Armenian General Benevolent Union
ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL REPORT
2021

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 2

MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD 3

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION 4

SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE 5

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, TEACHING STANDARDS, ... 6

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION & STUDENT ATTENDANCE 6

ENROLMENT POLICY AND PROFILE OF STUDENT POPULATION 8

- POLICY 8
- PROCEDURES 9
- SCHOOL POPULATION 9

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES 10

- SUMMARY 10
  - *A - The School Welfare Policy* *10*
  - *B - Critical Incident Policy* *11*
  - *C - Emergency Procedures Policy* *11*
  - *D - The School's Code of Conduct* *11*
  - *E - The Child Protection Policy* *11*
  - *F - The Excursion Policy* *11*

DISCIPLINE POLICY 12

- SUMMARY 12
- RATIONALE 12
- RULES 12
- POLICY SECTIONS 12
- BULLYING 12

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION POLICY 14

SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS 15

INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY 17

PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION 18

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION 19

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

As we moved into our fourth decade of teaching and learning at AGBU Alexander Primary School, we did so in the most challenging of circumstances: a global pandemic that changed the way we lived and worked. As we look back on the year that was, we reflect on how much our small but formidable school community was able to achieve under these conditions. It was a year in which each and every one of us was called upon to take up the school motto: "To Grow and Serve".

In such uncertain times, the steady hand of our Principle, Mr Manoug Demirjian, has provided some needed comfort. His leadership has been essential in the road through the pandemic so far and in looking forward to the next stage.

Having learnt much in years of lockdowns and online everything, our school community emerges stronger and better prepared to educate our students in new and innovative ways. We are also better prepared to shape our little ones for the brave new world that will define their future. This is of course a testament to our teachers' fierce and unrelenting dedication to the school and its students.

But the 2021 academic year school also brought changes that asked more of our parents than ever before. Periods of online learning meant parents were supervising their kids learning from home. There were those working from home while they checked school work. There were those learning how to use new technologies. And there were those figuring all this out as new members of the Armenian community or as new arrivals to the country. It was a clear indication of how loving and committed our parents are to their children's education.

The school community is also growing, with enrolments higher than they have ever been in the thirty-one years since the school was established. We retain the intimacy of small classes that have brought so much character to the education Alexander has always delivered but are welcoming more Australian-Armenians and children of parents with Armenian background every year.

Not only did the entire school community live up to our school motto this year, but we also became the best example for our children to do the same.

To Grow & Serve

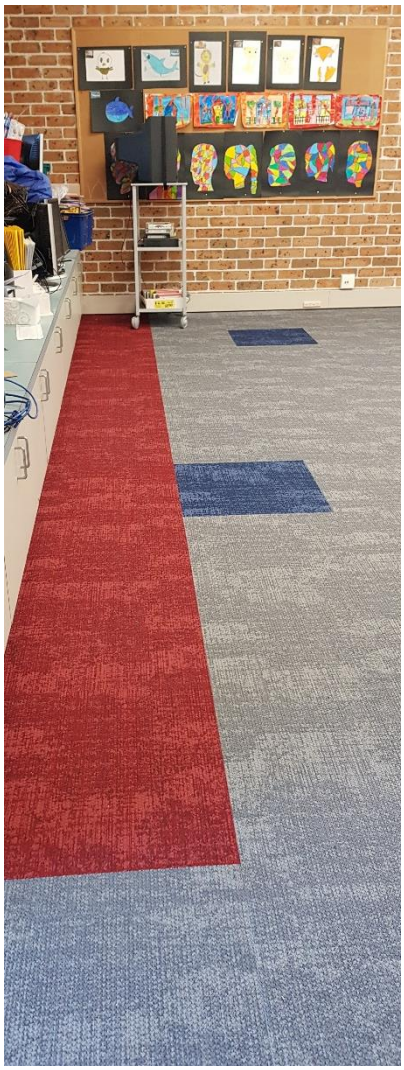
AGBU Alexander Primary School Board

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

AGBU Alexander Primary is a bilingual English and Armenian Christian school, dedicated to excellence in education and the realisation of each student's potential, providing a balanced curriculum, encompassing academic, spiritual, cultural, physical and practical areas of learning. The school's clear focus is the enrichment of the individual student. This is achieved by committing to the personal development of each student by individualising programs; small class sizes; monitoring of students' progress; recognising potential talents; facilitating a dynamic learning environment; encouraging active participation in school activities and performances. The school is open to all children. Parents need to show support for the Armenian heritage. It has strong affiliations with the wider community hosting cultural days and performing at community centres. The school is involved in many extracurricular activities, participating in interschool sporting and academic events such as debating. The students extend themselves in the performing arts by producing and performing in special event concerts held throughout the year. AGBU Alexander Primary School provides a safe, caring, nurturing, harmonious and conducive learning and working environment to support its motto to 'Grow and Serve'.

Further information is available at the My School website. (www.MySchool.edu.au)



A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

NAPLAN

NAPLAN results are available on the 'My School' website:

http://www.MySchool.edu.au

Search for *AGBU Alexander Primary School, Duffys Forest, NSW 2084* to access our school results for 2014 - 2021. My School data compares our school to the average scores for statistically similar schools nationwide, and the average scores for all Australian schools.

Similar background – students have a similar background as determined by parental occupation and education, Indigeneity and geographic location. The background of students has been shown to have an impact on NAPLAN results.

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, TEACHING STANDARDS,

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION & STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Professional Learning

As a Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA) registered by the NESA, the School has processes to support teachers to maintain their accreditation by continuing to meet the National Standards and to complete the mandatory hours.

The School Board and the School Executive participated in various online modules conducted by the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AIS). All members of staff participated in professional development during the school development days in Term 1, 2 and 3. They were designed to increase staff understanding, awareness and review of their current responsibilities in each of these areas:

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF STAFF
CPR, Anaphylaxis, Asthma – Emergency Care Training (HLTAID001)	**12**
Mandated Policies – Child Protection – New reporting guidelines	**12**
Adjusting Teaching During COVID-19	**6**
Cross Curriculum case study of NCCD students	**2**
Work Health and Safety / COVID-19 Protocols – Managing the NSW Public Health Advice on COVID-19	**All Staff**
Productive teaching with Google Apps for Education. Effective use of all tools related to online learning	**All Staff**
Building Capacity – enriching teaching and learning	**4**

The Pandemic brought challenges to the way teaching and learning was conducted. It was necessary for staff to review and upskill to manage the demand of the online learning platform and ensure delivery was effective. Learning was shared through staff expertise and webinars.

Teacher Accreditation

LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
Conditional	**0**
Provisional	**0**
Proficient Teacher	**6**

Teacher Qualifications

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
(a) Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	**6**
(b) Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	**0**

Total teacher numbers are listed on the My School website.

Workforce Composition Including Indigenous
Information is available at the My School website.

Student Attendance

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	89.19%
Year 1	90.80%
Year 2	93.24%
Year 3	91.94%
Year 4	93.16%
Year 5	95.16%
Year 6	98.21%

Students were expected to be at school for **190 days**. The attendance rate for all classes in 2021 was **93.10%** and is consistent with 2020 where the whole school attendance was 93.84%.

Unexplained student absences from classes or school will be followed up by the teacher in an appropriate manner. If a student has over three (3) days of unexplained absences, the teacher will notify the Principal who will in turn contact the parents in an appropriate manner to seek clarification. If the identified attendance issue is unresolved and unsatisfactory the Principal will inform the School Board. The Board will in turn take the necessary action, including the contacting and informing of the appropriate government authorities.

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

ENROLMENT POLICY AND PROFILE OF STUDENT POPULATION

AGBU Alexander Primary School is part of the global network of bilingual Armenian schools established by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

Mission Statement

'AGBU Alexander Primary School is dedicated to excellence in education and the realisation of each student's potential, providing a balanced curriculum, encompassing academic, spiritual, cultural, physical and practical areas of learning.'

Policy

AGBU Alexander Primary School is a bilingual English and Armenian Christian school, dedicated to excellence in education and the realisation of each student's potential, providing a balanced curriculum, encompassing academic, spiritual, cultural, physical and practical areas of learning.

The School's clear focus is the enrichment of the individual student. This is achieved by committing to the personal development of each student by individualising programs; small class sizes; monitoring of students' progress; recognising potential talents; facilitating a dynamic learning environment; encouraging active participation in school activities and performances.

AGBU Alexander Primary School caters for students from Preparatory (Prep) to Year 6.

Enrolment is open to all children of primary school age and applications are accepted for entry at all year levels.

The age requirement for students entering **Kindergarten is 5 years by 31st July** of the enrolment year, while for **Prep it is one year prior to Kindergarten** enrolment.

Parents need to show support for the Armenian heritage of the School. The School has strong affiliations with the wider community hosting cultural days and performing at community centres.

The School is involved in many extracurricular activities, participating in interschool sporting and academic events such as debating. The students extend themselves in the performing arts by producing and performing in special event concerts held throughout the year.

AGBU Alexander Primary School provides a safe, caring, nurturing, harmonious and conducive learning and working environment to support its motto to 'Grow and Serve'.

It is a policy of the Armenian General Benevolent Union for no child to be denied an education in its schools for the sole reason that his/her parents are unable to meet all or part of the school fees. Assistance or relief request is made by written application. Substantiation documents may be required.

Children with special physical or intellectual needs will be accepted into the School if there is proof that the needs of the child can be catered for within the present staffing set-up. Information on the special needs of the child will be sought from outside professionals before enrolment is confirmed.

Individual Armenian programs are structured for children with little or no Armenian background. Eastern and Western dialect are catered for in the teaching of Armenian language, in single classes.

Procedures

1. Applications for enrolment are made through the School Office via the Registrar.

2. The Principal and/or the Curriculum Coordinator will carry out an interview with each Applicant and Parents.

3. During 'Orientation Days' students will have the opportunity to spend some time in the classroom with the teacher and other students.

4. In consultation with the teachers, the Principal will determine the suitability of the child for enrolment.

5. All applicants will receive a letter to inform them of the outcome of their application for enrolment.

6. The School has absolute discretion in determining the weight of each of the factors it takes into account, in determining whether to offer a place to a student.

7. Continued enrolment at the School is dependent upon the student making satisfactory academic progress, attending consistently, the student and the parent/carer(s) acting consistently within the School ethos and observing all behavioural codes of conduct as well as other requirements of the School which are applicable from time to time.

School Population

Most students are from families of Armenian background. Most children travel to the school from either the Ryde/Dundas area or from the Chatswood/Willoughby area. There is also a small group of students who reside in the Hills shire and travel to school by a private bus.

Further information is available at the My School website. (www.MySchool.edu.au)

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Summary

AGBU Alexander Primary School will provide its students and staff with a safe, caring, harmonious and conducive learning and working environment. The fostering of relationships between all members of the school community will support such an environment. The school views productivity to be directly related to the morale of the work/classroom environment.

The focal point of AGBU Alexander Primary School is its students, their individual needs and well-being.

The School aims to:

- ensure the development of self-esteem in all members of the school community.
- ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff members within the school environment through incidental activities and planned programs.
- establish and set standards of behaviour and disciplinary measures through policies and procedures.
- promote positive attitudes and actions towards issues of human rights.
- utilize external agencies as support networks to help accomplish these aims.

All the following policies may be accessed in the School Office or Staff Room. Parents may request to use these at any time. Parents also have access to a shared folder of the policies on Google Drive.

The following Policies were in place during 2021.

A - The School Welfare Policy

- **Health and Safety**
  Nutrition, Sun Safety, Classroom Safety, Bus Safety, Playground Safety and Supervision, Toilet Safety, Walkways, Stairs and Common Areas.
- **Strategies to Promote Good Discipline and Effective Learning**
  Assigning Special Responsibilities to Senior Students - The School Captain, House Captains/Bus Monitors.
- **Respecting the Rights of Others**
  Statement of Rights, Protection, Harassment and Bullying.
- **Communication**
  Home Liaison via the Diary, Weekly Newsletter
- **Students With Special Needs**
  Identification, Action, Remedial Support, Enrichment/Extension
- **School Medical Service**
  Vision, Hearing, Speech and Language, Behavioural /Emotional, Dental, Immunisation, Fine/Gross Motor Skills – Occupational Therapy, Head Lice, Asthma, Medication.

B - Critical Incident Policy

- Definition, Reactions
- Responsibilities
- Time Line Guides for Action

C - Emergency Procedures Policy

- Fire Safety Provisions
- School Emergency Team
- Standard Fire Orders
- Conduct during Evacuations / Drills
- Equipment in the School
- Bush Fire Evacuation / Drill Record
- Lockdown

D - The School's Code of Conduct

- The Legislative Context
- Duty of Care and Legal Liabilities
- General Guidelines
    - Supervision of Students
    - Relationships with Students
    - Discipline of Students
    - Communication Issues
    - Duty to Disclose

E - The Child Protection Policy

- **The Care and Protection Act**
    - Mandatory Reporting
- **The Ombudsman Act**
    - Responsibilities
    - Reportable Conduct
    - Risk Management
    - Disciplinary Action
- **Working With Children Act**

F - The Excursion Policy

- Duty of Care
- Authorisation of excursions
- Student Briefings and Preparation
- Planning Excursions
- Supervisor Responsibilities
- Changes to Circumstances
- Third Party Providers
- In the Event of Emergency
- Overnight Excursions
- Medical Information
- Student Discipline
- Parents/Volunteers
- Evaluation

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Summary

It is expected that students attending AGBU Alexander Primary School will maintain an acceptable level of behaviour to ensure a happy, safe, interactive and cooperative environment. Students, staff and school community must each contribute toward creating a positive learning environment by preserving school rules and routine.

Rationale

AGBU Alexander Primary School believes in a positive approach to discipline. This is achievable by ensuring that:

- Rules and expectations are clear.
- Staff-members are positive, yet firm and consistent.
- Children achieve success from an interesting and stimulating program.
- Children are involved in constructive play at break times.

Rules

- We use our common sense
- We keep ourselves safe
- We respect other people, property and the environment.
- We strive to do our best.

Policy Sections

- **Classroom Management**
  Classroom Reward Chart, Encouragement Award, Teachers' Award, Honours Award.
- **Uniform Code**
- **Homework Code**
- **Detentions/Record of Misbehaviour**
  Detention procedure
- **Corporal Punishment**
  AGBU Alexander Primary School does not condone, permit nor exercise corporal punishment, as defined by the Education Reform (School Discipline) Act 1995. It also does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the School.
- **Behaviour Levels**
- **Discipline Guidelines**

Bullying

Bulling is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation,

victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying
- Psychological bullying
- Indirect bullying
- Cyber bullying

Our Commitment to Anti-Bullying

We recognise our duty to provide a safe and positive learning environment for students where individual differences and diversity within the community are respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated. It is our policy that:

a. we create a 'no bullying' culture within our community
b. bullying be managed through a 'whole of community' approach involving students, staff and parents/carers
c. bullying prevention strategies be implemented on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
d. bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident
e. staff establish positive role models emphasising our 'no bullying' culture
f. bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

Reporting Concerns about Bullying

A key part of our bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying or harassment incidents as well as providing assurance to students who suffer any incidents that we do not tolerate bullying and harassment.

Bullying or harassment incidents can be reported to the school verbally (or in writing) by informing a teacher or the Principal.

Responses to Bullying

We take all bullying incidents seriously and will investigate and deal with each instance of bullying behaviour individually on its facts. Responses to claims of bullying or harassment may include counselling, follow-up strategies and/or disciplinary action in consultation with parents/carers. We maintain appropriate records of all bullying incidents and actions taken.

The full text of the School's Discipline Policy is located in the School's Policy Folder, in the Office and Staff Room. Parents may request access when required. An abbreviated form is circulated to parents at the commencement of every year. Staff members also check and rework any sections at the commencement of each year.

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION POLICY

AGBU Alexander Primary School promotes an open and effective Complaints and Grievances Policy to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in an effective, fair and time efficient manner.

Communication on such matters is prompt and follows procedural fairness. The School Community is encouraged to treat all complaints with confidentiality and fair-mindedness.

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

Key Focus Area	Priorities for Improvement	Achievements in 2021
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS	Continue to enhance the quality of learning and engagement to all students through online initiatives.	Successful transition to *Remote Learning* in Term 3, in response to the Pandemic and Covid-19 lockdowns. As a result, there was an even greater emphasis on the quality of the learning and student engagement, having reviewed the system that was in place in the prior year. The online system through Google G suit and Classroom changed the way lessons, tasks and homework were presented. Staff were ready to respond to the changes quickly and work with their students on an online collaborative basis.
TEACHING AND LEARNING	A separate Preparatory (Prep) and Kindergarten classes.	In 2021 the school separated the Prep and Kindergarten class because of an increase in enrolment. As a result, an additional teacher, experienced with early childhood education was introduced to the Prep classroom. A dedicated Prep classroom was setup to serve the needs of the students.
	Managing composite classes across Stage Levels.	The school successfully continued to manage composite classes for Year 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6. Different levels of achievement were recognised, and separate outcomes were achieved for each level. Where appropriate students participated in activities with similarly aged students.
	Teachers' Aides.	Additional members of staff were engaged as Teacher's Aides to support learning in the junior cohort. The aides were also available during the lockdown to provide online support and

		individual support were required. They also supported students with additional needs.
RESOURCES	Student Laptops & classroom Tablets with charging station.	Students were supplied with their personal IT equipment for their individual use in the classroom and at home during the lockdown period. With the latest hardware and software, they provided an enhanced learning tool for online on individual activities.
POLICIES	Review & Update: • Enrolment & Attendance Policy • Uniform Policy	Staff Development on all school policies were carried out at Staff Meetings and during Staff Development Days. Hard copies of all policies are placed in the Office and Staff Room. They are also made available on request. Soft copies of all policies are shared with all members of staff on their Google Drive. Relevant policy documents are also shared with all parents and students through their Google Drive accounts. The attendance policy was updated to reflect the online learning arrangements. The uniform policy was also changed in line with the new winter dress for the girls.
FACILITIES	*30th Anniversary Projects* Carpets replaced in all classrooms. Sick Bay & Facilities upgrade with AED Defibrillator.	New carpets were installed in all the classrooms. A major maintenance, that also brightened and visually enhanced the working environment, using the latest innovation in floor covering. The Sick Bay was refurnished with the patient in mind, providing a space that will ensure their health and wellbeing.
	Additional learning spaces and Library enhancement.	Determine short term priorities to accommodate new classrooms and library space while setting out a new 5-year Master Plan for a major development.
	Security Gates & Intercom.	Automated security gates with intercom were installed to augment the school's general level of security.

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Efforts to continue education for respect and responsibility were continued in the following ways:

- The school rules include: We respect other people, property and the environment.
- The school respects and values each child as an individual and a member of the school community.
- Respect and responsibility are stressed in class and in everyday school life.
- There is an expectation of courtesy, good behaviour, care for the community they belong to and respect for all.
- At weekly assemblies, values are highlighted, two of which are Respect and Responsibility.
- In the classrooms as part of the PD units: Growth and Development, Interpersonal Relationships, Safe Living and Personal Health Choices.
- In the classrooms as part of the HSIE units: Communication, Australian Neighbours, Celebrations, People and Their Beliefs, Co-operating Communities, Australian Democracy and Global Environments.
- In the classroom as part of the Science and Technology units: Let's Communicate, Kid's Care, Keep In Touch, Environment Matters and Way Out Communication.
- The school carries out a buddy program where older children are responsible for younger ones.
- Year 5/6 are given responsibilities as bus monitors, house captains and are also responsible for conducting weekly assemblies.

- Teachers and parents provide the care and support that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.
- The school discipline policy upholds the values of respect and responsibility rewarding those following the school rules and addressing promptly any behaviour which comes into conflict with these rules.
- The students participate in interschool sporting, debating and multicultural days which promote the values of respect and responsibility. During the year they also take part in after church service by serving the parishioners tea/coffee & biscuits, in line with the school motto – 'To Grow & Serve'.

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

Parents

- Are given the opportunity to provide feedback on children's Term 1 and 3 Portfolios. Parent satisfaction is shown when comments come back congratulating both the teachers and the children on their achievements. 100% of these feedback sheets are returned and the comments that are made are positive and supportive of the staff and school.
- Many parents involve themselves in P&C committee organising school functions and fundraising activities – showing their support and satisfaction in the job that the school is doing. Most school functions can boast 100% attendance from parents who not only come to support their children but help in the catering and providing of food at these functions.
- Parents are well represented at Working Bees, as canteen helpers, classroom helpers and drivers, showing their support and satisfaction.
- Two formal meetings are held at the school with the parents. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teacher or Principal when necessary with any concerns or comments.
- Use is made by parents not only in face to face interviews but by emails and telephone conversations as well as letters or notes in the students' diaries if they should wish to communicate with the school.

Students

- When students leave AGBU Alexander Primary School after Year 6, they frequently express the wish that there was a high school here as they are very sorry to leave.
- Graduates return to school on a school day on which they are not required to be at school (pupil free days at High School). They spend the day helping teachers and children in class.
- Graduates of Alexander Primary School also often return to see and participate in programs of the school such as Easter concerts and Graduation evenings, Mothers/Fathers' Day events, Christmas Concerts and Cultural Evenings.
- Older Graduates are happy to be asked to assist during Cultural Days and major school community events. Others have joined the School Board or have become current parents.
- Being a small school, the current students know all other students well and play and work in a family like situation. The older students take on the responsibility for the younger ones taking on their roles as buddies very seriously. Students are encouraged to include everyone in their play.
- Students are very supportive of their peers. This is shown in competitions where the students rally behind all students cheering them on even if they are on different teams.

Teachers

- Alexander Primary School has a very low teacher turn over and very low absenteeism.
- Staff members are supportive of each other and enjoy getting together socially.

A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL
2021 SCHOOL REPORT

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Chart 1: Income 2021

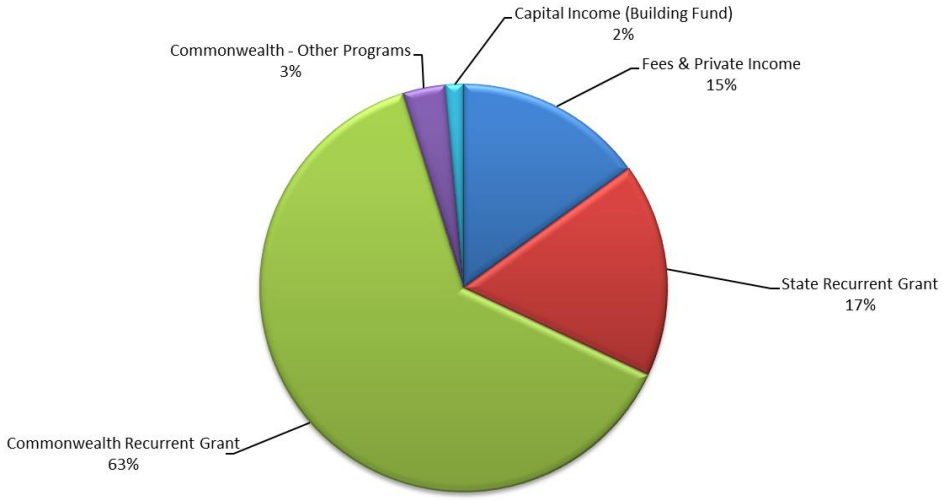
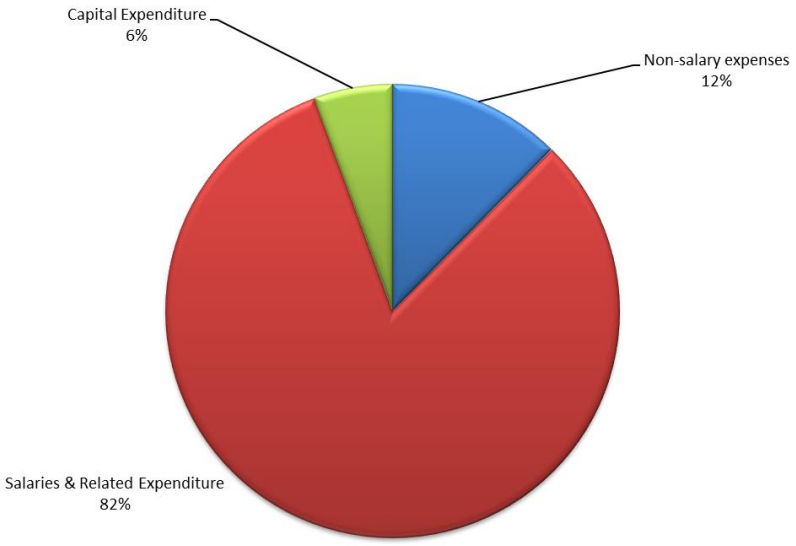



Chart 2: Expenditure 2021