



Annual Report 2020



The Currajong School is a registered independent specialist primary school for children with social, emotional and behavioural disorders.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).

- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006*. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December 2020 from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.

About our school

The Currajong School invites a community atmosphere, with an inclusive and positive learning environment. At The Currajong School we have proud tradition in providing excellence in specialist education for students with additional learning needs around social, emotional and behavioural disorders and maximise every learning opportunity to shape our students' future through high quality, values enriched teaching and learning.

As a Victorian Independent Specialist Primary School, The Currajong School has a clear vision and purpose. The school is renowned for fostering student excellence with the support and involvement of our learning community. The staff at The Currajong School are dedicated and committed professionals who are experts in their field of education. The Currajong School has provided assistance and expertise to primary and secondary schools within the local area through the Currajong Outreach Program.

At The Currajong School, the school community works together to ensure every child has a positive, happy and rewarding school experience. Parents and teachers are genuine partners in the learning process, ensuring students are encouraged to participate, to strive to achieve their best, to be considerate and supportive of others, to be independent and to value the pursuit of knowledge.

Student enrolment for 2020 was 42 students with results across formative and summative testing and growth against levels of the Australian Curriculum showing students achieving growth in all outcomes. This is testimony to the quality education provided.

Students are eligible to attend The Currajong School if they meet the criteria for enrolment:

Severe Emotional Disorder

Children who require special education provision as well as psychiatric or psychological treatment or monitoring in relation to the social, emotional and behavioural problems they are experiencing.

Age

Children should be the ages to attend primary schooling during their placement at Currajong. They should be no older than 11 years of age at the time of enrolment. In 2020 and previous years, The Currajong School has not offered enrolment to students in Foundation/Prep. Children were eligible from the age of 5.

Intellectual Ability

Children need to be functioning within or above the normal range of intelligence (as measured on a standardised test), to be able to benefit from the programs offered at Currajong. As the level of intelligence may be difficult to determine in very young children with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, such children may be referred on to a more appropriate school placement following periodic review.

Prognosis for Change

There should be positive indicators of children's ability to sustain changes made and to reintegrate into mainstream education following placement at Currajong.

Vision

To transform the lives of children experiencing social, emotional, and behavioural disorders.

Mission

To provide a positive and therapeutic school environment for children whose social, emotional, and behavioural needs are unable to be met within mainstream education.

Goal

To work intensively with children to develop the learning and coping strategies which will allow them to re-enter mainstream education with healthy self-esteem, established work habits, and acceptable behaviours. To achieve this goal, children are treated respectfully as individuals, given responsibility for their own behavioural choices, taught to be resourceful in solving problems, and accepted as valued members of the school community. Children are encouraged at all times to seek positive rather than negative ways of belonging.

Philosophy

The Currajong School is committed to providing a positive and therapeutic school experience for children presenting with significant social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. The educational program at Currajong has been designed to meet the needs of these young students, with social-emotional learning as an integral component of the curriculum.

The Currajong School operates within the Positive Behaviour Support approach, where learning is understood developmentally, and all behaviour is viewed as communication. The classroom offers a safe base for vulnerable children whose complex social and emotional needs have become a barrier to both their learning and their wellbeing. With the nurture approach students' social and

emotional development and learning is supported and enhanced, and the opportunity provided for them to reach their greatest potential.

Values

Using a model of collaboration and consultation, the staff and students created an agreed set of values that we aim to always demonstrate:

Respect

Treating people kindly, in a way that shows you care about their wellbeing and how they feel. Sometimes it means doing things for them or listening to their instructions.

Responsibility

Being honest and fair, having courage, and owning your actions.

Resilience

Bouncing back from challenges and difficulties, giving things a go, and trying your best.

Governance

The Currajong School Limited is a company limited by guarantee. The Board of Directors forms the School Council which acts as the governing body, appoints the school principal, and establishes and monitors the strategic direction of the school. The operation of the school is delegated by the Board of Directors to the school principal.

Board of Directors

Mrs Deborah Negri (Chair)

Ms Connie Linney

Ms Philippa Murray

Ms Elizabeth Pattison

Mr Stephen Carey

Mr Ken Vaughan (resigned 23rd April 2020)

Ms Rachael Collier

Company Secretary: Belinda Wright

Staffing

In 2020 the staff comprised 23 teaching, support and administrative staff, with a mix of full-time and part-time. No staff member identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

Leadership team

Principal

Susan Coull

Business Manager

Belinda Wright

Assistant Principal

Sonia Dunne (2 days)

Teachers

Sonia Dunne
Paul Crick
Ruth Mangan
Cris Payne
Amy Russell
Michele Whitby

Teaching Assistants

Jamie Choon,
Noelle Collado
Nicole Eykman
Janine Hamilton
Susan Hughes
Sarah Hunt
Georgia Koutina
Frances Moon
Nancy Moss
Bernadette Young
Matt Young
Zac Wright

Specialist Support

Psychology

Sharon Crowley

Speech Pathology

Aretha deKretser

Music Therapy

Philippa Reid

External Service Providers

Dance – Fit2Move

Swimming – Ashburton Pool & Recreation Centre

Strategic Development

The Strategic Plan was endorsed in November 2019 and will be implemented until 2022. Five key areas were identified addressing the immediate needs of the school community:

Our Learning and Wellbeing – improving educational and allied health services; enhancing transition into and out of the school; introducing Positive Behaviour in Schools.

Our Staff – implementing a performance and development system with regular feedback; improving communication; documenting and increasing transparency of employment conditions.

Our Community – increasing opportunities for parental involvement; engaging with external stakeholders; sharing staff expertise back into the community.

Our Facilities – developing a master plan to improve school facilities; improving technology supports and offerings.

Our Governance – building the representation, skill sets and diversity of the Board members; planning for succession; ensuring turnover of Board members.

Programs

Curriculum

The Australian curriculum informs the pedagogical direction for all students. It “sets the goal for what all students should learn as they progress through their school life – wherever they live in Australia and whichever school they attend”. We teach seven of the eight learning areas: English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education (HPE), Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), The Arts and Technologies. As a specialist school, we are exempt from teaching a language.

The Currajong School strives to continually maintain and challenge a high level of participation and achievement for students within the Australian Curriculum. Teachers use both formative and summative assessment resources to support this process and record achievement.

At The Currajong School every student has an individual learning plan. This results in very high engagement in the learning process of all students. Staff set realistic learning goals for each student attending Currajong. Student results reflect the teacher’s capacity to plan thoroughly and use appropriate pedagogical practices with continual monitoring. Continued improvement in student outcome progress is enhanced by student and staff competency in our new technology devices, like iPads and Interactive Whiteboards. We are using ACARA to guide our Teaching, Assessment and Reporting.

Teachers have been working on building capacity to provide differentiated learning, where the students are working and plan tasks which are both enjoyable but challenging for every student. By developing teacher knowledge through Professional development & meetings, the school has been able to implement consistent and sustained high-impact teaching strategies.

Social-emotional supports/ Wellbeing

An Individual Education Plan is designed in consultation between the school, parents/carers/guardians, and external services for every student.

A psychologist and speech pathologist provide therapeutic services to individuals and small groups. The psychologist facilitates fortnightly shared meetings for parents. Raphi, a trained therapy dog, provides supports for students three to four days per week.

A program of supports and programs is individualised for each student's needs to assist them managing and monitoring their behaviour.

The social, emotional, and behavioural disorders, along with other formal diagnosis such as ASD, ADHD etc of our students can limit their ability to significantly apply metacognitive strategies to their learning. We have found that with the expansion of the extra curriculum offerings the students' engagement has increased. This includes Transition Programs, Sports Clinics, Cooking, Horticulture, Clubs, Swimming, Community Access, Music and Dance.

The Currajong School, began to use the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) to promote student safety, wellbeing and to support students to manage their behaviour.

Student Progress

Each student works towards individualised goals which are included in their Individual Education Plan. Parents, external specialists and school staff work together to determine the student's needs and how they are best met.

All students are assessed at the time of enrolment and twelve-monthly thereafter on the Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement for reading, mathematics and spelling.

Eligible students are entitled to undertake the annual NAPLAN assessments. NAPLAN testing was not undertaken in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

Student Attendance

Student attendance data for 2020 has not been published due to inconsistencies in the data because of the varying health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (ACARA).

Families are required to notify the school of an absence either in person or by telephone, email or note. Regular attendance is heavily promoted as consistent participation in programs is a key to ensuring progress.

Students at The Currajong School have relatively high attendance and enjoy coming to school. We have a few students that have higher than usual non-attendance records and individual support plans are put into place with the students and their families. This is focused regularly at leadership and care team meetings, then further communicated with relevant staff across the school.

Staff work closely with parents/guardians/carers, psychologists, and other therapeutic support staff to enable regular school attendance for each student.

Improved School Facilities

A number of improvements were implemented according to the changing needs of the school community:

- ✓ Upgrade of outdoor playground to include sports surfacing, badminton court and nets and installation of basketball and netball rings.
- ✓ Refurbishment of library and office spaces to create an extra classroom/learning space.
- ✓ New cabinetry installed for library books and resources

A donation of \$5,000 from the Australian Hotels Associations provided additional resources and materials for our design and technology programs.

A donation of \$10,100 from the Rotary Club of Chadstone/East Malvern provided financial assistance bursaries to be provided to two students.

School Operations

Income 2020

Government Grants	1,883,320
Fees and levies	405,375
Interest	27,319
Donations	11,963
Capital Grants	0

Expenditure 2020

Salaries and Associated Costs	1,794,245
Operating Expenses	326,105
Depreciation	120,822
Contingency	208,069

The Currajong School

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