

Mumbulla School Parent Survey 2019

Qualitative Data

There were 59 responses to this year's survey. The Board is extremely grateful to all the respondents. The school community can be assured that the findings are being taken seriously. The school's Governance Leadership and Management (GLaM) Mandated Group will recommend to the College of Teachers, other Mandated Groups and individuals any practical changes, concerns and ideas gleaned from the survey which may lead to positive change within the school.

All quantitative results are also published on the school's website.

Respondents also added qualitative comments in answer to some questions. These are presented in summary form below as in some cases comments identified the respondent or an individual member of staff. It is not appropriate to publish any material that identifies individuals as this may affect future participation in the survey.

Additional comments about Information Sources

Comments about information sources are overall positive, SkoolBag is noted as a 'great source of information' but we could continue to work on making our Facebook page more active.

In what areas do you mostly volunteer?

Volunteering abounds at our school and parents are actively involved in multiple ways. Most parents offer their time in their child/ren's classrooms, helping with major school events, in the kitchen/garden program, working bees and walking on local area excursions.

What suggestions do you have for how the school could make it easier for parents to participate?

A couple of respondents suggested a community hours scheme for volunteering (in lieu of paying school fees). All respondents are in favour of the roster system that the school uses for big events, but we need to work on how we communicate volunteering opportunities. Overall, respondents felt that the school makes it easy for parents to get involved. One suggestion that could be further explored is the idea of a Volunteer Coordinator (ie someone to coordinate the volunteering at the school). One respondent nicely summed up the general view across respondent comments:

I believe that parents are always welcome in class events outside the school. In lower school classes parents are involved in reading and other class jobs, the magic washer helpers and so many jobs that happen that most people would not even know about. I believe if you have the desire to help there are so many jobs to be done. On the other hand, there is many two parent working families and often parents don't have the time during school open hours.

Additional comments about Parent Engagement

Most respondents love the broad range of tasks and different ways parents can be involved in the school. There was sadness and disappointment expressed in a few people's comments that the school doesn't have an active parent and friends' group. "For such a community minded school, it's strange. "

Additional comments about School Culture & Communication

The comments in this section were overwhelmingly positive. Here is a sample:

- Office staff are so super helpful and welcoming
- Skoolbag is fabulous
- Amazing. Caring and professional at all times.
- Dealings with the school in all areas are always dealt with in a respectful and timely manner.
- Mumbulla has nailed it!
- You're all great!
- The culture in the school is one of the main reasons I send my children here. We feel safe and loved and valued, which helps all children thrive.

Two areas highlighted for the school to work on are better promoting what we do around adoption of Steiner principles trying to limit extra-curricula activities in Term 4 when families are feeling tired and a bit stretched.

Additional comments about Teacher/Parent Communication

Teacher communication is outstanding. Class meetings are an absolute highlight for respondents.

- They provide an incredible wealth of information for the way the curriculum will be woven into children's development
- Class meetings have always exceeded expectation. The passion and dedication of the teachers is inspiring and humbling. We are so lucky to have them working with our kids
- Class meetings are essential.

It is felt that Skoolbag has positively and clearly increased the level of communication with parents. Perhaps more early childhood talks (ie Kindergarten) could be initiated by the school for parents beginning their Steiner journey.

What do you appreciate most about the school?

The responses to this question all fit positively within the following areas (there was not a single negative response to this question):

1. The Steiner curriculum
2. The staff/teachers and their beautiful manner with the children
3. The Community
4. Aesthetically pleasing, warm and nurturing environment

The skill and enthusiasm of the teachers. The atmosphere & community. The opportunity for our kids to embrace life in all its facets, not just academically. The care the wider school community seems to have about the people within the school. Inclusivity. Humour.

Everything, I'm sorry for such an open response but I truly value everything the school offers. But mostly the heart centred approach to teaching and learning.

Kindness, care and time that is put into things, loving environment for my children to learn and to make mistakes...

Do you have any hopes, dreams or aspirations for the school over the next 5 years?

- Extend school to include Years 7 & 8 and beyond.
- A new Kindergarten building.
- Continue to work on the school's approach to ICT instruction

What do you feel are the main challenges for the future of the school in the next 5 years?

The following points were highlighted by respondents as the primary challenges:

- No active P&F
- Fees: providing quality education at an affordable price.
- Maintain enrolments
- Maintaining the core values and principles of the Steiner in the current social climate.
- ICT
- Keeping with Steiner philosophy in a fast-paced world

Additional comments about Leadership and Direction

The responses pointed positively towards the school leadership structure. One person commented that the lack of a principal ensures that the success of the school is everybody's (including parents) responsibility. The school congratulated several times on the quality reflection and research that goes into decision-making at the school. Yet, someone also expressed they would like to see greater transparency and communication about decisions made by Management, College of Teachers and Board. Perhaps there could a section of the bulletin (when relevant) that summaries outcomes of meetings and management decisions.

Progress in the form of building projects was seen as progressive but concerns around families struggling financially was raised in relation to this progress drive.

Overall, the comments expressed that the school is very well led.

Additional comments about Parent Education

Parental education is vital but not always convenient. Parents who can attend education sessions offered at the school thoroughly enjoyed them and gained a lot of wisdom from them.

Some ideas from parent respondents:

1. How to parent better! How to help your child through the different stages of development both educational and emotional changes
2. Instead of talks, bulletin snippets would be great....eg the way Mumbulla observes and interprets Steiner education and care of the child
3. The blog could be better utilised for engagement and promotion for parents.
4. Maybe a where to start in reading material?
5. It would be great to have more parent education around parenting topics (puberty, technology, environment etc) within the context of anthroposophical thinking
6. A lunch recipe book would be great (seems we have already achieved this! Thanks, Nikki)
7. I would love specialists and teachers to present talks about different topics in Steiner Education and Philosophy
8. Steiner based education for the future

Are there any comments you would like to make about any aspect of the school?

The response to this question were mostly positive. Here is a sample:

1. We are so lucky to have our children attending Mumbulla, thank you all!
2. We appreciate you. Thank you!!

3. My children feel their best at school - and I love that. Thank you all for everything that you all do to make the school what it is.
4. Thank you to the caring people who teach, organize and work at the school

However, there are three areas of concern that were raised by several respondents that need our attention. Together, as a staff and a community, we aim to turn our focus to these in 2020 and beyond:

1. What was described by one respondent as loose/unmindful ICT use in teaching/learning at Mumbulla.
2. A more overt and proactive stance on inappropriate or bullying behaviours so that children fully understand what bullying is, what the school expectations are and what the consequences are if they do the wrong thing.
3. Parents struggling to pay their school fees.

Once again, the Board of Mumbulla School thank you for your insightful responses and we hope that together we can continue to make our school the special place that it is.

Board of Directors