

Heritage Christian School



2008 Annual Report

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Introduction

Heritage Christian School is a co-educational, Kindergarten to Year 12 Christian School located in Port Macquarie in New South Wales.

The school was established in 1983 by a group of local Christian parents who had a vision for a nurturing, empowering school community, firmly rooted in biblical instruction.

In 2008 the school's board decided on a new mission statement in order to mark the school's 25th anniversary and herald a new era.

Heritage Christian School - a vibrant, engaged community: educating, nurturing, empowering

This mission is underpinned by five strategic pillars which are:

- To develop students as Christians who are prepared for life and motivated to make a difference;
- To provide high quality teaching and learning programs;
- To provide a safe learning environment;
- To increase resources to support staffing and have a strong physical, financial infrastructure;
- To be the Christian school of choice in the district.

At Heritage Christian School, the subjects covered in class do not differ greatly from those taught in the other schools other than they are taught from a Christian perspective.

In fact the total curriculum – including what happens in class, the playground, relationships and at special events - all comes under the authority of the Bible.

Reporting Areas 1 & 2: Reports from Key School Persons and Bodies

Principal's Report 2008

Heritage Christian School is registered and accredited with the NSW Board of Studies.

This annual report provides the school and wider community with information about the school's distinctiveness and operation. The report is a legislative requirement under *The Education Amendment (Non-Government Schools Registration) Act 2004*.

The school prospectus, website and newsletters complement the information contained in this report.

The school has procedures in place to ensure its participation in annual reporting to publicly disclose its educational and financial performance measures and policies, as identified by the Minister of Education.

The following pages detail Heritage Christian School's academic results and financial reports for 2008. Some key policies are also included.

The school strives to develop a culture that looks after the individuals within it. Heritage seeks to be a learning community assisting each child to reach to their full potential.

During 2008 Heritage has sought to add value to each child's achievement in the following ways:

- Establishing a revised Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, seeking to give increased focus to the whole Heritage enterprise;
- Continuing with the Quality School Project focus on teacher development, expanding on work done during 2007;
- Appointing two part time Chaplains to enhance the provision of pastoral care within the school.

Ross Carlyon
Principal

Heritage Christian School Board (HACE) Report

Heritage Christian School Board

The School is a not for profit company limited by guarantee governed by a Board of Directors supported by a professional school executive led by the Principal and senior staff.

The School is a member of the Christian parent controlled schools movement, Christian Education National (CEN). CEN was previously known as Christian Parent Controlled Schools Ltd (CPCS). The Board of Directors of the School are elected annually from eligible members of Hastings Association of Christian Education Limited (HACE).

The School commenced in 1983 in temporary premises. Since then the School has acquired its own site in Mumford Street, Port Macquarie and grown to a K-12 school with a wide range of facilities and infrastructure.

The current school operational model is based on the traditional structure for a K-12 school. This entails using standard educational benchmarks for student: teacher ratios in primary and structuring secondary curriculum around core subject matter supplemented by electives as determined by both State Board of Studies requirements and the perceived needs of students. This process is one determined by the School Executive and the Board of Directors.

The Heritage Christian School Board worked through 2008 to support the Principal to develop and implement agreed plans, including the rollout of a newly developed strategic plan and determining the ongoing governance structure of the School.

Colin Lowe
Chairman of the Board

Reporting Area 3: School Performance in Statewide Tests and Examinations External Testing Results

The results achieved by Heritage Christian School students in external tests in 2008 were solid. These results form part of the story of what happens at Heritage, and reflect part of the development of our students. We aim for individual excellence in knowledge and skills, with all students being encouraged to do their best at all times, but we aim for this within the framework of the development of Christian character and godly relationships.

Higher School Certificate Results 2008

There were 12 candidates from Heritage Christian School who presented for the HSC, which means considerable care must be taken when comparing results against state averages. However, results in terms of performance bands were quite good, with some 50% of individual subject results in the upper bands (4, 5 or 6).

School Certificate Results 2008

Subject	Heritage Average Score	NSW Average Score
Australian History, Civics and Citizenship	69.53	70.58
Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship	72.63	73.52
English – literacy	78.22	76.63
Mathematics	65.38	70.67
Science	73.78	73.61
Computing Skills	83.13	80.71

National Assessment Plan – Literacy & Numeracy

The NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy & Numeracy) tests were introduced in 2008. Our students generally exceed the benchmarks in all areas and progress will be seen over the years. In most cases results are above state averages.

Should any students fall below the benchmarks they will have been identified by our Special Needs staff. Strategies will have been put in place to assist them by a combination of withdrawal groups, working alongside students in their classrooms and other individualised programs where necessary.

The following table summarises results and compares them to state wide scores. The number in brackets after the Year indicates the number of students in that year level.

Year 3 (20)	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Overall Literacy	Number, patterns and algebra	Measurement, data, space & geometry	Overall Numeracy
Heritage	448.0	412.5	420.8	431.1	428.8	436.5	430.6	433.4
NSW	412.2	427.8	418.6	416.4	419.5	409.8	408.3	409.6

Year 5 (31)	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Overall Literacy	Number, patterns and algebra	Measurement, data, space & geometry	Overall Numeracy
Heritage	478.9	452.9	448.3	494.0	467.6	484.1	476.9	480.7
NSW	494.4	495.5	498.5	504.5	497.4	489.7	488.0	489.1

Year 7 (24)	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Overall Literacy	Number, Patterns & Algebra	Measurement & Data	Space & Geometry	Overall Numeracy
Heritage	551.6	553.5	548.6	558.3	553.2	537.6	540.9	530.2	536.1
NSW	543.2	535.5	549.5	537.3	541.2	554.3	551.9	549.7	552.9

Year 9 (25)	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Overall Literacy	Number, & Data	Patterns & Algebra	Measurement, Space & Geometry	Overall Numeracy
Heritage	595.7	575.4	587.5	560.7	581.8	618.8	594.7	621.8	613.1
NSW	584.0	569.8	586.4	578.8	579.5	591.5	599.0	590.0	593.7

Reporting Area 4: Professional Learning and Teaching Standards

Staff were involved in the following professional training: Classroom Management for Academic Success, English Teachers Association (ETA) NSW Annual Conference, Science Lab Assistants Conference, Hospitality VET, Exploring Frontiers in Senior Biology, NICE Institute for Christian Education ED420/520 – Ways of Learning, AIS Child Protection Seminar, Hastings Macleay English Teachers' Association Annual General Meeting, English Teachers' Association (ETA) Leadership Day, ETA New HSC Texts, Association of Christian School English Teachers (ACSET) Shining the Light, Music for Schools Workshop, IST In-service – Programming, Christian Librarians Conference, The Association of Independent Schools (AIS) Vocational Education & Training Hospitality Orientation.

In addition to the above, Heritage Christian School held a professional development week for staff in July 2008.

The total cost of professional development at Heritage Christian School in 2008 was \$8,567.40.

Reporting Area 5: Teacher Attendance & Retention

Total number of Teachers at HCS	Total Days Attended	Total Days Absent	Attendance Rate	Average Days Absent	Number of Staff who left during the year	Retention Rate
20.2	5103	149	97%	7.38%	5	75%

Reporting Areas 6 & 7: Student Attendance & Retention Rates, Post-School Destination

Student Attendance Rates

Year	Number of Students	Total Days Absent	Percentage	Average Days Absent
Kindergarten	17	257.9	92.2	15.1
1	21	261.9	94.0	12.4
2	18	186.2	94.7	10.3
3	20	306.1	92.1	15.3
4	18	258.0	92.6	14.3
5	31	559.9	90.7	18.0
6	31	362.5	94.0	11.6
7	24	428.8	90.0	17.8
8	24	325.5	93.0	13.5
9	27	350.0	93.0	12.9
10	39	880.0	88.0	22.5
11	14	383.0	85.0	27.3
12	12	264.0	88.0	22.0

In 2008 the average student attendance is as follows:

Port Secondary campus	89.5%
Port Primary campus	92.9%

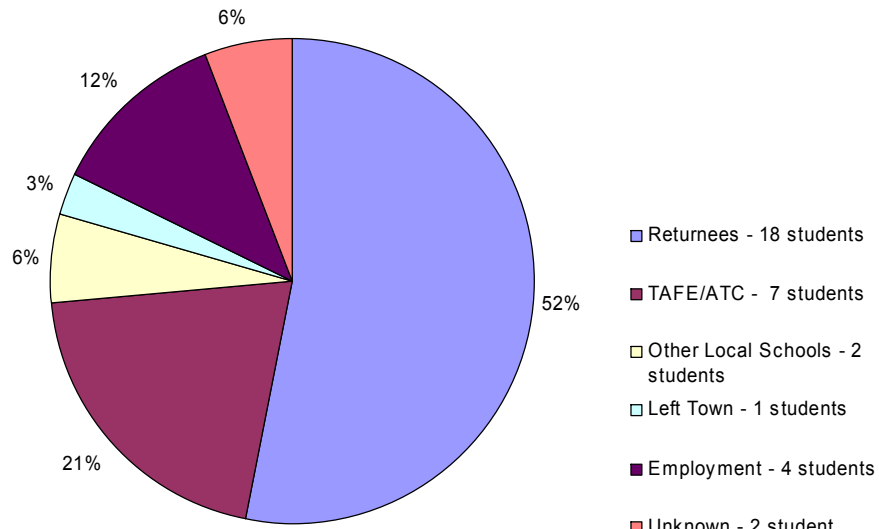
Student Retention Rates

Year	Numbers in 2007	Numbers in 2008	Retention Rate
Kindergarten	20	17	n/a
1	19	21	105
2	17	18	94
3	21	20	129
4	34	18	85
5	29	31	91
6	39	31	106
7	29	24	70
8	33	24	82
9	47	27	81
10	24	39	82
11	15	14	58
12	16	12	80
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	343	296	86

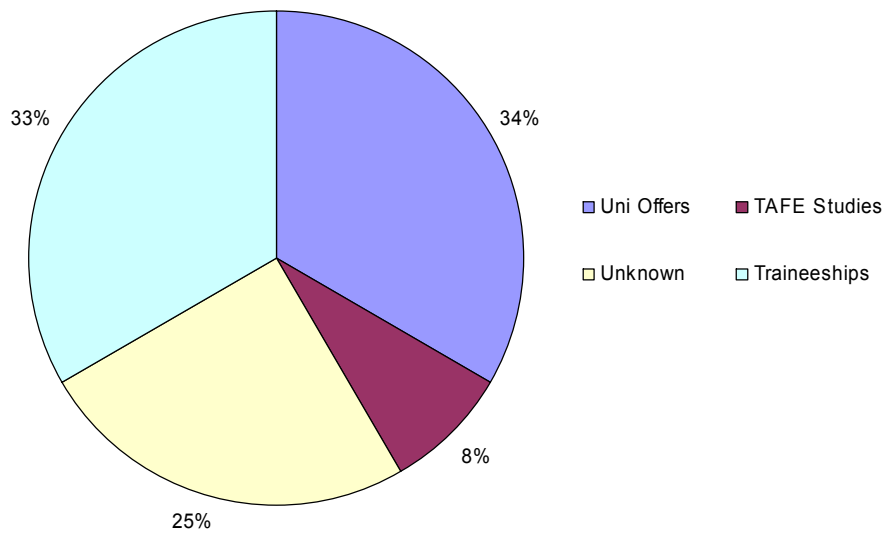
Overall student retention rate from 2007 to 2008 is 86%.

Year 10 Post School Destinations

There was the expected drop from Year 10 to Year 11 with some students pursuing vocational studies, full-time work or apprenticeships. The actual retention rate of Year 10 students was 52%.



Year 12 Post School Destinations



Reporting Area 8: Enrolment Policies and Profiles

Heritage Christian School has an open enrolment policy, and serves Christian and other interested families in the Hastings Valley. The school was founded to enable Christian families to have access to Christian education, taught by Christian teachers in partnership with the parents of children. These parents, who are the primary educators of their children, are keen to have their children taught at school the biblical values that they are teaching at home. The school has a mandated ratio of 60% Christian families.

Heritage Christian School welcomes enrolment applications for children with a broad range of learning abilities, physical development and social backgrounds. Individual excellence in academic, sporting, cultural and technological areas is pursued. Students are encouraged at all times to do their best, which is all that God requires of them in relation to the use of their gifts and talents.

Heritage Christian School values all children regardless of merit in any field of endeavour. The interaction of children with exceptional talent and those with learning difficulties is a feature of the school.

The school's enrolment guidelines are available from the school, or at www.heritage.nsw.edu.au.

Important aspects of these guidelines are:

- Serving local Christian families
- Compassion and justice
- Procedural fairness
- Expedient enrolment procedures

Heritage Christian School Enrolment Procedures

Overview

The three steps that are usually taken to enrol a student in HCS are:

1. The enrolment application form is completed and all information provided;
2. Interview stage, which may or may not lead to an offer;
3. The offer and contract stage.

The Process

1. Inquiries are directed to the Registrar who gathers initial information, sends out an information pack and invites parents to tour the School.
2. If there is no vacancy or if the proposed date of enrolment is distant the child may be put on an inquiry list.
3. During the year prior to the proposed enrolment, parents may complete an Enrolment Application Form for each child in the family - including all information and reports and documents as requested. (Applications where significant reports and assessments are required usually take longer to process.)
4. Parents return the completed application form to the School Registrar with a copy of the appropriate:
 - Birth Certificate
 - Latest school report;
 - Year 3, 5, 7 or 9 benchmark test results (where applicable);
 - Signed Statement of Beliefs;
 - Other necessary documents or reports; (includes any Court Orders)
 - Non-refundable registration fee of \$50 per family.

5. Receipt of the application is acknowledged by letter.
6. Further information may be sought if required or if the application information is incomplete.
7. The child's name will be placed on the waiting list for the class and entry year requested.
8. The Registrar will invite the parents, along with their child/ren to attend an interview if a position is or becomes available.
9. Interviews for future years are conducted around July/August of the previous year. The interview will be conducted by the Principal or a delegate.

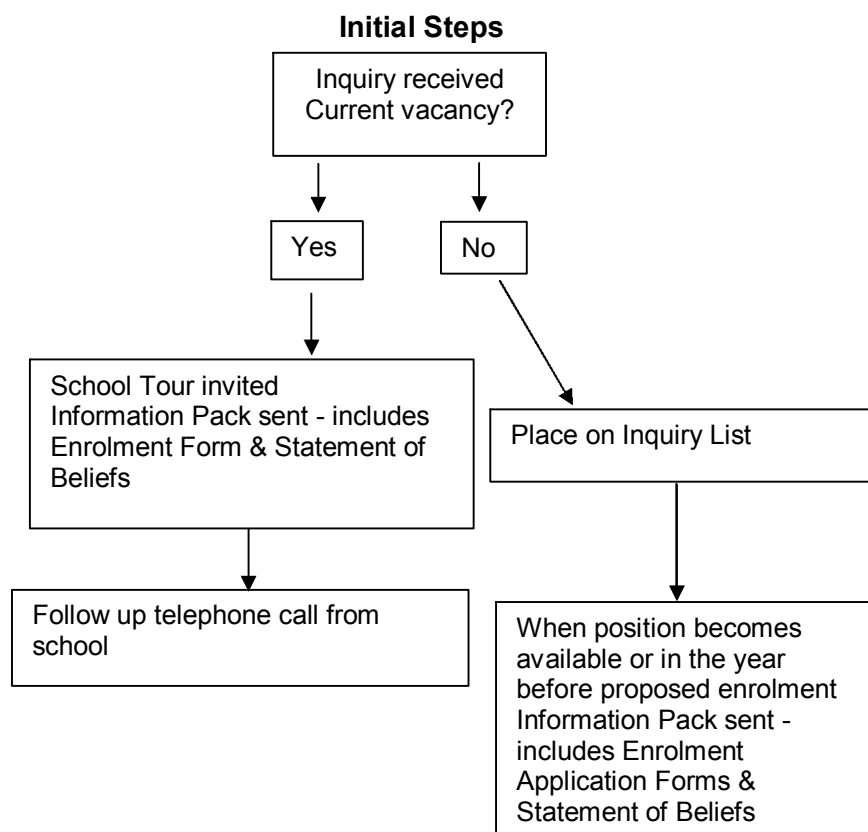
An interview does not mean that a place will be offered.

Applicant children are required to attend the interview.

10. If places are not available the child's name will be held on the waiting list unless the School is notified otherwise.
11. If the application for enrolment is unsuccessful, parents will be notified by mail.
12. Offers of places will be forwarded by post as soon after the interview as is practicable. Acceptance of the offer is required within 21 days by the signing of the Enrolment Contract which sets out the conditions and expectations of both parties and by payment of the enrolment bond of \$340 per family. This bond will be returned when the student leaves the School provided it is not within 12 months of the enrolment date and all items on loan from the School are returned at that time in good order.

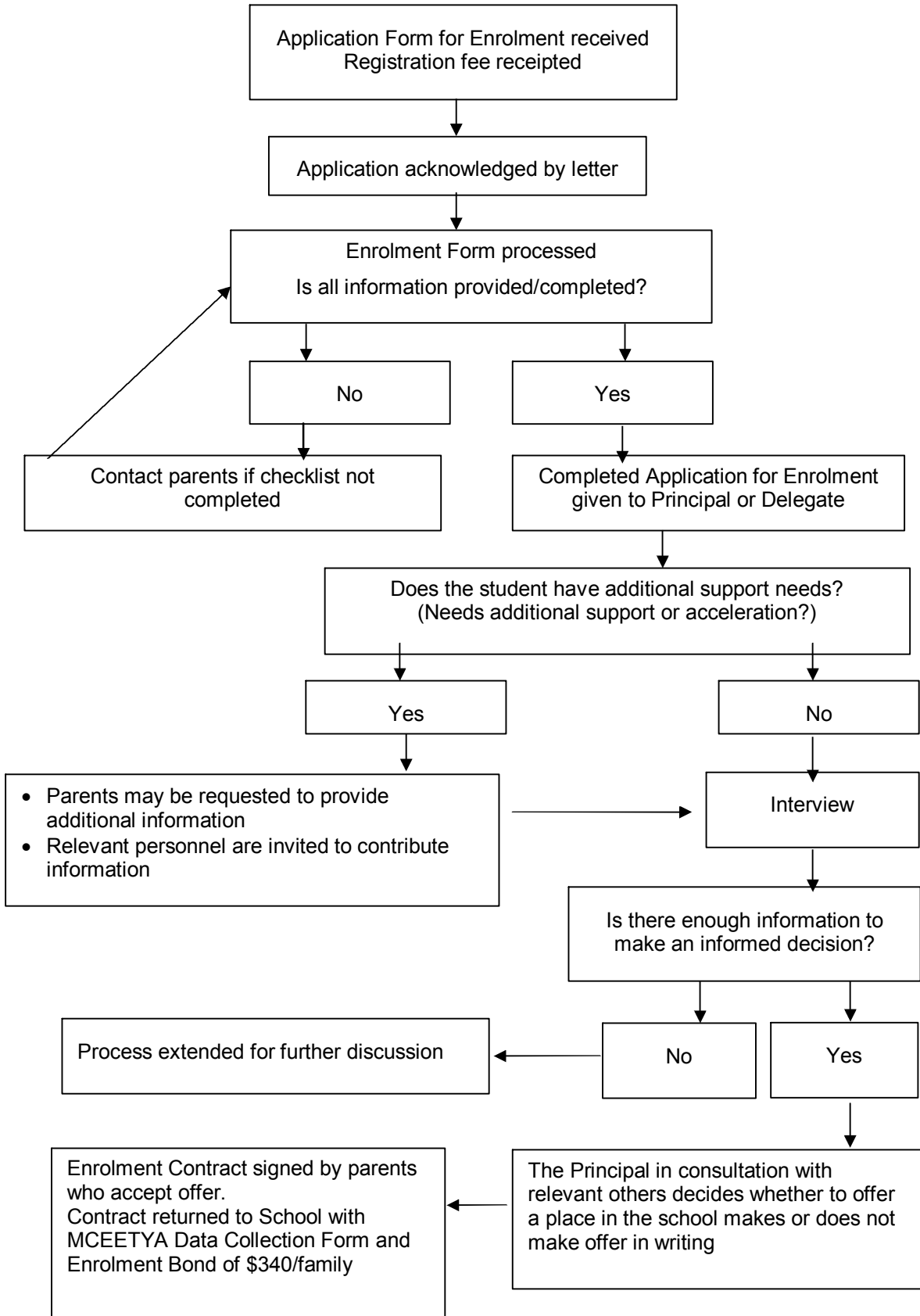
The Application Process

The Application Process is the same for all students.
The process takes between 2 and 12 weeks depending on the information required to fulfil the requirements for Full and Frank Disclosure.



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Reporting Area 9: Student Welfare & Discipline Policies

Student Discipline Policies:

Heritage Christian School has developed a range of student discipline policies, mostly contained within our **Disciplining Policy or Statement**. “Discipline” is interpreted here in the light of the Biblical understanding of the word. Disciplining is the process of teaching others. At Heritage Christian School all staff are committed to disciplining students, specifically teaching them about Jesus. Staff seek to model Jesus so that students of all ages might come to know him as their Lord.

The main facets of this are sub-policies of the **Disciplining Statement**. They are each based on scriptural principles:

- 1) The **Encouragement Policy**: acknowledging the efforts of students in all their endeavours;
- 2) The **Pastoral Care Policy**: seeking to minister to the whole student (including their spiritual needs);
- 3) The **Discipline Policy**: teaching students to take responsibility for their own actions (including the consequences).

All of these facets are the recognition of the need to develop children in our care in the expression of their God-given gifts, and in developing and maintaining relationships that honour God. Students should learn how Christ-like behaviour is vital for character growth.

An addendum to the Disciplining Statement at HCS is the **Statement on Bullying**. In summary, this policy says that: “In seeking to establish and maintain a safe environment for all children, staff and parents, those responsible for bullying (behaviour) will be identified and disciplined”.

Heritage Christian School is committed to developing and maintaining structures which:

- Encourage the identification and development of each child’s God-given gifts;
- Assist the development of each child through the recognition of the appropriate use of their gifts;
- Provide opportunities to develop and express genuine Christian care for each other;
- Foster each child’s spiritual growth;
- Foster clear biblical teaching about respect for authority and the importance of obedience;
- Promote an understanding and acceptance of the consequences which flow from disobedience.

Student Welfare Policies:

Heritage Christian School has also developed policies which relate to student welfare. Disciplining and welfare are very similar ideas at Heritage Christian School, so much of what is contained in the discipline policies above could easily be interpreted as being important for student welfare too.

The main policies we have that relate to student welfare include the **Child Protection Policy**, the **Sexual Harassment Policy**, and the **Critical Event Policy**.

The **Child Protection Policy** recognises that scripture indicates the nurture of children is a great responsibility given to the community, with specific responsibility given to parents, and that it is the staff’s responsibility to love the children in their care. This love should guide the staff’s actions and direction as they stand in the place of parents during school time.

When a child is enrolled at Heritage Christian School, the school enters a contract with the parents to assist them with the God-given responsibility of the nurture of their children. The school focuses on the education of the child in order to support the parents, who are the main educators of their children. This school education is not to be to the detriment of the welfare of children. In every action related to reportable conduct (child abuse), the best interest of the child is of paramount consideration.

Accordingly, Heritage Christian School is committed to:

- Providing a safe environment for students;
- Preventing harm to a student in any form within the school;
- Dealing with any reports that a student is at risk of harm in a prompt and appropriate way;
- Educating students about their rights, and equipping them with appropriate skills for avoiding and reporting uncomfortable and abusive situations.

Specific requirements and procedures are set out in the Child Protection Policy, the Sexual Harassment Policy, and the Statement on Bullying. These include:

- Ensuring that staff appointed are fit and proper people to occupy positions through interviews and employment screening;
- Requiring staff to abide by a Code of Conduct, which is actively monitored;
- Training staff;
- Procedures to identify when a child is at risk of harm, and to notify the proper authorities;
- Procedures to notify and investigate complaints of improper conduct by staff, and report to appropriate authorities.

Of course, HCS is required by law to develop and maintain a safe environment for its students, so many of these requirements and procedures are mandatory.

Reporting Area 10: Complaints & Resolving Grievance Policy

Called the **Dispute Resolution Plan**, this policy states that “the school will endeavour to handle all aspects of an inquiry or complaint in a manner that reflects Biblical principles and God’s love.”

The broad principles of the policy are contained within Annexure 1 of the plan:

- 1) Talk first with the person with whom you have a problem;
- 2) If you can’t resolve the problem take a wiser person with you;
- 3) Only refer matters to the Board when the prior steps have been tried;
- 4) Preserve unity as much as you on your part can do.

The school has appointed officers whose role will include managing the response to any complaint and ensuring that all complaints are dealt with in accordance with the policy/ plan. The School Complaints Officers are the Secondary and Primary Principals. (They will generally be the “wiser person” referred to in 2) above.)

This policy was changed during 2005 in order to widen the scope of the policy to assist in dealing with the complaints of non-members of HACE who are nonetheless part of the HCS community. Where the new policy differs from the old is that there are now opportunities to make **formal inquiries** as well as **complaints**. A register is kept in the Secondary Principal’s office which details each formal inquiry and each complaint. There are also parts of the policy that deal with minimising disputes, timeliness, remedies, analysing of complaints data, school board review, and visibility of procedures.

Important understandings that relate to how this policy is acted upon at HCS are:

- Complaints, compliments and suggestions are part of the life of an educational community.
- Encouragement and discouragement are integral parts of building up one another.
- Self-sacrificial love, as evidenced in Jesus life and death, should be a vital foundation to how we seek to build up one another.
- Confidentiality, respect for privacy, peace-making and right scriptural motives are all vital aspects of dealing with complaints in Christian community.
- Problems should be dealt with in humility, openness and a desire to live in harmony.
- Anonymous complaints should not be dealt with, unless of an important nature and supported by evidence that has been established by the Complaints Officers.

Reporting Area 11: Priority Areas for Improvement

Rolling Out the New Mission Statement

School community meetings were held early in 2008 to attach actions/ strategies to the mission and strategic pillars. Living out the mission on each school day was then the challenge.

Continuing the Quality School Project (QSP)

This three year project was in its second year, and was facilitated by Mrs Rachel Bennett as educational consultant.

Rachel's focus was on individual work within classes, coaching teachers, and leading Primary or Secondary department meetings on quality teaching.

Growing Enrolments

Throughout 2008 the school made efforts to encourage enrolment growth. The hope was that as the QSP begins to have more effect, negative community perceptions of the school would improve, hopefully leading to more new enrolments. A major part of this priority was the employment of a part-time Public Relations person, who promoted the school throughout the district and in October developed a Public Relations Plan for 2009.

Building Financial Stability

After a downturn in student numbers, the school needed to address the deficit budget for 2008 so that it is not repeated in 2009. Some steps were taken to improve student-teacher ratios.

Policy for Reporting to Board of Studies

This policy states that "we will provide Heritage Christian School parents, the NSW Board of Studies, and the public clear, truthful and relevant information regarding the education at the School". It also states that "we will fully comply with statutory requirements outlined in the Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) manual".

Heritage Christian School will, within the school's distinctively Christ-centred framework, prepare an annual report on the school's performance measures and policies which will be made available online to the NSW Board of Studies by 1 July in the year following the reporting year.

Reporting Area 12: Promoting Respect & Responsibility

Respectful Behaviour

An important aspect of the school's ethos is that teachers continually encourage and teach their students about respect for all adults and for each other. We do this because it is what God asks us to do in His Word, the Bible.

In 2008, encouragement awards were presented to students throughout the year for showing respect to others.

Involvement in Community Service Activities

Activities that were undertaken in the school in 2007 included:

- 1) Year 12 students donated blood at the local Blood Bank;
- 2) Primary Interest Groups were involved in Service activities such as caring for our school environment;
- 3) Secondary students built relationship with elderly residents of local retirement villages;
- 4) The Student Representative Council (SRC) raised money for charities through holding regular lunch BBQs and mufti days;
- 5) The whole school and some individual classes sponsor children from a third world country.

Specific Class-Based Activities

- 1) Developing respectful behaviour and responsibility in students is a normal part of all lessons, including devotional times and Bible readings;
- 2) All students attended camp, and learnt about respect and responsibility for each other, other people and the environment, and practised this in their in-camp activities;

Reporting Area 13: Parent, Student & Teacher Satisfaction

A key measure of customer satisfaction levels is enrolment interest and clearly there was a problem in this area during 2008 with enrolments dropping significantly.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that while a number of parents lost confidence in the school, many others continued to appreciate its solid faith base and caring approach.

The school holds a parent satisfaction survey every two years with the next scheduled for 2009.

Reporting Area 14: Summary Financial Information

Heritage Christian School was successful in 2008 in obtaining a grant under the Investing in Our Schools Program to enhance technology in the primary classrooms.

The percentages of income and expenditure during 2008 are as follows:

