



SCHOOL REPORT 2020

Contextual Information

Set in a peaceful bushland setting, NCS is a co-educational K-12 school, with high expectations for student competence, character and faith. The school was established in 1984 by a group of local Christian parents who had a vision for education that was authentically Christian in outlook and practice.

At the end of 2020, the school's enrolment was 495 which was an increase from the 465 in 2019. The school has continued a process of moving from single to double streams. It is anticipated that the double streaming process will be completed in a planned and measured way in 2021. The intention is to maintain a close-knit community as we continue to grow.

There is a range of student ability, talent and interest at Nepean. The school is not selective. Our indigenous students enrich the life of the school. Abilities range from students who are extremely gifted to those who struggle with aspects of their schooling. Whatever the case, all students are valued and there are no procedures that might indicate to students that one is valued more than another e.g. there are no academic prizes. The prize for any pursuit of excellence is the pursuit itself, the accompanying pleasure of having been faithful to God and the opportunity to have authentic impact in people's lives.

NCS serves Christian families (from a broad range of Christian backgrounds) and other interested families from places around Mulgoa (in particular Glenmore Park, Wallacia, Silverdale, Warragamba, Penrith, Werrington and the Lower Blue Mountains).

Our school is:

- Driven by Christian faith and action
- Distinguished by authentic learning excellence
- Delighting in wise, humble, obedient and kind students

In seeking to present truth in a spirit of love, teachers at NCS are to:

Be what they believe ...live Christ's story in their lives

Relate in a Christ-like way

Unfold the curriculum in the shadow of the Cross

Inspire students in the light of Christ's resurrection and return

Structure procedures and strategies that are in harmony with our Christian outlook

Enable students to be responsible followers of Jesus in an exciting, yet broken world

Messages from Key Bodies

A message from the Principal

Nepean Christian School's mission statement is to 'infol authentic, adventurous and accessible Christian education, founded on the Bible, within a community where God is glorified and enjoyed.' It is the endeavour of the school to make that deeply embedded in all aspects of school life. Our Christian focus is not simply an add-on to the task of learning, but rather it informs and directs every part of school life.

As a close-knit community, our school works to promote respect and responsibility. We have high expectations for all our students and this is monitored through pastoral care and discipline process. In the primary school, the classroom teacher guides and mentors the relationships of students. In the secondary school, that responsibility falls to the Impact Group teacher, with whom the students meet daily.

Our school is directed by the maxim of Wisdom, Humility, Obedience and Kindness (WHOK). WHOK runs through the fabric of the school and guides the way in which we talk to students about their behaviour and relational choices. Rather than running on a list of rules, our school emphasises community. WHOK helps define what we expect relationships and behaviour within the community to be like. Our emphasis is therefore not on conformity but rather building integrity. Over all this, is laid our foundational belief in the grace of Christ.

2020 was a year that presented a range of challenges due to COVID. We were forced to close for all but essential workers in Term 2 and cancel many of our camps and excursions. Fortunately with the easing of restrictions later in the year we were able to catch up on most things, except our Year 10 camp to Hobart and the Year 11 trip to Vanuatu. Borders remained firmly shut.

Our school continued to grow, and that put us in a strong financial position to assist families whose businesses were shut or experienced a significant downturn.

Our Senior College (Black Swan) program continues to mature and the success of our graduates, both academically and with an emphasis on leadership and service continues to grow.

The school completed a new strategic plan that will provide direction for the school over the next five years.

Cameron Nunn

A message from the President of the Board on behalf of parents

Nepean is a learning community. However, much more than that, we unfold authentic, adventurous, and accessible Christian education, founded on the Bible, within a community where God is enjoyed, and gloried.

Our vision is that under the authority of scripture, confident in grace and in partnership with parents, Nepean Christian School seeks to grow young men and women who; love God and seek to live lives worthy of His calling, live to serve others as though serving Christ, enjoy all of God's gifts, steward His creation, revel in the joy of lifelong learning, worship their Creator through their creativity.

We believe that Jesus is Lord of all, and that should impact on every aspect of life, including how we raise, nurture and educate our children. In Deuteronomy 6:7, God commands the Israelites to impress His truths upon their 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”. In other words, there isn’t to be a facet of life that isn’t impacted by God. Nepean is the avenue by which many Christian parents live out this instruction; to ensure that even their children’s education recognises God’s order and Jesus’ sovereignty.

The school board is drawn from the school’s Christian parent association because God’s command was to believing parents. Board members are therefore faithful Christian men and women seeking to make Jesus Christ real in the lives of their children. Ensuring that all teaching and learning at Nepean takes place from a Christian worldview is the Board’s single most important duty. Please pray for our parent association and board as they seek to uphold the mission and vision of our school.

Nicole Mannyx

Satisfaction from Key Bodies

Parents and care-givers satisfaction

The school engaged CEN to facilitate a 360 survey of all stakeholders ahead of the development of the strategic plan. The results were summarised as follows:

“Overall, these are very positive results which should be encouraging for the board and for the Executive of the school, particularly in the context of COVID19 and its educational complications. The staff of the school are well-regarded, and the school continues to be strongly supported and praised by its parents. Parents appreciate that their children are nurtured in a warm, relational Christian community that is clearly meeting its broad intentions in terms of Mission and Vision. And, the staff is in good heart, is strongly supportive of the Mission of the school and is working collaboratively.

This positive context is very reassuring and allows the board and executive to approach the key areas for improvement that the surveys identify with a strong sense of confidence.

The report identified the 10 following areas for future continued growth:

1. Continue to improve learning outcomes for all students.
2. Provide better support and challenge for more academically talented students.
3. Ensure that there are more consistently applied behavioural expectations for students.
4. Strengthen community understanding of parent partnership.
5. Grow Association membership.
6. Find measures of success in respect of the integration of Christian education principles in the life of the school.
7. Continue to grow the size of the school.
8. Consider facility/resource improvements for particular areas of the curriculum i.e. Performing Arts

9. Ensure technological support keeps pace with requirements.
10. Examine the possibilities going forward in light of the COVID19 experience.

Staff Satisfaction

Staff continue to be extremely positive about the school. Staff morale is very high. Regular feedback is given regarding the enjoyment that staff have in working at NCS. The school undertakes team building activities in July. There are regular social gatherings outside of school.

The greatest measure of satisfaction can be seen in staff retention, which continues at an extraordinarily high rate. At the end of 2020, only two teachers left, along with a number of support staff, who moved to our sister school to aid with the establishment of a Learning Support school in the Mountains.

The school conducts an annual staff satisfaction survey, which is reported back to staff for discussion.

Student Satisfaction

Retention rates are extremely high, especially around the Senior College Program. A number of students who left NCS returned after experiencing other schools. Students are involved in a broad range of school activities.

Staff

Our school had 31 full-time teaching staff (25 in 2013), and 16 part-time teaching staff (13 in 2019) in 2019. 46 of these teachers had teaching qualifications from a higher education institution. One teacher had a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution but lacked formal teacher education qualifications. All teachers are accredited through NESAs. No teacher had an indigenous background.

Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

Teacher standards are diligently maintained via:

- Ongoing classroom visits by supervisors
- Submission of Teaching Programs with ongoing feedback
- Professional Development days.
- Statistical analysis of external testing (NAPLAN and HSC results)
- Professional conversations
- Professional Pathways Plan

Our school enacts a Professional Development Policy (Professional Pathways Policy and Procedures). In addition, the school also has a programme for nurturing new teachers into the teaching career and teachers who are new to NCS. New teachers meet regularly with the Head of Teaching and Learning to discuss their teaching journey and as part of the Accreditation process.

Professional Development

<p>In 2020 there were ten Pupil Free Days and many staff meetings during which the following areas were addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Child Protection● Staff code of conduct● Professional Pathways Plan● First Aid● Information Technology rollout● Explicit Direct Instruction● Retrieval Practice techniques● Formative Assessment● Teachers also attended network meetings appropriate to their class or KLA	<p>Teaching staff attended a wide range of professional development courses which addressed the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Supervising teachers moving to proficiency● Christian Librarians● HSC preparation● 7 Steps to Writing● Registration requirements● Careers● Teacher Accreditation● Online conferences - Teaching and Learning● Child protection legislation / Investigations● VALID Marking● Bronze Medallion● Chaplaincy● Finance● CEN Principals conference● Macqlit training● Drama● Special Ed
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Students

Student Attendance

Whole School Student attendance for 2020 was 90.35%.

Student attendance rates for each Year level were:

Kindergarten	91.60%
Year 1	91.20%
Year 2	92.90%
Year 3	91.40%
Year 4	91.10%
Year 5	90.90%
Year 6	91.30%
Year 7	90.80%
Year 8	89.00%
Year 9	91.00%

Year 10	88.80%
Year 11	90.40%
Year 12	84.20%

The School managed student non-attendance by:

- anticipating and avoiding any difficulties e.g. we are proactive at special school events such as sporting carnivals
- requiring parents of secondary students to inform the school on the morning of any absences
- following up any absences that have not been notified
- speaking with parents about regular absences
- activating an Absence Reminder Note / Email as needed
- counselling students as needed
- checking for patterns of non-attendance and making mandatory reports as needed

Retention rates

	Original number at end of Year 10	Continuing 2019	Left for other school	Left for TAFE and workforce
Year 11	32 (2019)	22	5	5
Year 12	38 (2018)	27	5	7

Post-school destinations

Tertiary Study	TAFE or similar	Workforce	Unknown
48%	0%	32%	20%

VET

In 2020 16 students were enrolled in VET Courses: Construction, Automotive, Electrotechnology, and Entertainment. 8 students completed Statements of Attainment towards Cert II or III during the year.

Results *NAPLAN*

There were no NAPLAN tests in 2020 due to COVID

ROSA

4 Record of School Achievements were granted to students.

HSC results

Our school offers a compressed model of HSC studies meaning that students complete up to two of their HSC subjects in Year 11 and the remainder in Year 12. 2019 saw an increase in the average ATAR (66.23 compared with 53.58 in 2018). Over the years we have demonstrated that we have the capacity and willingness to assist students who would not have completed their schooling in other schools. At the same time, we also have academically gifted students. Our aim is that all students set high goals and work diligently to achieve those goals. HSC results were in line with expectations and reflect the general ability of the cohort. Many students exceeded their academic expectations. Our highest ATAR result was 87.75.

Course	School Mean	State Mean
Biology	64.23	72.39
Community and Family Studies	69.45	74.01
Design & Technology	70.97	78.54
Legal Studies	65.77	74.97
English Studies	58.47	50.06
English Advanced	70.33	81.33
English Extension 1 /50	35.44	41.66
English Extension 2 /50	49.20	45.63
Modern History	70.80	72.53
Mathematics Standard	56.71	68.40
Mathematics 2u	67.92	79.20
Mathematics Extension /50	33.40	39.24
Music 1	80.87	81.56
Physics	68.88	73.18

Key Policies

The following policies can be found on the school's website..

Welfare and anti-bullying (summary)

As a Christian school, we seek to be proactive in promoting; expecting and modelling the sort of kindness that Jesus lived. This means that as a community of staff, students and parents and care-givers, we seek to treat each other in a Christ-like way. The well-being of our students is inseparable from our mission as a Christian school. Anti-bullying is therefore a natural part of our school's approach in this area, but "Kindness" is more proactive, more encompassing, more vibrant and more powerful in building Christian community.

Our pastoral programme is unfolded in the context of our Christian faith:

- Acknowledging that our world is exciting, beautiful, good and challenging as well as broken, ugly, troubled and evil.
- Loving one another as God has loved us – unconditionally and self-sacrificially.
- Treating each student as precious - a unique creation of a loving and awesome God
- Caring for young people in partnership with the family and church.
- Building self-esteem that is founded upon the layers of value in God's eyes, the Gospel, self-confidence and meaning, love from others and resilience.

At NCS we are committed to the care of students through:

- Providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students
- Maintaining the principles of the National Safe Schools Framework
- Integrating systems of counselling, reporting and discipline which are responsive and reactive to the needs of students.
- Compliance with all Child Protection requirements and adherence to the school's Student Code of Conduct, Pastoral Care Policy, Communication Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Crisis Management Policy

Layers of our pastoral care program involve:

- Daily Pastoral Care meetings for small groups of Secondary students
- Home Class time for each Primary class
- Training of Student Leaders to care for school mates
- Teachers address issues as needed at weekly or fortnightly assemblies

We are equally determined to prevent bullying and heal relationships through:

- Affirming that bullying and harassment have no place at NCS
- Promoting kindness in all relationships, interactions and attitudes
- Countering views that bullying is an inevitable part of life (eg. that the only thing we can do is tolerate it) and encouraging parents, staff and students in the building of a climate of respect, love and care for others
- Supporting and training victims of bullying and reform those who engage in bullying
- Encouraging students to reflect on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as the ultimate way of dealing with wrongdoing

Discipline (summary)

Layers of discipline and consequences are easily accessed via the Student Handbook, Organisers, Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook

Nepean's discipline policy reflects our commitment to our Christian values of acting both justly and mercifully. It emphasises the importance of repentance and restoration as central qualities to a discipline policy built around relationships. Nepean CS does not use nor condone the use of physical punishment.

The key **elements** of our Policy are:

- Encouragement of Christ-likeness
- Acceptance of self-direction
- Development of solidarity and common purpose
- A spirit of celebration, relationship and restoration

The **layers** of our Discipline Policy are:

- **Relax and rejoice** when students are behaving (Level 0)
- **Remind** students on the run when things are going wrong (Level 1)
- **Reprimand** students whose poor behaviour is substantial (Level 2)
- **Recompense** with justice those students whose behaviour is getting serious (Level 3)
- **Reform** very serious levels of behaviour through programs of restoration and monitoring (Level 4)
- **Refer** to specialists and experts as needed (Level 5)

The **scaffolding** for our Discipline Policy is formed by:

- Dynamic student teacher **relationships**
- Vibrant learning **engagement**
- **Justice**
- **Forgiveness and grace**
- A spirit of **restoration**

Grievance (summary)

This policy is available in the Parent Handbook, Staff Handbook and school website. As we seek to live Christ's story in our lives, staff members are encouraged to accept complaints, compliment and suggestions from parents and others with humility, openness and a desire to live in harmony. The school is committed to ensuring fair process and a right to be heard before any determination is made.

Some **elements** of our policy are:

- Encourage and welcome the input and feedback of all NCS community members
- Channel complaints, compliments and suggestions via the relevant staff member in the first instance.
- Speak with the relevant Leader, Deputy or the Principal if any matter remains unresolved or incomplete after having contacted the person involved.
- Contact the President of the Board if the matter remains unresolved and is of a serious nature.
- Not deal with anonymous complaints, compliments and suggestions unless of an important nature and supported by evidence (established by the Principal).
- Not deal with issues that are considered trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith.

- Enact procedural fairness.

Enrolment Policy (summary)

Nepean Christian School welcomes and considers all enrolment applications. Decisions on enrolment are at the discretion of the principal, who makes offers within the parameters of our Christian framework, and in compliance with all government requirements e.g. Anti-Discrimination, Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Standards) and Disability Discrimination Act.

- In accepting an enrolment, the principal will consider the welfare of the whole school community, the school's Christian ethos and the capacity of the school to cater for the individual needs.
- The school will normally only enrol students in Kindergarten who have turned 5 by 30 April in the year they are starting school. Exceptions to this are at the discretion of the Principal.
- It is a requirement that all parents allow their child to engage in the full life of the school, including its promotion of Christian belief and character, with due consideration to the child's abilities and background. This includes spiritual, academic, physical, cultural, off-site and social events.
- The school has a preferred class enrolment of 28.
- If there is a vacancy, offers of enrolment are made in the following order, but always at the discretion of the Principal:
 - Christian family with a sibling who has attended NCS for longer than one term
 - Christian family who is transferring from another Christian School
 - Christian family
 - Non-Christian family with a sibling who has attended NCS for longer than one term
 - Non-Christian family

When possible, we seek to accommodate those families for whom the school fees would impose a financial burden. This is at the Principal's discretion. NCS has no program of scholarships.

- The school board reserves the right to terminate the enrolment of a student who, for example, undermines the school's Christian ethos, engages in serious unacceptable behaviour, repeatedly disrupts learning or jeopardizes the welfare of other student

Targets for growth and improvement

As a school we are committed to continuous reflection and targeted improvement. In 2021, NCS have identified the following areas in which we will measure our continued development:

- Completion of Registration and Accreditation by NESAs
- Commencement of building the new early learning centre
- Enrolment target of 530
- Further development of the Senior College Program
- Implementation and consolidation of primary literacy programme
- Full implementation of the Professional Pathways programme (teacher accreditation and PD)
- Final update of reporting system
- Further integration and teacher skill in using Canvas (Learning Management System)

Financial Information

NCS is a low-fee independent school, committed to our mission of affordability. The majority of our funding comes from recurrent government grants. The school operates at an average cost of \$16 554 per student. Our per student expenditure is inclusive of tuition, excursions and camps, textbooks and all other instructional materials.

