



in Christ's
service

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

ILLAWARRA
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL



(C) Illawarra Christian School, June 2018.

Illawarra Christian School is owned and operated by Illawarra Christian Education and is a member of Christian Education National.

Illawarra Christian School operates under the Illawarra Christian Education Mission Statement.

ICE MISSION STATEMENT

In Christ's service, to partner with parents in providing a quality Christian education founded on the Word of God.

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Our educational framework

A STRONG LEARNING CULTURE





FROM THE PRINCIPAL

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe..." (Hebrews 12:28)

The challenge of Hebrews 12:28 is to place things within an eternal focus—to rejoice in the salvation found in Christ Jesus and to see our merit not in our school community or our earthly success. We are to be thankful for God's provisions, especially for eternity, and to live in response to this by worshiping God acceptably with reverence and awe.

In 2017 we adopted the theme of 'celebrating learning'. We celebrate the fact that God has given us a capacity to learn and grow, both in our relationship with him, but also in our knowledge and understanding of his world. As teachers we celebrate the gifts of being able to assist and guide children in their learning and of being part of a community of Christian educators, parents and students who learn and grow together under God's grace.

Proverbs 9:9 says "Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning" and Proverbs 1:5, "... let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance..." Scripture identifies that a truly wise and knowledgeable person is one who recognises there is always more to learn, know and understand. We also understand that God has given us the great gift of learning, growing and discovering new things, and that this gift ought not to be taken for granted or wasted. While it is true that learning may at times be challenging, it develops in us significant character traits, such as perseverance.

2017 was Illawarra Christian School's 36th year. Our mission as a school has not changed as we continue to strive to serve Christ through the provision of Christian education founded on God's word. Illawarra Christian School is a thriving school community. God continues to bless us with students who work hard and strive for excellence, staff who are dedicated and faithful, and an active and involved parent community. We continue to receive outstanding academic results. We have new and improved school facilities. We are known in our local community for our high standards and the care demonstrated within our school to each other.

At Illawarra Christian School we celebrate learning, enjoy community and strive to serve Christ as we bring honour to him.

Simon Lainson
Principal



ICS VISION STATEMENT

*Pursuing excellence and innovation
in teaching and learning*

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



During the 2017 school year the Illawarra Association for Christian Parent-Controlled Education continued to provide Bible-based, quality education in a nurturing and caring environment.

We had 59 students graduate from Year 12, ready to move on to the next phase of their lives, prepared for a world in desperate need of people who are willing to put others before themselves. A biblically-based, other-centred worldview is the solid foundation upon which this preparation is established.

The financial position of the organisation remained healthy and there were no governance issues of notable concern for the Board.

Driven out of the strategic plan, progress was made with the development of the facilities at Illawarra Christian School, aimed at ensuring the infrastructure can support future enrolment growth. In particular, additional classrooms were created with the refurbishment of what was previously the school library. A new building was also acquired to serve as the secondary library.

Some land was also acquired adjacent to the property at Illawarra Christian School which supports progress towards the realisation of the site master plan.

At Calderwood Christian School our relationship with LendLease, who are the developer of the Calderwood Valley community, continued to grow. With a new

community being established around the school it is a privilege to be a foundation member of this community and participate in the development.

Board succession planning remains a focus including a desire to ensure Director diversity and appropriate representation of the Association. Work also progressed during 2017 to improve the efficiency of regulatory compliance through the use of supporting systems and tools.

The 2017 school year saw the commencement of our organisation operating as Illawarra Association for Christian Parent-Controlled Education, trading as Illawarra Christian Education with two separate schools, Illawarra Christian School and Calderwood Christian School. These changes were outputs from the strategic plan.

A compressed HSC course was also commenced at Calderwood Christian School, providing students with additional course options. During 2018 this program will become fully operational once the second cohort of students join the course.

Work was started to evaluate the viability of a Special School to help us live out our vision of making quality Christian education available to families in the Illawarra.

Andrew Spence
Board Chair

BOARD UPDATES

- The Board continued to govern the operation of the school during 2017 in conjunction with the executive staff.
- At the Annual General Meeting in May 2017, Mr Gavin Lowcock stood down as a director of IACPE.
- At the end of 2017 there were six directors.
- The Board and its subcommittees met regularly throughout the year, reviewing policies, the risk register, the financial position of the organisation and progressing towards achieving strategic outcomes.
- Training for directors took place during the year, focussed on developing a deeper understanding of governance obligations.
- The Board engaged the broader parent community with several Association meetings in 2017, providing feedback on progress with the strategic plan and encouraging parent partnership in the education process.
- Association meetings were held four times (including the AGM) and continue to be well attended.
- The Board Chair and representatives of the Board also attended a number of school events and functions during the year.

STUDENTS

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

From our Prep classes through to Year 12, Illawarra Christian School caters for children aged from three to 18 years.

The school requires that students must be five years old by April 30 in the year they begin Kindergarten. Our records indicate that we have nine children of indigenous background enrolled at the school.

ENROLMENTS AS AT AUGUST 2017 CENSUS

Illawarra Christian School 565
Primary 298
Secondary 267

Prep classes were offered five days a week.

RETENTION RATES - YEAR 10 TO YEAR 12

Illawarra Christian School retained 71% of students from Year 10 to Year 12.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Where a student is absent without explanation, parents are contacted by the school office to verify the absence.

Letters are sent home to remind parents of the need to explain absences in writing when these are outstanding.

Roll teachers are notified when a student has an unusual number of absences so they can speak to parents regarding attendance.

The school will notify Community Services, the Home School Liaison Officer or the School Police Liaison Officer if they have been unable to obtain reasonable explanations for long term absences from the parents of any student.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE 2017

Approximately 94 percent of students, on average, attended school on any school day in 2017.

The table to the right indicates the percentage of days attended by all students out of the maximum number of days that all students are required to be at school.

YEAR LEVEL	STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE %
KINDERGARTEN	93.8%
YEAR 1	93.7%
YEAR 2	95.0%
YEAR 3	94.5%
YEAR 4	93.7%
YEAR 5	94.8%
YEAR 6	93.8%
YEAR 7	93.8%
YEAR 8	93.5%
YEAR 9	90.5%
YEAR 10	93.2%
YEAR 11	93.3%
YEAR 12	94.4%



engaging &
growing

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM - LITERACY AND NUMERACY



% STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE NATIONAL MINIMAL STANDARDS (NMS)

YEAR 3	SCHOOL MEAN	STATE MEAN
READING	100%	89%
WRITING	97%	94%
SPELLING	100%	88%
GRAMMAR	95%	87%
NUMERACY	92%	88%

YEAR 5	SCHOOL MEAN	STATE MEAN
READING	90%	83%
WRITING	93%	84%
SPELLING	85%	87%
GRAMMAR	90%	78%
NUMERACY	91%	85%

% STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE NATIONAL MINIMAL STANDARDS (NMS)

Illawarra Christian School has continued to maintain strong standards in all areas of literacy and numeracy, receiving results above the national average in all areas assessed through NAPLAN in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

YEAR 7	SCHOOL MEAN	STATE MEAN
READING	95%	84%
WRITING	88%	70%
SPELLING	90%	85%
GRAMMAR	90%	82%
NUMERACY	98%	86%

YEAR 9	SCHOOL MEAN	STATE MEAN
READING	98%	79%
WRITING	87%	75%
SPELLING	98%	81%
GRAMMAR	92%	76%
NUMERACY	96%	84%





**challenging &
empowering**

RECORD OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT (RoSA)

Three applications for RoSA were made by students in 2017.

HSC RESULTS

In 2017, 32 students from Illawarra Christian School sat the Higher School Certificate. All students were eligible and met the requirements for the HSC.

The majority of students completed their courses at the school, though a small number of students accessed subjects through external education providers (as indicated in the table below).

DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVIDER

SUBJECT	PROVIDER	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Dance	Outside Tutor	1
Music 2	Outside Tutor	2
Music Extension	Outside Tutor	1
Spanish Continuers	NSW School of Languages	1

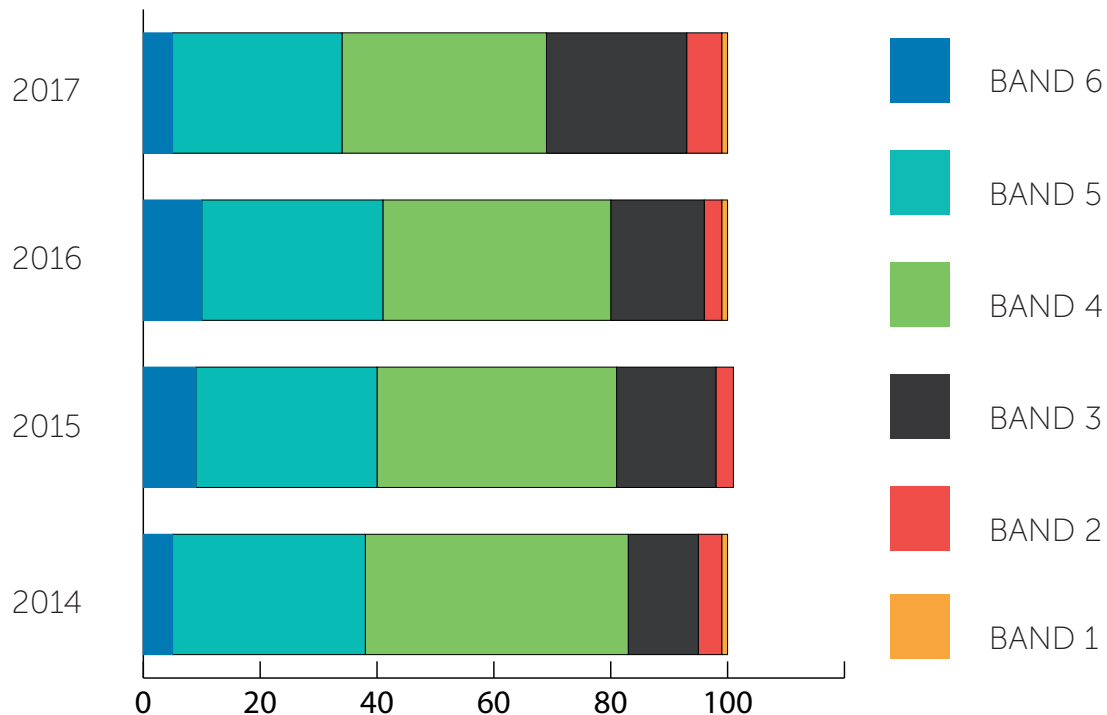
HSC BAND 6 RESULTS

In 2017, eight individual Band 6 results were achieved by our students in the following subjects.

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF BAND 6 ACHIEVED
Mathematics	2
Modern History	1
Physics	1
English Extension 2	3
Dance	1
Total	8



HISTORICAL HSC BAND DISTRIBUTION AT ICS 2014 - 2017



In 2017, student performance continues to be of a high standard with some subjects achieving above state average results. Despite this, overall results saw a shift in band distribution.

Results from previous years saw the majority of students achieving in Bands 4, 5 and 6. However, in 2017 the majority of students achieved Bands 3, 4 and 5. This is highlighted in the table 'Historical HSC band distribution at Illawarra Christian School 2014 – 2017'.

Although these results may not match the academic heights of previous years, it is widely accepted that these results were appropriate for the cohort of students and well represented their capacity.

The 2017 results reflected a student cohort with a wide range of interests and abilities. High achieving marks came from a variety of fields including Extension 2 English, Physics, Mathematics and Modern History.

In addition to the Band 6 results, many students received results in Band 5 (over 80 and therefore approximately in the top 20 percent of the state) and Band 4 (over 70 and therefore approximately in the top 30 percent of the state) in their subjects.

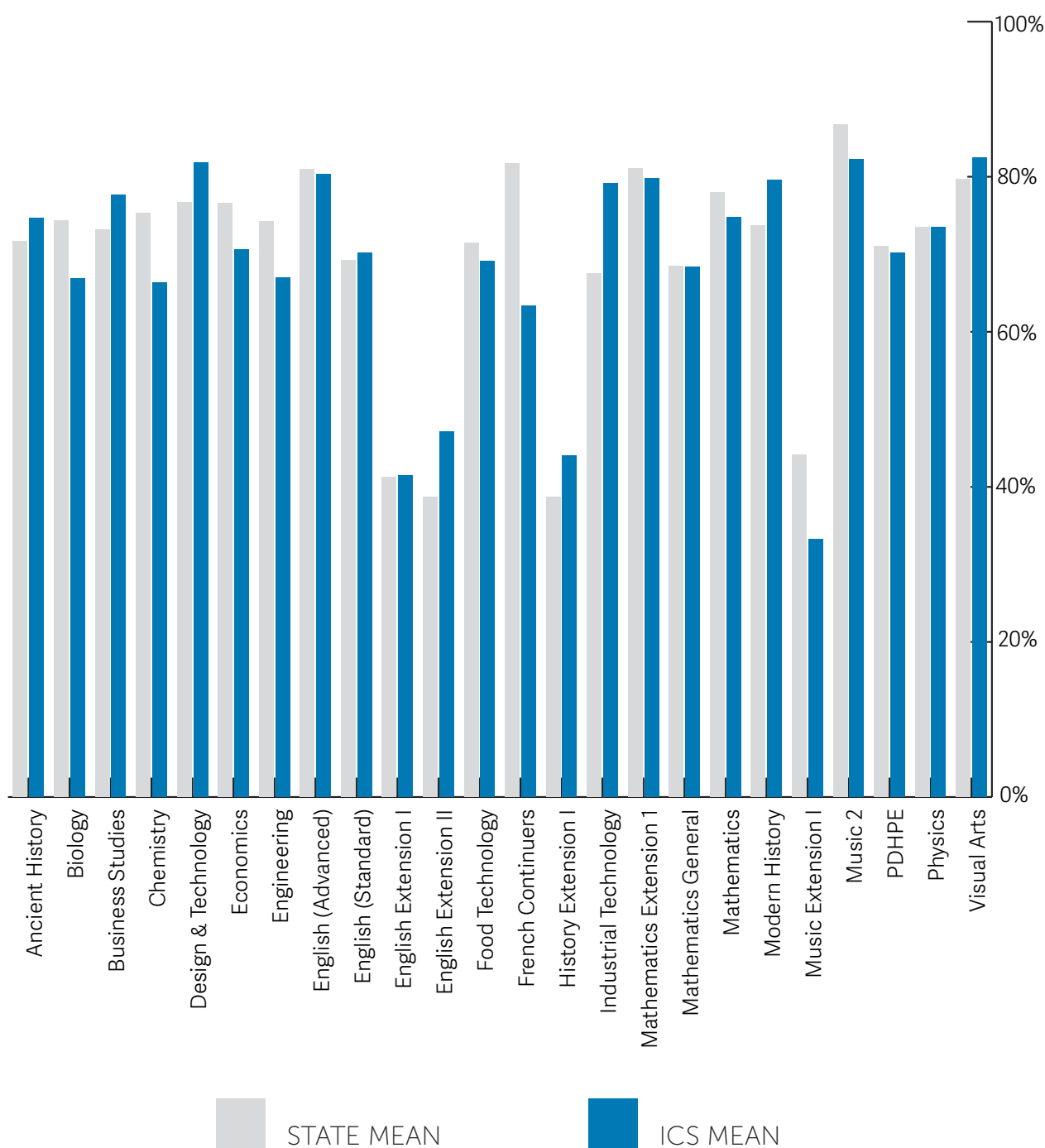
The school assessment marks correlated highly with the HSC marks awarded by NESA. This again confirms our teachers are accurately assessing, grading and ranking students in their various subjects.

2017 HSC COMPARISON OF STATE AND ICS MEANS

In the majority of subjects the school mean was above the state mean. It is important to note that English Extension 1 and 2, History Extension and Music Extension are only marked out of 50. In addition, the small number of students in some subjects makes the comparison between the state and school mean less valuable as a measure.

The 2017 HSC results are reflected in a range of ATAR scores. The ATAR is a rank, as compared to subject marks in the HSC, which are a scaled mark between 50-100. Therefore, those students who perform at a lower level will often have significant variance between their HSC subject marks and their ATAR. ATARs are sent only to students and as a school we only find out these scores if the students share them with us. We received three ATARs above 90. The highest ATAR was 95.6.

As a school we continue to perform well in the HSC and our 2017 results are encouraging. We pray that the academic achievement is used for God's glory and that each of our students will understand Christ's claim over their lives.



POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

All 32 students were eligible for an ATAR and 78 percent of students were offered university placements for semester 1 of 2018. Twenty five students were granted selected entry to the University of Wollongong prior to the HSC.

In 2018, 69 percent of our students accepted University of Wollongong offers and have commenced studies in their field of preference. One student was offered a place in the Dean's Scholars program at Wollongong University.

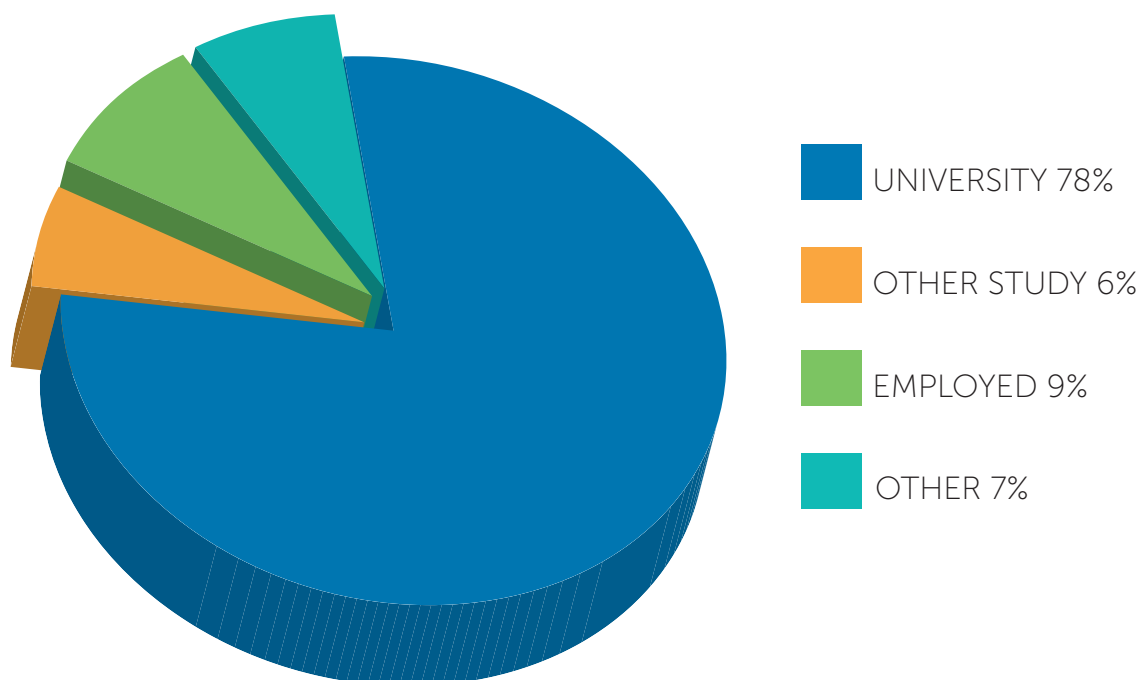
Ten percent of students received offers from other universities, including Macquarie University, the Australian National University, the University of New England and Western Sydney University.

Several students have taken time off from studying to pursue other areas of interest and employment.

COURSES OFFERED TO ICS STUDENTS

B Agriculture/B Business	B Creative Arts/B Arts
B Arts	B Engineering
B Arts (Psychology)	B Exercise Science
B Arts (Soc Sc/Bus Sc)	B Exercise Science & Rehab
B Arts/B Comm & Media	B Journalism/B Arts
B Arts/B International Studies	B Journalism/B Commerce
B Arts/B Laws	B Medical Biotechnology
B Business	B Nursing
B Commerce	B Nutrition Science
B Computer Science	B Primary Education
B Computer Science/B Science	B Psych Sc
B Creative Arts (Visual Arts&Dsgn)	B Psych Sc/B Social Sc (Crim)
B Creative Arts (Visual Arts)	B Psychology
B Creative Arts/B Comm&Media	B Sc/B Ed (Secondary)

PERCENTAGE OF ICS STUDENTS IN VARIOUS POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS



STAFF

These statistics indicate the number of class teachers for infants, primary and secondary as well as librarians and special education teachers. Our teacher aides worked in infants, primary and secondary classrooms, Prep, special education, library, and science and technology. The state chaplaincy program currently funds one day per week of our counselling positions.

56

TEACHING STAFF

45

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
TEACHING STAFF

6

COUNSELLORS/CHAPLAIN
DAYS/WEEK

19

ADMINISTRATION STAFF
(MOST PART-TIME)

6

TEACHER AIDES/ANCILLARY
(MOST PART-TIME)

98%

TEACHERS RETAINED FROM 2014

96%

TEACHER ATTENDANCE RATE

TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004, all teachers at Illawarra Christian School have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

Two staff members completed their Masters in Education in 2017, one through the National Institute for Christian Education (NICE) and one through the University of New South Wales.

Three others continued their Masters studies with NICE and the University of Wollongong.

The principal served as a member of the State Council for CEN NSW/ACT. He was a board member of CEN Hub and chair of the CEN NSW/ACT Principals' Forum.

We believe that quality teaching is the key to effective student learning. With this in mind, we have a strong focus on the professional learning of our teachers. We employ highly skilled, innovative and passionate teachers who are excited about opportunities to continually grow in their ability to support and extend the learning of all students in their classes.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

COMMITMENT

Illawarra Christian School acknowledges that excellent teaching is the key to positive student learning. The school is committed to providing high-quality professional learning opportunities for all teachers to support their ongoing development and to build a vibrant learning community. There is a strong learning culture among the staff, who partner with each other as they continually grow to be more effective in their teaching practices.

OBSERVATION

During 2017 all teachers observed lessons taught by other staff members, critically reviewing them in order to identify opportunities for growth. All members of staff also participated in the school's video program, with a lesson filmed to provide opportunity for self-reflection with the support of a facilitator. Students provided feedback to each teacher in surveys designed to assist teachers to understand their strengths and areas for growth.

FOCUS

The whole-school professional learning focus, grounded in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, was centred around improving student writing. All teaching staff participated in professional development sessions which involved presentations, staff sharing, professional readings, workshops, group tasks and planning activities.

PARTICIPATION

Staff participated in four professional development days at the beginning of Term 1, one day at the beginning of Terms 2 and 4, and five days at the beginning of Term 3. During these days staff received ongoing training in the school's online learning management system (SEQTA) and classroom management. They also received training in compliance-related areas, including child protection, workplace health and safety, and first aid. They attended sessions on Autism and Anxiety with professionals from Aspect, and Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder with Sue Larkey. The majority of the staff attended the two-day CEN State Conference at Nepean Christian School.

Teaching staff from the Science and HSIE faculties were employed by NESA as Higher School Certificate examination markers. This experience provides outstanding professional development opportunities in terms of setting standards and developing collegial networks.

Six staff members completed the school-based Learning for Leadership program that assists with the identification, consideration and development of leadership ideas and skills. Three members of the executive attended the CEN Equipped to Lead course over nine days across the year.

New staff attended an induction day and were introduced to key elements of the school's learning framework. They were given fundamental training in key focus areas, including Effective Formative Feedback and Visible Thinking.

During 2017 staff accessed a broad range of externally provided, subject-specific, leadership and student wellbeing courses including those listed on the table on the opposite page.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COURSES 2017

DEPARTMENT	COURSE
CAPA	DEUS ex Photos Photomedia Conference
English	Writing for NAPLAN, Stage 6: Change and Continuity, HSC Modules Day, ACSET English Teachers' Conference
Executive	Christian Schools' National Policy Forum, School Law, Overview of Timetabler, Literacy Across the Curriculum, 8-People Workshop, Improving Writing Across the Curriculum, Coaching Training, Careers Advisor Association NSW Conference
HSIE	Geography Teachers' Association Annual Conference, History Teachers' Association State Conference
ICT	ICT Leadership Conference, Academic Reporting Module, EduTech Conference, SEQTA Training
Learning Support and Enrichment	Extension and Enrichment Taskforce, Gifted Awareness Forum for Educators
LOTE	Stage 6 Marking and Assessment Workshop
Mathematics	Teachers New to Christian Education, WINDSSM Workshop
PDHPE	Teaching Stage 6 for the First Time, Quality Assessment Practices in PDHPE
Prep	ELLA Workshop
Science	Science Teachers' Association Annual Conference, Familiarisation: Revised Stage 6 Science Syllabuses, Leading Your Science Department, Meet the Markers
Stage 1	Get Reading Right, Phonics Training, Full STEM Ahead, Autism and Aspergers: Teaching Strategies and Behaviour Support, Making Consistent Teacher Judgements
Stage 2	Organising Sound, Making Space for Learning
Stage 3	Understanding Spectrum Disorder, Writing Teaching Beyond Text Types, Understanding Autism
STEM	Designing STEM, STEM Academy, Improving STEM Education
Student Wellbeing	A Holistic Approach to Child Psychometric Assessment, The Accidental Counsellor, Every Student/Every Lesson/Every Day
TAS	Wool4School Workshop

POLICIES

ENROLMENT POLICY

As a covenant community the Illawarra Christian School, through its Enrolment Policy, seeks primarily to support Christian parents (Gal 6:10) in their task of nurturing and training their children in God's ways. The school also seeks to support other families who are supportive of the Christian ethos of the school and are desirous that their children come under its Christian educational model.

The policy acknowledges the needs and desires of the individual family or child within the context of the nature and needs of the school community, such that justice and loving kindness may be evident in all enrolment processes and decisions (Micah 6:8).

While justice and loving kindness should not be applied to one family or child at the expense of others, due recognition should be given to the biblical pattern of care for the disadvantaged.

The ultimate responsibility, before God, for the training and nurture of the child resides with the parents. It is not the role of the school to seek to usurp that responsibility; neither should parents abdicate it in favour of the school.

It is expected that parents will be supportive of the educational model and the school's Code of Behaviour and will work in partnership with school staff.

Full details of the enrolment policy can be found in Appendix 1.



SCHOOL POLICIES

STUDENT WELFARE

Student welfare continues to be a high priority at Illawarra Christian School. Prolegis, our legal support company, were commissioned by CEN in 2014 to write a new Child Protection Policy taking into account all new legislation and changes. With the addition of our Staff Code of Conduct and Biblical Preamble, ICS adopted this policy in November 2014. The school remains current with legislative requirements, legal requirements, best educational practice and the Bible-based, Christian ethos of our school.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Student Discipline Policy was last reviewed in 2010 in response to a recommendation from the 2010 registration inspection. At the time the policy was updated with minor changes to the wording to meet Board of Studies requirements. Discipline involves counselling, restoration and, where appropriate, consequences. Communication between school and home is an integral component of disciplinary action carried out at school. As required under child protection legislation, consequences do not include any form of corporal punishment.

Discipline continues to be seen substantially as a process of discipling—encouraging students to accept responsibility for their own actions and relationships. An important aspect of discipline is procedural fairness, ensuring that the student's point of view is appropriately heard and that they are dealt with fairly. There was no recommendation to update the policy at the 2015 registration inspection, therefore the current policy stands.

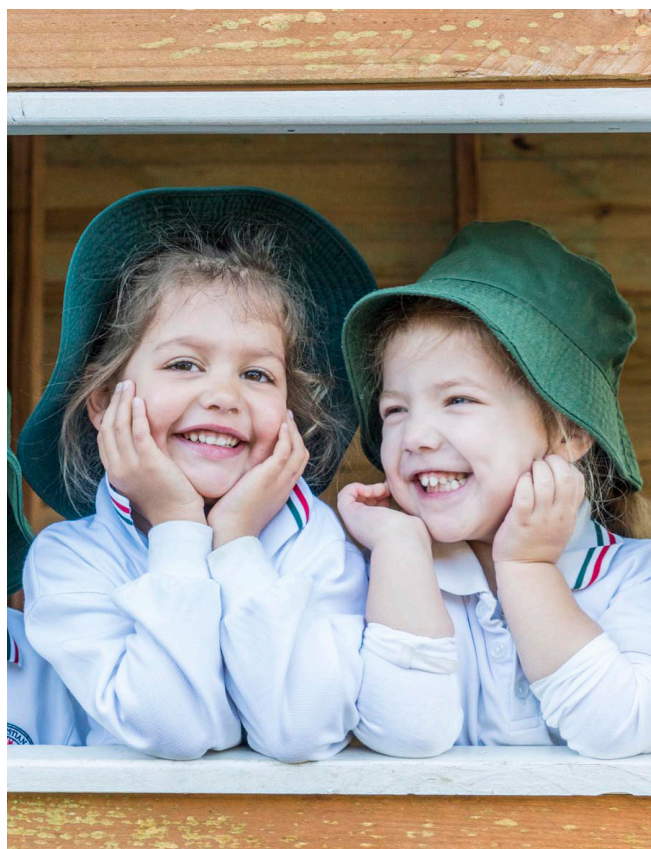
RESOLUTION OF ISSUES POLICY

The Resolution of Issues Policy was last reviewed in 2011. All members of the school community, including parents, teachers and students, are entitled to be heard and have any matter of concern dealt with openly and fairly. The school's policy reflects the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18, which directs the person who feels aggrieved to meet with the other person concerned.

If the matter is not resolved the member of the school community is encouraged to raise the concern with more senior members of staff, ultimately writing to the Chairman of the Board should the matter not be resolved by senior staff. Through this process people are encouraged to resolve disagreement in a positive and informed manner that allows for the exercise of grace, repentance and forgiveness.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Anti-Bullying Policy was last reviewed in 2014. The policy defines what the school considers to be bullying behaviour and a flow chart to investigate and deal with incidences of bullying.



HOW THESE POLICIES ARE DISCLOSED PUBLICLY

School policies and procedures are available on the school website or from the school office.

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

2017

FOCUS AREA

PRIORITIES, INITIATIVES AND TARGETS ACHIEVED



CHRISTIAN ETHOS

- Strengthened the pastoral care program for secondary students by developing small mentor groups in each year group



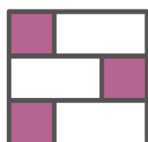
PARENT PARTNERSHIP

- Increased feedback and engagement with parents, students and staff in the learning process through use of feedback in SEQTA



EDUCATION

- Introduction of additional electives in Year 11 (Community and Family Studies) and Stage 5 (History Elective)
- Increased literacy and writing skills of staff and students—through focused PD on writing (P-12) and Synthetic Phonics (K-6)



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Development of site to provide six additional classrooms in C Block and new senior library and office facilities
- Increased outside seating for students
- Increased signage around school
- Purchase of neighbouring property to school



BUSINESS

- Employment of Communications and Community Development Officer

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

2018

FOCUS AREA

PRIORITIES, INITIATIVES AND TARGETS ACHIEVED



CHRISTIAN ETHOS

- Ensure all teaching staff complete the Certificate of Christian Education—delivered in either 2018 or 2019
- Further development of the Biblical Studies and pastoral care curriculum P-12



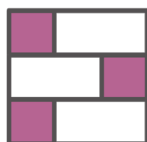
PARENT PARTNERSHIP

- Open a new parent, staff and senior student café to enable opportunity for community to gather
- Hold grandparents' activities to engage them further in the life of the school
- Improved process for parent-teacher interviews



EDUCATION

- Introduction of additional elective in Year 11 (Engineering and Stage 5 (iSTEM))
- Implementation of coding and STEM programs in K-6
- Introduction of HSC master classes
- Four key focus areas for staff professional development—writing, Christian teaching, visible thinking and feedback



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Improved staff room facilities
- Improved facilities for senior students—provision of new senior area
- Purchase of neighbouring property to school
- Increased car parking
- Renovation of courtyard playground area
- Renovation of COLA surface



BUSINESS

- Further development of marketing plan through social media

PROMOTING RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY

At Illawarra Christian School we nurture hearts and foster attitudes to express respect and responsibility to all members of our school community and beyond.

All students Prep-12 are involved in pastoral care programs. Prep-6 participate in devotions with their class teachers, and years 7-12 enjoy small group pastoral care time in devotions and prayer. We work hard to build a culture of fellowship and strong, trusting relationships with students and staff.

To complement our pastoral and educational programs, we offer a range of experiences that afford students the opportunity to grow in their faith and develop a willingness to serve and participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.



2017 EXPERIENCES

While not exhaustive, the following list highlights the breadth of experiences that contribute to a framework that promotes respect and responsibility within our school:

ACADEMIC

- Enrichment programs – including da Vinci Decathlon, Tournament of Minds, Community Problem Solving, Future Problem Solving
- Public speaking activities and competitions at class, interclass and inter-school level
- Debating at school and inter-school levels

SERVICE AND COMMUNITY

- Participation in service activities within the school and local area
- Awareness and fundraising for the Bible Society through our annual Bike for Bibles ride from Canberra to ICS, Forever Projects, Congo, aide work in Cambodia
- Slum Survivor activity—fundraising for the TEAR Fund
- Celebrations with the wider community including Mother's Day event, Father's Day event, grandparents' morning tea
- Student leadership programs, including Masterclass
- Various cultural visits and performances
- Service trip to Gawa Christian School in Arnhem Land, NT
- Graduation ceremonies for Years 6, 10 and 12
- Restorative detention initiative
- Work experience

SAFETY AND WELFARE

- Numerous school and general safety training activities, including first aid training
- Peer support, buddy program, teacher/student mentoring programs
- Cybersafety lectures
- Blackdog training/implementation
- Police Liaison and Police Youth Liaison visit
- Bullying Awareness program
- RYDA driving program

SPORT AND SOCIAL

- Various state and national conferences
- Captains' 'Prayer at the Flag' initiative
- Numerous school and inter-school sporting activities
- Zone, state and national Christian Schools' swimming, athletics and cross-country events
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Camping program
- Inter-school chess competition
- House system fostering participation for service and awareness

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

2017 STUDENT POLL

In 2017 a student poll was used to gauge satisfaction. Students expressed continued high levels of satisfaction with the school's impact upon their faith and level of engagement with school.

STAFF AND PARENT FEEDBACK

Staff attended Association meetings throughout the year and enjoyed special recognition for long service at the AGM. Staff have an increasing workload but continue to provide exceptional service to the school community.

Approximately 160 community members participated in a survey, providing feedback on the following areas:

- Affordability
- Discipline
- Education
- Parent/teacher/staff interaction.

In general, results remain consistent with satisfaction levels of the previous year.

RESULTS OF THE 2017 SATISFACTION SURVEY DEMONSTRATED THAT:

95%

OF RESPONDENTS HAD POSITIVE INTERACTIONS WITH STAFF IN GENERAL

86%

WERE SATISFIED WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT WITH TEACHERS

83%

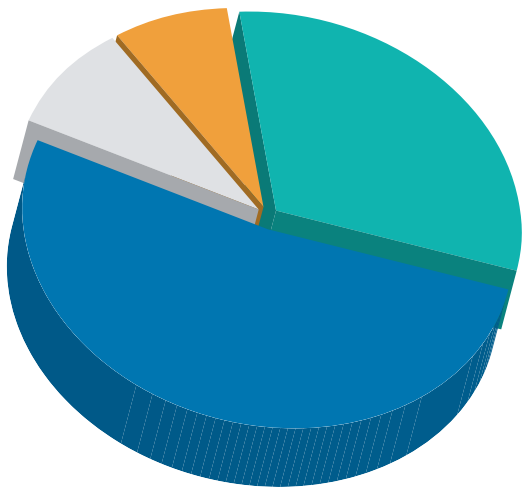
FELT THEIR CHILDREN WERE ENGAGED AND STIMULATED BY THEIR LEARNING—A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OF 16 PERCENT FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S SURVEY

89%

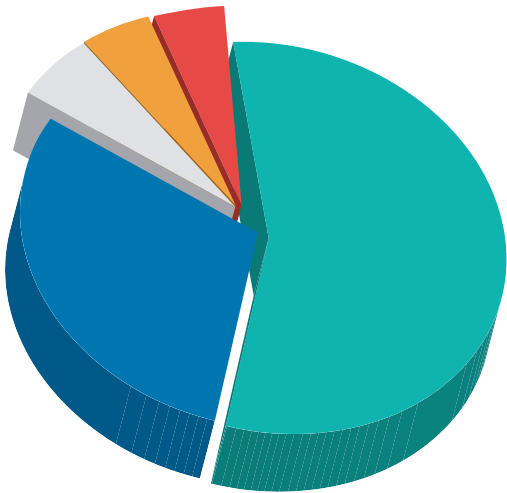
WOULD RECOMMEND ILLAWARRA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TO OTHERS



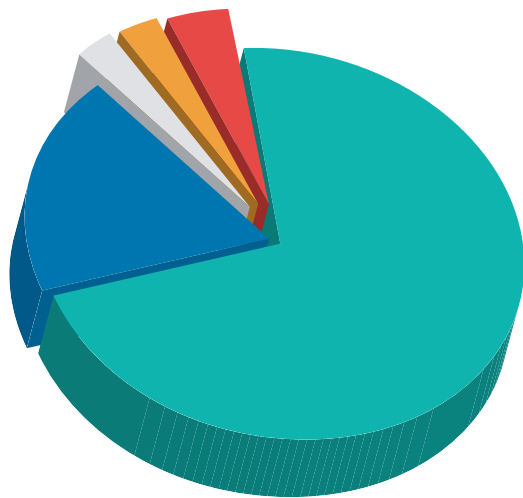
IN 2017 MY CHILDREN WERE ENGAGED AND STIMULATED BY THEIR LEARNING:



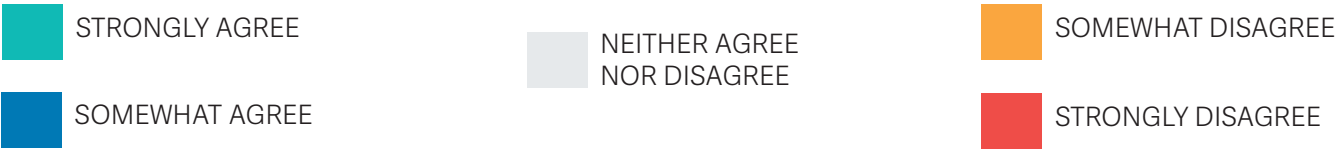
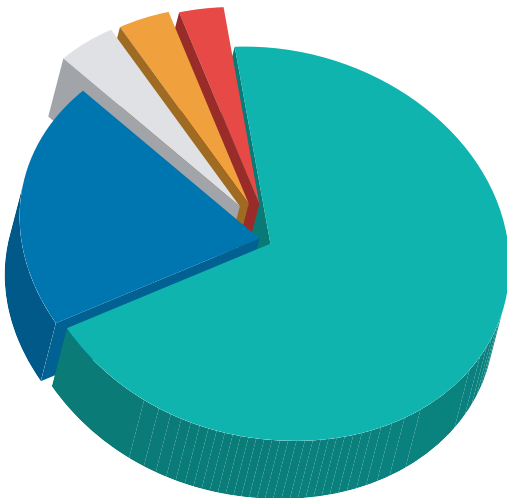
I AM SATISFIED THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENT/TEACHER INTERACTION IN 2017 WERE SUFFICIENT:



ICS PROVIDES A QUALITY, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, WHOSE STAFF ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY FOR MY CHILD TO SUCCEED:

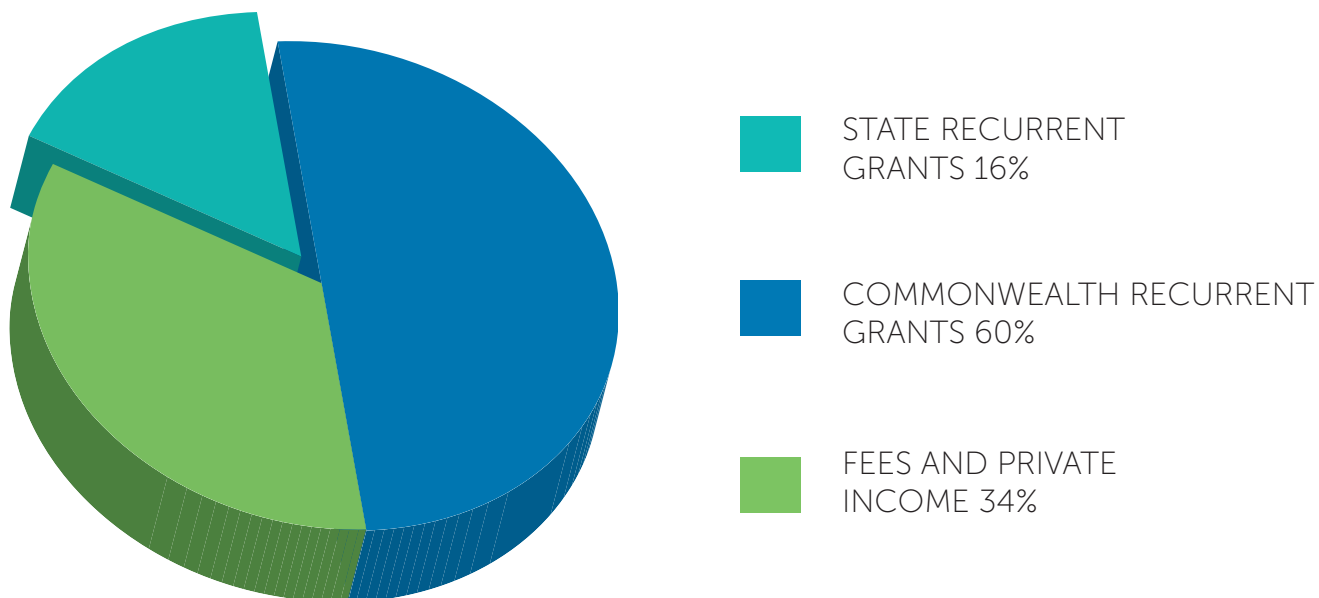


I WOULD RECOMMEND ILLAWARRA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TO MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY:

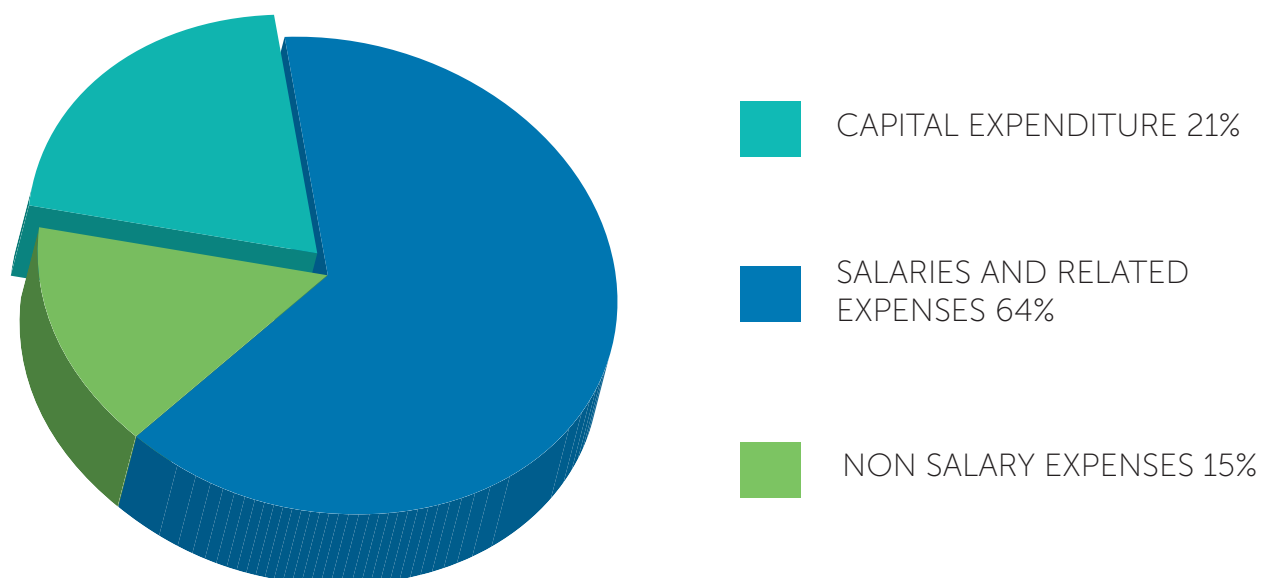


FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RECURRENT / CAPITAL INCOME



RECURRENT / CAPITAL EXPENDITURE



FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

2017 commenced with the registration of Illawarra Christian School and Calderwood Christian School as two independent Christian schools under the umbrella of the one proprietor, Illawarra Christian Education. This direction was warmly embraced by the school communities, allowing them to move in directions that matched the visions and strategic plans of each school. Each Illawarra Christian Education school continued to operate with one mission, to partner with parents in providing a quality Christian education founded on the word of God.

One of the strengths of belonging to an Illawarra Christian Education school is the wider association of CEN schools to which ICE belongs. CEN is a community of schools representing around 20,000 students and their parents. It is a community committed to demonstrating a vibrant biblical faith which permeates every aspect of learning, community life, policy and practice in its associations and schools. The benefits of belonging include shared experiences, resources, inspiration and motivation, as well as opportunities for collaboration and support.

As educators, this sense of community with a wider group of teachers challenges and drives us to reflect on and review our practices. As businesses, this same community provides resources and support. For students, it provides opportunities and connections, and for parents, it offers an environment for our children that we can't achieve on our own.

The focus of 2017 was to continue the implementation of our strategic plan, aimed at developing and strengthening our own school communities. Our strategic plan covers the five foundations of Christian Ethos, Parent Partnership, Education, Infrastructure and Business. Keeping Christ central to all we do is fundamental to the fulfilment of our mission in our task as educators.

Christian Ethos – The focus of 2017 was to develop robust pastoral care structures to support each student and encourage student Christian leadership opportunities.

Parent Partnership – Parents and parent-run committees at each school participate in daily activities and have contributed greatly to projects throughout 2017.

Education – The priority for best practice education has increased the focus on the professional development of teaching staff. ICE schools continue to focus on high academic achievement and subject selection.

Infrastructure – The Board of Illawarra Christian Education successfully purchased property to provide for the future educational needs of families of the Illawarra. A focused infrastructure plan led to many improvements to facilities.

Business – ICE continues to seek relationship opportunities with local churches and businesses. A continued priority to apply best practice business operations through our finance and accounting, student management and compliance software was also a focus in 2017.

2017 was a successful year for Illawarra Christian Education schools.

Our mission of parent partnership and quality Christian education founded on the word of God were accomplished. We always desire to improve, expand and refine our educational model and outcomes, but by God's grace:

- we give thanks and praise to our God for the continued blessings provided to our school communities
- we continue to strive to fulfil our mandate, our vision, to increase the quality and accessibility of Christian education to families in the Illawarra
- we acknowledge and thank the state and federal governments for their continued financial support of education in Australia.

Tony Horsley
Executive Principal



ILLAWARRA
CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

APPENDIX

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1. Biblical Basis

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.[a] 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Proverbs 22:5-6

5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them. 6 Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honour your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” 4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

2. Preamble

Illawarra Christian Education (ICE) was established by Christian parents desirous that their children be educated within a distinctively Christian school environment. Training in a Christian view of the world and relationships, and Christian nurture of the child are fundamental to the functioning of our schools. It is the task of Illawarra Christian Education school's to “lead the child to discern the meaning and structure of the creation under the guidance of the Word of God and to train the child in the use and development of their God given talents, so that they may be equipped to serve Christ as King in all spheres of life to the Glory of God and the wellbeing of their fellow men” (refer Educational Creed, Section H).

As a covenant community, Illawarra Christian Education, through its Enrolment Policy, seeks primarily to support Christian parents (Galatians 6:10) in their task of nurturing and training their children in God's ways. Illawarra Christian Education also seeks to support other families who are supportive of the Christian ethos of ICE schools and are desirous that their children come under the ICE Christian educational model.

This policy acknowledges the needs and desires of the individual family or child within the context of the nature and needs of the school community, such that justice and loving kindness may be evident in all enrolment processes and decisions (Micah 6:8). While justice and loving kindness should not be applied to one family or child at the expense of others, due recognition should be given to the Biblical pattern of care for the disadvantaged.

The ultimate responsibility, before God, for the training and nurture of the child resides with the parents. It is not the role of the ICE to seek to usurp that responsibility; neither should parents abdicate it in favour of the school.

It is expected that parents will be supportive of the educational model and ICE's “Code of Behaviour” and will work in partnership with Illawarra Christian Education staff.

3. Guidelines for Enrolment Decisions

All enrolment decisions will be at the sole discretion of the Board. The following guidelines are to be taken into account by the Board when considering applications for enrolment.

1. Illawarra Christian Education's Biblical ethos and constitution.
2. The provision of a sound Christian education for the children of Christian parents.
3. The recommendations of those responsible for advising the Board.
4. The impact of the enrolment on the welfare of each class and the whole school community.

5. Stewardship of available resources to ensure the viability of the whole school community.
6. The capacity of the school to cater for the individual needs of the student
7. A response of justice, loving kindness and pastoral care.
8. Maintenance of a predominantly Christian community.
9. Consideration of existing laws and regulations.
4. Enrolments Registrar

The role of Enrolments Registrar is performed by a member of the office staff. There is one Registrar for Illawarra Christian Education, aided by office staff at each School. The Registrar works closely with the Board member responsible for enrolments.

The Registrar maintains ownership of the entire enrolment process and performs the day to day enrolment transactions, including organising assessments and interviews.

The Registrar has the authority to approve straightforward enrolments and submits a report of those approved to the next Board meeting. Enrolments requiring additional assessments, involving special needs or impacting the minimum Christian percentage for a class must be taken to the Board for approval.

5. Overall Description of the Enrolment Process

A family enquiring about enrolment will be sent an Enrolment Prospectus, containing the procedure for enrolment, an enrolment application form, a document describing the Biblical basis of Christian education, and the uniform and discipline policies.

Upon receipt of the application form and enrolment application fee, the information will be checked and recorded.

When a vacancy occurs, the waiting list is reviewed and the family at the top of the list is invited for an interview and student assessment. Parents will provide two recent school reports, all other documentation relevant to the child, and will sign a consent form authorising the school to seek further information relevant to the enrolment.

Where possible, consultation with third parties providing reports and assessments will occur.

The enrolment interview team should comprise at least two members:

- The Registrar or delegate, and
- The Principal or delegate.

During the interview and assessment process, free and open communication will be encouraged with parents in regard to their child's individual needs and the progress of their application.

All available information is considered and a recommendation is formed on the enrolment application.

Parents and students must agree with the Code of Behaviour and secondary students and their parents must sign the Code to show their agreeance before approval for enrolment can be given.

If the recommendation from both the interview and assessment is for acceptance, and there are no complicating issues, the Registrar may approve the enrolment immediately and submit a report to the next Board meeting. Otherwise the recommendation and all relevant information are presented to the Board for decision.

If the recommendation is for non-acceptance, the parents will be further consulted to ensure clarity of understanding of issues and processes.

Copies of all correspondence are to be filed with the original application.

6. Confidentiality

All enrolment information is to be kept confidential and only viewed by the Business Manager, Registrar, the Principals, staff involved in the enrolment process and the Board.

Written consent from parents to allow discussion of assessment results from teachers and other professionals will be sought.

6.1 Federal Reporting Obligations

When a student from another state enrolls or applies for enrolment at an Illawarra Christian Education school the school will follow the process to request the transfer of information from the student's previous school as outlined in the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note.

7. Laws and Regulations

In all enrolment decisions, Biblical principles have pre-eminence. Subject to Biblical principles, Illawarra Christian Education adheres to existing laws and regulations. Given this, special care needs to be taken to ensure that all aspects of the enrolment process conform to legal requirements, including anti-discrimination and privacy legislation, whilst maintaining the Christian ethos and character of the school.

Personnel involved in the enrolment process should take into account those requirements.

If during the process of considering an enrolment the Board is uncertain of its Biblical, legal or educational obligations, it should seek advice from suitably qualified persons or organisations. Such advice should be carefully considered when making the final enrolment decision.

8. Association Membership in Relationship to Enrolment

The Association is established to provide Christian education, based on the word of God, for children, primarily from Christian families. As such, Association members receive priority in the enrolment process.

When families apply for both membership and enrolment at the same time, a separate Association membership interview must take place prior to a recommendation being made to the Board for a decision on Association membership. If the application for membership is approved by the Board, the student is moved to the appropriate priority category for the purposes of enrolment.

Similarly, when families apply for Associate membership, after already having had an enrolment interview, a separate membership interview will occur, and the student moved to the appropriate priority category if the family is accepted for Association membership by the Board.

In all other respects, the enrolment and Association membership processes are independent.

When families become full members of the Association prior to their children being offered a position in the school, the student is moved to the appropriate priority category.

9. Priority Categories

When an application for enrolment is received and receipted, it is added to the appropriate campus and class waiting list according to a priority category as listed below.

The priority categories, in order, are:

1. Full members of the Association who have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
2. Full members of the Association who do not have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
3. Associate members of the Association who have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
4. Associate members of the Association who do not have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
5. Parents who are committed to Parent-Controlled Christian Education transferring from another Christian school and who are eligible for full membership of the Association.

6. Parents who are neither full members nor associate members of the Association and who have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
7. Parents who are professing Christians, defined as those who attend church at least monthly, who sign on the enrolment form to indicate that they accept and personally believe the statement of faith, and whose application is accompanied by a reference from the minister of their church.
8. All other families.

Where two or more applicants, in consideration of the above categories, have equal priority and the position cannot be filled from a higher category, the earliest date of application for enrolment will take precedence.

Exceptional circumstances may arise from time to time where adherence to the priority categories may be overridden by the Board. All recommendations to override the priority categories must be presented to the Board, along with supporting information, for a decision prior to the family commencing student assessment and parent interviews.

When the process of filling vacancies is in progress, any changes in priority categories for families involved, such as Association membership, must be approved by the Board.

When a priority 7 or 8 family has a child being considered to fill a vacancy, and that family has other children on the waiting list, then those children may be considered to be in priority 6 if there are vacancies which they could also fill.

10. Waiting Lists

Upon receipt, all applications are checked to ensure that all necessary information has been supplied and then entered onto the waiting list according to:

- campus preferred,
- class applied for,
- relevant priority category,
- date of application.

When a vacancy becomes available, the Registrar will review the waiting list and approach families in the order of priority unless a recommendation is made to the Board to override the priority category due to exceptional circumstances.

Should a family either decline or not respond to an offer to commence the enrolment process, the next family on the waiting list is approached and so on until the vacancy is filled. When parents decline an offer to commence enrolment, the student is moved to the bottom of their category on the waiting list with the date of application set to the current date. In this case, the Registrar need not contact the family again during the current year unless the family specifically requests that we do so. If special circumstances play a part in the parent's decision to decline, the Board may choose to leave the student in their current position within the category.

11. Considerations for Filling Vacancies

The Board will seek to allocate enrolments in accordance with the priority categories.

In every enrolment decision the Board will consider:

- The welfare of the whole school community (including children, parents and staff).
- The Christian ethos of Illawarra Christian Education.
- The capacity of the school to cater for the individual needs of the student.
- The Board will periodically review all vacancies.

11.1 Maximum Class Sizes

The maximum enrolments in classes are:

- Prep 30 per day
- Kindergarten to year 2 24 (Single Stream), 24 (Double Stream)
- Year 3 to year 4 30 (Single stream), 30 (Double stream)
- Year 5 to year 6 32 (Single stream), 32 (Double stream)
- Year 7 to year 10 32 (Single stream), 28 (Double stream)
- Year 11 to year 12 notionally 38 for the purposes of calculating Christian percentage, however there is no set maximum

In special circumstances class sizes may be varied. The maximum size of a class may need to be reduced because of physical rooming restrictions.

11.2 Minimum Christian Percentage

The Board will seek to ensure that a minimum percentage of enrolments for each year come from Christian families. These are families who satisfy the requirements for membership or entry into priority 7 on the waiting list. Use the following as guidelines:

- Each class from Prep to year 3 should aim to have a minimum of 75% of students from Christian Families
- Each class from year 4 to year 12 should aim to have a minimum of 85% of students from Christian families.
- High School students coming from other families but who make a credible confession of their own Christian commitment are to be included in the Christian category. They must attend church regularly, which can include attendance at a church youth group. Their application must include a reference from their church testifying to their Christian commitment. The reference must be signed by a recognised Minister of the church. Such students will be interviewed at the parent interview.

It is desirable that new students entering Senior High School be Christians or be from a Christian family.

In special circumstances the Board may approve a temporary reduction in the minimum Christian percentage for a class. It is expected that the class would return to the normal minimum Christian percentage by filling subsequent vacancies from Christian families.

The number of positions in a class available to students from other families who do not meet the Christian criteria is calculated on the maximum class size, rounded up to the nearest whole number. For double streamed classes, this calculation is performed on the total maximum size of both classes combined.

The following table shows the number of positions available in a class to students from other families, according to class size.

Total class size	Positions available to students from other families Year 3 and below	Positions available to students from other families – Year 4 and above
24	6	4
30	8	5
32	8	5
38	10	6
48	12	8
52	13	8
56	14	9

11.3 Procedure for Filling a Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs the waiting list is reviewed to determine the next student in order of priority. If the student is from priority list categories 1 to 6, arrangements are to be made for a student assessment for the first child on the list and following children up to the existing number of vacancies. (If there is to be any special consideration given to children, then this should be noted on the waiting list and in the case of a vacancy, it should be referred to the Board before action is taken).

If there are no applications in priority categories 1 to 6 the Registrar shall be responsible for arranging an enrolment interview with both parents, if possible, and two members of the interview team who will complete the interview form and return it to the office.

In the case of a staged class which comprises more than one grade, the guideline is to fill a vacancy from the majority grade in the class. Before approaching families, the Registrar should consult with relevant staff who may determine that the class makeup would be better served by filling the vacancy from a minority grade. Preference should be given to upholding the Christian percentage by approaching families in categories 1-7 for all relevant grades before moving to category 8.

12. Enrolment Criteria

12.1 Minimum Starting Age for Enrolments

- Students commencing school in Prep must be three (3) years of age by 30th April of that year.
- Students commencing school in Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by 30th April of that year.
- Students commencing school in Year 1 must be six (6) years of age by 30th April of that year.
- For all other classes, there is no set minimum age. Each student is considered in relation to their readiness for the class, and to the class that they propose to enter.

In exceptional circumstances, the Board may, upon written request from parents, review individual students whose birthday occurs during May of the proposed year of entry to Kindergarten or Year 1. Such circumstances may include:

- Transfer from another Christian school.
- Additional documentary evidence from educational specialists indicating readiness for school.
- Other exceptional circumstances as determined by the Board from time to time.

In such exceptional cases the Board may seek additional assessments and recommendations when considering the enrolment application.

12.2 Maximum Age for Enrolments

- There is no set maximum age for enrolment in each class. Each student is considered in relation to the class that they propose to enter.
- Mature age applicants will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with the criteria established in this policy.

12.3 School's Ability to Meet the Needs of the Student

A key consideration for enrolment is the capacity of the school to cater for the specific needs of the individual student, both in the short and long term. As a Christian community, we have a responsibility to seek to provide each student with the opportunity to develop to their God given potential. To assist in this process, the following will be considered:

12.4 Assessment Procedure

The aim of the assessment procedure is to assist in understanding:

- the anticipated needs of each individual student throughout the duration of their schooling
- the anticipated resources required to meet those needs
- the school's capacity to provide those resources
- upon acceptance of enrolment, the individual program required to meet those needs
- the impact of meeting those individual needs on the existing class and school community

An important aspect of the assessment procedure is the free and open communication with parents of their child's individual needs. This will occur during all stages of the process.

12.5 Requesting Enrolment Information From Parents

To facilitate an understanding of the student's needs, it will be necessary to request all relevant reports and information from the parents regarding the student. In requesting this information, due consideration will be given to relevant laws.

Where possible, consultation with third parties providing reports and assessments should occur. Written consent will be sought from the parent prior to consultation.

Information will be requested through enrolment application forms or verbally during the assessment procedure.

12.6 Consideration of Remissions

A family's ability to pay required fees will be considered, however this should not be the main determining factor in the decision making process. During the enrolment process, if it appears that payment of fees may impose a financial burden on the family, and they satisfy the Remission of School Fees Policy the Board representative and Business Manager should apply this policy. It is expected that families not eligible for fee assistance, or did not inform the Illawarra Christian Education of their eligibility at enrolment of their first K to 12 student will be able to fulfil their commitment of meeting school fees. Therefore, no request for fee remission will be considered in the first twelve months following enrolment.

13. Christian Lifestyle Initiative

Christian Lifestyle Initiative (CLI) is an enrolment offer made to parents of Christian students entering Year 11. The enrolment will be at a substantially reduced fee for Years 11 and 12. The aim is to promote Christian education at senior secondary level amongst families who might not otherwise be able to afford it. CLI applications must be submitted by the minister of the church attended by the student, and must include a reference from the minister attesting to the Christian character of the student.

The student will be interviewed at the parent interview with one of the interviewers being the Principal or delegate. CLI applications must be approved by the Board.

A review by the Principal or delegate of the offer for a CLI will occur at the end of the Preliminary Year in order to confirm or discontinue the CLI for the HSC year. This review will be on the basis of maintenance of the student's Christian walk.

14. Transfers Between Campuses

To maintain the integrity of the waiting list the Board will consider each request for campus transfer on its merit and according to the circumstances at the time.

Any transfer is dependent upon a vacancy being available and the considerations for filling vacancies outlined below.

15. Holding Class Places / Temporary Withdrawal

Positions will not normally be held open in a class for temporary withdrawal of a student. Under exceptional circumstances, the Board may choose to override this practice.

16. Temporary Enrolments

It is not normal policy to have temporary enrolments, however under exceptional circumstances the Board may approve an increase in class sizes to accommodate temporary enrolments.

17. Recommendation to Board

In order to meet its obligation of making a fair and just decision in each enrolment application that the Board needs to approve, it is essential that the Board have at its disposal all relevant information.

This should include, at a minimum, the following:

- The information provided on the enrolment application.
- Priority category and current Christian family percentage in the class.
- A description of the individual needs of the student and how these needs have been determined.
- The outcome of discussions with parents and others currently involved in the management of the student.
- Specific support requirements to meet the students needs and the estimated cost of providing the required resources.
- Potential sources of additional funding.
- Characteristics of the class and potential impact on the school community.
- Other options that have been considered (such as alternate campus, repeats, etc)

A recommendation will be provided to the Board based on the available information.

18. Offer of Placement

18.1 Notification of Acceptance / Refusal of Enrolment

Parents will be notified in writing of the decision regarding the application for enrolment.

18.2 Procedures of Enrolment

Parents will be given a date by which they must respond to the offer in writing and a date by which the student must commence school.

Parents are required to sign an acceptance of the offer of placement, indicating their acceptance of the terms of enrolment. They will also be required to pay fees as outlined in the Fees Policy to hold the position until the date of commencement as signified in the letter of offer.

For non-Christian families (ie families who do not satisfy the requirements for membership or entry into priority 7 on the waiting list), the following two additional enrolment conditions apply:

- Parents must agree to attend an information session where the gospel and the basis for Christian education will be clearly enunciated within the first two years of their child being at the school.
- Parents are required to acknowledge, in writing, that they are comfortable with the statement of faith and the Christian ethos of Illawarra Christian Education, and accept that, in the course of their time at ICE, their children will be presented with the gospel, and given the opportunity to respond

If the required fees are paid and the student consequently does not take up the position, the fees will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances as approved by the Business Manager.

18.3 Time Periods Regarding Acceptance

When an offer of placement is made, parents will respond within a period of fourteen (14) days of the date of letter of offer. Should all conditions of enrolment not be satisfied within the required time, a phone call will be made to confirm that the parents understand the conditions of enrolment, prior to the position again being declared vacant.

Version	Date Approved	Revised By	Description	Review
1.0	2002		Initial release	
2.0	3/6/2004	K Bosward	Added Registrar role; revised maximum class sizes, minimum Christian percentage guidelines and K/1 minimum starting age	
2.1	9/12/2004	K Bosward	Clarified category 7 criteria, enrolment process and waiting list processing; changed Kinder enrolment process; added HOC role, CLI, temporary enrolments and Christian percentage rationale	
2.2	6/6/2005	K Bosward	Clarified student's own profession of faith; added procedure for filling vacancy in staged (composite) class	
2.3	13/10/2005	K Bosward	Clarified interview requirements for Year 11/12 students	
2.4	2/2/2006	K Bosward	Clarified requirements for student's own profession of faith	
2.5	9/3/2006	K Bosward	Kindergarten assessments now done before approval	
2.6	24/8/2006	K Bosward	Added Federal Reporting Obligations	
2.7	05/06/2007	M Edwards	Changes to Christian percentage	
2.8	16/10/2008	C Muscat	Changes to starting age and maximum class sizes	
2.9	19/5/2011	G. Batten & C. Muscat	Changes to eligibility for Fee Remission. Review Policy 2012	
3.0	18/07/2011	G.Batten & C. Muscat	Changes to size of Prep classes and age of entry to Prep	2013
3.1	2/2/2012	G. Batten & C. Muscat	Inclusion of Biblical Basis & requirement of accepting to "Code of Conduct" as a condition of enrolment	2014

Appendix I - Christian Percentage Rationale

18.4 Introduction

The Enrolment Policy contains the guideline that the Board will seek to ensure that a minimum 85% of all enrolments come from Christian families. These are families who satisfy the requirements for membership or entry into priority 7 on the waiting list. Each class should aim to have 85% students from Christian families. Also, students coming from other families but who make a credible profession of their own Christian commitment are to be included in the Christian category.

This paper gives the rationale behind our minimum Christian percentage guideline. With increasing enrolment "competition" from other Christian schools in our region, it is appropriate that this rationale be recorded here and referred to as needed when questions arise regarding this guideline.

18.5 Illawarra Christian Education as a Covenant Community

Our Educational Creed states that Christ's body is "the covenant community bound to Him as head, and that the children of believing parents belong to that covenant community." (E.11-13).

Further, the Creed states "although by the grace of God, men who reject the Word of God as the ordering principle of life provide many valuable insights into the common structure of reality, yet because the religious direction of their thoughts remains radically opposed to that of the covenant community in Christ, there can be no possibility of a synthesis of their systems of thought with the scripturally directed thought which Christ's covenant community is called to pursue." (E.17-24).

Also, "a school where Christ is confessed as head of the educational task in harmony with the Scripture is a valid ... expression of the life of the covenant community redeemed in Christ." (H.4-7).

Thus we see that our Educational Creed expects our schools to be substantially and effectively a covenant community, comprised of children of one or two believing parents, together with believing staff who work in partnership with the parents in the education of their children. Parents therefore join a community endeavouring to fulfil a God-given responsibility to give children a Christ-centred education on how to do all things for the glory of God.

Implications for our Schools

Since our schools are to be substantially and effectively a covenant community, we must approach with caution and much prayer any discussion which may result in not maintaining a high percentage of Christian families in our community. The impact of too many families who do not confess Christ as their head cannot be underestimated. "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (1 Cor 5:6).

Ronald P Chadwick says, "In my conversations with many Christian school administrators across America today, the unanimous conclusion is that the strength of the Christian school is in direct proportion to the Christian home or homes that are represented in the school family." (quoted by Richard Edlin, *The Cause of Christian Education*, p92).

Reina de Vries (from Christian Parent-Controlled Schools Ltd in Australia) is strongly of the view that a Christian percentage less than 80% can be disastrous. Christian parent-controlled schools which have a low or no minimum Christian percentage guideline have faced a number of problems.

The concern here is the potential influence that parents who are not Christ-centred may exert within the school. In this regard we even need to be careful when considering a student's own profession of faith. While a child of unbelieving parents may make a credible profession of faith, the reality is that the parents are the ones who are responsible for their child's education and who pay the fees, so they will be the ones who may seek to influence the direction and policy of the school.

There may even be an issue with anti-discrimination legislation, although this is as yet untested. While a Christian school may be "Christian" in name, if it can be demonstrated that a significant number of families in the school do not call themselves "Christian", then the school could forfeit existing exemptions granted to them under the legislation. For example, the school could lose the legal right to employ only Christian staff.

18.6 Disadvantages of reducing the minimum Christian percentage

Potential negative implications for our schools caused by reducing the minimum Christian percentage include:

- A greater number of parents who may not understand the biblical principles of education and thus may seek to impose other agenda, such as focusing more on the “private” aspect of independent schooling rather than our distinctive Christ-centred education.
- The temptation to remove what may be regarded as objectionable material from a Christ-centred curriculum, so as not to offend an increasing number of families who do not have a personal commitment to Christ.
- More disruptive pupils, especially those who enter at high school. Of course the sinful nature that afflicts all people (Romans 3:10) means that disruptive students may come from Christian families as well. However, in general there is the potential for more disruptive behaviour from children whose parents do not seek to live by the teachings of the bible nor to train their children to uphold those teachings. Those who come into the school later will find the school particularly different and challenging compared to what they have been used to.
- A decreased willingness to exercise disciplinary action against disruptive students, again for fear of offending parents and damaging the reputation of our schools. We may even be on shaky legal ground here. There is an expectation by parents that our schools, because they are caring and smaller, may be able to “fix” behavioural problems manifested by students at other schools. As we lower our percentage, more parents will insist on their right to have our schools take in their children and may challenge us if we are perceived to refuse on the basis of behavioural unsuitability. Currently our only avenue for refusal is on the basis of Christian percentage.
- The result can be a greater emphasis on the school environment, rather than on curriculum and teaching method. There may also be a greater emphasis on evangelism, which while important and necessary (even amongst the children of Christian parents), is not the primary task of education. It can lead to a greater focus on the secondary school where significant behavioural problems are more likely to be manifested, and where students are often seen as better targets for evangelism. By contrast, the educational approach that is to be characteristic of a covenant community should be one of continual disciplining and nurturing all the way from infants through to the senior years. This is an extension of what Christian parents are already doing in disciplining their children at home.

18.7 Anti-Discrimination Legislation

This paper does not seek to address in detail any legal issues surrounding a minimum Christian percentage guideline. Current legal advice indicates that under existing religious exemptions in the anti-discrimination legislation, we are permitted to refuse enrolment to families on the basis of Christian status, provided we have clearly indicated our definition of “Christian” up front to parents. We do this in the enrolment application form where parents are required to indicate that they attend church at least monthly, that they accept and personally believe our statement of faith, and that they have included a reference from the minister of their church.

