MUSEC SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS
ABN 90 952 801 237

Macquarie University Special Education Centre
14 First Walk
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

A registered non-government primary school: Kindergarten to Year Six for children with disabilities.

MUSEC SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Professor Martina Möllering (Chair)  Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts
Professor Mary Ryan  Dean, Macquarie School of Education
Mr Neil Durrant  General Manager, Faculty of Education
Dr Sally Howell  School Principal
Ms Anne Murdoch  Business Manager
Ms Rosie Green  Parent Observer

A MESSAGE FROM MUSEC SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) School is a community outreach activity of Macquarie School of Education, that receives advice from the MUSEC School Management Committee. This annual report fulfils statutory reporting requirements specified in Schedule 2 of the Australian Government’s Schools Assistance (Learning Together-Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) regulation 2005 and the educational and financial reporting requirements for the 2021 reporting year, as laid out in Section 3.10 of the Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual available from the NSW Education Standards Authority.

The MUSEC School Principal was responsible for co-ordinating the final preparation and distribution of the Annual Report. For all reporting areas the Principal was responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the data and has provided the relevant information for inclusion in the report. Financial information in the report has been provided by the School Business Manager. The report has been prepared in electronic format to send to the NSW Education Standards Authority and is available for download on the MUSEC School website.

MUSEC School operates as part of the Macquarie School of Education within the Faculty of Arts. The MUSEC School Management Committee meets four times per year, with one meeting held each term. The MUSEC School Charter, which outlines the role of the Management Committee, is available on the MUSEC School website.

MUSEC School remained open throughout the year, including the period of Covid-19 lockdown in Term 3 and the beginning of Term 4, being categorised as an essential service. Approximately one third of students moved to a fully remote learning program.

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during this period, with the remaining two thirds attending either full-time or a combination of in-person and remote learning. Half the staff delivered lessons remotely during this period as they lived in local government areas of concern and could not attend campus. Some school activities continued to be constrained by necessity, with no excursions or incursions, all sports programs being conducted onsite, and restricted parent events. The University provided the necessary support to ensure the school was able to comply with all Covid-19 related health protocols and ensure its continued operation.

**CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Through its programs MUSEC School:

- Optimised students’ development across developmental domains
- Accelerated progress in Literacy and Numeracy
- Provided successful learning experiences for students
- Worked collaboratively with parents in the education of their children
- Supported parents through information sessions
- Developed assessments and programs for students K-6 with disabilities
- Worked collaboratively with therapists and other professionals for the benefit of students.

From the beginning of 2013 the school has operated with four classes of 10-12 students per class. Typically, two classes cater for years K-3 and two classes cater for years 3-6. Staffing for each class comprises a Master Special Education Teacher, Special Education Teacher and one or two Teacher or Classroom Assistants. Additional support across classes is provided by a Speech Pathologist and a Special Education Teacher, who provides relief from face-to-face teaching and teaches creative arts. IT support is provided by University IT staff. The school is registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) as both a K-6 School and a School for Students of a Kind.

At MUSEC School we adopt a non-categorical approach to teaching. This means that all instructional decisions are made on the basis of a student’s demonstrated skill level rather than according to their diagnosed disability.

Curriculum based assessments are employed in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy for the purposes of formative evaluation to guide instructional decision-making.

To ensure effective classroom behaviour management and to facilitate high levels of student academic engagement the principles and procedures of Positive Teaching are practised.

At MUSEC School the major focus is on literacy and numeracy learning. The seven key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, History, Geography, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Creative Arts provide a context in which the students’ learning experiences are provided. The generalisation of literacy and numeracy skills is embedded across the curriculum. Individual student needs are identified and addressed through the Individual Education Plan process and the development of students’ communication skills, social skills and independent work habits is a priority.

Features of the school program include:

- Intensive, individualised small group instruction in literacy and numeracy by specialist teachers;
- Research-based practice;
- Close monitoring of student progress involving curriculum-based assessment;
- Program adjustment based on progress ensuring a truly individualised program;
- Parent education in helping the student at home;
- A comprehensive Individual Education Plan process;
- Transition to the student’s next educational setting.

The educational programs within the MUSEC School have three major functions. Firstly, they operate as models demonstrating the most effective forms of special education practice. These facilities allow for the demonstration of exemplary Special Education programs whereby students of the University and persons from outside may observe those working with students with special education needs. Secondly, university students completing Special Education teacher education courses directly benefit from involvement in the programs and have first-hand experience of working with these children as part of their course requirements. Thirdly, research and development of effective instructional procedures are on-going features of the school.

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PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE OR EQUIVALENT TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

As we are a special school, students may be withdrawn or exempted from statewide tests and examinations at their parents’ request in consultation with the school principal.

At the time of the NAPLAN 2021 there were five (5) students enrolled in Year 3 and four (4) students enrolled in Year 5. One (1) Year 3 student participated in the NAPLAN (Numeracy only).

The Year 3 student achieved a result of Band 4 in the Numeracy assessment.

Comparison with benchmark data is not appropriate for students in this school.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers at MUSEC School have access to a wide range of resources and professional expertise, at no cost. During 2021 staff also participated in the following professional learning:

Nineteen staff attended the full-day course “Managing Actual and Potential Aggression (MAPA)”. (cost $2350)

Eleven staff participated in the webinar “Supporting Students with Working Memory Difficulties” conducted by the Learning Difficulties Coalition. (cost $350)

Undergraduate and Post-graduate studies

In 2021 one teacher’s assistant completed a Bachelor of Special Education Primary Teaching and Disability Studies and one classroom assistant was enrolled in the Master of Primary Teaching.

Conferences, Seminars and Lectures

One teacher attended the webinar “2021 Trendsetter Panel and Alumni Reception: Cultural responsiveness and providing culturally safe spaces for children” hosted by the Macquarie University School of Education.

Curriculum Development

Individual teachers completed the following online courses:

“How to structure units based on how students learn”
“Adjusting teaching during Covid-19”
“Building connections that matter for learners”
“Inclusive Sport in Schools” (NSW Government “Live Life Well at School” program)
“ASD121 Autism Spectrum Disorder”
“Extending the thinking skills of young children”
“Working memory and its impact on learning”
“Teaching students with autism”

One teacher completed the NAPLAN Online test administrator training - disability adjustments module and the NAPLAN Online school readiness test 2021 training conducted by NESA in readiness for the transition to NAPLAN Online in 2022.

Staff received ongoing training in the MinSpeak software application.
TEACHER STANDARDS

The staff of MUSEC School in 2021 included a principal, four master special education teachers, seven special education teachers, classroom and teachers’ assistants and one speech and language pathologist, backed by technical and administrative support staff. All master special education teachers and special education teachers have both teacher qualifications and special education qualifications. In 2021 there were four classes: Primary 1, Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines or</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff who have qualifications as graduates from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications or</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff who do not have qualifications as described in (a) (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifteen of the staff in the first two categories have a Masters in Special Education.

STAFF OF MUSEC SCHOOL

Teaching
Sally Howell Principal
Sarah Kirkwood Master Special Education Teacher
Marie James Master Special Education Teacher
Sara Mills Master Special Education Teacher
Anna Schneider Master Special Education Teacher
Alice Berry Speech Pathologist
Candice Mariz Special Education Teacher
Rebecca Dark Special Education Teacher (p/t)
Elizabeth Hill Special Education Teacher
Ping Jackson Special Education Teacher
Nicola Berrick Special Education Teacher (p/t)
Ying Sng Special Education Teacher
Kerry Attard Special Education Teacher (casual)
Sarah Welch Teachers’ Assistant (p/t) Terms 1 and 2
Marcelle Bezuidenhout Classroom Assistant
Tanika Kehlet Classroom Assistant
Belinda Teunissen Classroom Assistant
Khushma Chikani Classroom Assistant
Betsy Isaac Classroom Assistant
Kate Falzon Classroom Assistant (casual)

Finance and Administration
Anne Murdoch Business Manager
Natalie Watson Administrative Assistant
Debbie Elderton Clerical and Teaching Assistant

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION RATES

In 2021 the average daily staff attendance rate was 98%. The percentage of staff retained from 2020 was 88%.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Ninety-four percent of students attended school on average each school day in 2021. The average attendance in 2020 was 98%. For some students, attendance included learning from home due to the impact of Covid-19.
MUSEC SCHOOL ENROLMENT POLICIES AND PROFILES

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY
Students of primary school age (Kindergarten to Year 6) satisfying, at least one of the disability criteria below, are considered for admission to MUSEC School. Parents seeking enrolment for their child, submit a completed application form (including all necessary documentation). If the child is considered a suitable candidate, an interview between parents, child and MUSEC personnel will follow. Placement on the Eligibility List is based on the application and interview. Consideration of the existing class structure is an additional factor determining whether or not an application can be accommodated. Continuing enrolment is subject to the student’s adherence to the school rules and the payment of all school fees.

Please note that all students are required to provide a psychologist’s report stating Full IQ score regardless of disability.

Disabilities – Documentation Required
Disability categories are listed below. Disability documentation must be provided at the time of application and should be recent, an assessment having been conducted within the last 12 months.

**Intellectual Disability:** A report from a registered psychologist/educational psychologist stating that the student has a full-scale IQ score of approximately two standard deviations or more below the mean on an approved individual test of intelligence (e.g., a score of 70 or below on the WISC). There must be information on the assessment of adaptive skills and school performance (where applicable) consistent with this range of scores.

**Language Disability:** A report from a speech pathologist that indicates the student has an assessed receptive or expressive language disorder. The report must include the results of at least one relevant standardised language test that allows for the reporting of both receptive and expressive language skills. At least one of the scales (receptive or expressive) must indicate a standard score of 70 (2nd percentile) or less. The report must indicate that the disorder significantly affects communication and diminishes the capacity to achieve academically. There must be documented evidence of the development and delivery of an intensive learning program assisted by a support teacher, or relevant specialist in the prior-to-school setting in the case of a student entering kindergarten. Difficulties in communication and academic achievement must be the direct result of the disorder.

**Autism:** A current report from a specialist medical practitioner or registered psychologist with appropriate clinical experience. The report must detail the nature of the student’s disorder. Documented evidence must indicate a developmental disability affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, that significantly affects the child’s ability to learn. There must be information of a functional assessment consistent with the student’s disorder.

**In Receipt of Special Education Services / Integration Funding:** Students who are currently enrolled in special education services in a special school or unit provided by the NSW Government (i.e., IM/IO, Autism, Multi-categorical classes), or who receive integration funding, may be considered eligible. In such cases, a letter from the school where the child is enrolled indicating this to be the case is sufficient for the purposes of documentation.

**PROFILES: STUDENT POPULATION**

In 2021, there were thirty-six (36) students from Kindergarten to Year 6, enrolled at MUSEC School. All students had a documented disability. The students came from a wide geographical area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>No. Students</th>
<th>Adults per classroom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>

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## STUDENT POLICIES

**STUDENT WELFARE POLICIES; DISCIPLINE POLICIES; ANTI-BULLYING POLICY; REPORTING COMPLAINTS, RESOLVING GRIEVANCES POLICIES.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY STATEMENT ON POLICIES</th>
<th>CHANGES TO POLICY</th>
<th>ACCESS TO POLICY</th>
<th>STAFF RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DATE DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All MUSEC POLICIES, PROCEDURES and GUIDELINES are written in the context of the student’s special educational needs.</td>
<td>All School Policies, Procedures and Guidelines were approved by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) as part of the school registration process.</td>
<td>MUSEC SCHOOL POLICIES, PROCEDURES and GUIDELINES MANUAL (2019)</td>
<td>All staff.</td>
<td>Revised policies were signed off by the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences as the delegated authority of Macquarie University.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STUDENT WELFARE POLICIES</strong></td>
<td>All School Policies, Procedures and Guidelines remain on file.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student welfare in MUSEC School:</td>
<td>MUSEC Child Protection Policy and Guidelines updated to reflect new reporting requirements to NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian.</td>
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<td>• encompasses everything the school community does to meet the personal, social and learning needs of students</td>
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<td>• creates a safe, caring school environment in which students are nurtured as they learn</td>
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<td>• is achieved through the total school curriculum and the way it is delivered</td>
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<td>• incorporates effective discipline</td>
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<td>• incorporates preventive health and social skills programs</td>
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<td>• stresses the value of collaborative appropriate intervention when problems are identified</td>
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<td>• provides ongoing educational services to support students</td>
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<td>• recognises the diversity within the school community and provides programs and support which acknowledge difference and promote harmony</td>
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<td>• recognises the role that the school plays as a resource to link families with community support services</td>
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<td>• provides opportunities for students to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- enjoy success and recognition</td>
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<td>- make a useful contribution to the life of the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>- derive enjoyment from their learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSEC School will provide effective learning and teaching within a secure, well-managed environment, in partnership with parents and the wider school community. The objectives and outcomes pertaining to the student welfare policies therefore relate to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective learning and teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive climate and good discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community participation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**DISCIPLINE POLICIES**
MUSEC School recognises that in many instances inappropriate behaviour has a communicative function.

As such ‘discipline’ means responding to inappropriate behaviour through a process of interpretation and positive intervention. Under no circumstances is corporal punishment to be used.

At MUSEC School, students are taught about: what is good to do, what is not good, what is safe, what pleases other people, what angers or hurts other people. The classroom program encourages students to cooperate and enhances their self-esteem and ability to interact with others, thereby providing a positive classroom environment that fosters appropriate behaviour.

Self-discipline can only be achieved if the students are aware of the limits of acceptable behaviour. Rules are established and vary across the school depending on the age of the students. They are expressed positively, displayed in a visual format, few in number and are consistently reinforced by each staff member.

**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**
The MUSEC School Anti-Bullying Policy complements the school’s Student Welfare and Discipline policies, aiming to deal effectively with and prevent incidences of bullying.

The school implements programs for students which promote positive relationships and incorporate strategies to deal with bullying. Staff are required to model appropriate behaviour at all times.

Staff monitor student behaviour and encourage students to report any incidents of bullying to an adult. Parents are expected to support the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy, watch for signs of bullying, and inform the school if bullying is suspected.

When a bullying incident is reported or observed, the school will
- Have discussions with the students involved
- Take appropriate action e.g. time-out from a play activity, while reinforcing expected behaviour
- Report major or continuing bullying incidents to parents
- Develop a behaviour support plan in collaboration with the parents
- Suspend the student if necessary.
REPORTING COMPLAINTS, RESOLVING GRIEVANCES POLICIES

A professional response to suggestions, complaints and allegations promotes fairness, leads to improvements and creates confidence in the outcome. Complaints, as well as compliments and other constructive feedback, create opportunities for an organisation to improve its services and prevent future problems.

In relation to parents: In the first instance all parent concerns should be directed to the child’s teacher. If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome following a complaint, an appointment should be made with the Principal to discuss the grievance.

A MUSEC School Grievance/Complaints Procedure for Parents was added to the MUSEC School website.

In relation to staff: The Macquarie University Human Resources Website provides details of the Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures and the staff Grievances Policy and Procedures.
## ACHIEVEMENT OF PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE SCHOOL’S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Teaching and Learning** | • Focus on language development introducing/using ‘Colourful Semantics’ as appropriate.  
• Hold regular class meetings with the school speech pathologist.  
• Consistent implementation of language/communication strategies across the school day  
• Consistent behaviour management across teachers and the school day | • Approval granted for the appointment of second full time Speech Pathologist  
• Each class using Colourful Semantics icons to support oral and/or written language  
• Regular team meetings held throughout the year  
• Behaviour management strategies for specific students recorded and circulated to all teachers to promote consistency |
| **Staff Development**     | • Management of Actual and Potential Aggression Training (MAPA)  
• Focus on consistency of behaviour support strategies.  
• Focus on language/communication strategies.  
• Contribute to the development of NESA familiarisation activities related to the new K-2 English and Mathematics syllabuses.  
• Align MUSEC Literacy and Numeracy IEP goals and teaching strategies with the new K-2 English and Mathematics syllabuses.  
• Training in management of the MUSEC School website for administration staff. | • MAPA training undertaken by all staff  
• Delay in release of NESA Syllabuses due to COVID. Familiarisation and school implementation, along with IEP alignment to begin in 2022.  
• Administration staff completed website training  
• School Principal actively involved in the development of both syllabuses at the invitation of NESA representatives |
| **Facilities & Resources**| • Purchase additional decodable texts to support the school’s phonics program.  
• Purchase additional non-fiction texts to support KLA units of work.  
• Purchase sport/play equipment to support the school’s PE program and play skills program.  
• Purchase indoor games and resources to support language/communication lessons.  
• Replace carpet in three classrooms and blinds/curtains in observation rooms.  
• Review and upgrade MUSEC School website. | • Resources purchased  
• Carpets and blinds installed  
• In the light of COVID classroom ventilation checked and windows repaired to ensure best possible airflow.  
• MUSEC website developed and live |

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### SUMMARY: 2022 PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
<td>- Align MUSEC Literacy and Numeracy IEP goals and teaching strategies with the new K-2 English and Mathematics syllabuses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Specific focus on language/communication goals and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus on language development and consistent use ‘Colourful Semantics’ across all classes as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hold regular class meetings with the school speech pathologists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Consistent behaviour management across teachers and the school day.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Mentor and support new staff through regular observation and feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Development</strong></td>
<td>- Familiarisation with K-2 English and Mathematics Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Collaborative project to align IEP goals and strategies with the new syllabuses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Team meetings to review behaviour support plans for specific students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities &amp; Resources</strong></td>
<td>- School repairs to rain damaged areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Upgrade of school computers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Respect and responsibility are explicitly taught through the school’s ‘positive behaviour’ approach to classroom management. Social skills and classroom skills are embedded in students’ IEPs. Specific classroom and playground social interaction activities form part of daily programs.

PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

A survey of parent satisfaction with MUSEC School was conducted at the end of the year. This was in relation to the following:

- The quality of the education provided
- The quality of the teaching and learning experiences
- The student’s progress
- The school’s communication during Covid-19
- The effectiveness of class email as a form of communication
- The level of contribution offered for the individual educational plan process
- The responsiveness of the School Principal to parent concerns or questions
- The responsiveness of teachers to parent concerns or questions

Parents were asked to rate school performance by indicating whether they were very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, not satisfied or very dissatisfied with a range of statements in relation to the above areas. 17 survey forms from a total of 36 issued were returned to the school from 17 families. Overall, the results were very positive, with all parents who responded being very satisfied or satisfied with:

- the opportunity to their child’s individual educational plan and
- the responsiveness of the School Principal to any concerns or questions

Sixteen out of seventeen parents were very satisfied or satisfied with:

- the quality of education,
- the quality of teaching,
- their child’s progress,
- the effectiveness of class email as a form of communication,
- the School’s communication throughout Covid-19, and
- the responsiveness of teachers to concerns or questions

Fourteen out of seventeen parents added further comments that they were likely or highly likely to recommend MUSEC School to a friend or colleague. A small number of parents expressed a desire for further communication in relation to their child’s achievements each day, formal arrangements for parent-teacher interviews each term to review their child’s progress or individual goals, and hope for the resumption of activities that had been cancelled during Covid-19. However, the majority of parents who provided additional comments were very complimentary or had no suggestions for further improvement.

Some comments written by parents as part of the survey were a pleasure to read, for example:

“I am overall very happy with the quality of education and teaching at MUSEC. My child is very happy, loves going to school and is very fond of her teachers.”

“Thank you for all of the hard work during the unpredictable Covid years.”

“MUSEC is a wonderful school that makes everyone feel welcome. It has allowed my daughter to meet new friends and has increased her self-worth.”
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Income & Expenditure 2021

Income - %
Fees & Private Income 29
State Recurrent Grants 24
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants 47

Expenditure -
Salaries, Allowances & Related Expenses 91
Non - Salary Expenses 8
Capital Expenditure 1

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income 2021</th>
<th>Expenditure 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fees 29%</td>
<td>- Non-Salary Expenses 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Recurrent Grants 24%</td>
<td>- Capital Expenditure 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C'with Recurrent Grants 47%</td>
<td>- Salaries 91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>