

Aetaomah School



2025 Annual Report

Acknowledgement Of Country

Nestled at the foot of Wollumbin

And by this mighty river...

In this special place...

We acknowledge and offer our respects

To the people of the Bundjalung Nation;

The original caretakers of this land on which we stand...

And the original storytellers too...

To Ancestors...wise Elders...

And those developing who walk with us...

Being continuous custodians of Country

And carers of the land, waters and sky...

Where we live, learn and play together...



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Context

2025 Reflections from The Principal



As I take time to reflect back and to share some memories of Aetaomah School's 2025 year in this Annual Report and of my second year as Principal of this beautiful school, my overwhelming feeling is that of gratefulness.

Gratefulness for the child-centred approach that our school prioritises, where we hold the healthy development of the child at the centre of all we do and also the simple things, such as welcoming each new day with a gentle, subtle, observation of the land, sky, plants and animals around us. I feel very glad to be Principal of such a special school.



It was with great pleasure that we welcomed students and families to our new year; joyous greetings, smiling faces; friends familiar and new friends too; these were the lovely moments we all so enjoyed together on the first day of the new 2025 year....

And in Term 1 when the hot Summer days were upon us, teachers and children were able to meander down to the banks of the beautiful Tweed River, to cool off with a shady play and a refreshing paddle. Such are the wonderful experiences that our beautiful school, surrounded by nature's wonders provides for our students.

Before welcoming students back to school, our staff gathered for three rich and inspiring Professional Learning and Preparation days led by Ron and Margaret. Together, we carried a shared intention to nourish and strengthen the teaching,

learning, and healthy community life of Aetaomah School. Our Summer preparation included readings from Rudolf Steiner's Four Seasons Archangel Lectures, particularly exploring the St. John Imagination and the working together of the Four Archangels. The days were enriched by immersion in *Nature-Inspired Teaching and Learning* experiences, K-Class 7 Water Colour Painting, a shared Summer Luncheon, and my reflections and learnings from the SEA Study Tour, which included visits to the Goetheanum in Dornach and Waldorf Schools in Stuttgart, Berlin, Dresden and Bangkok.

In this way, together the staff consciously cultivated a beautiful Aetaomah mood in preparation for our work alongside students and their families throughout the year ahead. Sunflowers bloomed in abundance, bees busily moved among them, and together we dreamed into the year before us—envisioning a fruitful, healthy, joyful, and harmonious 2025 year for all.



With deep appreciation, I extend heartfelt gratitude to our College of Teachers for their dedication, care, and enthusiasm in carrying the educational impulse and nurturing the continued healthy growth of our school. The thoughtful way in which they teach—with wisdom, purpose, and heart—daily enriches the life of our children and our school community in a most special way. I also extend warm appreciation to our devoted Support Staff, including Leadership, Administration, Site Staff, Assistants, and Volunteers, whose efforts, care, and contributions enrich and sustain our school community.

Lastly, on behalf of all those who have been supported so thoughtfully throughout the year, we offer our deepest thanks to the Aetaomah Parent Community. Your generosity, involvement, and kind support have played an essential role in helping the school continue to thrive and flourish, and for this we are truly grateful. We thank you.

I hope you enjoy the following pages of this Annual Report, with reflections, images and memories of our many lovely Seasonal Festivals and other events attended and enjoyed by the whole school community.



Teera Palmer

Principal



Our highest endeavour must be to develop free individuals who are able, out of their own initiative, to impart purpose and direction in their lives.

... Rudolf Steiner



And so the great 'wheel of the year' turned, and there were many special seasonal, festive and social activities and events that inspired creativity, effort, collaboration and wove us together as a community...

Honey Hive Playgroup

In February, we were so pleased when our first Honey Hive Playgroup began led by Melissa, who so beautifully welcomed many young children and their families...

Honey Hive is much loved and continues for 8 weeks in each Term of the year. Our appreciative thanks to Melissa for holding such a gentle, nurturing space for the children and their families.

HONEY HIVE PLAYGROUP

The Aetaomah Honey Hive Playgroup led by Melissa welcomes you to come together with like-minded parents on Friday mornings in the Stone Story House and kinder garden during term time.

It is an opportunity for nature-inspired cultural experiences for both parents and children which serve as a soft preparation for Kindergarten at Aetaomah.

Rhythmical learning activities include stories, finger rhymes, songs, movement, music, short walks, planting seeds and sharing food at the table.

Melissa is inspired by the selfless nature of the bees which work together for the good of the whole Honey Home Hive.





Autumn Festival

As the days gradually grew a little cooler and mornings misty, preparations began for Autumn Harvest Festival.



Autumn Harvest Festival at the close of Term 1 welcomed and celebrated the early whispers of Autumn; this was made special by the beautifully arranged mandala, the offerings from the teachers and children and the delicious food made by Parents. We felt thankful to all for their presence, generosity and the abundance of our school community contributions which combined to create a wonderfully uplifting Autumn Harvest Market enjoyed by all.



Sun Artistry Autumn Artisan Fair

"The love of doing things well"

When: Saturday 29th of March, 2025

Time: 10am - 2pm

Where: Aetaomah School Grounds

2486 Kyogle Road, Terragon (10km South of Uki Post Office)

FEATURING

Live music

Artisan products

Food stalls

Fun Games

Workshops for young and young hearted

Coffee and chai

...and much more!

We look forward to seeing you there!

Please note, this is a cash event

contact@aetaomah.nsw.edu.au

Ph: 0266 797 255

Our first Artisan Fair was a lovely event even with the torrential rains!

Winter Night Festival

The cooler days and longer nights drew us towards our special Winter Night Festival, filled with beautiful candle-lit moments shared by the whole community.

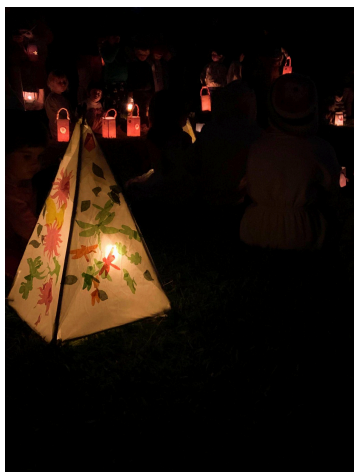


It was so moving to observe the children carefully walking their Winter Spiral path to the centre and tenderly holding their apple candles alight. Each child carried their light with care and reverence, creating a mood of quiet wonder and reminding us of the warmth and hope that can be found within the darkness of winter.



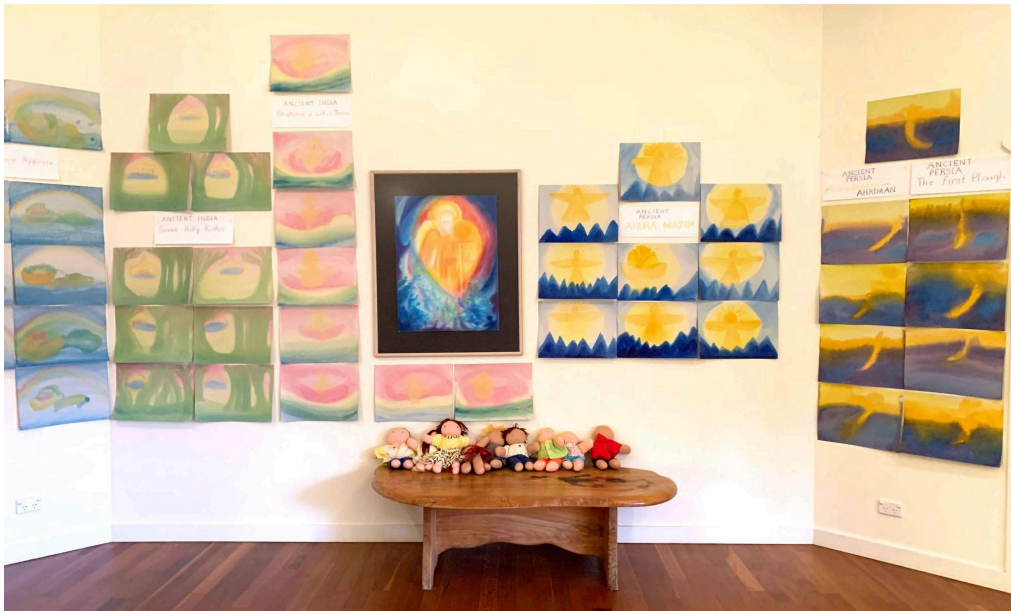
*Little Light,
Little Light,*

Inside me is shining bright...



Water Colour Landscape Painting for Parents and Art Exhibition

Painting Exhibition
Primary Classes
Parent's Paintings



Spring Festival and Market



How wonderful it was when at last, we felt Life forces moving upwards from Mother Earth and we finally saw the signs we had been waiting for:

the Pecan Trees began to bud and open their beautiful fresh leaves of green...

And just in perfect time for our Spring Market - such a joyful, wonderful celebration of life and hope was had by all...

*With the blue sky over us,
the green grass beneath us,
the beautiful mountains surrounding
us and the river flowing by us.
An abundance of joy and beauty in flowers,
music, song, dance, food and merriment
gave us such a wonderful feeling of optimism
and of the warmer days arriving....*



In the later part of the year, as the Spring days grew warmer, the students and Teachers ventured out near and far, on Class Excursions and Camps...

Class 1 went on a walking excursion to visit Deborah & Thomas's Home, Class 2 & 3 went on an Excursion to Kyogle Historical Museum, the Senior Students enjoyed a Camp at Sheep Station Creek and also joined the Greek Olympics at Brunswick Heads joining with several other Steiner School students.





Facilities - Air Conditioning

We were proud to have some long awaited and very exciting school improvement works take place in 2025; the installation of Stage 1 of our Air Conditioning Project! Preparation works undertaken in December 2024, substantially upgraded our 100% off-grid Solar Power System to increase capacity and better provide for all the school's power needs. Stage 1 included: Air conditioning for the Kindergarten and the Hall Building - both upper and lower levels. Happily, the installation of Stage 1 Air Conditioning Project, now provides room comfort in Kindergarten, classrooms, the hall and office during both warm and cool weather. How inspiring it is to reflect on Aetaomah School



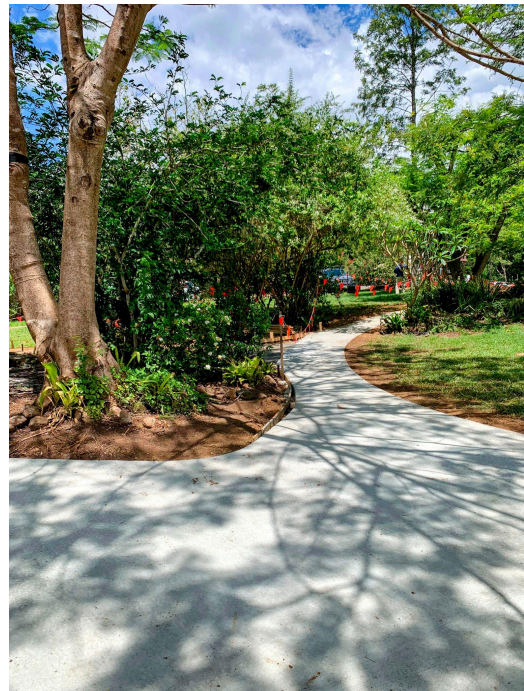
situated in its beautiful location, providing a rich and creative learning environment, while quietly providing for all its power needs independently - this is a rare and unique gift for which we are grateful.

Facilities - Disability Upgrade

Fortuitously, Aetaomah was also successful in receiving a significant BGA Grant approval from the Association of Independent Schools NSW, for a Disability Facilities upgrade, the works undertaken in 2025 included upgrade of the Amenity Block, installation of a Disability Ramp and deck and new pathways.

These projects successfully fulfilled two of our Master Plan goals being:

- Installation of air Conditioning in the School (Stage 1)
- Disability Facilities Upgrade



Our School

Aetaomah is a small school nestled in the heart of the Tweed Valley in the foothills of Mt Warning, a short bus ride from Murwillumbah and Uki.

At Aetaomah we educate through the arts and imagination, by making things, enjoying outdoor activities and agriculture. In this way we can creatively inspire

the inquiring mind, delicately foster the child's emerging thinking, care for the physical and emotional health and nurture social and leadership skills. We strive to develop in the children individual inner strength imbued with moral, ethical and social skills, a sense of wonder



and a desire to learn and understand the world and humanity. We unite imagination with the sciences, expressed through the visual and performing arts and the skeleton of our syllabus and values are brought to life through wonder and creativity.

This is the heart of our educational approach, enriched by the science, art and practicality of biodynamic agriculture (we have two gardens worked by the children) and outdoor activities such as sports and excursions. The development of life-skills is fostered through handwork and hard and soft crafts. An open, artistic outlook, penetrated by thought, reason, knowledge and hope with a sense of spirituality weaving through all things and a capacity and determination to work through life's challenges, are all priorities we endeavour to share with the children.

Student Population

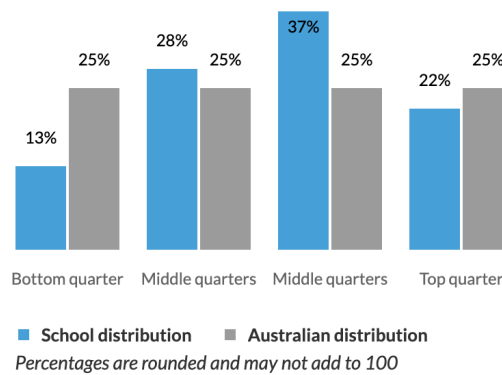
Our students come from Murwillumbah area, Uki, Burringbar, Nimbin and Blue Knob, rural properties, semi-suburban situations, villages and alternative communities. It is a mixed socio-economic area of low to average, and a philosophically stimulating one.

Student background

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

School ICSEA value	1057
Average ICSEA value	1000
School ICSEA percentile	71

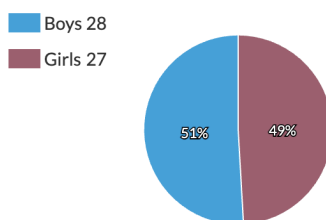
Distribution of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA)



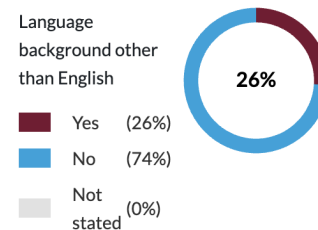
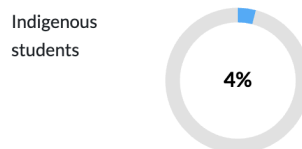
We welcome students from all backgrounds and cultures. This area provides a stimulating diversity of outlooks. 26% of students have a language background other than English at home. The school student enrollment in 2025 was 55, including 27 girls and 28 boys.

Students

Total enrolments: 55



Full-time equivalent enrolments: 55.0



Educational Approach

Aetaomah is a Kindergarten to Year 8 school based on the educational work of Dr. Rudolf Steiner. We strive to develop in the children individual inner strength imbued with moral, ethical and social skills, a sense of wonder and a desire to learn and understand the world and humanity. We unite imagination with the sciences, expressed through the visual and performing arts and the foundation of our syllabus and values are brought to life through wonder and creativity. At the heart of Aetaomah's educational approach and philosophy, is the understanding of the child as a human being, developing in the gradual process of incarnating into a relationship with the physical world. To really understand this world requires an imaginative, artistic approach. To educate in accordance with the natural development of the child requires creative artistry and imagination. The growing human being develops through recognisable physical and cognitive stages from birth to the change of teeth, where the physical body is consolidated.



All subjects are taught through the arts and crafts: drawing, painting, music, singing, story, poetry, drama, modelling and a range of handicrafts and enriched by the science, art and the practicality of gardening and other outdoor activities such as sports and

excursions and camps. The development of life skills is fostered through handwork and hard and soft crafts. An open, artistic outlook, penetrated by thought, reason, knowledge and hope with a sense of spirituality weaving through all things and a capacity and determination to work through life's challenges are all priorities we endeavour to share with the children.



Imagination is the key to the child's world, especially through play and imitation in the kindergarten, the artistic guidance of the teacher in primary school and informed leadership in high school.

A nurturing learning environment based on imitation of adults and creative play in the natural world is what the young Kindergarten child needs. In the school this is supported by activities such as content-based songs, modelling, drawing, painting, handwork and gardening, encouraged by the child's natural instinct to imitate their teacher.

The next stage, from the change of teeth to puberty, sees the social aspect and the unfolding of the child's imaginative relationship to the outer world. The child has an inner need for an authority to set the examples of how to act in the world. The intellect in association with imagination and creativity is preparing to unfold. The rhythmical processes, particularly the heartbeat/breathing relationship are consolidating.



A day based on rhythm and a respected authority (their teacher) is important to lay the foundations for physical, emotional well-being and a healthy, free, thought life. From around puberty the principles of love and critical, reasoned thought are released and need to be nurtured to allow the young person to develop into freedom and responsibility. The key to our education approach is from Play to Beauty to Work. Respect and responsibility always has been and always will be an integral part of our school's social, ethical and moral education programme.



This is approached first and foremost in the presentation of lessons. Stories are told picturing social situations and a variety of ways of dealing with them. In general, one story a day over 9-10 years of schooling gives a thorough coverage.

We present all the subjects in such a way that they picture a moral/social aspect. This requires close observation of the social workings of the children and use of stories to help correct problems.

Teachers set the tone of respect and responsibility through the way that they relate to each other, the children and the parents.

Social events such as Class Trips away where the children need to work together, and in a situation where they need to respect others (eg. A Camping Ground) are vital and are an integral part of the school year for all students.



Our highest endeavour must be to develop free individuals who are able, out of their own initiative, to impart purpose and direction in their lives.

... Rudolf Steiner

Outcomes & Results

As an Independent School, our education is underpinned by the philosophy and values of Steiner Education. Our Steiner Curriculum follows a program of Main Lessons, meets NSW Syllabus requirements and links closely to the stages of child development. Hence, we deliver a rich and broad curriculum and the timing of delivery of when and why we teach as we do, is often a point of difference. Our programs are designed to support the developing child with minimal exposure to stress and as such, our teachers spend minimal time preparing the children for the tests.

Our school always participates in NAPLAN; we find parents of our school often request withdrawal of their child/ren from sitting the NAPLAN tests. In 2025, we had no students participate in the National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with parents requesting their child/ren be exempt from sitting the test.



Staffing

SCHOOL STAFF	NUMBER
Teaching staff	6
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	3.5
Non teaching staff	7
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	2.8

LEVEL OF TEACHER ACCREDITATION	NUMBER
Conditional	0
Provisional	1
Proficient	8

All teachers at Aetaomah participate in regular meetings weekly, where ideas in education are discussed, drawing from all relevant sources and areas. Ideas on how to help individual children are discussed drawing on the experience within the teaching group and qualified resources from without.



We all participate in artistic speech and movement activities at these meetings. This is important as the most used tools of teaching are the voice, facial expression, gesture and posture. Instantly a teacher will gain or lose a child's interest through his or her uninspiring speech or sloppy movement. Staff Professional Learning Days are held at the end of each term break; teacher Professional Learning sessions are led by experienced teachers. All Staff participate.

At present, none of our staff members identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Attendance

87.28% of students attended school on average each school day in 2025.

Year Level	Attendance Rate
Kindergarten	88.44%
Class 1	85.6%
Class 2	84.15%
Class 3	89.98%
Class 4	85.55%
Class 5	91.87%
Class 6	88.67%
Total	87.28%

Management of non-attendance

If a child is away on any school day, parents must phone or email the office to advise that their child is absent, ideally before 9am in the morning; such communication is essential to ensure that children are safe. This is a requirement; the school is obliged to mark the Attendance Roll *Absent Without Reason* if one is not received.

Where absences are unexplained and/or too frequent, parents will be contacted by the office and may be required to attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss how attendance will be improved.



School Policy

The School Policies below link to those made publicly available on our website

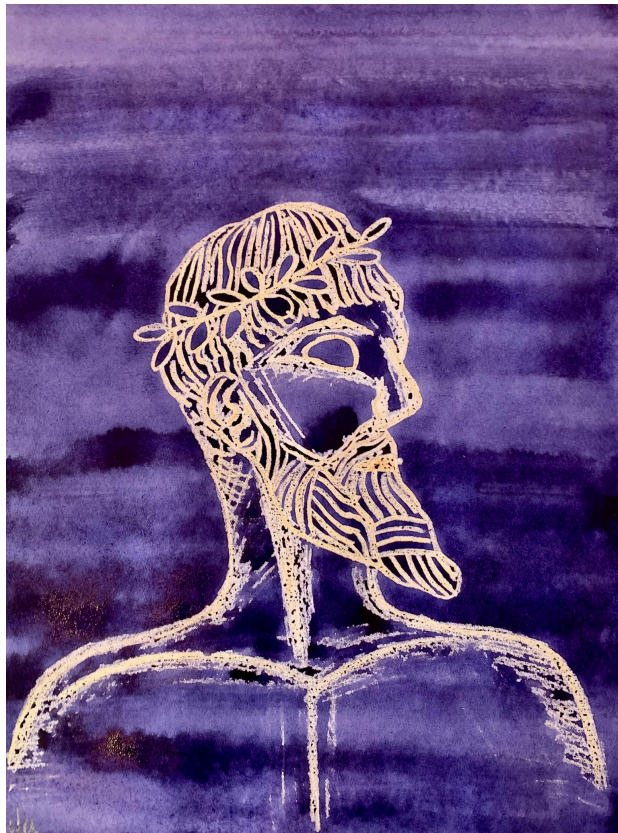
[Enrolment Policy](#)

[Child Protection Policy](#)

[Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

[Discipline Policy](#)

[Complaints Handling Policy](#)



Stakeholder Satisfaction

The Creative Arts is a key aspect of the school and the children are enthusiastically involved. The students perform major play presentations several times a year and these provide an artistic-creative focus through drama, movement and music. Often, some of the parents are involved in costume creation.



Students

Most often, students in all classes are keen and proud to show their family members their class work, which often includes their bookwork, handwork, craft, and art work. A wonderful gauge of satisfaction is to observe our students engage wholeheartedly in singing and playing instruments in a musical recital or performing in a play for a parent audience. The students have very happy days at school in general and love to work and care for the gardens.

From time to time, we have adult alumni visitors who pop in to visit the school and they share happy stories of their own time as a student at Aetaomah.

Teachers

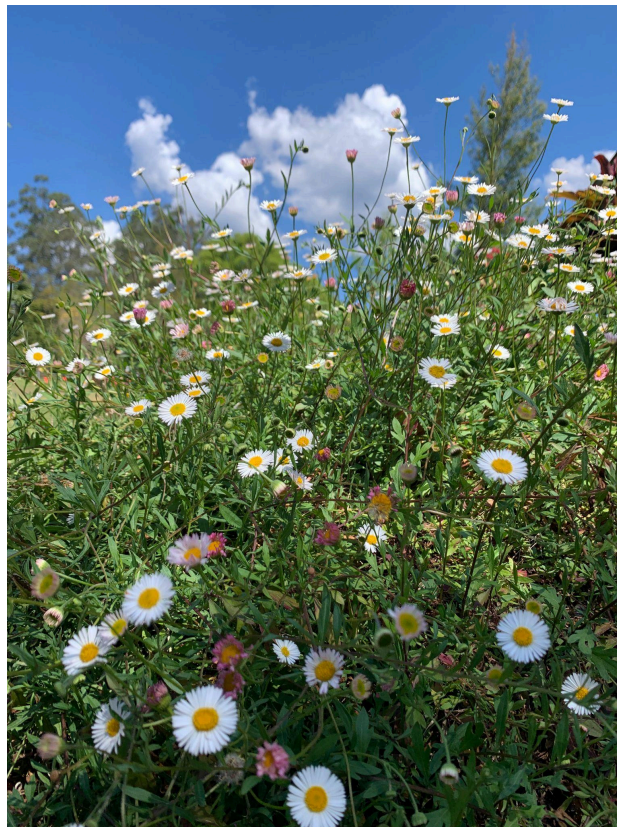
Teachers are most often warmed and feel affirmed and supported by their interactions with families at Seasonal Festivals and Markets, Class Parent Meetings and other School Community events.

School events such as Seasonal Festivals, Markets, Family Fun Day and Open Classroom Days are a wonderful time to observe Parents, Teachers and Students enjoying collaborating together to create special times and memories.

Teachers feel well supported by Parents who give a good response when asked to be 'Parent Helpers.'

Gardening days where the children, parents and teachers all work together in the school garden have had enthusiastic results.

Our Teachers and Staff so often express their deep love for Aetaomah School and of working with their colleagues.



Parents

Teachers have regular meetings with parents individually, and as a Class group. These meetings may take place after school and also may be formally arranged meetings; the anecdotal reports heard from parents are generally of satisfaction and appreciation for Staff time. Such meetings with parents are important opportunities to deal with any problems that may be simmering. The door is always open for parents to come to the school and view the children's work and talk to the teachers. Parent feedback is overall very positive and appreciative of what is happening at the school; this is particularly observed when we have long-term families reluctantly leave the school, and who take the time to express their appreciative thanks, sadness and very warm memories.

"Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you've always extended to our girls. They have truly loved their time at the school, and we wish nothing but the best for the staff and teachers going forward."



"Thank you again to everyone for all of your hard work and dedication."

"Thank you all for being such wonderful teachers to our little ones. All the effort and support does not go unnoticed in between the business of life."



"Thank you to the Teachers and Staff, we hope you all have a wonderful break and a happy new year!"

Seasonal festivals bring the whole school community including parents together, where the children give a short presentation (music, speech, drama, movement) and the children's bookwork, craft etc is displayed. These are all opportunities for observing Teacher, Student & Parent satisfaction in action.

The teachers work harmoniously together and are able to express attitudes and raise problems as they need or wish to in the College. Given the journey in any school is rich in wonders and also in challenges too, our staff have well developed ability and capacity to meet challenges when they arise and to be flexible; Aetaomah School morale continues to be healthy.

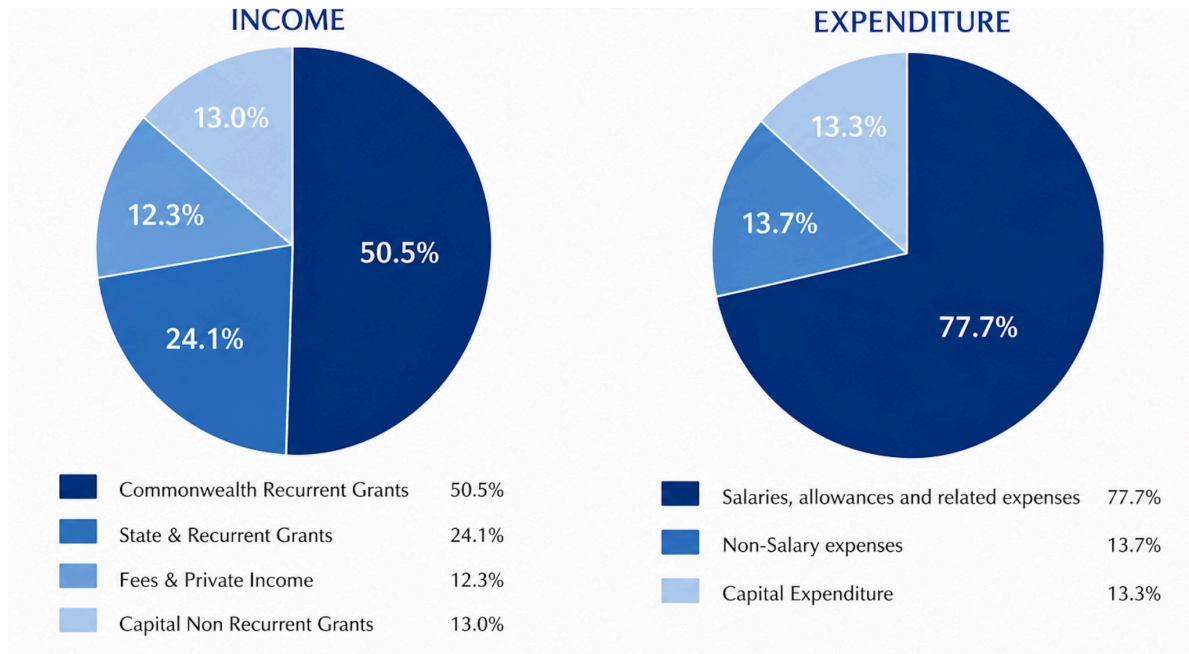


*'A healthy social life is found only when,
in the mirror of each soul,
the whole community finds its reflection, and when,
in the whole community, the virtue of each one is living'*

...Rudolf Steiner

Financial Information

Sun Artistry Limited. Financial Review 2025



A Verse For Our Times

*We must eradicate from the soul
All fear and terror of what comes towards us out of the future
We must acquire serenity
In all feelings and sensations about the future*

*We must look forwards
With absolute equanimity to all that may come
And we must think only, that whatever comes
Is given to us by a world direction, full of wisdom*

*It is part of what we must learn in this age
Namely, to live out of pure trust - Without any security in existence.
Trust in the ever-present help of the spiritual world.
Truly, nothing else will do
If our courage is not to fail us.*

*Let us discipline our will
And let us seek the awakening from within ourselves
Every morning and every evening*

...Rudolf Steiner

