

2022 Annual Report

Aspect Riverina School



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Child safe statement

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is a child safe organisation committed to protecting the rights and interests of children and vulnerable people by providing them with a safe environment. This commitment extends to ensuring a culturally safe and inclusive environment that recognises and respects an individual's heritage, relationships and cultural practices.

Acknowledgment of Country

Aspect acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we work, live and learn. We pay our respect to their elders, past present and emerging.

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest service provider for people on the autism spectrum. Our specialised, evidence informed schools program is one of the largest in the world, with additional services that include information and advice, diagnostic assessments, behaviour support, parent and family support, and adult programs. We share evidence-informed autism practice and applied research nationwide.

Autism Spectrum Australia offers one of the best quality autism-specific education programs in the nation. We have over 50 years of experience and provide dynamic autism specific support in purpose-built classrooms. We utilise the strengths and interests of students as a gateway to learning through quality autism-specific, tailored programs that focus on the individual learning needs of each child.

Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children aged 4 to 17 on the autism spectrum, who require an autism specific program.

The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition into more inclusive settings. This is achieved through the application of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach. At the centre of the approach is the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star to support autism-specific person-centred planning and respectful and positive relationships between the educator and student. It also focuses on the following elements: Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Health & Wellbeing.



Aspect's Strategic Plan

Our purpose

Understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum
- *a different brilliant®*

Our vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2023



Work in partnership with people on the autism spectrum

- Implement our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Work in Partnership with People on the Autism Spectrum Charter
- Employ Autistic people across a range of roles



Extend Aspect's reach and enhance people capabilities

- Well trained staff with enhanced critical skills
- Customer-centric culture
- Strong and trusted brand identity



Deliver best practice, evidence informed services

- Research activities prioritised to focus on the Aspect Comprehensive Approach
- Continuous improvements to our autism-specific education
- A diverse and inclusive workforce



Investment in physical and digital infrastructure

- Capital Works Program for Aspect schools
- Innovative facilities co-designed with Autistic people
- Digital platforms that facilitate collaboration and communication

Our strategic support

Our people who are highly trained and value diversity and inclusion

Our systems and processes which are built to enable smarter work practices and foster collaboration

Our supporters who help to create a world where no one on the autism spectrum is left behind

By 2023



6% of roles at Aspect held by Autistic people



7,000 active participants and students receiving autism-specific education and supports

1,600 employees who are proud to be working for Aspect



Message from the Principal

In presenting the 2022 annual report I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located.

Aspect schools all share Aspect's Vision to offer the best opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum, through the delivery of evidence informed programs which are person-centred and family focused.

In 2022 Aspect Riverina School provided education for 103 students (87 boys and 16 girls). The school offers a K-12 Life Skills program across our four sites which includes our new Wagga Campus at Charles Sturt University, our Aspect Kindergarten site which is based in North Albury, our high school satellite class based at Xavier College and our main site campus in Albury. Class groups are small with a high teacher to student ratio and a teacher's aide in each class.

Our students have very much reaped the benefits this year of our improved facilities at main campus and we are looking forward to further improvements in both Wagga and Albury over the coming two years. We are looking forward to having some additional classrooms in both Wagga and at our main campus as well as the establishment of a library and multipurpose space.

Our teaching and learning at Aspect Riverina follows the ACA (Aspect Comprehensive Approach) which focuses on providing a positive learning environment which is highly structured, predictable and academically challenging. We continue to be committed to student wellbeing through both achievement and skill development. Our school remains focused on improving literacy skills and using data to support and monitor student progress. We as a school believe each and every one of our students has huge potential and we are committed to continue to make a difference and support them in their learning.

Our curriculum includes opportunities for our students to participate with the community. On behalf of our school I would like to thank all our supporters and partners who provide those rich opportunities for our students to connect. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and care that the staff at our school demonstrate every day in their commitment to providing a quality education for each of our students. This year we were particularly proud of some of our senior students who took part in our Extreme Walk for Autism to conquer Mount Bogong. This adventure was captured in a documentary called Still I Breathe which had its cinema opening night in October. Their determination and teamwork were incredible. Thank you to our wonderful staff and the community partners that made this possible.



Jane Carrington

Principal

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

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 Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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 the My School website www.myschool.edu.au.

The school administers literacy testing across the school each year to help inform practice and monitor progress. We assess, sight words, phonemes, graphemes, spelling, reading accuracy, reading comprehension, spelling, and verbal working memory.

Senior secondary outcomes

Record of School Achievement

The formal Record of Achievement credential was awarded by NESA to one student.

Higher School Certificate

In 2022, four students graduated from Year 12. The school offered six Stage 6 Life Skills NESA-Developed courses, one TVET course and five more school developed courses.

Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2022:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Child Protection Training (leading questions & Incident Response & Reporting	ALL
CPI Safety Intervention- person-centred training to prevent, de-escalate, and safely respond to crisis situations	ALL
New Starters Day & Organisational Induction Program	7
Aspect Code of Conduct	6
Workplace Bullying Prevention for staff	6
ACA Structured Supports	4
An Introduction to Autism (Positive Partnerships)	4
An Introduction to Positive Behaviour Support Template (Positive Partnerships)	4
Girls on the Spectrum & Anxiety	4
Understanding Sensory Processing (Positive Partnerships)	4
An Introduction to Visual Supports (Positive Partnerships)	3
Hand Hygiene	3
Incident Response and Reporting	3
Teachers & Teacher's Assistants – Dynamic Teams (Positive Partnerships)	3
Acknowledging and recording feedback and complaints	2
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion	1
Essentials for High-tech AAC Devices and LAMP Approaches in the Classroom	1

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	4
Proficient Teacher	23
Highly Accomplished Teacher / Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	28

Teacher qualifications

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.

Workforce composition

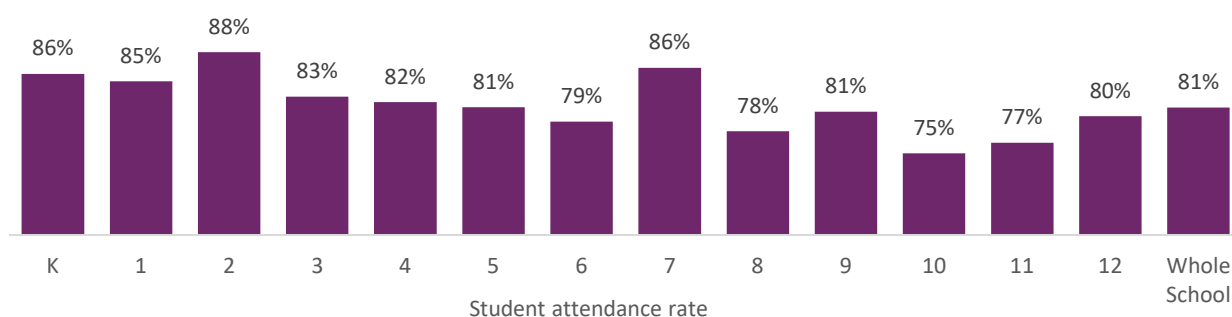
The composition of Aspect Riverina School staff is documented on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au.

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

Student attendance, retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools

Student attendance rates

Kinder	86%	Year 7	86%
Year 1	85%	Year 8	78%
Year 2	88%	Year 9	81%
Year 3	83%	Year 10	75%
Year 4	82%	Year 11	77%
Year 5	81%	Year 12	80%
Year 6	79%	Whole School	81%



Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has a work instruction to ensure compliance with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Aspect Riverina School follows up with parents/guardians if their child is absent and they have not notified the school of the absence. Where unsatisfactory attendance is identified, an attendance improvement plan is formulated in collaboration with the student and their parent/guardian. The plan is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. Repeated unexplained absence or absence of concern may need to be reported to Family and Community Services.

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

80 percent of the 2020 Year 10 cohort completed Year 12 in 2022. One student left to take up employment after year ten.

School determined areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	To embed the use of data in teacher practice across the school	School leaders have begun to establish systems that enable staff to analyse student growth
	To improve reading comprehension and numeracy abilities across the school.	Teachers have embraced the use of carefully differentiated classroom practices that are improving student outcomes in literacy and numeracy
Leadership	Strengthen leadership capability by building the leadership skills of each coordinator through the understanding and embedding of the 5 drivers of high performing teams into their leadership practice.	Leaders across the school engaged in a series of workshops to develop strategies for creating 'high performance environments.
	Strengthen ability of individual coordinators to empower their team members to work independently	Coordinators regularly support their teachers to use data to demonstrate student learning growth.
	To strengthen community partnerships, raise awareness and expand reach within local community.	Aspect Riverina School established a new partnership with Charles Sturt University in Wagga. The school held a well-attended Gala Ball in October and held and promoted an extreme walk for autism which was filmed as a documentary and screened at the cinema. This event was well supported by the local community.
Well-being	To support the development of EQ (emotional quotient) through goal setting and independent learning tasks	Staff training was undertaken to support teams to develop and monitor goal setting by students for their own personal development and growth.
	To support students to improve the quality of their health and wellbeing through diet.	A grant from a generous supporter enabled the school to purchase a food truck as part of both work education and encouraging awareness of healthy eating.

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Aspect Riverina School wants all students to recognise that they are a valued part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

Students have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities such as Harmony Day, National Reconciliation week, Sorry Day, NAIDOC week and Graduation ceremonies.

Aspect's Purpose of "understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum" and Aspect's Value of "we are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirror the nine recommended values of the 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.

In 2022 Aspect Riverina was proud to establish a Student Reprehensive Council which has given our students leadership opportunities and provided a forum for input into the running of our school. Our senior students also took part in an Extreme Walk for Autism to attempt to conquer Mount Bogong. The walk was designed to empower students by building self-confidence and resilience. The school is so proud of their determination and teamwork as well as the care and dedication shown by our staff team to make this happen.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

In 2022 Aspect Riverina School participated in a school-wide survey called Perspectives: Your School in Focus to gather insights and perspective from four important stakeholder groups (staff, students, parents/guardians and leaders) which highlighted strengths and achievements but also identified opportunities for growth and development. This survey was delivered by the Association of Independent Schools NSW.

We were pleased to see that most of our students reporting feeling a sense of belonging at our school and that they felt their teachers' understood their interests, strengths and needs. Our staff also reported feeling connected to our vision and mission and that this is reflecting in the work of our school.

One parent told us "we think ASPECT is a wonderful school and we're so grateful our son is a part of it".

We will be working hard over the next 12 months to use this data to inform future priorities, goals and targets, so we can better meet the needs of the whole school community. We had some wonderful suggestions from families, staff and perhaps most importantly our students which we will look forward to acting on in 2023.

Enrolment policy

Aspect provides autism-specific educational services for eligible school-aged children on the autism spectrum, to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific. Aspect recognises that children on the autism spectrum have the right to access and equity of services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language.

An application is made for an Aspect school rather than a specific class. Our school's professional staff decide in consultation with the family which class is best suited to the educational needs of the student. Each school is responsible for managing its own application, intake and waiting lists process, which is managed by the school Principal.

In the case of an application for Aspect Distance Education the Aspect School Distance Education Enrolment Committee decides, in consultation with the family, if the Distance Education program is best suited to the educational needs of the student. When vacancies arise in the school or Distance Education program, the decision about how to fill them is made based on whether the type of vacancy available would be appropriate for the child. Factors taken into consideration include the type of vacancy available, the child's age, the length of time a child has been on the waiting list, the availability of alternative placements and the family situation.

Entry criteria

Aspect schools are funded in part by the Commonwealth and state governments, which have specific criteria for placement. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must satisfy the following criteria:

Citizenship and visa status – a child must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or holds an eligible visa
- be aged between 4 and 17 years.

Diagnosis – a child must:

- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current diagnosis which is not more than twelve (12) months old as being on the autism spectrum from a specialist medical practitioner, child psychiatrist or clinical psychologist with the necessary training and experience to be able to undertake a diagnostic assessment;
- in South Australia, a second report from a psychologist or speech pathologist that confirms the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder that is not more than two (2) years old; and
- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-111, Stanford Binet V) which is not more than two (2) years old.

Reason for Distance Education pathway choice

As well as citizenship, age and diagnosis criteria, a child may be deemed eligible for Distance Education if:

- they are geographically isolated; or
- their individual circumstances prevent them from regularly attending school; and
- they agree to abide by the Distance Education requirements as set out in the Enrolment letter offer and contract.

Eligible students must be enrolled full time in the Distance Education program.

Registration to school/Distance Education waitlist

Expression of interest in Aspect schools may be made directly with the Aspect School. Enquiries can also be made with Aspect Customer Service by phone or email. or by general enquiry via the Contact Us page on the Aspect website and these enquiries will be directed to the school.

The registration form can be obtained from the following processes:

- families who are interested in enrolling their child to an Aspect school are asked to attend a School Information Session. Aspect Principals or their delegate are responsible for organising a school information session once per school term, for

prospective parents or guardians who would like to enrol their child. This information session outlines the Aspect education program and the enrolment process. The school registration form is obtained after attending this session.

- families who are unable to attend a School Information Session can obtain a registration form directly from an Aspect school. A School Enrolment Committee representative will provide them with information about the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process, before sending them the registration form.

A non-refundable processing fee is required for each application submitted.

Application to more than one Aspect School

When a family wants to place their child on the waitlist of more than one Aspect school, they first apply to their preferred Aspect school and indicate which other Aspect schools they will consider enrolment. The preferred Aspect school is responsible for processing the application, inform the other Aspect school/s to place the student on their school's active waitlist and share the application documents.

Aspect School Enrolment Committee

School Principals are responsible for convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee (comprised of school Principal, psychologist and selected school coordinators) which meets once per school term, following the information session, to review registrations received. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect school.

Eligible/Not Eligible for service

Citizenship and age criteria

If the citizenship or age criteria is not met, a school representative will inform the parents or guardians that their child is not eligible for enrolment. If the parents or guardians are not satisfied with the result, they can make a complaint to Aspect (refer to Aspect's Complaints Management procedure).

Diagnosis criteria

If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the Principal will inform the parents or guardians that, based on the diagnostic information provided, their child has been deemed eligible for the program and their child's name has been placed on the school waitlist.

The Principal is responsible for referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification. If further information is required by the Committee, the Principal is responsible for writing to the parents requesting updated information (Letter – Request for updated Psychological reports).

Aspect Eligibility Committee

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any registrations that require clarification, and
- reporting to Aspect Principals the results of the Aspect Eligibility Committee, so they can inform parents of the outcomes.

The Principal will inform the parents or guardians that based on the diagnostic information provided their child has been deemed eligible for the program or not and, if confirmed, the child's name is placed on the school's waitlist.

Vacancy Management

If a vacancy arises, students on the waitlist who can potentially fill the vacancy will be considered. The Principal or delegate interviews families regarding accommodations/ adjustments for their child following the interview pro forma.

If a student being considered for enrolment is not an Australian citizen, the Principal or their delegate must check that the visa is still valid and eligible for enrolment.

Following completion of the interview, the Principal, or their delegate will complete the Risk Management Plan pro forma, to assist with decision making.

Following the interview process, the school will inform the family if a child has been offered a placement (Letter – Enrolment Contract/Acceptance of Offer) or (Letter – Placement to Satellite Class) or will be retained on the school's waitlist.

Principals are responsible for forwarding parents the relevant enrolment package and liaising with them through the process.

Enrolment Package

When a family is offered a placement, in addition to the enrolment contract, they will be sent documents based on the enrolment acceptance checklist.

A family can decline an enrolment offer and inform Aspect school if they want to be placed in the school's active waitlist. To secure enrolment, the family must pay a non-refundable enrolment fee as published in the Aspect School fees schedule (NSW or SA).

When a family informs the Aspect school of their decision to withdraw their child from enrolment before commencing, they must also inform the Aspect school if they wish to be placed in the school's active waitlist.

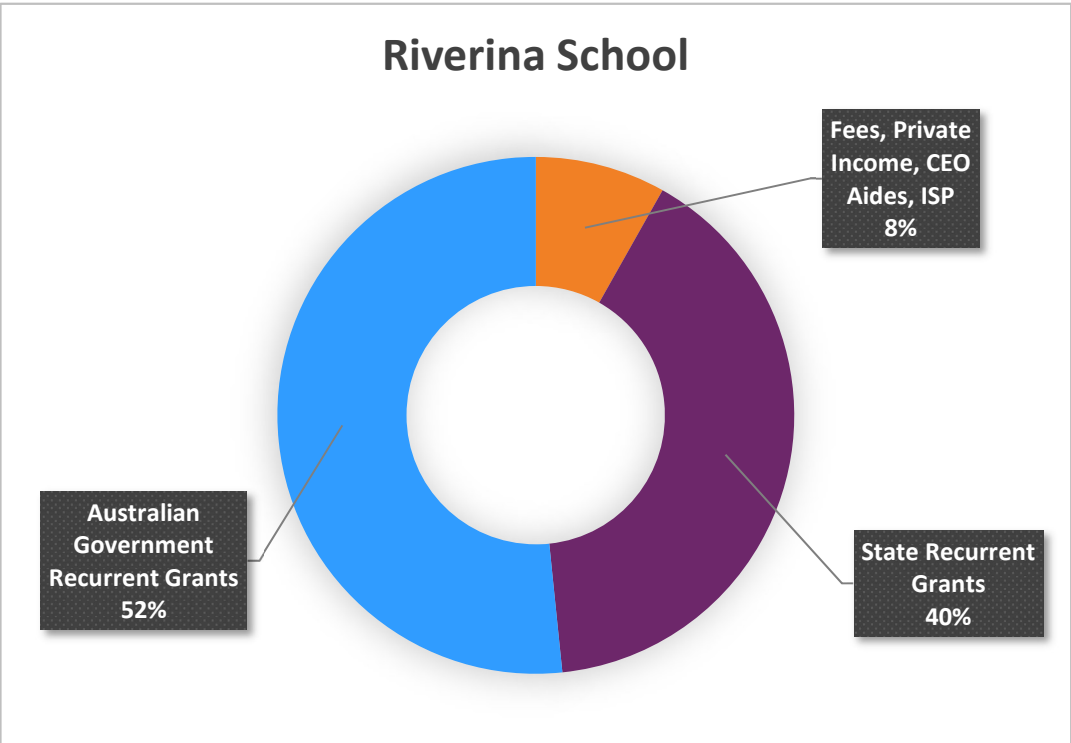
Other school policies

Summary of policy	Changes in 2022	Access to full text
<p>Student welfare</p> <p>The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies:</p> <p><i>Customer Experience & Service Innovation</i>— define and work towards achieving participants goals and personal lifestyle choices with support and input from those who care about them.</p> <p><i>Risk Management Framework</i> – identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks</p> <p><i>Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk</i> - ensures that staff understand and implement the principles of both Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk, recognising the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks. Aspect facilitates each student's meaningful choice and control to maximise their independence; and minimises the risk to the individual or others wherever possible.</p> <p><i>Safeguarding the People We Support</i> - 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</p>	<p>Customer experience policy new in October 2022. Replacing Person Centred Approach Policy.</p>	<p>These policies can all be accessed from Aspect's website autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies</p>
<p>Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools</p> <p>The Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA), including the use of the Five Point Star, drives aspect's guiding principles for pastoral care.</p> <p>Aspect exercises due diligence in all of its duty of care responsibilities towards students, staff and the school community. Leaders of the school endorse activities and plan for the safety and maintenance of good mental and physical health and well-being of the students, staff and parents. Schools seek to make provision for particular needs of individuals who require special safety arrangements or avoid discomfort or threat to their health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>The Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools procedure can be accessed by request from the school.</p> <p>The following related policies can be accessed from Aspect's website autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies</p>

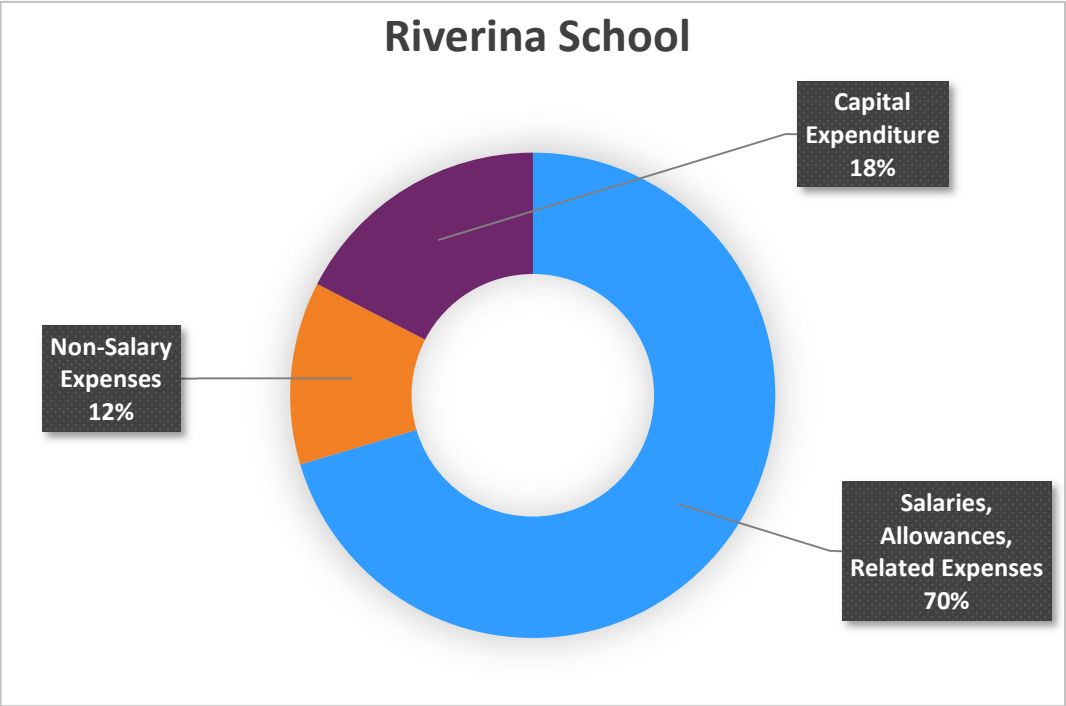
<p>Bullying or harassment is not tolerated in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. Aspect Schools aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Aspect encourages the reporting of complaints and feedback.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) • Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk • Embracing Diversity • Person-Centred Approach and Recognition of Valued Status • Safeguarding the People We Support • Feedback, Complaints and Incidents
<p>Discipline</p> <p>Aspect adopts a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach when working with children on the autism spectrum ranging from strategies for all students through to more intensive strategies for students who may exhibit more challenging behaviours as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Support policy.</p> <p>Aspect follows a PBS approach but when behaviours occur that put the safety of any stakeholder at risk, the school will be required to implement appropriate procedures to safeguard all stakeholders' safety. All staff have responsibilities in relation to implementing discipline in Aspect Schools.</p>	<p>Aspect Positive Behaviour Policy updated April 2022 to reflect current best practice and provide more detail.</p>	<p>The full text of the Discipline in Schools work instruction can be accessed by request from the school Principal.</p> <p>The Aspect Positive Behaviour Support policy can be accessed from Aspect's website autismspectrum.org.au/about- aspect/policies</p>
<p>Complaints and grievances resolution</p> <p>Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>The Aspect Complaints Management Process can be accessed from Aspect's website <a href="https://autismspectrum.org.au/feedba
ck-and-complaints">autismspectrum.org.au/feedba ck-and-complaints</p> <p>The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from the Aspect website <a href="https://autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/docu
ments/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-
and-Complaints-Brochure.pdf">autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/docu ments/Governance/Aspect-Feedback- and-Complaints-Brochure.pdf</p>

Financial information

Recurrent/capital income



Recurrent/capital expenditure





a different brilliant®

understanding, engaging & celebrating the
strengths, interests & aspirations
of people on the autism spectrum

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