

East Sydney Community Based High School

Annual Report 2005

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Introduction

East Sydney Community Based High School is an independent school that targets youth who have had difficulty in accessing mainstream education. The school provides Years 9 and 10 only, with the aim of helping these students to complete their Year 10 education.

The school accepts new students throughout the year; with an enrolment ceiling of 65 current students.

Students have typically attended more than 2 high schools before enrolment at the school.

The majority of the students attending the school come from a disadvantaged social background. In consequence, a significant aspect of the school's effort to enable the students to succeed in education is the provision of support for welfare matters. The school operates a Keyworker system, in which all students are assigned to a teaching staff member who maintains an active interest in the student's progress and assists the student in welfare matters such as, health, accommodation, Centrelink payments and legal problems.

School Performance

In 2005 there were 13 students who were successful in achieving their School Certificate.

Teaching Staff

In 2005 the school employed a staff of 5 full-time teachers. All staff have attained a standard of professional teacher competence, as defined by the Minister for Education and Training; and all staff have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution in Australia.

Achievement Targets

Retention in Education

In 2005 there was a high level of enrolment of 77 through the year as a whole. Of these:

18 students were in Year 9 and 59 students in Year 10.

From Year 9, 65 % continued to Year 10 in 2006.

From Year 10, 20 % remained in education, to repeat Year 10.

23 % achieved the School Certificate.

Of the Graduates, 23 % went on to further education in other schools or T.A.F.E., and a further

23% went on to apprenticeships

Of the Non-graduates, 7% returned to education in mainstream schools

Financial Statement

East Sydney Community Based High School

Financial Statement to 31st December 2005

Recurrent Income

Grants

Commonwealth Grant	\$246,972	
State Govt. Grant	\$109,591	
State Education Allowances	\$ 1,155	
Students with Disability	\$ 4,458	
Literacy & Numeracy Programmes	\$ 7,680	\$369,856

Private Income

Fees	\$ 300	
Donations	\$ 35,000	
Interest	\$ 19,986	
Sundry	\$ 82	\$ 55,368

Total Recurrent Income **\$425,224**

Recurrent Expenditure

Salary

Teaching Staff	\$338,287	
Admin. Staff	\$ 36,779	\$375,066

Employment Expenses

Workers Compensation	\$ 2,342	
Superannuation	\$ 33,777	\$ 36,119

Administrative Expenses

Resources	\$ 8,748	
General Administration	\$ 66,996	
Building Operation	\$ 13,702	
Rent	\$ 1,019	
Depreciation	\$ 11,128	\$101,593

Total Recurrent Expenditure **\$512,778**

Loss on Recurrent Account **(\$ 87,554)**

Capital Expenditure

Furniture & Equipment **\$13,588**

Nett Loss After Capital Expenditure **(\$101,142)**

School Policies

Available in this report are policies for :

Enrolment
Discipline
Complaints and Grievance
Student Welfare

ENROLMENT POLICY

Background Information

The structure of East Sydney High

East Sydney High is a community-based school managed by a committee comprising Staff and interested members of the general community. Established in 1976, it has been operating in its current location on William Street since 1985. The School offer years 9 and 10 and is open to all applicants from the greater Sydney region.

The Target Group

The School provides a place for students who have experienced difficulties within the mainstream education system and those who would otherwise be at risk of not completing their basic education. East Sydney High sees its primary function as the re-engagement of 'at risk' youth in their own education. Initially, the School aims to foster in each student a sense of connectedness to the school community. It is through this sense of belonging that the School then seeks to develop resilience within each individual, to enable the students to deal with personal issues and challenges, both during schooling and in life beyond East Sydney High.

What the Service Offers

With a ceiling enrolment of sixty-five students, the School is able to offer a high teacher /student ratio. Classes are small and attention is paid to individual development and self-motivated learning. The Staff Team continually assess and re-design courses in order to more effectively meet the needs of the target group. Whilst East Sydney High offers a full School Certificate course for years 9 and 10, it is understood that for some students this may not be a realistic aim. In order to maximise the chance of re-engagement with an educational facility, the School encourages new starts to access the service at a level which is manageable for them. Therefore, once enrolled students can use East Sydney High :

- * as a registered school where they can complete the School Certificate course
- * as a drop in facility where they can receive welfare assistance and support.

Whilst preference is given to applicants who have no other options for access to education, East Sydney High may not be suitable for all applicants. The suitability of each individual will be assessed by the Staff Team at interview.

Organising an Interview

Inquiries are welcome in person, by telephone or over the Internet. An enrolment form can be downloaded from the Internet or can be mailed to the prospective student; and an appointment for an interview is arranged by telephone. Applicants who are under 18 years need to be accompanied by their legal guardian/caregiver to the interview.

Enrolment Procedure

When a student or an individual working on the student's behalf contacts East Sydney High School regarding a possible enrolment, the following steps are undertaken:

1. A brief description of how the School operates is given
2. An interview time is organised
3. If the student is under 18, they are informed that they must attend the interview with an adult, preferably the legal guardian. If this is not possible, an adult must accompany the individual to the interview.
4. As the form must be signed by the legal guardian, if they are unable to attend the interview, the School will either give a copy of the enrolment form to the student so he/she can obtain a signature or the school will send a copy to the legal guardian's residential address.

The Interview

Two Staff Members carry out each interview. The Staff go through the enrolment form with the student and get them to expand on the information already provided. The aims of the interview are :

1. To gather as much information about the student as possible, so an informed decision can be made about their suitability to the School.
2. To inform the students about the School Rules.
3. To inform the students about their Rights and Responsibilities.
4. To assist the Staff Team in carrying out a Risk Management assessment.

Risk management

Once the interview has been completed and the prospective student has been given a tour of the School, one member of the Staff Team carries out a background check, which usually takes one week. This involves the Staff Member making contact with the student's previous schools to ascertain past behaviours and to be aware of possible problems if they were to be enrolled at East Sydney High School.

A risk assessment is carried out by the Staff Member, to assess the safety issues that could impact on all members of the community. If appropriate, other significant people in the student's life are contacted, such as Juvenile Justice workers, Department of Community Service workers and school or other counsellors. Once the information has been gathered, a meeting is convened and all Staff Members assess the student's application. Risk factors are outlined and the Staff discuss whether they believe that the child would benefit from the type of service the School offers and whether they could provide a safe environment for the entire School community if this student was to be enrolled. All applicants are informed of the School's decision by phone.

A Successful Applicant

A successful applicant is one who the Staff Team believe could benefit from the nature of the School and whose behaviour does not pose an unmanageable safety risk. Each student enrolling will undergo a two week probation and settling in period. The student will be assigned a staff "Key Worker", who will assist them to settle in. The aims of the probation period are twofold. Firstly, it allows the staff sufficient time to observe the applicant and their suitability to the School. Secondly, it allows the student time to assess their own suitability.

An Unsuccessful Applicant

An unsuccessful applicant is one whose behaviour poses an unmanageable safety risk to either the staff and/or students at the School. We cannot offer places to individuals who have an untreated psychiatric condition or who have a chronic history of violence. All enrolments are assessed on a case by case basis by all members of the Staff Team and the decision is recorded on their application form.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Rationale

The aim of the East Sydney High Discipline Policy is to ensure the safety, privacy and well-being of the whole school community, evident in the rules listed below.

School Rules

1. No physical contact between students or between students and Staff.
2. No weapons, no violence, no harassment and no personal abuse.
3. Discrimination against others on the grounds of race, religion, appearance, gender or sexuality is unacceptable.
4. Students must follow staff directions.
5. No prohibited drugs or alcohol at school - either in someone's body or on their person.
6. Mobile phones are to be switched off before entering class.
7. No spitting, graffiti or damage to the building or school property. Students are expected to pay for any damage caused.
8. No eating, drinking or smoking in class.
9. Visitors are only allowed on the premises by prior arrangement with the Staff.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Students

Rights of the students:

What students can expect at East Sydney High School:

- to receive an education
- to be treated with dignity and respect
- to be safe from violence, reportable conduct or interference from others
- to be safe from discrimination and harassment
- to be given a fair hearing in any dispute
- to have a say in any decision that affects them

Responsibilities of the students:

What the School expects from the students:

- to respect the rights of others
- to follow the school rules
- to treat members of the community with dignity and respect
- to not make false accusations against the staff

Students at East Sydney High have the right to feel and be safe from reportable behaviour, violence or interference from others, discrimination and harassment.

Staff have the right to feel and be safe from false accusations, violence or interference, discrimination and harassment.

If, at anytime a student does not feel safe, all they need to do is talk to their Key Worker or another member of the Staff Team about the situation. Procedures have been put in place to address these issues at this School.

Disciplinary Procedure

Part of the School's Disciplinary Procedure is to have meetings with the students to solve any problems that arise. These meetings are part of the School culture and happen on a daily basis to address issues that occur both within and outside of the classroom.

All meetings are recorded in the School Incident Book, so if a pattern of behaviour is identified the Staff can address it more adequately. The purpose of these meetings is to address the problems as they arise, to provide a safe environment for Staff and students and to give the students every opportunity to change their behaviour.

If an inappropriate behaviour occurs within the classroom the following procedure is adopted:

- Step 1) The student is given a warning.
- Step 2) If it occurs again, the student is asked to leave the classroom environment and is directed to the communal area to be supervised by non-timetabled staff.
- Step 3) As soon as the class is finished, a meeting is called between the student and two Staff Members.

Minor infringements of the school rules will be discussed in a meetings between two Staff Members and the student involved, to give the individual every opportunity to change her/his behaviour.

If no behaviour change occurs within a specified period, the student may be given " Time Out " to think about his/her actions and the impact they are having on the school community.

Major infringements of the school rules will be discussed in a meeting between Staff and the student and initially the student is given a formal warning. If the behaviour continues, a suspension may result. If the same major rule is consistently broken, expulsion may result. Students are requested to attend meetings as the incidents occur or as soon as is convenient.

Violence towards Staff or students will be not be tolerated. Corporal punishment is in no way used or supported by the Staff at East Sydney High School. (For information regarding the management of critical incidents, refer to the School's Critical Incident Policy.)

GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION POLICY

Aims

This policy describes the processes by which disputes between East Sydney High School and members of its community may be speedily resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. East Sydney High School aims to promote and maintain a supportive learning environment for all students. The purpose of the Grievance Resolution Policy is to provide fair and equitable processes which enable student, legal guardian/caregiver and Staff concerns to be addressed. All actions under this policy are to be underpinned by the principles of procedural fairness. These principles of procedural fairness apply to all students, legal guardians/ caregivers, Staff Members and others who may be involved. These procedures are designed to assist everyone in what might be termed “general concerns.” Where a solution to a different concern might require following a different process, ie allegations of reportable conduct, other policies are already in place which require certain, immediate actions on the part of the Staff Team/ Head of Agency.

The Grievance Resolution Policy is designed to:

- Resolve concerns/grievances speedily, in a confidential, conciliatory and effective manner
- Be easily accessible to students, legal guardians/caregivers and Staff Members, thus enabling an effective and productive work and study environment to be created and maintained
- Resolve the concern/grievance as close as possible to the source of the concern/ grievance

Principles

1. All concerns/grievances are to be addressed as diligently as possible.
2. All parties to a concern or grievance have the right to be:
 1. Heard
 2. Treated without bias or pre-judgement
 3. Informed of any concern/grievance raised which relates to them
 4. Provided with an opportunity to respond to any concern/grievance pertaining to them
 5. Informed about the status of any concern or grievance which has been formally raised and to which they are a party
3. Students, legal guardians/caregivers or Staff Members will not suffer any disadvantage as a result of raising a concern/grievance.
4. Any Staff Member who is the subject of or associated with any student, legal guardian or another Staff Member’s concern or grievance will participate in discussions and actions taken under this policy with a view to addressing the matter.
5. Any party to a concern/grievance has the right to be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at any meetings convened to discuss resolution of that concern/grievance.

6. All aspects of the process are to be transparent. The policy and associated procedures are readily accessible via the school web site and the School policy folder.
7. Appropriate confidentiality is to be maintained at all times.
8. A solution to be sought that is agreeable to all parties concerned.

Definitions

“**Concern**” means any act or omission which a student / legal guardian / Staff Member believes to be unfair or discriminatory and relates to school activities, which is dealt with in an *informal* manner.

“**Grievance**” means any act or omission which a student / legal guardian / Staff Member believes to be unfair or discriminatory and relates to school activities, which is dealt with in a *formal* manner.

“**Grievant**” means a person who has initiated the grievance.

“**Respondent**” means a person against whom a grievance has been initiated under this policy.

“**Principles of procedural fairness**” in the context of this policy are defined as the right to be given a fair hearing and the opportunity to present one’s case, the right to have a decision made by an unbiased or disinterested decision-maker and the right to have that decision based on reasonable and testable evidence.

“**Appropriate confidentiality**” refers to all members of the Staff Team being equally informed about the nature of the grievance. Also, people outside of this group will be informed on a need to know basis only, for the explicit purposes of clarification or assistance, to enable the grievance process to be facilitated.

Procedures

PART A: Procedure to be used if a concern is raised by a student about an East Sydney High Staff Member.

Informal stages

Stage 1: Issue is to be raised by the student with any member of the Staff Team.

Stage 2: A meeting is called between the student who has raised the concern, the student's Key Worker, the Staff Member against whom the concern has been raised, and if appropriate the Staff Member who received the initial concern.

Stage 3: Staff Member who was informed by the student of the complaint, discusses the issue with all members of the Staff Team at the afternoon debrief. (The Staff Team represents a privileged communication path as per the Child Protection Policy).

NOTE: If it is more appropriate to have a meeting after the staff debrief, a meeting is called as soon as the student returns to school.

If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting, a more formal procedure will be adopted. If it reaches this stage, the concern will be termed a grievance and the student making the complaint will be termed the grievant. The Staff Member against whom the complaint is made will be referred to as the respondent. All meetings henceforth will be documented.

Formal stages

Stage 5: The grievant will have a second meeting accompanied by her/his legal guardian, if possible. At this meeting the student's legal guardian, Key Worker, the respondent and, if appropriate, another member of the Staff Team will be present.

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting

Stage 6: A third meeting will be organised between all members outlined in Stage 5 and the Head of Agency, representing the Management Committee. The Head of Agency will adopt a mediation role in this process.

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting

Stage 7: The grievant is encouraged to contact the Association of Independent Schools and inform them of the complaint.

PART B: Procedure to be used if a concern is raised by a Staff Member about another East Sydney High Staff Member.

Informal stages

Stage 1: The Staff Member is encouraged to have an informal chat with the colleague that is the subject of their concern, to see if they can resolve the issue.

If the Staff Member raising the concern is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting

Stage 2: The issue is taken to another member of the Staff Team who acts as a mediator.

If the Staff Member raising the concern is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting

Stage 3: The issue is taken to all members of the Staff Team.

If the Staff Member is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting, a more formal procedure will be adopted. If it reaches this stage, the concern will be termed a grievance and the Staff Member making the complaint will be termed the grievant. The Staff Member against whom the complaint is made will be referred to as the respondent. All meetings henceforth will be documented.

Formal stages

Stage 4: The grievant is invited to have a member of the Independent Education Union be present at a meeting with the Staff Team

OR

The issue is taken to the Non -Teaching Staff of the Total Management Committee.

PART C: Procedure to be used if a concern is raised by a legal guardian / caregiver about an East Sydney High Staff Member.

Informal stages

Stage 1: The issue is to be raised by the legal guardian/caregiver with any member of the Staff Team by phone/mail etc.

Stage 2: Staff Member who is informed by the legal guardian/caregiver of the concern, discusses the issue with the Staff Member who is the subject of the concern.

Stage 3: All members of the Staff Team are informed of the nature of the concern at that afternoon's debrief. (The Staff Team represents a privileged communication path as per the Child Protection Policy).

Stage 4: The most appropriate Staff Member, as determined by the Staff Team, phones the legal guardian/caregiver and informs she/he of the school's response.

If the legal guardian/caregiver raising the concern is dissatisfied with the outcome of this phone call

Stage 5: The legal guardian/caregiver is invited to attend a meeting with the Staff Team.

If the legal guardian/caregiver is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting, a more formal procedure will be adopted. If it reaches this stage, the concern will be termed a grievance and the legal guardian/caregiver making the complaint will be termed the grievant. The Staff Member against whom the complaint is made will be referred to as the respondent. All meetings henceforth will be documented.

Formal stages

Stage 6: A second meeting will be organised between all members outlined in Stage 5 and the Head of Agency, representing the Management Committee. The Head of Agency will adopt a mediation role in this process.

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting

Stage 6: The grievant is encouraged to contact the Association of Independent Schools and inform them of the complaint.

Documentation

If the concern/grievance cannot be solved at an informal level, it will progress to the formal stage and all meetings henceforth will be recorded. A copy of all of the meetings will be placed in the students file.

If the grievance is taken to any formal stage, the School must:

- a. Obtain a written statement from the grievant outlining the nature of and grounds for her/his grievance, including the names of any other party/ies, the time, date, place and any witnesses to the alleged matter of grievance. This must include the name and signature of the grievant. This can be handed to any member of the Staff Team or posted to the School.
- b. Write down the steps that have been taken to date, including advice sought and provided, and any action taken.
- c. Provide any relevant supporting document.
- d. Indicate what the grievant considers to be a satisfactory solution of her/his grievance.
- e. Record all subsequent meetings and place a copy in the files of all relevant parties.

Exclusions

The following are specifically excluded from the scope of this policy:

- * Issues relating to the Child Protection Policy
- * Decisions regarding termination of enrolment
- * Occupational Health and Safety
- * Management of Critical Incidents
- * Enrolment procedures
- * School Discipline

STUDENT WELFARE POLICY

1. Rationale

The Student Welfare Policy at East Sydney High School endeavours to promote a healthy, supportive and secure environment for students and to raise awareness of what makes students resilient. The main focus is to empower the students with strategies that will reduce their individual vulnerabilities and increase their coping skills.

Student Welfare encompasses everything that the school community does to meet the personal and social needs of students and enhance their well-being. It involves recognising, valuing and developing each student as a total and unique person in the context of the School Community and society at large. The Staff Team have a specific role in planning, co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating the school's Student Welfare Program.

The Student Welfare Program is the sum total of all of the policies, structures and activities which are planned and implemented by the school to promote student safety and well-being.

2. Aim

East Sydney High School aims to create an environment in which all teachers assume responsibility for Student Welfare. The Staff Team will endeavour to provide successful experiences for all students, where they feel safe and secure in a supportive atmosphere. Through this structure, a sense of belonging is fostered and a sense of well being is strengthened. By developing this sense of connectedness to the school community, the Staff Team can then focus on improving and developing the welfare of each student. Through interaction with their Key Worker and other adults on the Staff Team, the student can develop positive social behaviours and problem solving skills.

Staff are confident, skilled and proactive in the management of Student Welfare issues. Communication processes and protocols are clear and well known to ensure the effectiveness of Student Welfare support. Staff training is undertaken on a daily basis and all members of the Staff Team are encouraged to undergo professional development in the area of student welfare.

3. Implementation

To ensure Student Welfare is constantly addressed, East Sydney High School will implement and maintain programs, policies and structures such as:

- i. The Key Worker Program
- ii. Moving Right Along
- iii. Personal Development Health and Physical Education Program
- iv. School Rules
- v. Discipline Policy
- vi. Staff Debrief

i) The Key Worker Program

'The Key worker Program' is the single most effective tool that ESH employs in removing the obstacles which stand between these young people and their ability to become functioning and contributing members of society. Each new start is allocated a staff key worker, whose first task is to engage the student with ESH. Throughout their time at the School the 'Key Worker' assists and supports the young person in meeting their basic welfare needs in the areas of health, accommodation, finance and the law. Our Staff offer an outreach service and regularly attend and liaise with:

- medical centres and hospitals
- refuges and accommodation services
- Centrelink, financial institutions and potential employers
- legal centres, the Department of Juvenile Justice and the court system
- employers and other educational institutions

By connecting the young person with the institution the Key Worker is then able to assist them in developing resilience towards issues such as alcohol and drug problems, gender identity confusion, neglect, violence, homelessness and/ or unemployment, which may be preventing them from accessing education.

ii) Moving Right Along Program

Moving Right Along is a week long program conducted at the end of Term 4. It aims to connect students who have completed their School Certificate with other educational options and apprenticeships, and Career Reference centres. Students go to TAFE's, Colleges and employment centres in the Sydney city area, which helps students become familiar with and connect to various post East Sydney High options.

iii) Personal Development Health and Physical Education Program

The Personal Development Health and Physical Education curriculum aims to develop specific areas of skill deficit in most at risk youth, which include:

- improving self-esteem
- improving interpersonal communication skills
- establishing and maintaining positive relationships
- clarifying values
- making responsible decisions
- developing conflict resolution strategies

Students will be involved in drug education programs which prevent students misusing and/or overusing drugs.

iv) School Rules

The School rules and the Rights and Responsibilities of the students have been developed with Student Welfare being the top priority. All of these rules are listed below, and the Rights and Responsibilities of the students are listed on the next page:

- 1 No physical contact between students or between students and staff.
- 2 No weapons, no violence, no harassment.
- 3 Discrimination against others on the grounds of race, religion, appearance, gender or sexuality is unacceptable.
- 4 No eating, drinking or smoking in class.
- 5 Mobile phones are to be switched off before entering class.
- 6 No spitting, graffiti or damage to the building or school property. Students are expected to pay for any damage caused.
- 7 No drugs or alcohol at school - either in someone's body or on their person.
- 8 Visitors are only allowed on the premises by prior arrangement with the Staff.

Rights of the students

What students can expect at East Sydney High School:

- to receive an education
- to be treated with dignity and respect
- to be safe from violence, reportable conduct or interference from others
- to be safe from discrimination and harassment
- to be given a fair hearing in any dispute
- to have a say in any decision that affects them.

Responsibilities of the students

What the School expects from the students:

- to respect the rights of others
- to co-operate with the staff and students
- to follow the school rules
- to treat members of the community with dignity and respect
- to not make false accusations against the staff

v) Disciplinary Policy

Part of the School's Disciplinary Policy is to have meetings with the students to solve any problems that arise. These meetings are part of the School culture and happen on a daily basis to address issues that occur both within and outside of the classroom.

All disciplinary meetings are recorded in the School Incident Book and on the students file, so if a pattern of behaviour is identified the Staff can address it more adequately. The purpose of these meetings is to address the problems as they arise, to provide a safe environment for Staff and students and to give the students every opportunity to change their behaviour.

If an inappropriate behaviour occurs within the classroom the following procedure is adopted:

Step 1) The student is given a warning.

Step 2) If it occurs again, the student is asked to leave the classroom environment and is directed to the communal area to be supervised by non-timetable staff.

Step 3) As soon as the class is finished, a meeting is called between the student and two staff members.

Minor infringements of the school rules will be discussed in a meeting between two staff members and the student involved, to give the individual every opportunity to change his/her behaviour. If no behaviour change occurs within a specified period, the student may be given " Time Out " to think about his/her actions and the impact they are having on the school community. Major infringements of the school rules will be discussed in a meeting between staff and the student and initially the student is given a formal warning. If the behaviour continues, a suspension may result. If the same major rule is consistently broken, expulsion may result. Students are requested to attend meetings as the incidents occur or as soon as is convenient.

If a student carries out an assault on another member of the student body, either on or off the premises, their place is terminated for that year, unless there are mitigating circumstances. The nature of the assault and the circumstances surrounding it will determine whether or not that student is to be re-enrolled in future years. Any assault on a Staff Member will result in a student having their place at the school permanently terminated. Corporal punishment is in no way used or supported by the Staff at East Sydney High School.

vi) Staff Debrief

All members of the Staff Team attend a debrief at the end of every day. At this meeting, every student is raised and any information about their circumstances and their welfare is discussed. In this way, all Staff Members have access to the same information and student welfare can be monitored and evaluated on a daily basis.