

2025 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: The Austin School (3605)



- all teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the [Victorian Institute of Teaching \(VIT\)](#)
- the school meets prescribed Minimum Standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#) (this includes any exemption granted to this school by the VRQA, for the most recent calendar year, in relation to minimum student enrolment numbers and/or the curriculum framework requirement to deliver a languages program)
- the school meets the requirements of the Child Safe Standards as prescribed in [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](#).

Attested on 26 March 2026 at 04:12 PM by Lucia Garzarella (Principal)

- As executive officer of the school council, I attest that this 2025 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community.

Attested on 26 March 2026 at 04:12 PM by Lucia Garzarella (Principal)

How to read the Annual Report

What does the *About Our School* commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school and an overview of the school's performance over the previous calendar year.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values, and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics, and special programs.

The 'Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes, and student engagement' section allows schools to reflect on highlights related to implementation of and progress towards the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, and efforts to improve student learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

What does the 'Performance Summary' section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

- School Profile
 - student enrolment information
 - the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
 - responses to the General Satisfaction area of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey
 - school staff responses to the School Climate area of the School Staff Survey

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

NDP and NDA

'NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'NDA' refers to no data being available. Some schools have no data for particular measures due to low enrolments. There may be no students enrolled in some year levels, so school comparisons are not possible.

Note that new schools only have the latest year of data and no comparative data from previous years. The department also recognises unique circumstances in Specialist, Select Entry, English Language, Community Schools and schools that changed school type recently, where school-to-school comparisons are not appropriate.

What is the 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum'?

The Victorian Curriculum is assessed through teacher judgements of student achievement based on classroom learning.

The 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' is integrated directly into the curriculum and is referred to as 'Levels A to D'.

'Levels A to D' may be used for students with disabilities or students who may have additional learning needs.

'Levels A to D' are not associated with any set age or year level that links chronological age to cognitive progress (i.e., there is no age expected standard of achievement for 'Levels A to D')

About Our School

School context

The Austin School is a F-12 school that provides specialised educational programs for children and young people who are patients of Austin Health and Austin Infant Child and Youth Mental Health Services (ICYMHS). The school's vision is "Educating the Whole Student". Our mission is that 'Students will engage in a safe and supportive learning environment that will enhance social and emotional skills, relationships and support their transition to education and vocation.' The Austin School's values are "Respectful, Inclusive and Curious". All members of our school community are expected to practise and demonstrate these values.

The Austin School is located within the grounds of the Austin Hospital in Heidelberg. The school has an attractive garden setting where students have access to an outdoor area for program activities, recreation and socialisation. Most programs take place within the relocatable school buildings provided by the Department of Education; however, teachers also work with students within the Paediatric Ward and the inpatient units within the Marion Drummond Building. The majority of students attending The Austin School have a mental health and/or physical health diagnosis. Young people with mental health diagnoses may present with psychiatric, emotional or behavioural concerns. These students are all clients of Austin ICYMHS and teaching staff work collaboratively with ICYMHS clinicians as part of a multidisciplinary team.

Students who are Inpatients are enrolled on average between 5 days to 6 weeks, whilst outpatients attend term programs. The inpatient programs include:

- Adolescent Inpatient Program: young people (13 to 17 years) from the NorthWestern sector of the state.
- Child Inpatient Program (5 to 12 years) state-wide.
- Paediatric Ward (5 to 18 years).
- Austin Spinal Unit and Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Hospital (13 to 18years).
- Booboop Social Skills program for primary students whose families are attending the Booboop Narrkwarren Nagarra-jarra-noun Austin Family Healing Centre

Teachers in these inpatient programs work closely with students and their home schools to support their learning whilst in hospital and to develop strategies to support their re-integration back to the home school.

Students who are outpatients of Austin ICYMHS can be offered placements in term-based programs designed to support their personal and social educational needs and to facilitate a return to an educational or vocational setting. Support is provided to re-engage students who may not be attending school or have been identified as at risk of disengaging. These outpatient programs include:

- Social Education Programs (SEP) (Primary)
- Linking Education and Personal Development Program (LEAP), 13-14 years (Secondary)

- Return to Education and Vocation (REV), 15-18 years (Secondary).

The school provides an outreach program and consultancy service to schools as requested by Austin ICYMHs inpatient and outpatient teams.

As a school specialising in the delivery of educational services to young people with mental health challenges, professional development sessions in specific areas such as “Managing School Reluctance” are offered to schools as requested.

The school’s modified curriculum is based upon the Personal and Social Capability of the Victorian Curriculum and the Interacting with Others, Sub-strand of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum for students up to an equivalent of Year 10. Students undertaking VCE, including those enrolled in VCE VM and the International Baccalaureate are supported in their learning through co-ordination with their home school.

Given the transient nature of the school population and the health concerns of the students, the school does not administer the NAPLAN. Individual Education Plans are formulated for the majority of students, with a focus on School Readiness Skills and Personal and Social Capabilities. The individual programs in The Austin School collect data around the educational interventions that are designed to re-engage students with the learning process and develop social and emotional skills to re-engage students with their schools and communities.

All teachers meet the registration requirements of the VIT. The school has a time fraction of 22 staff; this includes 2 Principal class, 16 teachers and 4 Education Support staff. Of the 16 teachers, 10 are full-time with 6 part-time. In 2025, program enrolments reached 531 students of which 439 attended programs at The Austin School. 92 students received outreach support and 13 were referred to Outreach Liaison. The school had an increase in numbers in 2025.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

Teachers have worked diligently to strengthen engagement in school and learning for the students who attend our school, particularly as many students continue to face challenges with motivation and re-engaging in education following extended periods of absence or disengagement.

Teachers worked collaboratively to review their programs with a particular focus on student engagement and skills development. Attention was given to the VTLM 2.0 focussing on how students learn, what this means for The Austin School student cohort and approaches to planning to foster increased student engagement in learning. Teachers are becoming more familiar with the VTLM 2.0 and Capabilities 2.0 curriculum. In 2026 middle leaders will participate in further professional learning and continue in the support of teachers in integrating VTLM 2.0 design into program delivery and documentation.

In 2025, teachers continued to engage in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to strengthen their capacity to respond effectively to cohort data. Dedicated time within the school meeting schedule ensured this work remained a priority and supported targeted improvements in teaching practice. Deeper analysis of data sets and the use of an inquiry cycle informs future planning to better meet the needs of the school's transient cohort and enhance student learning. Teachers also demonstrated a strong capacity to undertake varied roles within PLCs and collaborate effectively as team members. Members of the leadership team continue to facilitate each of the PLCs and time is allocated at the end of each inquiry cycle for teams to share findings across the school and to celebrate achievements.

Professional Learning Communities continue to target school determined foci supporting key improvement strategies for student outcomes. Individual Education Plans have been revised and implemented consistently across the school. Staff feedback indicates strong support for the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process. Teachers value the professional dialogue it fosters, the opportunity for structured collaboration across programs, and the positive impact these efforts have had on student learning and wellbeing. A further significant benefit of establishing PLCs has been the opportunity to reflect more deeply on student cohorts and refine data collection practices. Staff also identified mutual support, teamwork, and close collaboration with multidisciplinary teams as key strengths of the process.

In 2025, 70% of students achieved all of their IEP goals in personal and social awareness. Attendance data for Outpatient Programs in 2025 was 64%, maintaining the attendance rate from 2024. Greater attendance and program completion was realised by our whole school attendance, reaching 86%. The 2025 School Staff Survey data showed high levels of positive endorsement for factors related to collective focus on student learning and collective responsibility. Levels of positive endorsement in the area of School Climate were higher than those achieved by the network and state.

Wellbeing

In 2025, in line with our School Strategic Plan (SSP) goal, 'To improve student engagement to maximise their wellbeing', developing opportunities across the school for students to codesign their learning is a continued focus. Professional development was geared towards a shared understanding of what this looks like in both inpatient and outpatient programs. This continued our focus on building teacher capacity to utilise and teach a skills-based approach to social and emotional learning. Areas of focus development and creation included the revisiting of curriculum and program overviews. Program planning, distilling the curriculum and agreeing on the specific skills to be developed in each of the short-term programs as well as the development of assessment measures and methods to support and understand the need of the school's transient cohort is an ongoing focus for 2026.

All staff participated in the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) Curriculum professional development and Mental Health First Aid training RRRR training provided teachers with curriculum resources to support their program planning and targeted strategies to support student learning. Building teacher capacity around strategies to consider when working through behavioural supports for students and recommendations for schools and classroom teachers is a continued focus as our students' needs can vary and change over time.

The school also formalised the implementation and collection of the School-Wide Positive Behaviour (SWPBS) Tier 2 data. This information supports our focus on the acknowledgement and teaching of expected behaviours to minimise behavioural issues that impact on an individual's learning and wellbeing, as well as that of others.

Strong emphasis is placed on fostering trustful, respectful relationships with students and building meaningful, supportive partnerships with families. In 2025, teachers prioritised the analysis of data to support student engagement and wellbeing. By administering varying student surveys and closely examining the feedback received, staff were able to identify key strengths to celebrate, as well as areas for growth to guide future program planning. In 2025, student and parent satisfaction with respect to learner wellbeing remained high.

The Austin School Students' Attitude to School Survey continues to show high levels of positive endorsement. The Austin School Parent opinion survey feedback indicated parents are positive about their child's learning and about the teaching at this school and about our school.

In 2025 The Austin School continued to participate in a number of secondary consultation sessions with our school networks in conjunction with the Department of Education and ICYMHS. This was an opportunity for our leadership team to enhance the knowledge and strategies of our teaching partners in mainstream schools to support the wellbeing of all students.

Engagement

Student attendance and completion rates continue to be a challenge in some programs; however, they reflect the complexity of the student cohort referred to The Austin School programs. In 2025 The Austin School had all programs running, including CIP for the Child Inpatient Unit and SSK being offered to the students from Booboop for 2 ½ days each week. Being able to again offer the full complement of programs is crucial in reengaging our student cohort with education.

Case managers from a wider number of community teams have referred to us. This has included an increase in referrals from the newly created (4-12 yo) child teams and the acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills we can provide in supporting school visits or care team meetings for complex students.

Case managers seek our expertise in navigating the educational system particularly with the growth of the alternative school sector. Austin School staff have developed knowledge and familiarity with different schools and are able to provide targeted advice to case managers. Further, clinical staff have turned to us to explore how the regional structure and resources of the department can be employed to support their clients.

Student attendance rates for 2025 was 86% for the whole school.

Return to Education and Vocation.....	62% decrease (2024 63%)
Social Education Program.....	60% decrease (2024 84%)
Linking Education to Personal Development.....	64% decrease (2024 69%)

Social Skills..... 76%
Inpatient Programs had attendance rates of100%

Completion rates for all programs was 92%. Rates include:

Child Inpatient Program.....100% - (2024 100%)
Adolescent Inpatient Program.....98% - (2024 98%)
Wards.....100% - (2024 100%)
Return to Education and Vocation58% - (2024 60%)
Social Education Program.....38% - (2024 100%)
Social Skills (Booboop program).....100%
LEAP.....94% (2024 97%)

Other highlights from the school year

The Extraordinary Education Setting CoP (EES) schools continued our collegiate work. All staff across the 6 similar school settings were provided with an opportunity to visit a similar program in one of the other settings across two weeks. and meet with classroom teachers and Education Support Staff. shared program information, planning and resources. This experience builds networking capacity and collegiality across the education settings. Feedback collected from staff about this process was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the importance of the CoPs commitment to this opportunity for collaboration and celebration.

In 2025 we had students form the Booboop Narrkwarren Nagarra-jarra -noun continue to access a social skills program over 3 days each week throughout their Booboop admission. Feedback from students, families and Austin Health team was positive with 41 enrolments across the year.

We continued to support each of our programs with incursions. These allow our students to develop social and emotional skills through a range of interactive opportunities. Our student engagement in these offerings is high, and anecdotal feedback is overwhelmingly positive.

Interim measures suggest we are on track to meet our goals and targets.

Financial performance

By the end of 2025, The Austin School was in a strong financial position. Student funding is allocated termly and confirmed based on a one-month census period each term. In 2025 our confirmed budget increased in all four terms post our census period. Our inpatient numbers remained high across the year. The school's equity funding (\$5,000) allows for all students to receive universal supports, which includes resources such as sensory items.

The school will continue to use our cash funding to address any significant minor works that need addressing. These funds will ensure school facilities; equipment and services are maintained and conducive to the students and programs offered at The Austin School. In 2026 this will include:

- Planned turnover of student devices including laptops and iPads

- Appropriate updates to classrooms to ensure the spaces meet the needs of students.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://austinschool.vic.edu.au/>**

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes 2.0 (FISO 2.0).

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrolment Profile

A total of NDA students were enrolled at this school in 2025, NDA female and NDA male. NDA had English as an additional language and NDA were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Overall Socio-Economic Profile

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE). SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage, a 'High' band represents a high level of socio-educational disadvantage. This school's SFOE band value is ____.

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percentage endorsement by parents on their General School Satisfaction, as reported in the annual Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey. Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.

2025		
% positive endorsement General School Satisfaction (Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey)	State	86.9%

School Staff Survey

The percentage endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey. Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

2025		
% positive endorsement School Climate (School Staff Survey)	School	68.6%
	State	68.0%

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND POSITION

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

Financial figures are as of 19 March 2026.

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$2,733,901
Government Provided DET Grants	\$536,379
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$1,000
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$47,222
Locally Raised Funds	\$450
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$3,318,951

Equity	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$5,000
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage - Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$5,000

The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ¹	\$2,363,900
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$5,270
Communication Costs	\$5,426
Consumables	\$35,880
Miscellaneous Expenses ²	\$172,411
Agency Staff	\$27,607
Professional Development	\$22,156
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$88,595
Property Services	\$104,943
Salaries & Allowances ³	\$119,512
Support Services	\$12,648

Expenditure	Actual
Trading & Fundraising	\$0
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$5,384
Travel & Subsistence	\$25,674
Utilities	\$0
Total Operating Expenditure	\$2,989,407
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$329,545
Asset Acquisitions	\$82,388

¹ Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are subject to change during the reconciliation process.

² Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.

³ Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

Funds Available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$981,167
Official Account	\$38,603
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$1,019,770

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$104,251
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$4,045
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$250,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$100,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$100,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$558,296

All funds received from the Department of Education, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.