

Qualitative Data 2023 Parent Survey

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The Board expresses immense gratitude to all participants in this year's Parent Survey, totalling 53 responses. The school community can rest assured that the gathered insights will play a pivotal role in shaping discussions, decisions, and practices, continuing the tradition of thorough analysis and action observed in previous years.

Since 2015, the annual Parent Survey has served as a valuable tool, providing essential benchmarks for evaluating various aspects of parent involvement, school culture, and governance. All past survey results and analyses can be accessed on the school's website [here](#).

The Governance, Leadership, and Management group (GLaM), the Board's governance arm, collaborates with the College of Teachers (CoT) and the Board to propose areas of focus and change based on received responses. GLaM annually delegates the responsibility of survey circulation and analysis to the Education Manager.

Quantitative results are detailed in a separate document but undergo review by the Board, CoT, and the Education and Business Managers. Qualitative comments from respondents are summarized here, ensuring confidentiality while forwarding concerns and compliments to relevant stakeholders.

Qualitative Data

The Bulletin continues to be the primary source of information for families (84.91%) and the secondary source is emails from the Front Office (which includes Audiri). The Bulletin is very positively received.

75% of respondents know how to access school policies and procedures. This has been a steady increase since 2015 when only 40% knew this. The combined efforts of Board and Management to move the school's policies and procedures to a central and easily accessible online management system has no doubt contributed to this alongside a concerted effort by all staff to refer parents to the school's policies and procedures where appropriate.

However, the P&F profile has slightly declined, with approximately 70% of parents knowledgeable about involvement opportunities, down from 76% in 2022.

Notably, 92.46% of respondents express satisfaction with the school's communication methods, reflecting the effectiveness of electronic communication from the school's perspective.

As in all previous years, the Front Office staff are commended for their professionalism, warmth, friendliness and care.

Parent Engagement

53.85% of parents feel they volunteer at their capacity, citing work commitments, time constraints, and distance from the school as limiting factors. Efforts to assist more in the future are acknowledged, with suggestions for clearer communication on available opportunities and a desire for a parent-buddy system. Clear communication pathways and advanced notice for volunteering opportunities are also emphasized.

I have repeatedly asked about how to be involved and have been informed there is limited capacity for this in kindergarten however there may be more opportunities in future years.

I'd like to see a 'parent-buddy' system, to assist new parents to meet n greet and integrate. Maybe a group of 4 parents from 4 families, so as not to put too much burden on these members, but also to spread around the experiences shared. New parents can feel isolated, and there's a lot to get to know, a lot of culture to assimilate, and I feel that having a compulsory parent-buddy system will help new families tremendously.

I would love to be more involved but do not know where to begin and often find the culture of the school 'clicky'. It is unclear about what expectations of parents are and I have not found the communication methods effective in engaging, informing or supporting parent involvement.

It is a shame so many parents are so busy these days. I know cost of living and work are taking priority, but I feel we have lost something in the heart of the school by not being more expectant that volunteers are part of it all.

The school continues to be open to trying different ways to make it easier for parents to be involved. Encouraging early engagement with new parents around the importance of contributing to the school and increasing the number of class meetings in all classes, Kindergarten to Class 6, to enhance parental involvement are two which will be considered at College in 2024.

School Culture and Communication

The survey reflects a strong sense of welcome at the school (92.45%). Concerns about bullying and a desire for more feedback on incidents are voiced by a few, prompting the school to address such issues more comprehensively.

A majority strongly agrees or agrees (92.31%) that their child's wellbeing is a priority, with some emphasising the importance of personalised support. However, a couple express concerns about bullying and suggest a stronger focus on the needs of all children.

My child has needed special consideration and support this year, and the school has willingly and respectfully done everything possible to assist.

We are extremely grateful for the support provided to our children.

The only feedback I get is at teacher/parent meetings, in the school report or from parents that go on camp/excursions with the class. I would appreciate more feedback in case of incidents that occur at the school (either physical or teasing/bullying).

Little bullying on the playground after school

My child mostly feels safe; there have been a few incidents with classmates however after which they expressed being scared to go to school.

My child's well-being is of equal priority to the well-being of all other children.

Last year we added two additional questions to the Parent Survey that specifically address child welfare and safety. These are:

1. I feel informed about my child's wellbeing at school.

Last year, 86.79% of respondents felt informed about their child's wellbeing at school. 9.43% (5 respondents) neither agreed or disagreed and 1 respondent strongly disagreed.

Pleasingly this year, 92.31% of parents felt informed about their child's wellbeing at school. 5.77% (3 respondents) neither agreed or disagreed and 1 respondent disagreed. Communication and training in the school's new Child Safe Policies and Procedures, across all bodies of the school, may have helped raise awareness and increased information sharing.

2. My child feels safe at school.

Last year, 94.34% of respondents believed their child felt safe at school. 1 respondent answered neither agree nor disagree.

This year saw a slight decrease in this figure, to 92.46% of parents believing their child felt safe at school. 2 respondents answered neither agree nor disagree and 2 answered disagree. However, these four respondents went on to note that incidences resulting in their child/ren feeling unsafe had been addressed by the class teacher or had occurred in the playground after school.

Regardless of these strong positive responses, we continue to aim for 100% and as committed Child Safe school culture both figures should be 100%. This is something we can work on achieving as a whole school community.

Respondents appreciate the school's holistic education approach but request clearer communication on class content, meetings, and teacher-parent interactions.

94.34% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their child's teacher communicated with them in an open and timely manner (up from 90% in 2022). However, when it comes to feeling informed about the content and curriculum in the classroom 83% strongly agreed or agreed that they were informed, while the remaining were ambivalent or disagreed. One respondent commented: "Trust the process."

Leadership and Management

While the majority (67.92%) feel informed about the school's organizational structures, efforts are needed to educate the remaining 11 unsure respondents. This includes what the College and Board are doing and the decisions that are being made that affect the school. More transparent and proactive information sharing is something that Management, College and Board will continue to target.

60% of parents feel well informed about the school's vision and future direction. Concerns about communication transparency persist, with 32.08% feeling ambivalent about being informed on the school's vision and future direction.

Below is a cross section of the 39 responses received to the question, **What do you appreciate most about the school?** These answers are representative of the main themes expressed by all.

What I appreciate MOST is the culture and community spirit of the school. The warmth and kindness of all the staff and people involved in the school makes it special to be a part of. I also love that the children have access to such beautiful resources and materials to learn and create with. I love the music and arts programs. I love the wholistic approach to education

which takes into account the child as a whole person rather than focusing only on academic achievement.

I love the community that the school has built, such a supportive and warm environment that encourages a child's uniqueness.

The inclusivity that Mumbulla culture generates amongst students and teacher. It's so good and provides a safe environment for all children.

Attention to the bio-individuality of each person, and the recognition of the spiritual being in each of us as primary.

The rich curriculum, beautiful grounds, warm and caring environment for learning.

Its 'home away from home' vibe which allows and encourages individuality.

The focus on kindness, compassion and lifelong learning

How much the teachers love teaching and the kids.

The welcoming and caring approach that uses Steiner principles to support raising our children.

Community and pastoral care.

The smiles from all parties.

In response to the hopes, dreams or aspirations parents have for the school for the next 5 years, comments ranged from offering secondary education (this appears repeatedly), suggesting teachers participate in ongoing cultural competence training to enable them to promote reconciliation in their classrooms, being even more strongly focused on the care of the environment, children being more active in growing food for the school, to have more volunteering from parents and more engagement with First nations elders. Many of these suggestions are regularly on the College and Board agendas so it is reassuring to see the parent body also prioritizing these things.

The interest in enrolling/continuing to years 7 & 8 for respondents is around 95.83%, which is a significant increase on last year's figure of 62%.

Request for additional comments about Leadership and Direction elicited 4 comments:

I have been impressed with the level of leadership and communication shown by the Front Office...

Providing additional information to parents about Steiner philosophy and how it directs the learning for children would be useful for parents.

As a new parent it would be nice to see and meet school leadership and know who they are.

High school please!

24.53% of respondents strongly agree they understand the basic principles of Steiner Education, 60.38% agree and 11.32% are ambivalent and 3.77% disagree. Around 60.38% would like to have

more about Steiner Education offered and 88% would like 'other' parent education offered. Both the anxiety and bullying education evenings were well attended in 2023 and positively received:

The anxiety presentation was really useful (despite no substantial anxiety in our children).

I really enjoyed the talk this year about bullying.

In collaboration with the P&F the school will continue to offer education opportunities to the school community in 2024.

Additional closing comments from respondents:

I'd like to see any new directions that are taught, eg. gender, sexuality, in balance with traditional/conservative, where all get represented in education, and assist our children's free will by teaching understanding, communication and discernment.

There is a culture at Mumbulla School within the broader community of families which seems at odds with its essential ethos. While I feel confident this school is the best available choice for my family in the Bega Valley, it is not always a comfortable part of the community to be in... holier than thou attitudes and an air of detachment seem to have become hallmark attributes. I wonder what the school could do to foster more down to earth and accepting involvement of families, where inclusion (real inclusion, not just PC inclusion) could be emphasised? This aside, thank you Mumbulla School for all you do for the children, it's valued in our family.

I just want to say that I really appreciate all the care and time that you (ALL the staff) put into the school to make it what it is.

Thank you to everyone for everything you do to make this school so colourful and a rich learning environment.

We are incredibly grateful for the support, dedication and commitment to inclusivity of everyone we meet: staff, parents and students alike.

Thank you, honestly. Just thank you. This school is a non-negotiable part of our family. I'm super proud to be part of the School Community.

Parents express appreciation for the school's caring and supportive environment. In 2024, the school is committed to actively listening to parents, enhancing practices, and fostering collaboration within the entire school community.