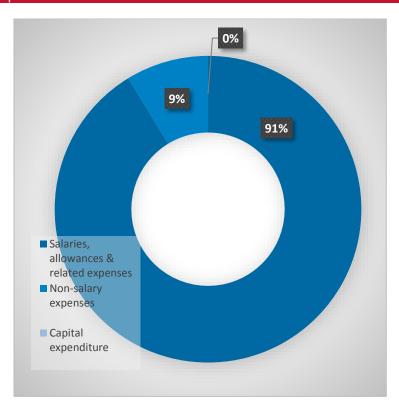


Financial Information

Recurrent/capital income 2017



Recurrent/capital expenditure 2017





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