

Muswellbrook Christian School

2014 Annual Report



**To establish Faith in Christ
to impart Truth with Godly Character
through Educational Excellence.**

2014 Annual Report

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This report is compiled in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act (as amended 2004).

Contact the Principal, David O'Hara, in relation to this report or other school matters.

School Overview

Contextual Information about the School

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Muswellbrook Christian School was established as Dunmore Lang Christian Community School by the St John's Presbyterian Church in 1999, in Muswellbrook. In July 2010 the school name was changed to Muswellbrook Christian School (MCS). The school is currently located in the St John's hall and a two classroom block built using BER funding. The school has two classrooms, a toilet block, a library, a multi-purpose learning space, reception area, office and kitchen.

Muswellbrook is a country town with a local economy based on coal mining. Muswellbrook Christian School's aim is to provide affordable Christian education to local families. A condition of enrolment is that families are expected to accept the school's Statement of Faith (refer to appendix) and agree to abide by all policies.

MCS strives to provide an environment that encourages a loving, caring, Christian atmosphere, where students support each other, particularly new enrolments and younger children.

Muswellbrook Christian School is fully registered with the Board of Studies and offers courses from Kindergarten to Year 6. All mandatory subjects are taught including English, Mathematics, Human Society and Its Environment, Science and Technology, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. Our curriculum also included study of the Bible during Devotions, and teachers teach their subjects from a Christian perspective. Discussions are encouraged amongst students concerning aspects of the Christian faith and how it applies to contemporary life.

Our mission statement is:

"To establish Faith in Christ to impart Truth with Godly Character through Educational Excellence."

Vision Statement

Muswellbrook Christian School is a Presbyterian co-educational Kindergarten to Year 6 School run as an activity of Muswellbrook Presbyterian Church. We aim to provide a quality education in a secure and supportive Christian environment. We strive to give every assistance to each student to develop:

- Their academic gifts
- Their social abilities
- Their physical endeavours
- Their spiritual awareness.

We encourage students to pursue success in all their undertakings in order to prepare them for a life of contribution to the community while serving Christ.

Muswellbrook Christian School exists to serve students and families from Muswellbrook and the surrounding area.

The School seeks to honour God at every level:

- Through honest Governance and management practices
- The development and implementation of all policies and procedures
- The employment of dedicated Christian staff
- The provision of quality curriculum programs
- By nurturing and caring for everyone in the MCS community
- Being a positive witness for Christ both within MCS and the wider community
- Encouraging the whole MCS community to grow in their individual relationships with God
- Maintaining a high standard of integrity, honesty and compassion in all areas.

2014 Principal's Report

The 2014 school year ended with consistent enrolments, a sound financial situation and the announcement of exciting developments for the 2015 school year. God has blessed the school community greatly in many ways.

During 2014 Muswellbrook Christian School continued to be part of the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan. The project is funded by the N.S.W. Government through the AIS to enhance sound literacy and numeracy practice. During 2014 Muswellbrook Christian School received \$74 924.82. This funding continues until the 2016 school year.

We used known data and the results of standardised testing to create a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of our approaches to the teaching of reading at every grade level. The data was used to help create a school profile which then became the basis of an action plan.

A written action plan for the school was developed, approved by the AIS, and implemented. The major initiatives of the action plan are as follows:

- Staff training
- Purchase and implementation of Number Worlds in the Infants
- Purchase and implementation of JEMM and EMM Maths program in the primary class.
- Purchase and implementation of Get Reading Right literacy program for the infants class.
- Purchase and implementation of Reading Mastery, Spelling Mastery and SRA Reading Lab for the Primary classroom.
- Implementation of MiniLit for infants classes and MultiLit for Year 2 to Year 6 students needing literacy intervention
- Appointment and training of two casual teachers' aides to deliver MultiLit and assisting in the delivery of the literacy and numeracy programs.
- Standardised testing to gain an understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the schools numeracy program.

Inclusion in the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Plan has been a wonderful blessing to the whole school community. It has allowed us to better serve students with learning needs and the provision of quality resources is a benefit to all students. We are very thankful to God and the NSW government for this provision. We will continue to see new initiatives as the funding continues.

At the Commonwealth census in August 29 students were enrolled at MCS. This allowed the school to employ teaching staff to the equivalent of two full-time teachers. In addition to this, there was provision for the principal to have a day for administration each week using a casual teacher. Administration staff were employed so that the office was manned during school hours every week day of term. Teachers' aides were employed to assist in the delivery of literacy and numeracy programs.

Each day at the school this year began with a devotion time, which included a Bible reading, teaching and prayer. Regular in school chapel services were run by Pastor Phill Hiron. These were well received and are enjoyed by the children.

The students also had opportunities for involvement in the community. As in previous years, the primary students prepared entries for the annual Muswellbrook Shire Council Solar Boat Competition and all students performed at the Muswellbrook Eisteddfod in school items. The children also sang Christmas carols by invitation at a local shopping centre. There were two major excursions for the children, both to enhance and support units being studied. The primary students enjoyed a two day excursion to Sydney where they went to a medieval festival, visited the Powerhouse Museum and visited a zoo. The infants enjoyed a day at Hunter Valley Zoo. A swimming carnival was held at the Muswellbrook Pool at the end of the swimming season and an athletics carnival was held during Term 3. There were track and field events for all ages and an opportunity for fellowship with parents.

The year saw the continued improvement and enhancement of school facilities. Work is progressing well, with voluntary help, to enclose the underneath of the teaching block and new bag racks were purchased and installed. All of this was financed with BER funds. An interactive whiteboard was installed in the infants room so that both teaching rooms are now equipped with this technology. During the year it became necessary to replace the office floor and so it was decided to refurbish the office as well, with new paint, carpet and rewiring. This work was completed with the help of Phill Hiron, who rebuilt the floor and the work was financed with church and school funds. The newly refurbished office and the hall was equipped with air conditioning, financed from school funds.

The children are encouraged to serve others and the school attempts to teach the principles of Christian service through word and action. The children were involved in raising money for a sponsor child in Indonesia through Compassion Australia.

The school has a small but committed and active Parents and Friends Committee. The committee held a Father's Day stall prior to Father's Day, and a Tales, Treats and Tunes event.

Parents, with the support of office staff, run a canteen for lunches and over the counter food each Wednesday. Profits from food sales go to the P and F. New and used uniform sales also contribute to Parents and Friends fundraising. The P and F has made substantial contributions to the school.

The school is blessed with committed Christian staff members, each highly committed and gifted in different ways. Chad Kentwell began as principal at the start of 2014, as did Kylie Moors, a part time teacher for the Infants class. Chad Kentwell left MCS at the end of the year, moving with his family to Gunnedah. Muswellbrook Christian School is thankful to Chad for all his tireless efforts and his work in many aspects of school life. Our school has been greatly blessed by Chad's endeavours and skills. David O'Hara will begin as principal in 2015.

The school is in a sound position because of careful management by the school's bursar Kier Bowman, with support from Noel Eveleigh. Reserve funds held by the school provide security for the future, particularly in circumstances where numbers fluctuate. Mining towns are vulnerable to economic changes both nationally and globally and Muswellbrook is experiencing a prolonged downturn at this time.

There are a number of maintenance and workplace health and safety issues involving buildings and facilities which will need attention in the long and short term. Some of these are:

- Disabled access to the buildings and toilets is not available and somewhat of a challenge because of the site. Professional plans have been developed, which would solve much of this when finances allow.
- Concreting the COLA / lunch area and replacing the retaining wall.
- Replacing the shade cloth and frame over the play equipment which was damaged during a storm last year.

David O'Hara (Principal)

Muswellbrook Christian School Board

Muswellbrook Christian School Board is a committee of St John's Presbyterian Church, given the responsibility of governing Muswellbrook Christian School. At the end of 2014, the Board consisted of:

Mr Adrian Lamrock Board Chairman
Mrs Barbara Betts Church Representative
Mrs Mary Bowman Church representative
Mrs Barbara Turvey Community Member

Mrs Kier Bowman (ex officio) Bursar
Mr Noel Eveleigh (ex officio)
Mr Chad Kentwell (ex officio) School Principal

The School Board endorses the report prepared by the Principal, Mr David O'Hara and expresses its thanks to him for the leadership he has provided since the departure of Mr Chad Kentwell in early January 2015.

2014 was a year of change for the school with the arrival of Mr Kentwell and his input particularly in the Literacy and Numeracy support programs which have been able to be operated. The composition and the chairmanship of the Board also changed with the arrival of Mr Adrian Lamrock, who became Chair in July 2014, and the resignations of Mrs Jeanette Beer and Mrs Beverley Burchell. Mrs Mary Bowman, who has held the position of Board Chair for some time, decided to step down from the position in July, but remains Deputy Chair. I am grateful for her consistent support for the school and, indeed, for all the input of the Board during 2014.

We would like to commend the excellent work done by the teaching staff under the leadership of Mr Kentwell and more recently under Mr O'Hara and thank them for the great care they show for their students and the efforts they make to enhance the learning experience at the school.

We would also like to thank the P&F for their continued support for the school in a variety of ways.

We have been conscious of the economic pressure on many of the families of the school community and are seeking to keep the school as accessible as possible both now and in the future. We hope that 2015 will be a year when some important improvements can be made to the school's physical facilities.

We would encourage all members of the school community to spread the good news about the school. Our present parents are our best advertisers. I commend the school to your support for 2015.

Adrian Lamrock
Board Chair

Community Satisfaction

Student Satisfaction

In 2014 there was no formal survey of students to gauge satisfaction. Overall student enrolment numbers were quite consistent. There were a variety of reasons for students leaving the school, all of which were noted. The main reason is moving for family employment opportunities.

Parent Satisfaction

Parents have praised the school for its close partnership with them and its caring nature. School functions and even the playground as parents wait to collect their children are places where the positive spirit and thankfulness of parents are evidenced in parent discussion and interaction with staff.

In 2014 there was no formal survey of parents to gauge satisfaction. Though there was no formal survey of parents to gauge satisfaction, parents are afforded the opportunity for feedback via the newsletter, Parent/Teacher Conferences and daily access to teachers. This feedback has been exceptionally positive.

Any constructive feedback from parents was duly followed up and appropriate action was taken within the feasibility of the school.

Staff Satisfaction

Feedback from staff continues to be positive. Evidence of this is our meetings which are celebrated with fun and enthusiasm. Staffroom banter, collegiality, educational risk taking and ongoing commitment to the school's ethos are other items of evidence.

There were many times when the self-sacrifice of teachers was evident. Whether it was at excursions, sporting events, social events or extra-curricular experiences, the involvement of Muswellbrook Christian School teachers displayed their commitment to the school and their sense of professional satisfaction.

Students

Characteristics of the Student Body

Muswellbrook Christian School exists to serve students and families of the Muswellbrook district who desire a Christian education that compliments the teachings of the Church and home.

In 2014 there were 29 students enrolled at Muswellbrook Christian School at the time of the Commonwealth Census. These students were predominately from the Muswellbrook township with some from nearby areas. They represented a mix of cultural backgrounds and Christian heritages.

Enrolments at August 1st 2014

	Total Enrolments	Boys	Girls
Kindergarten	6	5	1
Year One	5	2	3
Year Two	3	0	3
Year Three	2	2	0
Year Four	5	4	1
Year Five	5	5	0
Year Six	3	2	1
Total	29	20	9

Attendance Rates

School attendance rate for the whole school and each year level were as follows in the table below.

Year Level	Attendance Rate
Kindergarten	87%
Year One	90%
Year Two	92%
Year Three	94%
Year Four	89%
Year Five	95%
Year Six	92%
Whole School	90%

Attendance Register

Muswellbrook Christian School has an electronic roll marking system. Attendance Registers should reflect the highest professional standards. They are a legal document and can be inspected at any time. Therefore rolls must be accurate and up to date.

All details including the following must be recorded in the *Elite* database:

- Daily attendance of students which may be noted by recording absences
- Absences
- Reason for absence
- Documentation to substantiate reason for absence
- Common codes (approved by the Minister of Education) of registering absences must be used.

Register of Enrolments

Muswellbrook Christian School complies with Board of Studies requirements by maintaining an enrolment register that includes the following:

- The students
 - Name
 - Age
 - Address
- Parent/caregivers
 - Name
 - Contact address
 - Telephone number
- Date of enrolment and, where appropriate the date of leaving the school and the student's destination
- For children older than 6 years, previous school or pre enrolment situation
- Where the destination of a student below 17 years is unknown, evidence that the student's details are forwarded to the Director General of Education.

General Roll Marking Procedures

- The roll will be marked on all days that the school is open for instruction, including sports carnivals and excursions.
- Students involved in an official school activity must not be recorded as absent
- Students who arrive late or leave early must have the precise time of arrival or departure recorded.
- The correct codes must be used by staff maintaining rolls.
- If a child is absent, parents or caregivers can notify the school via
 - An email to the school (school@muswellbrookchristianschool.nsw.edu.au)
 - A facsimile (02 65431114)
 - A letter sent to the school.
- If a child is marked as absent and there is no known reason,
 - The parents/caregivers will be contacted by phone by 9:30am on the day of absence to alert them to the absence and to notify the school of the reason.
 - If no response is received a second contact will be made 3 days after the absence
 - Again if no response is received a letter is sent from the office.
- For partial absences the parents/caregivers need to notify the school of the late arrival or early departure time and the student needs to sign in or out at the administration office.
- Parents/caregivers may use the school Absentee Note.

Conditions of Enrolment

1. In enrolling a student at Muswellbrook Christian School, the parent(s) or guardian(s) accepts and agrees to be bound by these Conditions of Enrolment, and acknowledges liability for fees and charges in respect of tuition.
2. Once a student is in attendance at Muswellbrook Christian School at least one term's notice of withdrawal must be given in writing to the Principal. In default of such notice the upcoming term's fees will be required to be paid in full before the student leaves.
3. Annual fees can be paid by three different methods of payment. They include: one annual fee to be paid by the last week in March, payment by the term due by the second week of the term; payment weekly. All fees MUST be paid by November 30th each year.
4. In the event of financial difficulty, special arrangements may be made. Early notification of problems will help prevent debt collection action.
5. Respecting and caring for others are Christian values foundational to Muswellbrook Christian School. In accepting enrolment, students and parents acknowledge their intention to follow policies outlined in the Parent Handbook.
6. It is an expectation of Muswellbrook Christian School that all students participate in the Christian activities provided in the school.
7. In case of the need for urgent medical or hospital treatment for a student and if their parents or guardians are not readily contactable, a member of the school staff is authorised to give authority for such treatment without the school or staff member incurring any legal liability to the parent, guardian or student. In this regard, the parent or guardian indemnifies the staff, the school management, and the Trustees, against any claims which might arise as a result of such treatment.
8. The Principal reserves the right to suspend or terminate an enrolment. No remission of fees will be made in the case of suspension or removal of a student for unacceptable conduct or failure to pay fees.
9. These Conditions of Enrolment together with the general policies of the school as outlined in the current Governing Policies constitute the terms of the contract between the parents and/or guardians of the student/s and Muswellbrook Christian School.
10. Parents shall agree to allow the child to share fully in the life and program of the school, including the devotional activities and doctrinal lessons.
11. Parents shall support the aims of the school.
12. Any health or educational difficulties must be declared.
13. The parents undertake to provide the child with all the necessary equipment of a personal nature which will enable the child to benefit from the education offered.

14. That the parents undertake to provide the child with the correct uniform approved by the School Board, and to ensure that the child is always sent to school neatly and modestly dressed in the required uniform.
15. That all parents who are interested in volunteering their services to the school will regularly have to attend inductions for child protection and workplace health and safety, which are found in the respective policies.
16. That the first term of a student's enrolment at Muswellbrook Christian School will be on a probational period and that the school may suspend this temporary enrolment at the completion of one term.
17. Parents are required to disclose all relevant information to the school in regards to citizenship and residency status. Failure to do so can mean immediate termination of enrolment.
18. The school may suspend or terminate enrolment, at its discretion, for failure to comply with these conditions or other serious breaches of the school's rules and regulations.

National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

It is to be recognised that education is more than just test scores. Overall performance of the student, along with the development of character, behaviour and faith-in-action gives a more comprehensive picture of what "To establish Faith in Christ to impart Truth with Godly Character Through Educational Excellence." aims to produce within the Muswellbrook Christian School environment and within the community.

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were required to participate in the NAPLAN (National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy) tests. Muswellbrook Christian School students in Year 3 and Year 5 participated in NAPLAN in 2014. Detailed information regarding student results in these assessments can be obtained from the My School website at the following web address: <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>. As cohort numbers are small, specific performance data cannot be given without infringing on the Privacy Rights of individual students. If more details of this information are legitimately required, it may be obtained from the school administration office upon request.

Although the school can only publish NAPLAN results, there are many other areas where our students achieve excellent results. These are not as easy to quantify and measure, and therefore very difficult to report on accurately. NAPLAN only reports on a small part of student achievement.

Staff

Teacher Qualifications

In 2014, Muswellbrook Christian School employed the equivalent of two full-time teachers for the whole year. Two female teachers were employed on the K-2 class, one for three days per week and the other for two days per week. The 3-6 class was taught for four days per week by the Principal, Chad Kentwell, and one day per week by a casual teacher, Alison Baker. The Principal spent one day per week completing administration tasks.

All teachers employed by MCS in 2014 had teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia, including one teacher with an Honours degree and another teacher with a Master's degree. In addition to qualified teaching staff, MCS employed the equivalent of one full-time person in administration, two teachers' aides and casual cleaners and maintenance staff throughout 2014.

All teaching staff are committed Christians and subscribe to the school's Statement of Faith.

Professional Development

During 2014, teaching staff engaged in a wide range of professional learning (PL) provided both externally and internally. External PL was provided by the Association of Independent Schools as part of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan.

Muswellbrook Christian School is committed to ongoing professional development of all staff through participation at in-school activities, regular staff meetings, external courses and conferences. For other professional development, staff were released to attend specific training seminars during school hours or have attended workshops held at school.

The *Institute of Teachers Act 2004* defines professional development as *formal and informal learning activities designed to maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers*.

In 2014, teachers at MCS undertook the following professional development:

- Principal as Literacy Leaders (PALL) course
- Taree, Hunter and Central Coast Christian Schools Association (THACCCSA) conference
- Professional Learning with Association of Independent Schools (AIS) literacy consultant, Pat Hodges
- Professional Learning with Association of Independent Schools (AIS) numeracy consultant, Lynelle Campbell
- Webinar sessions on the implementation of Get Reading Right literacy program
- Numeracy course run by Anita Chin

School Strategies

Priority Areas

2014 Targets	2014 Achievement
Continue to work towards increasing enrolments in order to achieve the school's original vision of approximately 100 students.	The school's enrolment at the end of the year was 29 students. Improving the school's enrolment figures will continue to be an aim in 2015.
Continue to focus on the implementation of the NSWLNAP in the school.	The NSWLNAP has continued to be in operation through 2014. The LNAP has funded two teachers' aides which has been of huge benefit in assisting students struggling with literacy and numeracy. MCS has also introduced MultiLit, Get Reading Right, Reading Mastery, Spelling Mastery and EMM / JEMM programs
<p>There are a number of maintenance and workplace health and safety issues involving buildings and facilities which will need attention in the long and short term. Some of these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tennis court, now turfed for general play, is a high use area. The fencing is aged and in need of repair or replacement. • The play equipment is aging and in need of at least partial rebuilding in places. • The sandpit, damaged by a fallen tree branch, needs removal and a new one constructed. • The build-up of soil around the office area is causing dampness and requires a long term solution. • Fencing above the tennis court area and below the church is not adequate and in very poor repair in some places. • Continue to work towards a solution to providing disabled access to the school site and its buildings. 	<p>The fence around the tennis court is due to be replaced in January 2015.</p> <p>During 2015 work is due to commence to excavate the build-up of soil and concrete the lunch area. Plans are also in place to provide a larger undercover area for lunch.</p> <p>The fence above the tennis court is planned to be replaced in March 2015 in agreement with the neighbours of the school.</p> <p>There are plans to provide for disabled access to the school, but the cost of such work is very high, and the school needs to hold off such work until it has the funds to carry it out. The school applied for grants but was unsuccessful in this process.</p>

Goals for 2015:

- Increase enrolments. To do this we are using things like newspaper articles, the proposed brochure, visiting churches, putting the brochure, when printed, in churches and the visitor information centre.
- Continue to focus on the implementation of the NSWLNAP in the school. Teachers will continue to take part in professional development and implement new programs with the aim of improving the literacy and numeracy skills of all students.
- Further develop the school website
- Improve the lunch area and around the office. Soil will be need to be excavated and the ground levelled. Install taps and bubblers near the lunch area. Concrete the lunch area all the way to the path. Install a larger shade cloth over the new concreted area.

Respect and Responsibility

Due to the fact that we are a Christian school, we always encourage students to act in a Christ-like fashion. This means that we show respect to older members of the community and for our peers. Students are currently reminded of this through devotions, Personal Development and Health lessons and Bible teaching. Teachers encourage students who act in a caring and loving manner towards others and discipline students who do not respect others.

Students regularly participate in the Muswellbrook Anzac Day Ceremony each year to show their respect to the war veterans of our community. They also attend Remembrance Day services when they fall on a school day. In addition, this year the children were involved in sponsoring a child from Indonesia through Compassion Australia.

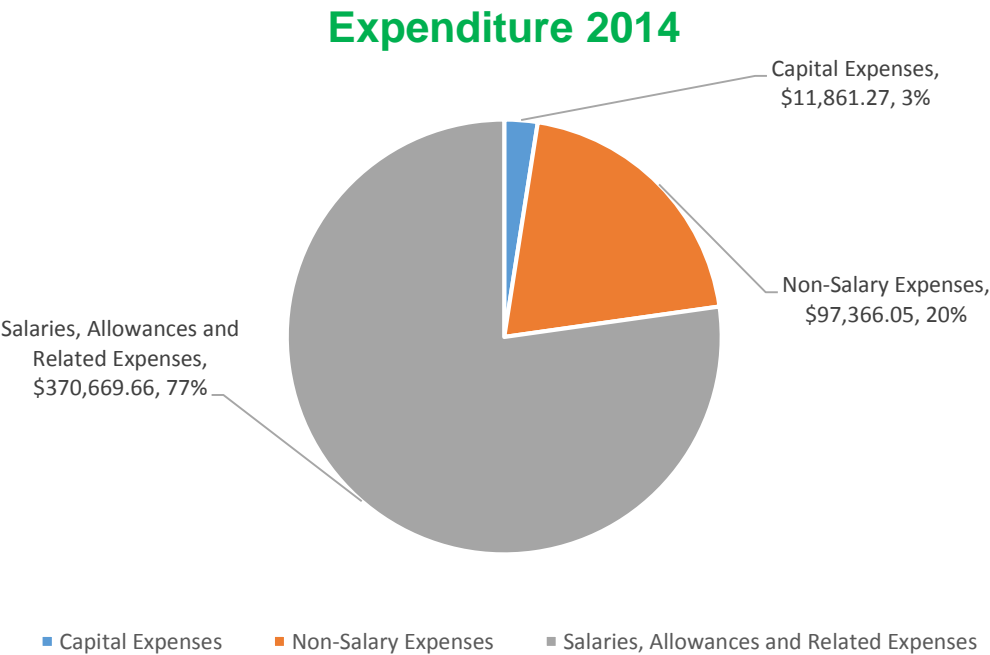
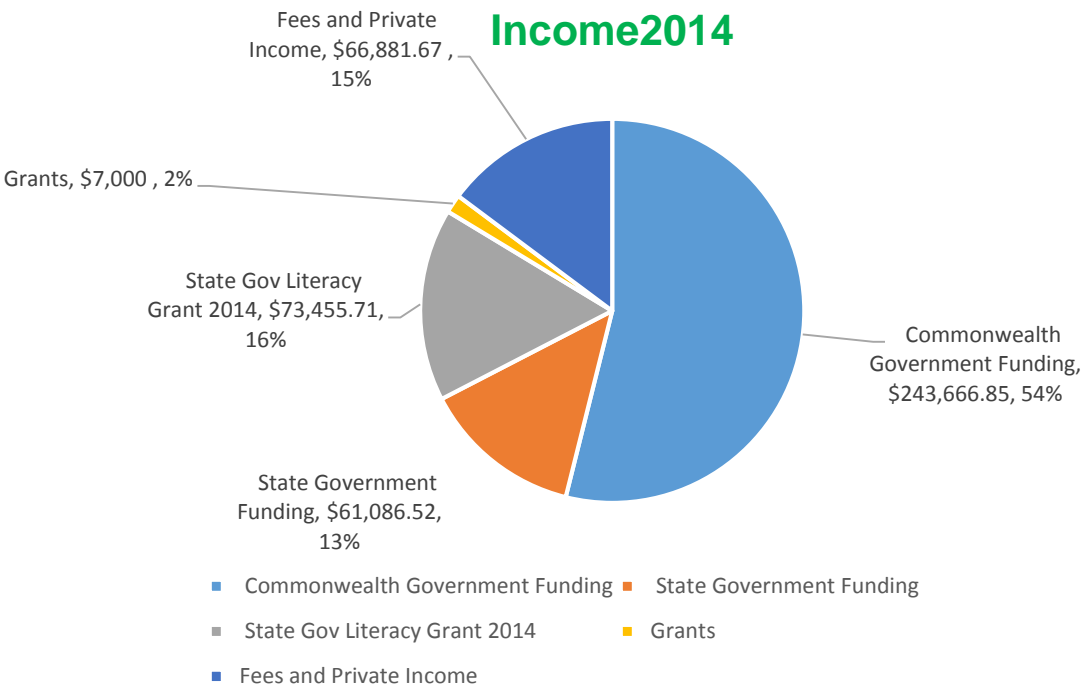
Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, to admit wrongdoing and mistakes and to accept sanctions and punishment. The demonstration of forgiveness when there has been wrongdoing is an important element in dealing with such matters. This approach helps students to deal directly with mistakes and wrongdoing and to modify behaviour in a supportive atmosphere where reminders of past misdemeanours are not used to pigeonhole or condemn students.

Financial Summary

Categories for Financial Information are as required and outlined in the *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual 2004, (Updated Online 2009), under item 3.10.1*

The Commonwealth and State governments are major contributors to the costs of running the school. We are thankful to the government authorities for their support. We give grateful thanks to God for his continued provision and pray that under His leadership we can be good stewards of the financial operations at the school.

The Board of Management, meet regularly to review the financial performance of the school and this allows for accountability and transparency in our financial dealings. The school is also aligning its financial plan to its Strategic Plan to provide the resources and initiatives to the school.



Policies

All school policies are due for review early in 2015 as Muswellbrook Christian School prepares for the registration process with BOSTES. This will be undertaken by the school principal.

A copy of all school policies including student welfare, enrolment, discipline, grievances, child protection etc. are available for parents to view by contacting the administration office at the school.

These policies aim to foster a safe, supportive environment where all school community members (students, staff and parents) are valued, respected and treated fairly. The policies are consistent with the school Core Values Statement, and are based on:

- The mandate to love one another as God has loved us
- God's pure and servant-like love permeating the school community at all levels
- Each person being acknowledged as a unique creation of our Heavenly Father, deserving of our respect and kindness
- The fruit of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control) that should be evident and growing in our lives
- The partnership between family, school and church for the complete nurturing and education of children
- Encouraging repentance and restoration.

Some elements of the policies and their implementation include:

- Whole school training and reminding, e.g. during devotions and assemblies
- Teacher mentor approach
- Inclusion of relevant material in PDHPE programs, e.g. self-image, respect, building community
- Merit Award System: positive affirmations and rewards for positive choices and behaviours
- Consequences for poor choices and undesirable behaviour that are appropriate to the situation, age and understanding of the student
- Information for parent helpers
- Maintaining and improving communication and partnership between school and home.

The school has a zero tolerance to bullying. The school values and ethos are intended to promote God honouring and positive relationships

Summary of Specified School Policies

Child Protection Policy

Childhood holds a special place in time and in society. It should be a time of playing, learning and growing in peace and in the comfort of love and protection of others. Sadly for many children, this is not the case. Each person in the community has a responsibility for actively ensuring the protection of all the children in our community. In this responsibility, Muswellbrook Christian School (MCS) is responsible to provide a safe environment for its students and to provide an educational environment and curriculum which fosters healthy growth and development spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and socially.

The aim of this policy is to provide:

1. The guiding principles that underpin child protection at DCS and
2. The framework for implementing the procedures and practices of child protection at DCS.

Scripture indicates the nurture of children is a great responsibility given to the community with specific responsibility given to their parents.

To Parents: *"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."* Ephesians 6:4 NIV

To the Nation: *"...do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."* Deuteronomy 4:9 NIV

All staff at MCS have a responsibility to love the children in their care. This love will guide staff actions and direction as they stand in the place of parents.

"Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." 1 Corinthians 13:6,7 NIV

When a child is enrolled at MCS the school enters a contract with the parents to assist the parents with the God-given responsibility of the nurture of their children. The school strives to fulfil this contract and support the family unit **but** never at the detriment of the welfare of the children. In every action related to the child, the best interest of the child is of paramount consideration. This forms the scriptural and moral basis that will enable the school to be involved in the process of protecting children.

Student Welfare

The health, safety and welfare of students is the highest priority at Muswellbrook Christian School. Staff are expected to make themselves familiar with the policies regarding the safety and welfare of the students. The following is a summary of the policies that involve the safety and welfare of students:

- Maintain a professional relationship with all students.
- Provide an environment which is free from bullying and harassment.
- Report any incidences where a suspected case of child abuse is apparent, to the Principal. Not be involved in acts of physical, emotional, psychological or verbal abuse towards children.
- Not place themselves in a position where a student can feel threatened.
- Model appropriate behaviour, dress and language at all times. * Respect student's cultural and individual differences.
- Maintain an acceptable standard of supervision and discipline both inside and outside the classroom at all times.
- Know how to keep children safe in both the classroom and playground in a time of emergency.
- Inform the Principal of any children who are unresponsive to usual form of discipline so that appropriate steps can be taken.
- Deal with students who are upset or require medical attention in an acceptable fashion according to the school protocols.
- Complete child protection assessments for excursions.

These policies are reviewed and implemented annually and full statements of all policies regarding teachers' conduct and the safety and welfare of children are available from the school office upon request.

Discipline Policy

We believe that:

- Discipline has an important function to play in the development of God's children.
- Discipline is meant to be a source of encouragement not despair for God's people (Heb 12:5,6).
- God establishes the pattern for discipline and expects those who have been given authority over children to follow His lead (Ephesians 6:4, Hebrews 12:7).
- Discipline should be seen as contributing to the child's development as part of **training for righteousness and peace**, and of **correcting error**. Discipline should never be seen as solely punishment but also and equally as important, as a training of the child's will and nature into a maturity of living in, and relating to, the community around them.

The school believes that all students can expect to:

- Be treated as individuals, with respect, courtesy and kindness
- Feel and be safe
- Express themselves without ridicule
- Learn in a secure environment without intimidation or disruption
- Be given help and discipline if self-discipline fails, and if the privileges of others are abused
- Have rules and their consequences applied consistently and fairly
- Have the principles of Procedural Fairness applied
- Be encouraged toward responsible and cooperative play
- Have enforced the wearing of uniforms (allowing for special circumstances)
- Have peer and cross age sport promoted
- Benefit from regular Teacher / parent contact.

The school believes that all students have the responsibility to:

- Contribute to and be involved in learning situations
- Be thoughtful, respectful and courteous to others
- Develop and exercise self-discipline and self-control
- Care for property (school, others, own)
- Ensure they do not disrupt the learning opportunities of other students
- Be a good ambassador for our school and for Christ
- Respect the rights of teachers, fellow students and the community
- Obey school and classroom rules
- Contribute to the school's clean and healthy environment
- Contribute to maintaining a safe school environment by not physically bullying, hitting or hurting anyone in any way

Safe Environment Policy

Muswellbrook Christian School is committed to a safe environment for all members of the school community. This Policy should also be read in conjunction with the MCS Discipline Policy. Both these policies are consistent with, and stem from, the Biblical Core Values of our School.

All members of the school community (students, staff and parents) have a responsibility to work towards fostering a safe and positive environment.

Bullying or harassment in any form by staff or students, or to staff or students, will not be tolerated.

Bullying is any repeated and/or serious intentional action or comment of a cruel, demeaning or intimidating nature by a person who is perceived to be more powerful than the person towards whom that action or comment is directed.

Bullying can include harassment, victimisation, sexual harassment, physical abuse and psychological abuse. It may occur in a variety of ways including the use of electronic technology and may take place off-campus.

Conflict will be managed where possible through dispute resolution processes. (see Communication Policy).

The School will ensure that:

- Legislative requirements to protect the safety of staff and students are observed.
- Students and staff are aware of the School's Safe Environment Policy.
- Support is available for victims and perpetrators of bullying/harassment.
- There are reporting/recording systems in place for bullying/harassment.
- Serious or repeated incidents of bullying/harassment are reported to parents.
- The policy and training, information and reporting procedures are reviewed regularly.
- Bullying/harassment procedures are compatible with the School's other policies and procedures.

Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is underpinned by the School's Core Values, and reflects the expected standards of behaviour consistent with a Christian worldview and our Educational Creed. It should be considered in conjunction with other relevant MCS policies, including

- Discipline
- Safe Environment (Anti-Bullying)
- Communication

The Code seeks to:

- Give guidance on ethical issues and expected standards of behaviour at Muswellbrook Christian School
- Assist staff and volunteers to make informed choices about personal behaviour,
- Encourage a culture of edifying and God-honouring behaviour within the everyday life of our School
- Provide general guidelines to test whether a course of action is consistent with a Christian worldview, as well as giving examples of specific behaviours.

The Code acknowledges:

- The reality of living in a fallen world: mistakes will be made
- We all need the grace and forgiveness of God
- We should extend this grace and forgiveness to others, while at all times protecting the students placed in our care
- Each person is responsible for their own behaviour and needs to take accountability for choices made and the impact on colleagues, students, families and the School as a whole.

God has always given clear guidelines concerning his expectations of His people. He has not operated on the assumption that people will know what to do. In today's societal climate of litigation and the melding together of many different cultures and customs, it is not appropriate to assume that every Christian thinks alike concerning acceptable or non-acceptable behaviour.

Communication Policy

Muswellbrook Christian School believes that to function effectively in our educational task, communication is vital. This includes communication between students, parents and helpers, staff, the P&F, the Board and the wider community. Open and honest communication is always desirable, but must also be tempered with love and encouragement. Our Father God, who is Love, instructs us in His Word to love others (eg Matthew 22: 37-39), and to show love in our words and actions.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7)

As we live in a world tainted by sin, our school community will be affected by complaints, grievances, offences and hurts. This Policy aims to educate all members of the school community in ways to minimise hurts, and to encourage responses that reflect the loving servant attitude of Christ our Lord.

Positive encouraging communication between all school community members is also vital.

We acknowledge rights to confidentiality and privacy, where these do not conflict with legal requirements (e.g. in the case of Mandatory Reporting issues.)

Statement of Faith

- We believe in the Divine inspiration, the infallibility and supreme authority of the Old and New Testaments in their entirety and that the Holy Spirit so moved the writers that what they wrote are authoritative statements of truth for all matters of faith and conduct.
- We believe there is one God in whom there are three equal Divine Persons, revealed as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and who of His own sovereign will, created the heavens, the earth and all that is contained within the Universe.
- We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternally existing, only begotten Son of the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. As God He became flesh and dwelt among us; as man He was God.
- We believe that everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's standard, and that everyone will be raised from the dead, some to eternal life with God and the rest to eternal separation from Him.
- We believe that the salvation from the penalty and consequences of sin is found only through the substitutionary, atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We believe it is the Holy Spirit alone who convicts men of sin; leads them to repentance; creates faith within them and regenerates and fills those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord. It is the indwelling Spirit who bestows the Gifts of the Spirit and manifests the Fruit of the Spirit in the believer.
- We believe Christ died for our sins, was buried and the third day rose from the dead; that He appeared to men who touched Him and knew His bodily presence and that He ascended to His Father.
- We believe the Lord Jesus Christ will return in person with His saints and that the full consummation of the kingdom of God awaits His return.
- We believe those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit will receive a resurrection body at the return of Jesus Christ and be forever with the Lord, while those who have not believed will be resurrected to stand at the Judgment Seat of God to receive His judgment and eternal separation from Him.
- We believe in the actual existence of Satan who is the father of evil and opposed to God although ultimately subject to the purposes of God and destined to be confined forever to Hell.

- We believe the Church is the Body of Christ composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, which finds its visible manifestation in the local community of believers and ministers through the cooperative exercise of God-given gifts by the entire membership. Each local community of believers is competent under Christ as Head of the Church to order its life without interference from any authority whether civil or ecclesiastical.*
- We believe there are two ordinances instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ:
 - Baptism by immersion of all believers; *
 - The Lord's Supper which is a memorial and proclamation of the Lord's death until He returns.

*Variations to these clauses will be accepted to allow for different convictions about these two beliefs.