

Cheshire School

bestchance

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Stepping Stones to Success

Cheshire School is a renowned specialist primary school for students with significant social, emotional and behavioural challenges. Through an intervention approach that is evidence-based, our team of highly dedicated Teachers, Education Support Officers and allied health personnel partner closely with families to help students gain the skills and confidence needed to re-engage with learning and transition back into mainstream schooling.



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Acknowledgement of Country

Cheshire School acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians of the land. We also acknowledge in a special way the Wurundjeri and Bunerong Peoples of the Kulin Nation for it is on their land that we are proud and fortunate to live and learn as the Cheshire School community today.

As we share our knowledge and help our young people grow, we pay our respects to the Elders – past, present and emerging, as it is their knowledge and experiences that hold the key to the success of future generations.

As we live and learn together, may our journey remain forever committed to a spirit of respect, mutual understanding and reconciliation



Contact Details

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HEAD OF SCHOOL	Kevin Browning
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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, *Kevin Browning*, attest that Cheshire School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Expenditure and commitment of funds being used solely to support educational outcomes and operational needs
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2021 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.1379 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School

June 2023

Statement from the Head of School

Diversity encompasses all learners across cultural, academic, social emotional and physical attributes noting these are not mutually exclusive. 'Learning diversity' refers to the infinite variety of life experiences and attributes a child brings to their formal learning at school. Educators seek to meet the needs of all learners, so that every student experiences success.

(Learning Diversity in a Catholic School)



As we reflect on the last 12 months, we are proud to share with you the incredible growth and change that has taken place at Cheshire School. Our achievements have positioned us well to continue providing quality education to children who have significant social, emotional and behavioural challenges. We are proud of our accomplishments and want to share them with you.



One of our most significant achievements was the completion of our new school facilities. This has allowed us to expand our programs and enhance learning opportunities for our students. It has also provided us with the opportunity to integrate more closely with broader best practice services and re-imagine the ways in which we deliver our services as a special assistance school. With these new facilities, we are confident that we can continue to grow and provide the best possible education to our students.

In 2022, we also established the School Advisory Committee. This forum provides an opportunity for parents and carers to engage as partners with our school in pursuing what is best for our students. The Committee has already served as an outstanding platform for parents to provide input and advice on critical matters such as strategic planning, school

improvement, development of policy, and leadership. With the Committee's support, we are better equipped to bring our mission and vision to life.

The past 12 months have also seen review and development of foundational policies, particularly those related to duty of care, supervision, student attendance, and student health. These policies are now accessible to families and broader community stakeholders. We believe that by keeping everyone informed, we can continue to foster a safer educational environment where all students can thrive.

Furthermore, we undertook the school's five-year cyclical VRQA Regulatory Compliance review. This review ensures that we are meeting all regulatory requirements and maintaining our commitment to providing a quality education. Whilst we wait on the final outcome of our re-registration, we remain proud of continuing to provide a quality service for our students and their families.

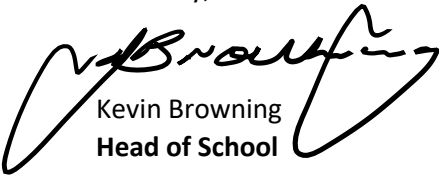
In addition to these achievements, we successfully implemented our school's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, which was developed around four core goals. These goals are designed to:

- Strengthen student achievement and wellbeing, organisation and community networks and engagement,
- Strengthen an ongoing commitment to staff formation, wellbeing, and building professional capacity, and developing strategies for growth and forward planning. Our team is committed to making sure that we meet these goals so that we can continue delivering high-quality education to our students.

Lastly, we undertook a review of our documentation to ensure compliance with the new child safe standards effective as of July 2022. These new standards are essential to ensuring that we provide a safe and nurturing environment for all our students. Our commitment to these standards is unwavering, and we are proud to be taking measures to ensure their implementation.

In conclusion, the last year has been a year of significant achievement for Cheshire School. Our new facilities and improved policies, along with our strategic plan and regulatory compliance success, have positioned us well for continued growth and success. We are dedicated to providing the best possible education to our students and will continue to work towards achieving this goal with the support of our School Advisory Committee, staff, families, and the broader community. Thank you for your ongoing support, and we look forward to continuing our journey with you.

Sincerely,



Kevin Browning
Head of School

bestchance

bestchance Child and Family Care is an independent not-for-profit organisation that has been providing support to children and families since 1895 in the eastern metropolitan region of Victoria. *bestchance* adopts an innovative and holistic approach to provide flexible, comprehensive and integrated services, within available resources, based on identified needs.

Cheshire School is one of the programs run by *bestchance*, and focuses on delivering an intervention program that facilitates the future development and learning of children with social, emotional and behavioural challenges. Its service to students and families is an integral component of *bestchance* and complementary to the other key priorities of early years, family support, children's therapy services and training opportunities.

bestchance Philosophy

The early years are the building blocks for later life. We recognise that children develop in the context of their families and that this needs to be the starting point for service delivery.

We provide an integrated environment that combines the elements of care, learning and laughter within child care, kindergarten, early childhood intervention, primary education, child and family support and volunteer programs.

This philosophy is reflected in the following goals of Cheshire School:

- Each child is provided with an individualised program that is based on their needs, interests and wants.
- Each child is provided with positive and consistent guidance that promotes their self-esteem and confidence.
- The school is a safe, caring environment free from hazards.
- Children with additional needs are fully included in all programs.
- Diversity is embraced and celebrated.
- Educators treat all children and families equally and fairly.
- Educators not only identify any additional needs or barriers that children and/or their families may be facing but assist them in seeking support from other programs within *bestchance* or in the community.
- Families are encouraged to participate in their child's program and experiences.
- Educators work as a team, knowing and respecting each other's skill and strengths in order to provide the best care for each other.
- Educators are affirmed and encouraged to pursue professional development and further qualifications in order to continually improve the quality of the programs offered to children in their care.

Cheshire School Mission

By using contemporary research, evidence-informed practice and our team's expertise, we strive to fulfil every student's potential in a physically and emotionally safe learning environment. Through our program, students are empowered in their learning and transition back to the mainstream school system with renewed confidence.

Cheshire School Vision

Our vision is to be the leading provider in the specialist educational setting. We aim to be a centre of excellence committed to evidence-informed best practice in teaching students with social, emotional and behavioural issues, leveraging contemporary research to have a positive impact on families.

Our Aim: Why we exist?

To fulfil every student's potential so they can successfully transition back to a mainstream educational setting.

Our Values

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We see the potential in every student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each student has an Individual Education Plan with clear learning and behavioural goals. We have high expectations for every student. After every session students reflect on their engagement and receive positive feedback and guidance for improvement. A Student Support Plan is designed for each student. It details tailored strategies to ensure that they are able to engage in their learning. Rigorous initial assessment of each student's needs begins with observations in their current setting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We believe every student deserves to experience joy in their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide an engaging and innovative learning experience, based on The Victorian Curriculum. Students participate in a range of extra-curricular activities that help them to self-regulate. Fortnightly excursions linked to Victorian Curriculum take our students beyond the core academic curriculum and further encourage each student to make deeper links with their learning. We have a high staff to student ratio and so learning is modelled, scaffolded and supported.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We invest in caring and trusting partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our thorough intake process ensures we are the right program for families. Our focus is building strong rapport when a student first starts at our school. Every term starts with exploring the school values and students take part in a series of activities to build their trust, resilience and confidence. Our enrolment process clearly sets out the expectations for parents and how we can support them during their child's journey. To ensure the success of every student, we insist on all stakeholders being involved throughout the student's time at our school. We hold regular parent and carer opportunities for collaboration throughout the term (formal and informal) to strengthen the parent/school partnership and improve student outcomes.

School Overview

Cheshire School is a small independent school which focuses on supporting students to be the very best version of themselves. Our location on the main site of *bestchance* in Glen Waverley, affords us the unique opportunity to establish strong connections with the organisation's Children's Therapy Services, a dedicated and expert team of allied health professionals who enable us to advocate a transdisciplinary perspective in our delivery of our "team around the child" approach.

As an interim specialist school, our aim is about reimagining a positive experience of school for our students, equipping them with the strategies and mindset that enables them to manage their social, emotional and behavioural challenges in ways that fosters success when reintegrated within a mainstream school setting.

For many of our students and their families, Cheshire School affords an opportunity to step back from the cycle of disengagement, negative experiences of school to date, judgement and misunderstanding that can often result in students feeling isolated, low in self-confidence, and poor self-perception of themselves as learners and as an individual.

The team at Cheshire are deeply dedicated and passionate about their work. Through an approach that is underpinned by evidence-based practice and collaboration, particular attention is given to knowing each and every one of our students, and to ensuring that a strong partnership exists with all of our families, where connection and communication are fundamental.

At Cheshire School, our priority is always about the children in our care. We pride ourselves in providing a way of learning that is unique, that values the individual and their family, and acknowledges and celebrates success in all its forms through a learning environment that is positive, respectful and safe for all.

Our hope is for something better for all who pass through our doors. By providing a stepping stone to success, we believe that we can enable every student the best chance to thrive and reach their individual potential.

Democratic Principles

The programs and teaching at Cheshire School support and promote the principles and practice of Australian Democracy, including a commitment to:

- Elected government
- The rule of law
- Equal rights for all before the law
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech and association
- The values of openness and tolerance



Curriculum

Cheshire School provides an interim specialist program that is specifically designed to help students gain the skills required to re-engage with learning and transition back into mainstream school.

Given this, particular focus is given to building those fundamental skills that sit as part of the Victorian Curriculum's Personal and Social Capabilities. Learning experiences are targeted at helping students engage in a range of opportunities that are aimed at:

- recognizing and regulating emotions
- developing empathy for others and understanding relationships
- establishing and building positive relationships
- making responsible decisions
- working effectively in teams
- handling challenging situations constructively and with resilience, and
- developing leadership skills

Underpinning the program, however, remains a strong focus and commitment to English and Mathematics along with integrated and inquiry units which provide a platform for students to also explore a range of concepts and topics that sit as part of their curriculum learning entitlement.

At Cheshire School, we develop learning units that encourage students wondering and questioning. This, in turn, leads to higher-order thinking skills as students move through the process of inquiry to investigate and express their growing understandings. Students are supported to work independently as well as collaboratively. Fortnightly excursions linked to the Victorian Curriculum take our students beyond the core academic curriculum and further encourage each student to make deeper links with their learning.

The curriculum:

- Adapts to current educational reforms at international, national, and state levels, guided by inclusive education principles and practices.
- Supports inclusive education and upholds the rights of every student to participate in, or have equal access to, the full range of programs and services provided by the education system, just like their neurotypical peers.
- Embraces an inclusive curriculum that empowers teachers to equip all students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours for success in active community participation.



Relationships are at the heart of great learning at Cheshire School. Our team works closely with parents to establish a working partnership and quickly build confidence in every child, so that they feel empowered and they are able to make valuable contributions in the world around them.

Extra Curricula Activities

During the 2022 school year, students had the chance to participate in a variety of educational visits and activities aimed at expanding their learning beyond the classroom and connecting them with the wider community.

Excursions included:

- Yarra Valley Chocolaterie
- Melbourne Aquarium
- Myuna Farm
- Cinemas
- TwistEd Science
- Scienceworks
- Enchanted Maze Gardens
- Tree-Top Adventures
- Moorabbin Airport Museum
- Creative Sparx
- Bounce
- Rush HQ
- Visits to various local parks



Incursions included:

- Black Snake Productions
- Mad Science

Other Programs:

- Swimming (Terms 1 & 4)
- Gymnastics Program

Standardised Assessments

Eligible students in Years 3 and 5 are entitled to undertake the annual NAPLAN assessments. 2022 was the first year that students participated in the assessments online.

Student Progress

Cheshire School is dedicated to student progress. Each student at Cheshire School has an Individual Education Plan. These plans ensure that learning goals are individually tailored and identify appropriate supports, strategies and interventions aimed at achieving success. Parents and carers, external specialists such as allied health personnel, and staff work collaboratively to determine students' needs and identify goal priorities. These are regularly reviewed with Student Support Group meetings held in Terms 1 and 3.

Over the course of the school year, our teachers continuously monitor student outcomes using various assessment strategies and tools. We collect and analyse both formative and summative data on a regular basis. Standardized testing provides numerical measurements of student growth, while the collection of student work and teacher observations offer ongoing formative assessments to track progress.

Twice a year, teachers also prepare formal reports to parents and students. These reports inform parents and students about their progress and achievement, specifically in relation to the Victorian Curriculum.

Cheshire School ensures that parents and carers have a clear understanding of their child's progress by providing end-of-period reports that demonstrate:

- Where their child is on the learning continuum
- How well their child is progressing against expected levels of achievement and personalized learning goals
- Areas in which their child needs improvement and the next steps in their learning

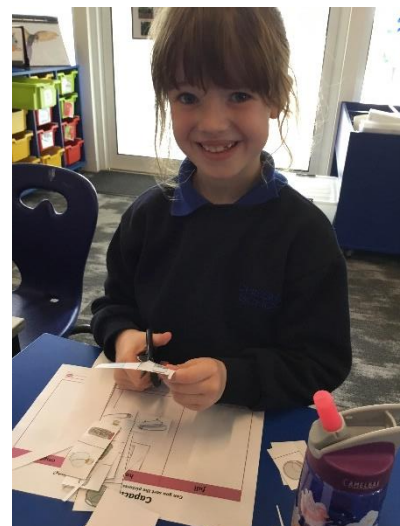
Student Attendance

The rates of attendance for the 2021 year as per the annual student attendance data was:

Prep	91.0%
Year 1	85.75%
Year 2	92.0%
Year 3	74.0%
Year 4	79.5%
Year 5	89.40%
Year 6	N/A

Cheshire School complies with the *Australian Education Act (2013)* which requires children of school age to be in full-time attendance at school. Please see the information below for detail on the attendance policy.

- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Illness is reasonable grounds for absence.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if unwell or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a responsibility to provide a written note or telephone call to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.
- All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers.
- Government departments and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- Unexplained absences are followed up as soon as practicable on the day of absence by the Administration Officer.



TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0%
Masters	0%
Graduate	0%
Graduate Certificate	0%
Bachelor Degree	100%

Advanced Diploma	0%
No Qualifications Listed	0%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Head of School (Headcount)	1
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (FTE)	2.6
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	7
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	6.0
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Staff Participation in Professional Development

During 2022, all staff continued to undertake significant professional learning to build and improve their own professional knowledge according to their specific areas of responsibility. Professional learning activities included, but were not limited to:

- Team Teach Training (Whole Staff)
- Attachment and Trauma Theory
- Protocols for Koorie Education in Victorian Schools
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and First Aid in an Education or Early Years Setting
- Course in the Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace
- Course in First Aid Management of Anaphylaxis
- Anaphylaxis Training
- Chain of Infection
- Protecting Children: Mandatory Reporting (e-learning modules)
- Fire Wardens Roles and Responsibilities
- VRQA School Review
- NAPLAN School Readiness Training

Child Safety

Cheshire School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022).

Ministerial Order No. 1359 sets out the specific actions that registered schools need to take to meet the child safe standards. The Ministerial Order replaces Ministerial Order 870 effective as of the 1 July 2022 and outlines how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in schools. The New Child Safe Standards provide an outline of the new minimum standards for school registration required by schools to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order.

The order requires all schools and school boarding premises to:

- embed a culture of ‘no tolerance’ for child abuse
- comply with the Child Safe Standards; and
- comply with the prescribed minimum standards

In 2022, bestchance established an organisational-wide Child Safe Steering Group, comprising of representatives from across the organisation, including the school. The Group meets monthly to monitor and continuously improve the organisation’s procedures and practices against the Child Safe Standards and the Ministerial Order.

Child Safe Commitment

Cheshire School is committed to providing a child-safe environment where children and young people feel safe and have their voices heard regarding decisions that affect their lives. Cheshire School prioritizes the best interests of children and takes steps to protect them from harm. The school acknowledges its responsibilities in child protection and is dedicated to allocating necessary resources to comply with all relevant child protection laws and regulations. Robust policies and procedures are in place to foster a culture of child safety. Every member of the Cheshire School community is responsible for understanding their role in ensuring the wellbeing and safety of all children and prioritizing it in every decision made.

Zero Tolerance to Child Abuse

At Cheshire School, we have a strict policy of zero tolerance for child abuse. We recognize that children with significant social, emotional and behavioural challenges are particularly vulnerable and it is essential to support them in communicating their needs and involving them in decisions that impact their lives. We value and respect our students' voices, understanding that their behaviour and actions are forms of communication. We are committed to assisting and supporting any children who disclose child abuse or are linked to suspected abuse.

In our school community, we promote diversity and tolerance. We welcome people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. Specifically, we:

- promote the cultural safety, expression, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- promote the cultural safety, expression, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- ensure that children with disabilities are safe and can participate equally.

Families are provided with information on child safety matters and supported in understanding, identifying, discussing, and reporting such matters for the benefit of children.

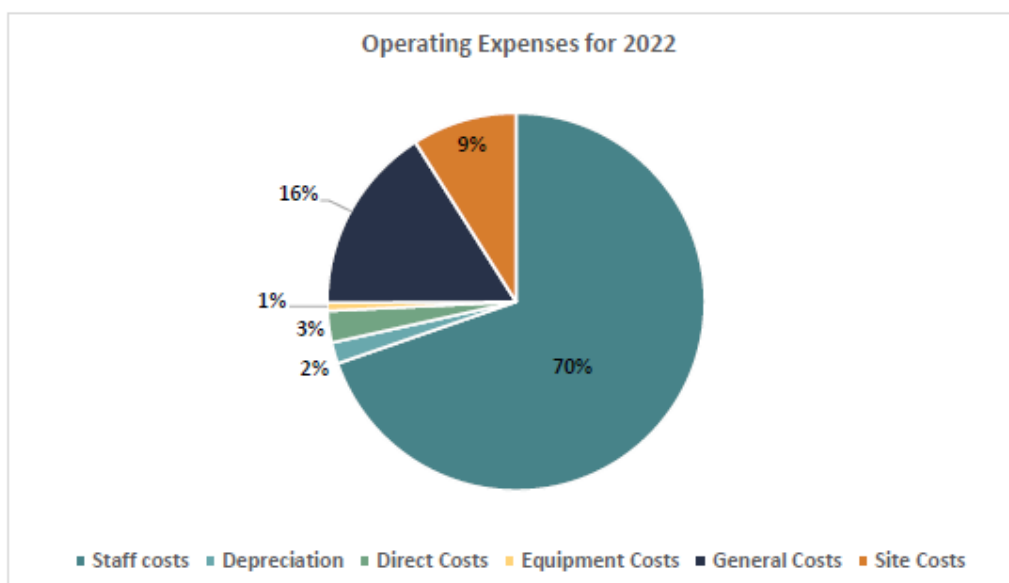
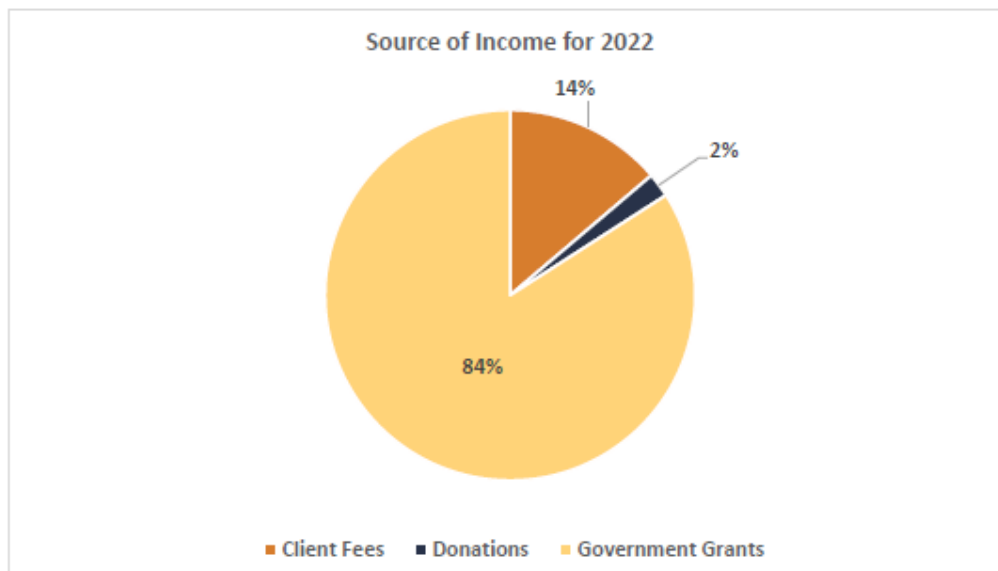
Cheshire School has a zero tolerance policy towards racism, and any incidents of racism will be addressed by the School.



Financial Operating Revenue and Expenses for Year Ending 2022

Cheshire School

Financial Activities for the year ended 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022



NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au.

Distribution of the Annual Report

- A copy of the Annual Report is to be placed on the Victorian State Register.
- The report is made available to staff and parents within the school community.
- Copies made available to *bestchance* Board of Management.
- Copies to be made available on Cheshire School website.

Contact Information

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Company Information

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