

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT FOR 2018

Namoi Valley Christian School

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Please feel free to contact the Principal, Peter Henderson, in regard to this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Namoi Valley Christian School (NVCS) is set on the main street in Wee Waa, a small agriculturally based rural town in North Western NSW. The school has been operating for 35 years providing K-6 education, with high expectations for student competence, character and faith. The foundational principles of the school are Christian and these values are woven into all aspects of school outlook and activity. Parental participation is significant in classroom assistance and administration, as well as elected positions on the School Board. The quote below is taken from the school's mission statement and highlights its foundational principles.

The purpose of NAMOI VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL is to support Christian parents by providing an educational setting in which teaching and learning of a high standard are founded on Bible-based beliefs, values and behaviors and where parents have ready access to the decision-making framework.

The background of students is both indigenous and non-indigenous, 2-parent and single parent families. The staff of 3 classroom teachers and 1 support teacher makes up a dynamic team, committed to the ethos of the school. A number of part-time paid and voluntary staff, including a chaplain under the Australian School Chaplaincy Programme, complements the teaching staff.

NVCS is registered and accredited with the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). It is a member school of Christian Education National.

This annual report for 2018 provides parents, grandparents and the wider school community with information about various aspects of this school's distinctiveness, performance and development. The report is a legislative requirement under *The Education Amendment (Non-Government Schools Registration) Act 2005*.

The School Newsletters, Curriculum Statements, and Parent Information and Policy Handbook (available from the school) complement the information in this report. The report will be discussed at the Association Annual General Meeting on Saturday 25th May 2019.

The school has procedures in place to ensure its participation in annual reporting to publicly disclose the educational and financial performance measures and policies of the school as identified by the Minister.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The continuing drought into 2018 has certainly put significant pressure on our community. Our school families know all too well the importance of rainfall and the flow on effect to local businesses. We continue to pray for relief from the drought and for our school community to be supportive of one another through these tough times. We as a board are very grateful for the financial support of both the state and Commonwealth government. We are also very grateful for the support of school families through school fees. Without funding we would certainly not exist and therefore not be able to supply a Christian world-view education.

This year we have continued to grow and all acknowledgement goes to our Heavenly Father for His hand upon Namoi Valley Christian School. This year in brief we oversaw:

1. The addition of a display at our school entrance stating our Christian nature.
2. The Painting of our classrooms.
3. The decision to add 2 new teachers' aide positions for 2019.
4. Staff being encouraged to attend training to continue their professional development.
5. Parent/family/staff BBQ's to increase the opportunity to interact with the school. We always appreciate parent help in the school - being a part of their child's learning environment.
6. The boys' toilet refitted with new cisterns and bowls.
7. The revision of policies and our 3-year strategic management plan.
8. The organisation of the "Everyday Peacemaker" course in December
9. The connection with our local community assisting at the Wee Waa Show gate and the community country music muster.
10. The welcoming of Rod Crawford as our new school chaplain

The CEN HUB has continued to be a great source for assisting in the updating of our policies providing greater depth to our current documents. At the conclusion of 2018 we interviewed a number of candidates to fill our 5/6 position as Mr Lloyd Bennet finished up at NVCS. From the interview process we employed Mrs Diana Morrison. Mrs Morrison stepped off the board and commenced teaching 5/6 in 2019. Mrs Montana Carrett, Mrs Kate Morrison and Mrs Aimee Lions were successful in the Teacher Aide position and will commence in 2019. We would like to thank Mr Lloyd Bennett for his involvement in the school in 2018 and wish him all the best in his new endeavours.

IT Updates

Throughout the year we continued to upgrade our classroom facilities, purchasing new smart board projectors for current classrooms, the Board room as well as the new classroom planned for 2019 (library converted to Year 5/6 room). We also approved the purchase of new iPads for Kindergarten and Years 1/2. 2018 also saw the school connect to the NBN.

Working Bees

We continued to hold our bi-annual working bees throughout the year. These events are essential to ensure the school is maintained and clean for the beginning of the year and mid-year terms. Working bees also provide an excellent opportunity to meet other parents from the school and allow an opportunity for parents to contribute to the school community. We wish to thank those that have turned up to the working bees so faithfully each time and contribute on these days.

Board Training, CEN AGM meetings and Governance Training

As a requirement from NESA, the NSW Education Standards Authority, board members are 'responsible persons' and must be able to perform proper governance of a non-government school. They must undergo a minimum of 12 hours professional learning over each 3-year period from the time of commencing as a 'responsible person'. During 2018 the board has continued to adhere to this requirement and attend various professional training of accredited courses. Tim attended the AIS NSW Board and Principals Symposium in April, the Australian Institute of Company Directors course in June (completing all assessments and attaining the GAICD qualification). He also attended the Business Managers and Board Training following the State AGM in October. Rick attended the Conflict of Interest Governance Training in July at Moree Christian School. If board members have not been able to attend courses, they have completed training through the AIS NSW website (Australian Independent Schools), or online through CEN (Christian Educational National).

Support from CEN

Throughout the year we continued to remain connected with our Christian Education National (CEN) Chief Executive Officer - Michelle Dempsey and NSW and ACT State Executive Officer - Rachel McClure, both visited the school in February. We greatly appreciated Rachel's visit in July for our school planning day where we discussed the addition of a 4th classroom. It was at this meeting we began to organise for our sports shed and library to be transformed into classrooms to accommodate the larger than normal kindergarten enrolments for 2019.

At the end of 2018 Rachel stepped down from her role and Kathy Pereira was announced as her replacement for 2019. This was also exciting news due to our pre-existing relationship with Kathy from her years of service at SEO prior to Rachel. We have greatly appreciated Rachel's assistance

and guidance in 2018 and wish her all the best. We also look forward to the return of Kathy and continued guidance from CEN through our SEO.

Thank you

Tim Weaver
(on Behalf of Namoi Valley Christian School)

TEACHER STANDARDS and PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In 2018 NVCS had four full-time teaching staff and two part-time teaching staff. We farewelled Mrs Renee Cecil from her role of 2 days/week on K1 and welcomed Mrs Heather Petersen to this position, with Mrs Leanne Flower continuing the 3 days/week. The team of teachers were able to consolidate their professional relationship and continue teaching in light of the school's purpose. There were some illnesses throughout the year among teachers, but overall teachers attended school, or a school event/PD, on average 96.0% of the time.

All teaching staff (including casual teachers) have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution. All qualifications are Bachelor degrees.

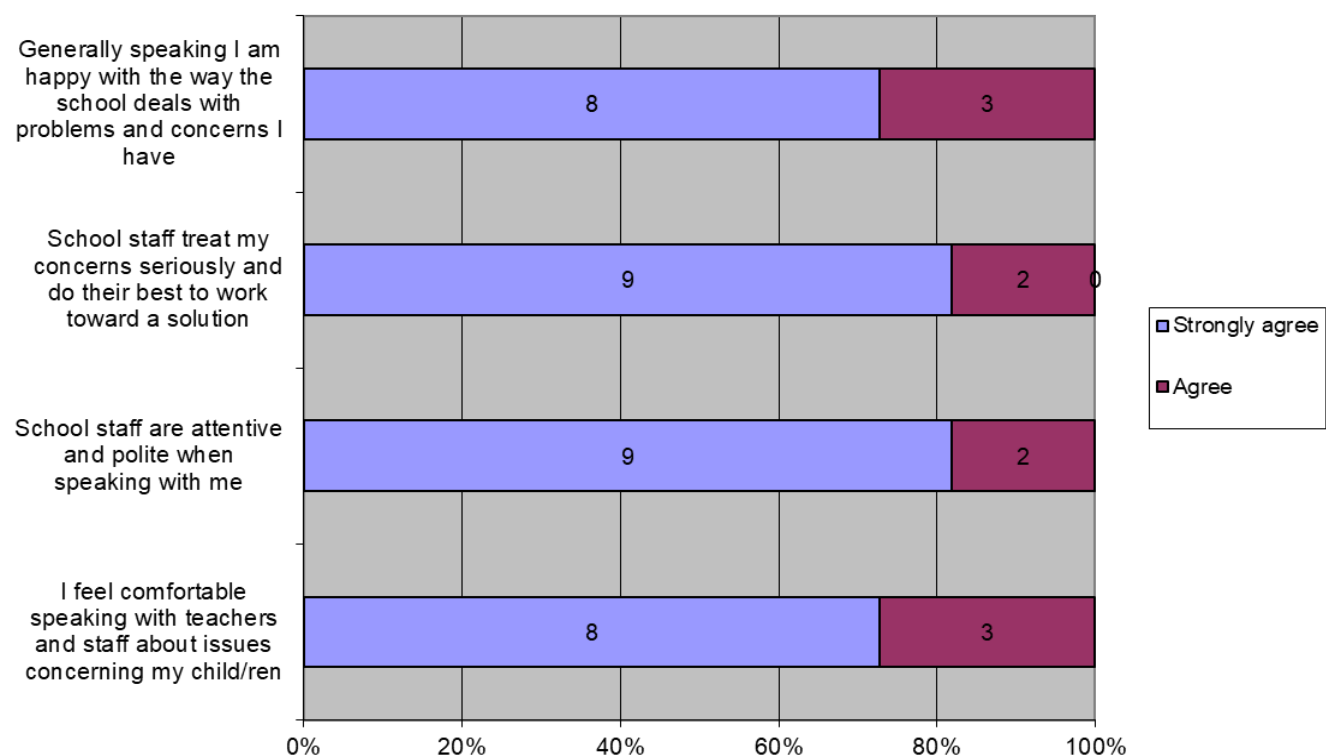
Professional development for the whole teaching staff included attending conferences, courses focussing on Literacy and Writing, AIS courses, PETAA writing the future conference and the CEN mid-year conference. There were school visits from AIS consultants and the Principal attended CEN Principals meetings. Training for all the above was from a range of providers such as AIS, CEN, PETAA NSW Department of Education and school based staff. All full time and part time staff participated in a substantial amount of professional training and development throughout the course of the year. Two staff also worked on a PDHPE project which was made possible by funding received through AISNSW

Namoi Valley Christian School acknowledges the funding provided under Smarter Schools National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and facilitated by the Independent Schools Centre for excellence. This funding continued to allow us to support teachers in their professional work and build teacher capacity across the independent sector in NSW.

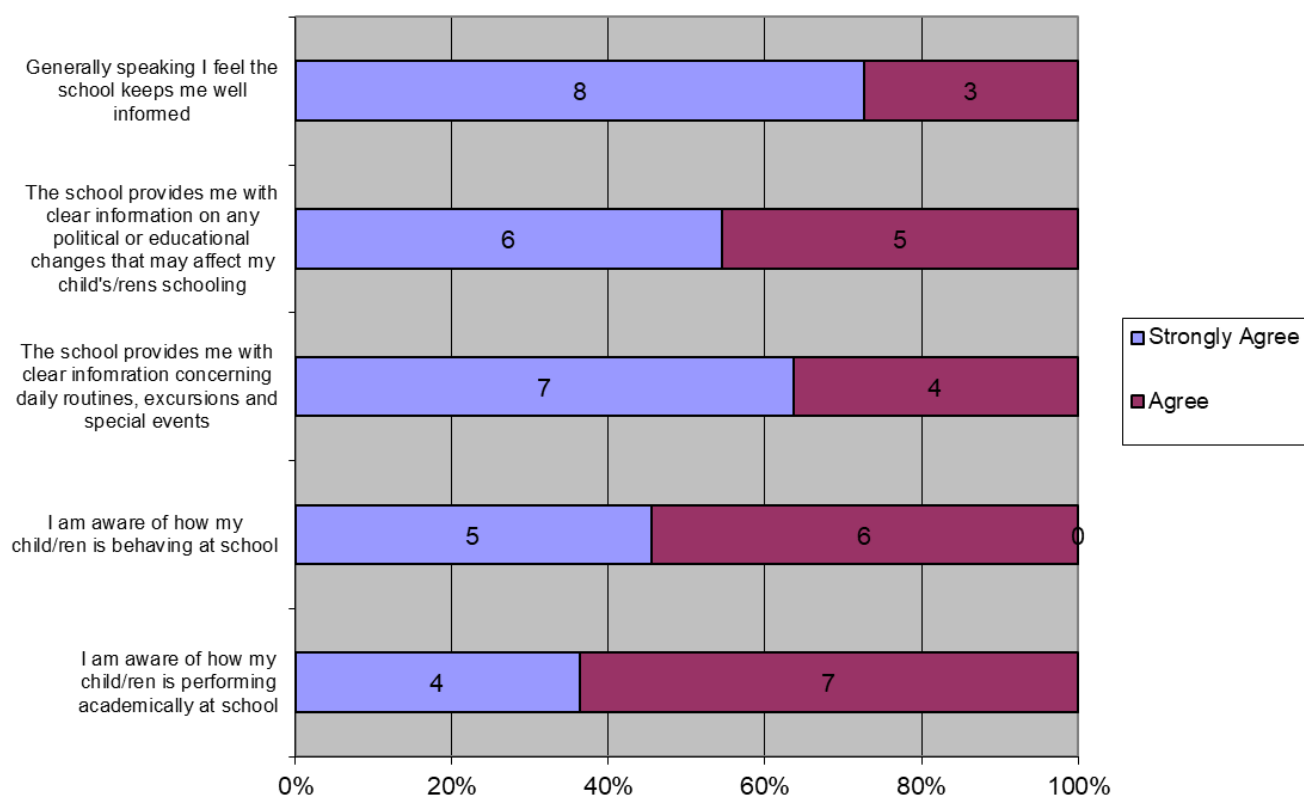
Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

A survey taken at the end of 2018 showed high satisfaction from parents, teachers and students. The school is very encouraged by the feedback given. Graphs below show the results.

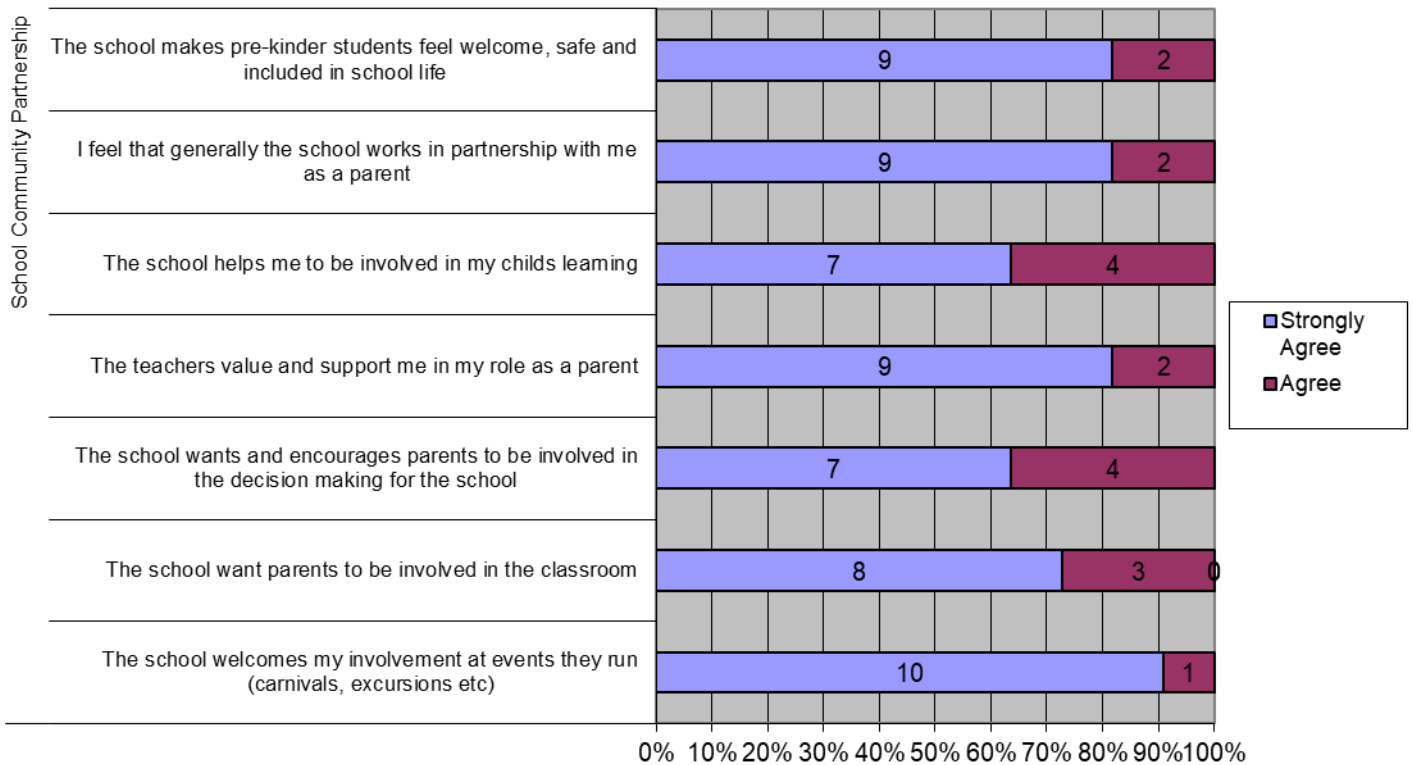
Communication between Home and School



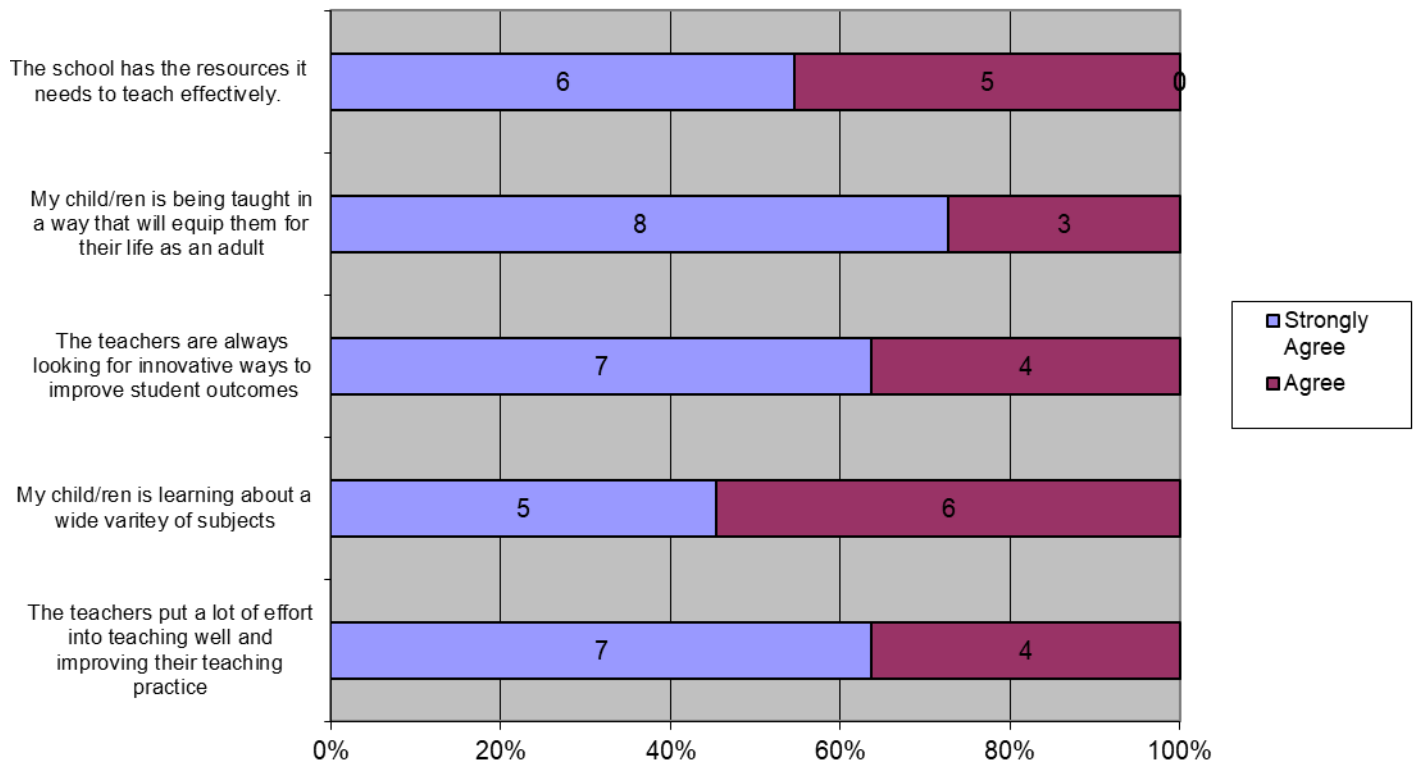
Communication between School and Home



School Community Partnership



Parents Perceptions of Teachers & teaching practices



CURRICULUM

The curriculum the school uses is developed to show God's creation as a rich and exciting whole, and establishes God and His word at the centre of education. Thus, nature is studied as God's creation, history is studied as the work of God's provision in the past and Mathematics as a natural part of God's order in creation. Teachers can work in teams and individually to develop lessons and courses of study, and each year builds on the previous one to form a solid base for each student's future, whilst meeting the educational requirement of the NSW Education Standards Authority

Teachers are kept abreast of educational activities and issues by attending in-service programs and reading many professional papers made available through the Association of Independent Schools, and Christian Education National and others.

NVCS uses the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) curriculum.

EXTERNAL TESTING RESULTS

The improvement of our students from one NAPLAN test to the next continues to be encouraging. In response to our Christian ethos, NVCS is a welcoming, rather than a selective school. With this in mind, we value the continued progress all our students make in all areas of their learning and life. Our overall focus is on student growth rather than a final grade

However, we expect our students to display more than just knowledge or skills. We aim to prepare our students for life beyond school and, with this in mind, we expect that in every situation our students will model the love of Christ. Our foundation is Christ and this permeates all of our teaching and learning. NAPLAN results only form part of the picture of what happens at school and part of the development of our students. We want more than just individual excellence in basic skills, we expect our students to live their learning.

Year 3 NAPLAN – eight students sat for the tests.

100% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Reading.

100% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Writing.

100% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Spelling

75% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Grammar and Punctuation.

100% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Overall Numeracy.

Year 5 NAPLAN - six students sat for the tests.

83% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Reading

83% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Writing.

83% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Spelling

50% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Grammar and Punctuation

100% of students scored at or above National Minimum Standard in Overall Numeracy

PRIORITIES

The priorities for 2018 were:

1. Working with the Association of Independent schools with the school improvement service.
 - This saw a focus on attendance, communication and writing. The service will continue in 2019
2. Supporting the continued growth of the school and planning structures for coming years.
 - The Board identified the option of converting the library into a Year 5/6 classroom and changing the sport shed into a new library/learning space and a smaller shed.
3. Reflecting on how we teach writing and making changes as needed.
 - Teaching staff attended a PETAA PD on writing in Canberra. Staff have also been registered for relevant PDs with the AISNSW in 2019
4. Supporting all teachers with the requirements of NESA accreditation
 - One teachers achieved the Proficient Teacher status whilst others were provided with a number of Professional Development opportunities.

The priorities for 2019 are:

1. Introduction of a 4th class and restructuring Scope & Sequences into straight stages.
2. Transition of Sport Shed & Board room into new learning spaces.
3. Implementation of the new Science & Technology Syllabus.
4. Implementation of the new PDHPE Syllabus.
5. Continued work with AISNSW and the school improvement service. Specific focus on writing; parent communication & attendance.

ENROLMENT

Enrolment in 2018 varied from 39 to 44 students. At census there were 42 FTE students. NVCS had 3 classes with a K-1 class with 13 students; a 2-3 class with 17 students and a Year 4-6 class with 12 students.

There was a slight increase in overall attendance rates in 2018 compared to 2017. Overall, we still have a concern over the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We have been working with AISNSW to determine ways to increase attendance rates. In 2018 students attended school 89.6% of the time (compared to 88.8% in 2017). For non-indigenous students' attendance was 89.9% (90.5% in 2017), while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' attendance was 88.8% (85.6% in 2017). The school seeks to manage non-attendance through clear communication with families. If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days, the class teacher contacts the parent to seek an explanation and to encourage attendance.

The following table looks at attendance data for ES1/S1, Stage 2 & Stage 3

	Early Stage 1/Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Total	88.3%	89.9%	89.7%	88.2%	89.5%	91.0%
Non-Indigenous	88.9%	90.4%	91.0%	87.2%	95.7%	93.4%
ATSI Students	86.8%	88.8%	87.6%	91.4%	80.1%	86.5%

NVCS serves Christian families and other interested families from places such as Wee Waa, Merah North, Narrabri, Yarrie Lake and Pilliga.

NVCS Enrolment Policy

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE & RATIONALE

Namoi Valley Christian School has been set up to serve Christian parents who desire their children to be educated in a manner which is consistent with their home teaching. However, if vacancies exist after these parents are served, enrolment applications will be considered from other interested members of the community. All parents must be prepared to commit to the Christian Education National model of schooling and the Biblical ethos of the school. Namoi Valley Christian School is inter-denominational and strives to regard each enrolment on its individual merit with no regard to race or culture. All Enrolment Applications for children will be considered in view of the best interests of the child and the whole school. To protect the Christian fabric which is at the core of the existence of the school, the Board will strive to maintain a suitable balance of enrolments of children from Christian families and non-Christian families. At the time of review of this policy, there is an imbalance. The Board will work to rectify this discrepancy as new enrolments are considered.

POLICY STATEMENT

NVCS will:

1. Welcome and consider all enrolment applications without undue delay, with confidentiality and with open communication between school and parents.
2. Proceed applications to the interview stage, at the discretion of the Principal, only after all enrolment forms have been completed.
3. Consider the welfare of the whole school community, the school's Christian ethos and the capacity of the school to cater for the individual needs of an applying student when deciding whether to enrol a child.

The maximum number of students per composite classroom should not exceed 25. When a student with learning, behavioural or social difficulties is considered for enrolment, they will be counted as 3 enrolments or up to 5 enrolments due to the extra teaching load. When a class is 'full', enrolment may be declined because we do not have a place available at the time with the current class make-up.

4. If there is a vacancy, make an offer of enrolment in the following order, but always at the discretion of the Principal in conjunction with the Board or its representative(s), subject to individual assessment and subject to the date of application within each category:
 - Christian family with a sibling who has attended NVCS for longer than one term
 - Christian family who is transferring from another Christian School
 - Christian family
 - Non-Christian family with a sibling who has attended NVCS for longer than one term
 - Non-Christian family
5. When possible, seek to accommodate those families for whom the school fees would impose a financial burden. This is at the Business Manager's discretion. NVCS has a scholarship program available. (See Fee Scholarship policy)
6. Seek to support all families. We understand that not all families are able to attend school on a regular basis due to distances to and from school, illness of child and other circumstances. We will endeavour to assist these families by offering partial enrolments. Partial enrolments enable students to attend selected classes as organised by the Principal and parents. Each application for Partial Enrolment will be considered on a case by case basis and in keeping with all other enrolment policies.
7. Within the parameters of our Christian framework, comply with any government requirements (e.g. Data Implementation Manual for Enrolments, Anti-Discrimination, NESA Registration). Part of our requirements is to verify a child's Date of Birth. Parents will be asked to provide the school with a copy from an external source identifying DOB (suggested documents are Immunisation Records or Birth Certificates).
8. Require that all parents allow their child to engage in the full life of the school, including its promotion of Christian belief and character, with due consideration to the child's abilities and background. This includes spiritual, academic, physical, cultural, off-site and social events.
9. Terminate the enrolment of a student who, for example, undermines the school's Christian ethos, engages in serious unacceptable behaviour, repeatedly disrupts learning or jeopardises the welfare of other students (see Discipline Policy and Detention, Suspension & Expulsion Policy)

ENROLMENT PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

The Enrolment Application Process is:

1. Parent makes initial enquiry to school
2. School provides parent with information pack
3. Parent returns completed Enrolment Form
4. Principal conducts informal tour of the school with parent/s and child
5. Principal consults with Board and an Enrolment Panel is Convened.
 - If the enrolment is for a sibling of an existing family a pre-approval of enrolment may be decided upon by the Board, pending the outcome of the Enrolment Interview. Such Pre-approvals are on a case by case basis and dependant on the interview.

6. Enrolment Panel conducts an interview with the parent/s/carer. This Panel is determined by the Board after consultation with the Principal. The following is a guideline as to the makeup of the Enrolment Panel
 - for new families - Principal and two Board members
 - for existing families - Principal and at least one Board member.
7. Enrolment Panel make recommendation to School Board regarding the application
8. Parents will be notified by the Principal of Board's decision regarding acceptance of enrolment
9. Enrolment Form passed on to Administration Staff for processing:
 - Details entered in Register of Admission/Enrolment and School Data Base including name, age, address, name and telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s), previous school/s attended, medical alerts, date of enrolment and date of leaving and destination. Where the destination of a student under 15 years of age is unknown, evidence that a Dept of Education & Training Officer with home school liaison responsibilities has been notified of the student's name, age and last known address. Register should be retained for a minimum period of 5 years.
 - Student Record Card made with relevant details entered and filed appropriately

Kindergarten Enrolment Applications should be lodged by the end of Term 3 of the year prior to enrolment. Prep Enrolment Applications are available for the Year prior to Kindergarten Enrolment. Enrolment applications will follow the same guidelines as outlined above. Please refer to "School Student Starting Age" below for more information on school readiness. All enrolment applications will be considered individually.

School Student Starting Age

All children are required to commence school by the age of 6. The guideline for earliest starting age is 5 before 31 July in the first year of schooling. However, the school encourages parents to defer enrolment to the following year if the child's birthday falls in the middle of the year. This is because the school has found in the past that nearly all children benefit from postponing formal schooling.

Formal testing for school readiness will be conducted by staff at the time of interview. Factors to be considered by both parents and staff when assessing readiness are: social adjustment, academic standard, emotional stability and co-ordination. All these factors contribute to the child's readiness to begin school. No **one** factor in itself indicates sufficient development to warrant enrolment.

Immunisation criteria on enrolment

To comply with the NSW State Government Health Department, the school will require parents to provide the school with an Immunisation Certificate for each child on enrolment. If a parent fails to provide the school with an Immunisation Certificate, the child will be classified as unimmunised and excluded in disease outbreaks. For further information, please contact your doctor, Community Health Centre, or the school.

Students with Disabilities – The school encourage Enrolment Applications for all students, as all children will benefit from Christian education. However, it must be noted that levels of funding for children with disabilities in non-government schools from all sources is extremely poor and the educational needs of the child may not be able to be met, purely by financial constraints.

Indigenous students

We welcome the enrolment of Indigenous students at NVCS. Christ lived, died and rose again for His people, including our Indigenous sisters and brothers, as the only way for us to be at peace with God and each other.

We will walk alongside our Indigenous brothers and sisters as they take responsibility for their children's education and provide education in the shadow of the Cross that respects and accommodates Indigenous culture, background, talents and needs, whilst maintaining our Christian faith. We will endeavour to accommodate any special health, learning or other needs of all our students.

Excerpt of Key Policy – Grievances and Disputes

RATIONALE

In any community, differences of opinions or perspectives will occur. When such differences occur, they are most often satisfactorily resolved privately and informally. In the event that these differences lead to conflict, ie a dispute or grievance, it is important that mechanisms are in place to facilitate a satisfactory resolution.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Christians are to "pursue peace with all men" (Heb 12:14). We are instructed that "if possible, so far as it depends upon you, be at peace with all men" (Rom12:18). We are accountable to "be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3).

However, Christians should be reconciled to one another when disputes of any nature arise between them (Matthew 5:23-24, 6:9-15, 18:15-22). Christians should resolve their disputes within the context of the Christian community, as the body of Christ (Matthew 18:15-22; 1 Corinthians 12:25-27; Ephesians 4:15-16; Philippians 21-5; James 5:16).

Christians are firmly directed against the resolution of disputes between themselves by recourse to secular courts (Luke 12:57-59; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8). Christians are to resolve disputes without consideration or calculation for revenge (Leviticus 19:18; Romans 12:17-21). Repentance and restitution may be required (Luke 17:3-4; Romans 13:8).

See Attachment A "The Peacemaker's Pledge" for a biblical response to conflict.

POLICY STATEMENT

In the event a conflict is not able to be resolved privately and informally, this policy seeks to provide an acceptable and biblical pathway and mandate for the achievement of reconciliation through:

- a) mediation and conciliation,
- b) arbitration

and seeks to inform, educate and enable those involved toward the successful fulfilment of this mandate.

A pathway to reconciliation between parties requiring consideration beyond the private and informal consists of a fourfold process incorporating the principles of Procedural Fairness:

1. Reconciliation in private is preferred and is to be encouraged initially and throughout any subsequent procedure.
2. When informal procedures have been unsuccessful and the matter is to be further pursued, the Principal should be briefed and become involved. In the event that the conflict involves the Principal a Board nominee should be briefed and become involved.
3. When in-school procedures have been unsuccessful a three person Mediation Committee consisting of representation from the School Board shall be appointed.
4. If the Mediation Committee cannot lead and counsel the parties to a resolution, an **Arbitration Panel** (see 4.2) shall be appointed to determine and deliver a resolution to the dispute by majority vote.

Parties are encouraged to continue to strive for a private resolution so that more formal processes of settlement may be unnecessary or be abandoned.

Recommended Reading: "The Peacemaker" by Ken Sande (Baker Bookhouse) available from Koorong, Peacemaker Ministries, Amazon

Excerpt of Key Policy - Student welfare

At Namoi Valley Christian School, student welfare and academic achievement involves the balance of physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of the child. Thus student welfare is incorporated into every area of school life.

Namoi Valley Christian School aims to provide:

- A safe and nurturing environment in which students can learn. (WHS Policy suite)
- Effective teaching and learning experiences which engage students in the activities of the school, including extra-curricular activities. (Teaching & Learning Policy)
- Oversight of day to day monitoring of student well-being as determined by observable signs at school.
- A fair and effective discipline system which encourages behaviour consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and School Rules; and seeks to improve the behaviour of students who do not meet those expectations. (Discipline Policy)
- An environment in which students can come to understand how God has given them abilities and gifts and how they can use them.
- An environment that encourages attitudes of self-respect, self-discipline, and respect for others, as people made in God's image; and an understanding of individual differences. (Staff Code of Conduct; Student Code of Conduct; School Rules; Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors)
- An environment in which it is clear that bullying, violence and aggression are unacceptable. (Student Anti-Bullying Policy; WHS 5-2 Anti-Bullying, Workplace)
- Monitoring of student attendance at school to ensure safety and well-being of students, and the continuation of a sound educational program. (Attendance Policy)
- Partnership with parents, and the school community, on issues that affect children's social development and learning within the school. (Community Development Plan)
- Staff who are committed Christians, qualified teachers, have current clearance under WWCC; and who seek to care for and nurture the students in their care. Employment Policy 1-1 Recruitment; Child Protection Policy)
- Open Classroom policy – classrooms are open to visits from other staff, team teaching arrangements, the assistance of a teacher's aide; and a teacher may invite observation by their Section Coordinator, or have a class observation agreed to as part of Staff Appraisal. (Staff Appraisal Policy)
- A clear understanding across the school community of duty of care; the provisions of the Child Protection Act; and commitment to reporting incidents relating to child protection. (Child Protection Policy)

PROCEDURES

Namoi Valley Christian School seeks the welfare of all students through nurture, protection, training and building them up in every element of school life; so they may develop personal resilience and a sense of self, through the understanding that they are loved and valued by God.

6.1 Physical Security

Measures to ensure the safety of students include:

- Closed gates to school grounds during class hours
- Playground and bus supervision by teachers
- Visitor sign-in; Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors
- Late and early notes for students arriving or departing during class hours
- Maintenance of buildings, grounds, facilities (WHS Policy suite)

6.2 School Programming

- a) Daily commitment of time for Biblical Studies and Discipleship which complement family and church priorities for development of Christ-like character and attitudes.
- b) The Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) program addresses issues of physical and emotional health, reinforced by events such as: sports carnivals and teams; the Life Education Van
- c) The Student Code of Conduct sets out positive expectations for students to confidently know how to behave in the school setting. It is reviewed annually at the start of the year, and regularly in classroom discussions.
- d) Anti-bullying content is incorporated in classroom management practices and teaching programs. (Anti-Bullying Policy, Student)
- e) Discipline procedures provide a clear behaviour modification plan that provides direction and both positive and negative consequences for behaviour choices at school. (Discipline Policy)
- f) Staff morning devotions and staff meetings will update staff generally on student issues for information and prayer, maintaining confidentiality and privacy according to the sensitivity of the circumstances.
- g) Staff training in child protection, discipline and welfare occurs annually at the start of the year (PD Week); and is included throughout the year at staff meetings as incidents arise, or policies and procedures change.

6.3 Development of Student's Gifts and Strengths

- a) The school offers individualised learning support; and creative extension, to enhance students' learning opportunities.
- b) Retreats and outdoor education experiences develop closer relationships and offer challenges that build resilience.
- c) The work, gifts and achievements of students is celebrated; and regularly showcased through assemblies, newsletters, performances and displays.

- d) A range of extra-curricular activities is offered for students to try new things, mix with students in other year groups, and to learn from invited guests who can build positively into the lives of students.
- e) Opportunities are provided for student leadership that allows development of skills and positive relationships within different year groups in the school context e.g. managing school assemblies, and Buddy programs (Year 6 + new kindergarten children).
- f) The school encourages the development of an outward focus and service to others through involvement in charities and local events designed to help others in our local or wider community.
- g) Understanding of other cultures, and an experience of Christian ministry to others is encouraged through experiences, such as: Bible Society Days, visiting speakers and other events.

6.4 Building the School Community

a) Enrolment

The Enrolment process includes orientation to the school. (Enrolment Policy)

Orientation occurs: for Prep readiness; for students entering Kindergarten the following year; for students and families at the start of the year, or when a student commences mid-year.

b) Communication

Regular information to parents, and other members of the school community, on all aspects of school life and events, through: newsletters, website, annual report, school reports, newspaper coverage of school events, advertising etc.

Information nights for parents at the beginning of the school year include a discussion of welfare pathways for the support of students.

c) Chaplain

Namoi Valley Christian School engages an on-site Chaplain for student and staff support, who may be called on for advice or direct involvement with the welfare of a student.

6.5 School Welfare Team (SWT)

- a) Class teacher: the first point of contact for students, parents and other staff concerning student welfare.

Parents are encouraged to arrange a meeting during scheduled parent-teacher meeting times; and at any other time through appointment via the Front Office, if they would like to talk to their child's teacher.

- b) Teachers will consult with Principal in all significant matters of student welfare; or when requiring further support in dealing with a welfare issue.
- c) Chaplain: available to students, parents and staff.
The school may refer students to the Chaplain; or include the Chaplain in discussion/ mediation/ investigation as required.
- d) Principal: ultimately responsible for the welfare of students. Parents may contact the Principal if they feel the need for further intervention in a matter of their child's welfare. The Principal deals directly with issues such as child protection matters, and provides appropriate information to Teachers.
In emergency or critical incident situations any Staff member can be called on for assistance.

Reports all incidents where a student appears to be at risk of significant harm, to the relevant authorities. (Child Protection Policy)

The Principal will also intervene in any issues of a serious nature where there is difficulty reaching resolution.

6.6 Welfare Strategies

- a. Early communication to parents of any educational, welfare or behavioural concerns the school holds regarding their child
- b. Individualised Enrolment Plan – partial enrolment; return to school plan; provisional enrolment; (Enrolment Policy; Attendance Policy)
- c. Special Ed/ Learning Support – testing;
Individual Plans (IP's) and Personalised Learning Plans (PLP's) –proformas: actual plan stored on Staff Share drive; referenced in (database); copy given to teachers (Special Education Policy)
- d. Classroom Support – teacher's aides in class, observing lunch/playground, taking kids out of class; parent involvement; Continued Professional Learning (CPL) for teachers
- e. Parent Connection/ Involvement – such as: information nights; parent-teacher meetings; regular communication to parents if welfare/ discipline issue; parent involvement in classes and on excursions/ camps; displays/ performances of student work; PIP (parents-in-partnership) working bees; social community events
- f. Feedback on effectiveness of the school in numerous areas - Annual Community Survey
- g. Attendance procedures - to ensure regular attendance and follow up of unexplained/ persistent absences or late arrivals (Attendance Policy)
- h. Discipline procedures – individual plans for focus on improvement to behavior in 3 goals (Discipline Policy)
- i. Centralised record keeping on (database) - an accurate profile of student records as updated by staff. Confidential notes are securely maintained on a school server, with access limited to authorised staff only.

Excerpt of Key Policy - Student Discipline

General Principles

1. Discipline should be appropriate given the age and maturity of the child.
2. Discipline should remain in the context of home and school working together
3. Discipline should always consider the individual and the particular situation.
4. Discipline should be appropriate to the incident and be accompanied by discussion with parents.
5. Discipline should be based on principles of Procedural Fairness, including the 'hearing rule' and the 'right to an unbiased decision'.

Policy Statements

1. The school will endeavour to develop proactive initiatives when dealing with student behaviour (both positive and negative). Positive reinforcement strategies accompanied by vigilant observation of student movement will enable staff to minimise problems and maximise a healthy learning environment.
2. It is the responsibility of the school to determine incidents which may require disciplinary action. This falls into two categories:

Behaviour requiring detention:

- Deliberate hurt (verbal or physical) to teacher or fellow student,
- Deliberate disobedience following fair warning

Behaviour requiring discipline:

- Offence against fellow student or teacher
- Breaking of class or school rule known by student

3. The Principal is responsible for the oversight of disciplinary measures used within the school.
4. Each teacher is responsible for discipline in their classroom and when supervising students in the wider activities of the school.
5. When travelling on public transport students are to conduct themselves as representatives of the school and as such should conduct themselves appropriately. *See Student Travel Policy.*
6. A wide range of disciplinary measures will be used within the school as appropriate for the student concerned and the particular circumstances. These may include encouragement, counsel, correction, reprimand, deprivation of privileges, school community service jobs, detention, isolation, family conference, suspension, expulsion and exclusion.
7. Those involved in a disciplinary action, are responsible for determining the actual facts of the matter, rather than relying upon hear-say and speculation. Clear and accurate communication is encouraged to prevent misunderstanding.

8. Incidents resulting in a detention should be reported to the parents of the students directly involved as soon as practical. (See point 13 below)
9. It is the responsibility of the adult to see that an apology is taken and amends made. The nature of the offence will determine the form and timing of the reparation.
10. In accordance with the requirements of the Education Reform Amendment (School Discipline) Act 1995, corporal discipline is not permitted at Namoi Valley Christian School.
11. In accordance with the requirements of the NSW Registered and Accredited Individual non-Government Schools Manual (**December 2006**) the school does not seek to explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.
12. All students must be dealt with in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness. In all areas of discipline students and parents shall have appropriate access to those implementing the discipline procedure. To ensure that:
 - a student's concerns are heard
 - the student is aware of the process by which the matter will be considered,
 - the student is aware of the process by which they may appeal.
13. Parents have the right to appeal any decision made by the Principal if they believe they have new information or considerations which were not provided or were not available at a previous point in the disciplinary process. This appeal should be made firstly to the Principal, and if still unresolved an appeal may be made to the School Board in writing.

As a caring and loving Christian Community it is important to understand that at all stages in the disciplinary process, every opportunity will be provided for the child to experience reconciliation and forgiveness. Whenever a child genuinely demonstrates his/her commitment to abide by the school's code of conduct, reinstatement will always be offered as an expression of the school's hope and desire for a new beginning.

Excerpt of Key Policy – Anti-Bullying

RATIONALE

Bullying occurs when any member of Namoi Valley Christian School is subjected to behaviour which is hurtful, threatening or causes physical injury. Bullying involves sustained, repeated intimidation of a physical, verbal or psychological nature by one or more persons.

As an extension of the home, the school seeks to ensure that students have opportunity to develop positive attitudes, appropriate values, tolerance and understanding of others and their needs. As a Christian School we aim to assist parents training their children in godliness. Children are encouraged to take responsibility in obeying God, acting as peace makers and showing love to others - love being the fulfillment of God's law (Romans 13:10).

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES/PERSPECTIVE

Namoi Valley Christian School is a community of unique individuals created to bear the image of God. As a result, each member of the school community shares the responsibility of ensuring the safety and well-being of other members of the community (Philippians 2:3, 4). Interactions between members of the School community should be edifying and supportive (Ephesians 4:29).

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Bullying is not acceptable and will not be condoned by the school. (Matthew 7:12) Students, parents and teachers have the right to feel safe travelling to and from school, while at school and during its associated activities.
2. Namoi Valley Christian School will seek to provide opportunity for members of the school community (i.e. staff, parents and students) to gain a heightened awareness of varying forms of bullying. Parents will be given a copy of the *Anti-Bullying Student Handout* at time of enrolment.
3. Teachers are encouraged to show commitment to enhance their own knowledge and understanding of bullying in the educational context, and develop personal skills to combat it.
4. Teachers may work to deal with various forms of bullying both within and outside the classroom taking care to involve parents in the conciliatory/restoration process.
5. Teachers should ensure that curriculum content and teaching methods are consistent and support the concept of producing a non-threatening learning environment, which encompasses the Biblical principles on which our school is founded.
6. The Student Handout on Anti-Bullying will be reviewed in class at the beginning of each semester or as necessary when bullying behaviour is reported.
7. Bullying is manifest in a number of ways, including, but not limited to the following...
 - Causing malicious hurt or pain to another. (Matthew 7:12)
 - Teasing, name calling or any other form of verbal abuse. (James 3:1-6)

- Gossiping or telling lies or spreading rumours about another student. (Proverbs 11:13; 26:20-22)
- Unjustified exclusion of students from an activity or activities without a good reason.
- Touching or taking other students' possessions without permission, or damaging these possessions deliberately.
- Making a student feel uncomfortable by the use of sexual actions or references. (Colossians 3:11)
- Causing a student to feel they are of less worth.
- Causing a student to be afraid whilst at school or any school related activity, or on the way to and from school or any school related activity.
- Making threats of a verbal, physical or sexual nature to a person, or to their belongings.
- Using offensive racial terms or references. (Colossians 3:11)

