

**Birali Steiner School**  
**2020**  
**School Annual Report**



## VISION

**Engaging our Birali students in learning through Head, Heart and Hands**

## MISSION

At Birali Steiner School, we strive together to deliver an education that honours, nourishes, and develops the creative spirit of the child. Our school aims to kindle in young people courage, determination, a sense for truth and beauty and a desire for lifelong learning, with an understanding of respect for the traditional custodians of the land on which the school is founded.

We do this by providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences that encompass and emphasise:

- physical development and connection to the natural world
- advancement of the social and feeling life
- development of artistic and creative capacity
- cultivation of living thinking through engaging in academic studies

Our educators bring the Steiner pedagogical approach to life, in our unique Birali context, so that young people may develop a healthy and lively connection to others, their natural environment and their own individuality.

With this foundation, the young person can go forth into the world with a broad and deep knowledge base, a feeling of their own social competency and a benevolent sense of individual freedom.

## OUR SCHOOL

Our Birali Steiner School respectfully acknowledges Traditional Custodians of the land on which our school lives – the Gubbi Gubbi People. We also acknowledge a continuous connection to land, culture and learning for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Birali Steiner School offers an inspiring and comprehensive Steiner education for children from Prep through to Year 10. Our architecturally designed school is located on 26 acres of natural bushland, at Beachmere. This picturesque destination is approximately 1 hour drive from Brisbane, in South-East Queensland, Australia.

Birali Steiner School is an inclusive, sustainable and beautiful school with a community of passionate people who are committed to learning, supporting each other and working together. We provide a nurturing environment where children can thrive and have opportunities on many levels to find their inner and outer potential.

Steiner/Waldorf education is now over 100 years old and is the fastest growing education movement in the world, in over 65 countries. It is an education for global citizenship: providing students with the opportunity to foster courage, imagination, resilience and enthusiasm to be positive and effective contributors to society and the environment.

We value mutually supportive relationships for students, staff and families. Each staff member strives to be the best role model they can be for the young people in our community. We strongly uphold the philosophy, ethos and child developmental principles given to us by Dr Rudolf Steiner who was a scientist, philosopher, architect and social reformer. Out of his developmental picture, a whole school movement and curriculum was born, which is increasingly more relevant for the world today, as we work together to ensure an ethical future. In everything we do, we hold the child in the centre, as we strive to develop the three faculties of thinking, feeling and willing.

Our Birali Community value experiential learning, respect towards each other and the environment, and a commitment to celebrating together as a community with festivals and community events. We view ourselves as a community of learners: teachers, staff, families, and students - striving to achieve individual, communal and global growth and understanding.

In 2020, the Birali community and Birali Steiner staff and students experienced many challenges of Covid across their family and school life. Our Birali Steiner teachers were extraordinarily adept and agile in addressing diverse approaches to offering learning engagement to our students. Our whole community has expressed our appreciation to them.

## **BIRALI COLLEGE**

The Birali College is working toward a clearer understanding and shared vision focussed on ensuring that Birali Steiner School always retains at its core the inspiration of Rudolf Steiner and the Anthroposophical insight that is needed to deliver a comprehensive Steiner education to students. It is through the shared responsibility of the teachers and staff and their joint contribution, via membership of the developing Birali College, that Birali Steiner School will be highly regarded.

The developing Birali College role is pivotal to building the vision for Steiner education as it is applied locally at Birali Steiner School, and to develop and maintain the rhythms of school life over the year.

There are key elements to the role of Birali College, particularly developing the broad pedagogical picture at Birali Steiner School across P-10.

The development of this picture across all the classes will be based upon the teachings of Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophy). The Birali College continue to work diligently toward developing their shared knowledge, and to ensure that all members are able to contribute to the efficient and informed development of the pedagogical visions needed across the learning environment of the school.

The Birali College is forming, and contributing to, the cultural understanding of the school. This is particularly relevant to Artistic Engagement, such as celebrating Birali Festivals and through Birali Performances.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*The preschool years, the kindergarten years, are the most important of all in the education of the child ... It is absolutely essential that before we begin to think, before we so much as begin to set our thinking in motion, we experience the condition of wonder. Rudolf Steiner*

We strive to create a warm and loving environment for our early years' program offered through our Pippi Room (Prep) and Birali Playgroup sessions, which honours the young child's need for connectedness to this world, with nurturing rhythms, quality sensory experiences and engagement in the real work of childhood: play.

## **PRIMARY YEARS**

At Birali Steiner School, the traditional Waldorf School practice of having one teacher accompany the children through their Primary School years is valued. Over this extended period the teacher and children develop a meaningful relationship that fosters an environment of trust and security within which the child can relax into their learning.

Our Primary School teachers work consciously in all they do to first and foremost protect and develop this imaginative capacity. Academic learning is enlivened through an artistic approach and embedded in practical experience and activity. Every day children are immersed in story, art, music, movement, and verse along with the more traditional academics.

The Main Lesson is a key point of difference in Steiner Schools. The first two hours of every morning are dedicated to study of the same topic or theme for a period of three or four weeks. The central theme of the Main Lesson is progressively explored through a broad spectrum of integrated activity; each day building on the previous.

Main Lesson blocks may be focused on Mathematics, Language, Humanities, Science, however each will encompass a variety of experiences including movement, singing, painting, drawing, modelling, drama, narrative, practical activity and formal academic work. The children create their own Main Lesson Books which serve as a personal record and recount of their learning through drawings, words and other visual representations.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

The aim of our Middle School is to provide an education for teenagers that inspires love of learning, develops freedom of thought, and fosters self-confidence in an atmosphere of academic rigor and artistic fulfilment. Adolescence is when the student really begins to take hold of their independent thinking. We encourage them to think independently: to observe, to research, and then to come to conclusions and judgements.

In Middle School, students' care and guidance is passed from the Class Teacher to a group of specialist teachers. In 2021 one of their Middle School teachers became the Middle School students' Class Guardian. This new emphasis on specialist teaching means that the young person meets a range of experienced and passionate Specialist Teachers, who can bring the full depth of knowledge in an enlivened and extended way.

The Middle School curriculum is designed to encourage the emergence of world citizens. The Main Lesson Structure established in the Primary School years is preserved throughout the Middle School and students continue to explore a full range of academic subjects in an integrated and creative way. The work of the secondary teacher in Middle School is to unfold Main Lessons that are thematic, experiential and that develop discernment and independent, lively thinking within the discipline of the subject. These lessons include: mathematics; English; lessons in physics, chemistry and biology; visual, sculptural, dramatic, musical and movement arts; foreign language; sport and physical education; gardening and workshop lessons in handwork and manual crafts.

## INDIVIDUAL ENRICHMENT

Rudolf Steiner gave lenses through which to observe the children. He advocated observing and 'seeing what is'. Through close observation, teachers are able to see how children learn, to see their gifts and through observing their behaviours, to see their challenges.

In 2020 increased enrichment support was offered across the school as increased needs were identified. The Individual Enrichment Team space has been continuing to grow and develop with wider access and utilisation. The ideal is for children to be in their class and the Individual Enrichment Team to upskill the teaching assistants and collaborate with teachers. The NCCD process also requires significant oversight and coordination, providing support for teachers who are collecting the data as evidence.

The Individual Enrichment Team work closely with the teachers and then strive to support the diverse needs of the children. The role of the Individual Enrichment Team is to help integrate children with additional needs, identify which therapies or targeted programs can support individual children and collaborate with teachers and assistants. They help to monitor and review and meet with parents when required.

## FESTIVALS

Throughout history, festivals have been interwoven with life and the cycles of nature. Rudolf Steiner presents the annual festivals in a seasonally and globally encompassing context. He describes processes, which are taking place in nature during the four seasons spring, summer, autumn and winter. Steiner states that the earth is a living organism, which is performing a rhythmic life together with the seasons. For the description of this rhythmic life, he uses two metaphors connected to human life. On the one hand, he compares it with the processes of sleeping and waking, and on the other with those of inhaling and exhaling.

Festivals play an essential role for the school community. Celebrating festivals brings a sense of rhythm and anticipation. Celebrating festivals together is also a way of keeping time. They help the child to increasingly find orientation in time.

Our Birali Festivals are developing a pattern and rhythm which is creating positive connections between our school, our students and our community.

## MUSIC

*“Music is an art imbued with power to penetrate into the very depth of the soul, imbuing man with the love of virtue.” Rudolf Steiner*

Primary Classroom Music begins from Class 1 and continues to Class 8 as a weekly specialist lesson. In Classroom Music at Birali, this takes shape and direction building on the Early Years Pippi Room Prep program, and using songs and games to help gradually develop the child’s response to pitch and rhythm. The timing around the introduction of each new musical concept is considered and sequential, so that by the time the children reach Class 3 and are entering the next stage of development, they are ready to take on the physical learning of an instrument with well-prepared aural skills and the reading and writing of music notation. As well as developing strong musical skills, the program seeks to instil in the children a love of music and allow them to experience joy in music making that is the birthright of every human being.

## INSTRUMENTAL PROGRAM

Birali Steiner School offers a variety of opportunities to engage with music through the introduction of musical instruments, including Class engagement with Pentatonic, Diatonic then Alto Recorders, commencing from Class 1 to and progressing to Class 8. Other instruments introduced include Marimba, Xylophone, Violin, Cello, Ukulele and more recently Piano.

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM – INCLUDING CAMPS and CLASS EXCURSIONS

The Birali Outdoor Education program continues to develop with Birali teachers ensuring that, wherever appropriate and possible, these form an integral and inclusive aspect of all our students’ education, starting with Pippi Room Preps ‘Nature Day’.

A lot of time and effort goes into tailoring outdoor education programs suitable for Birali Steiner School students, ensuring that each activity aligns with and responds to the Steiner Curriculum requirements, and is underpinned by Anthroposophical understanding. The elements of each camp or excursion are also planned so that these might best meet the learning focus and individual needs of our students. During planned camps or excursions, our students experience a high level of interaction and connection, of effort and reward, of fun and challenge. Through our Outdoor Education Camp and Excursion program, students are presented with a wide variety of experiences to help with their overall growth and development.

The open, natural environment of Birali Steiner School supports the engagement of our students in open space and bushland activities, which encourage a love of our local environment. Additionally, our students are able to participate in a Gardening Program - and from that Cooking Programs encouraging each of us in a healthy lifestyle approach, and supporting students in their positive healthy choices.

In 2020, some planned camps, excursions and class activities had to be changed due to Covid restrictions. A huge thank you to teachers and other staff involved in coordinating and supporting Birali Steiner School Outdoor Ed Camps and Class Excursions for all their revisions, changes and management of these challenges.

## SOCIAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The aim of our Birali approach to student health and well-being is to support the development of a strong, inner moral compass in all students that allows them to make ethical behavioural choices as adults.

A need for constant and consistent positive and gentle guidance flows, from very young children to older children, to developing self-discipline and taking more individual responsibility for their behaviour and actions. Teachers strongly focus on and support this process and movement by using specific positive behaviour engagement techniques at different stages of children's development.

Students learn social skills in different ways at different ages. Their individual level of skill will depend on their experience, environment and developmental maturity. Teachers' responses to acknowledging positive engagement and supporting inappropriate or challenging behaviours which might disrupt learning or the well-being of other students, need to reflect this, and be differentiated accordingly.

## ENVIRONMENT

Our Birali Steiner School relocated to our current site in November 2018, with finalisation of the Learning Spaces.

Interim plans are being made in consultation with TMR, Caboolture Bus Lines and MBRC with ongoing collaboration to find positive solutions to the traffic movement around the school, including public bus transport options, and the development of plans for the Beachmere Rd Turning Lane.

The school's Master Plan will be reviewed in 2021 to ensure a solid foundation for the future, responsible planning for sustainability and ensure future resources are available as required to support the continuing growth on our Birali site.

On behalf of all the Birali Steiner School Community, I take this opportunity to thank the Birali Board for their advice and support, the Birali School Leadership Team for their professionalism and commitment, the Birali College for their continuing focus on forming a clear understanding of their focus on the pedagogical impulse of the school and, of course, thank you to all staff for their ongoing commitment to Birali Steiner School.

Our thanks and appreciation to all families who entrust your children to us for their education, and to all our Birali students for your enthusiasm, your energy, your willingness to learn and your friendship to each other. Together Birali Steiner School has a positive community - learning and growing with each other, with each of us striving for continual improvement.

Helen Starr

Interim Principal

## BIRALI BOARD

### 2020 – A Review

The Birali Board delegated accountability through the Birali, Association Constitution, is to the Birali Steiner School Principal, Mr Chris Jack. Mr Jack is genuine and warm in his dealings with the Board, staff and children.

Achievements for 2020 were:

1. Financial: Continued growth in enrolments (refer to the Treasurer's Report for details).
2. Performance: Highlights this year with regards to performance have included the achievement of several strategic milestones:
  - a. Continuing increase in Enrolments across the school

- b. The transition of our first cohort of primary students into a Middle School cohort
- c. Development of the Middle School Hub with an appropriate Learning Space for Middle School students in Arts, Manual Arts and Science studies. During 2020 a Manual Arts and Visual Arts specific area was appropriately equipped, with required Risk Assessments for student safe use of tools and materials required in their learning programs.
- d. Continuance of providing student learning throughout the 2020 challenges of Covid 19, particularly with regard to Queensland Health directives to schools for 'Learn from Home' program delivery, extended and enhanced the professional capability and agility of teaching staff.
- e. Continuing to develop the Birali Steiner School Enrichment Program to support student learning and continuing well-being.

## 2021 – The Year Ahead

The Board's focus continues to be on accountability and effective governance, on providing a strong Steiner education to our students, and consolidating expectations of being a model of Steiner education.

Key focus areas for the Board in 2021 are:

- Review of the Birali Steiner Strategic Plan 2021-2025, including reframing and clarifying the purpose of Birali Education, through developing the Birali Steiner School Mission Statement.
- Master Plan development - with consideration of the Birali site scope, and future needs of our growing and developing school.
- Understanding enrolment trends and influences, including fluctuations, and working proactively to engage quality staff (teachers, aides, interns, learning support, administration and maintenance) focussed on the academic, social and emotional development of the students.
- Understanding what additional infrastructure will be required for the growth of the school enrolment and required infrastructure for Learning Spaces.

## Acknowledgements

As Board Chair, and on behalf of the Birali Board Directors and our Birali Steiner School staff, I would like to express the Birali Board's gratitude to our school community. Our wonderful school is developing, supported by our Birali community that surrounds it.

On behalf of the Birali Board, my appreciation to:

- Our staff – professional, committed, energetic, enthusiastic.
- College members – focussed on developing a clear picture of their collective role and shared understanding of Anthroposophy and its practice in our School, and for taking on responsibilities additional to their normal workload.
- Volunteers – your ongoing commitment of time and energy is so very much appreciated by each of us in the Birali Community.

## Board Membership

Every member of the Board is a volunteer who devotes countless hours to promoting efficient governance for the school – on behalf of our Birali community, my thanks to you all. These roles require ongoing commitment and work at a professional and strategic level, taking on a Board Director workload as well as committing to legal and financial responsibilities which are quite significant.

Several Board Directors concluded their roles on the Birali Board in 2020 – our long-standing and valued Board Chair, Brad Day; and particularly our Board Directors – Francis Klugman, Birali Treasurer and valued previous

staff member – now Principal, Noosa Pengari, and our very much appreciated Board Director, Lorraine Birse (retired in 2019).

Their contributions - particularly with regard to Brad's role and commitment to the Birali Steiner School as Birali Board Chair - were highly significant to the continuing efforts and future direction of the Board, prior to and continuing in early 2020. Our sincere appreciation and deep thanks for their commitment.

The following table provides a summary of the intentions of current Board members for the June **2021 BIRALI AGM**.

Mr Steven Laughton: Birali Board Chair, Role of Appointed Birali Board Member -1 Year term.

Ms Helen Starr: Birali Board Treasurer, Role of Birali Board Member, 5 years over two terms, Previous Secretary

Ms Betty (Jane) Francis: Birali Board Secretary, Role of Appointed Birali Board Member - 1 Year term.

Mr Rob Birse: Non-Executive - Role of Birali Board Member, Previous Birali Board Director - 1 Year term (Anthroposophical perspective)

Mr Hugh Thompson: Birali Board Vice Chair, Role of Birali Board Member, Previous Birali Board President (Founding member – Birali Steiner School)

Ms Jess Markey: Non-Executive Director – Role of Birali Board Member (Parent perspective), Previous Secretary

## 2020 Annual Report data

### Contextual Information<sup>1</sup>

#### School Sector: \*

Independent

#### Year Levels Offered:

Pre-prep to Class 8

#### Co-educational or Single Sex: \*

Co-educational

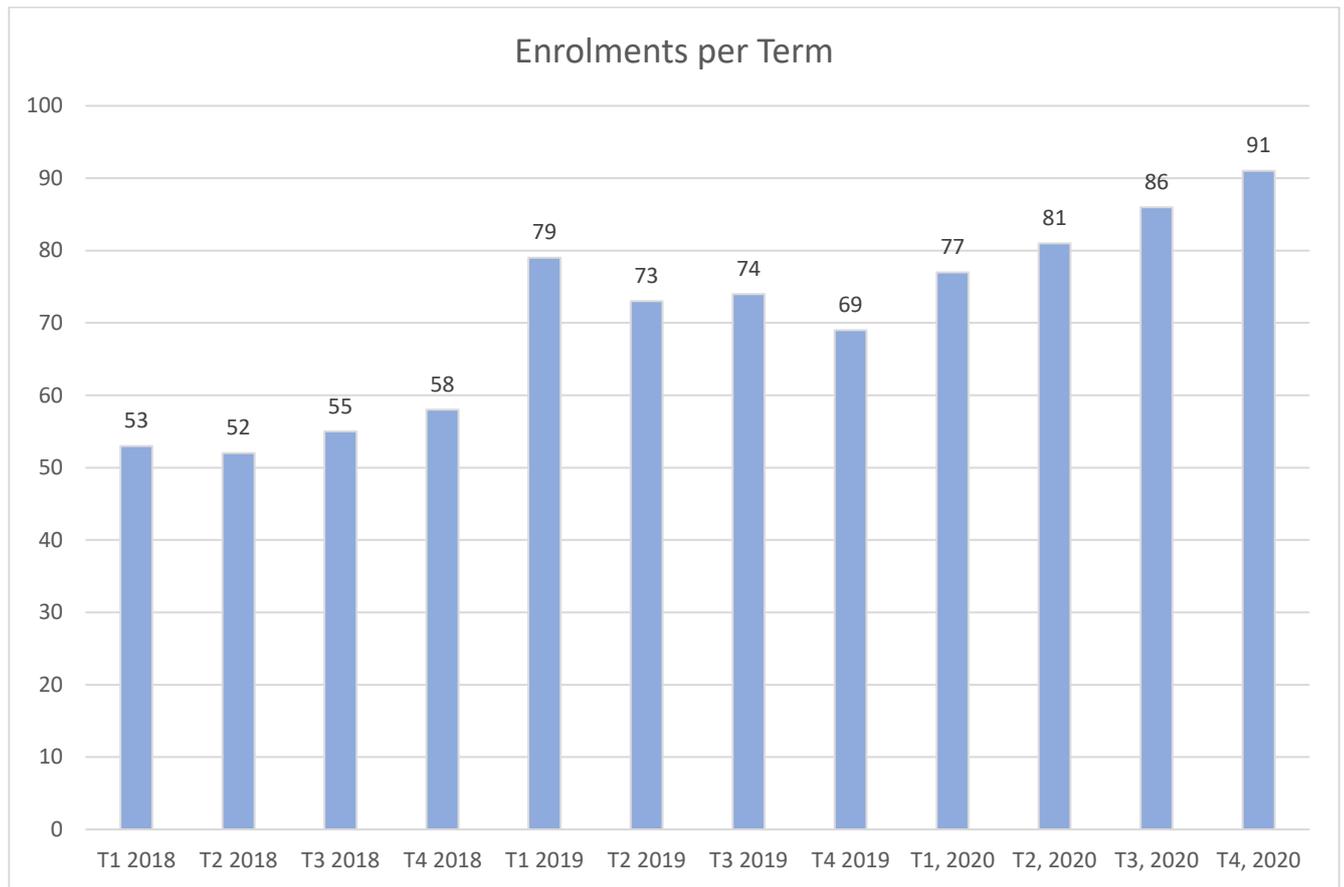
#### Characteristics of the Student Body: \*

Birali Steiner School is a diverse community which draws upon the rich culture of nationalities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Asian, European and Pacific Islander students.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(a)

## Total Enrolments: \*



## Workforce Information

### Staff Composition, Including Indigenous Staff: \*<sup>2</sup>

Full Time Teaching Staff – Teachers, Teacher Aides, Specialist Support = 7  
Part Time Teaching Staff – Teachers, Teacher Aides, Specialist Support = 12.5  
Full Time Non-Teaching Staff – Administration, Maintenance = 2  
Part Time Non-Teaching Staff – Administration, Maintenance = 6.5  
Currently no staff identify as indigenous.

### Highest Qualifications of all Teachers: \*<sup>3</sup>

Qualification	Number of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school who hold this qualification
Doctorate or higher	0
Masters	3
Post-Graduate/Graduate Diploma	5
Bachelor	5
Diploma	0
Qualification in Steiner Education	4

<sup>2</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(c)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(b)

## Funding Information

### School Income Broken Down by Funding Source \*4

Please refer to the My School website for Financial data - <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/52666/finances>

## Social Climate

### Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School \*5

Where schools already undertake annual surveys of parents, students and teachers for the purpose of marketing and school improvement, include relevant summaries of findings here, in plain English.

If a school does not currently undertake any such surveys, consideration might be given to such a project; or alternatively, the school should consider any other data or information that it may have which could be the basis of a report on parent, student and teacher satisfaction. For example, letters and testimonials from parents; enrolment retention rates over time; increasing enrolments over time; teacher retention rates over time.

Student Enrolments: During the 2020 school year, the enrolments at Birali Steiner School continued to trend upward. This pleasing pattern has been evident from the formative days of Birali Steiner School.

Satisfaction Data: The Birali Steiner School communication process - *Feedback@Birali* - offers opportunity for Birali community – parents, staff members and interested stakeholders- to submit suggestions for improvement or resolution, concerns and compliments to the Birali Steiner School Principal or Birali Board Chair for their attention.

In 2021, a Birali Steiner School Parent Survey is planned with the purpose of gathering the perspective of parents in relation to their satisfaction with the school.

## Student Outcomes

### Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school: \*6

The average student attendance rate for the whole school in 2020 was at 88.9%

### Average student attendance rate for each year level: \*7

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE (%) FOR EACH YEAR LEVEL 2020									
A d	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
	85.40%	88.70%	87.60%	89.40%	88.10%	92.90%	90.60%	88.10%	85.60%
* The year level rate is generated by dividing the total of full-days and part-days that students attended and comparing this to the total of all possible days for students to attend, expressed as a percentage.									

<sup>4</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(g)

<sup>5</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(f)

<sup>6</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(i)

<sup>7</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(i)

<sup>8</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(ii)

Non-Attendance: Students with less than satisfactory Attendance Rates are identified by their Class Teachers. Communication is undertaken with parents to provide possible advice, assistance or strategies to the family to improve the student attendance.

Continuing concerns regarding non-attendance are referred to the Birali Steiner School Well-Being Officer for support to the student and family.

Should the matter of non-attendance continue to be unresolved with the child successfully attending at school, the family are contacted by a member of the School Leadership to support and advise on how to address this concerning ongoing non-attendance matter.

### **NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5 and 7 and 9 in 2020 \*<sup>9</sup>**

Please refer to the MySchool website for information on NAPLAN data - <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/52666/naplan/results>

*Alternatively, complete the following section.*

### **Privacy and Interpretation of Data**

The fundamental principle for reporting performance information is to support school improvement throughout Queensland and to provide a profile of all schools to the community. While the reporting initiative is a valuable move towards sharing education information, it brings with it responsibilities in the areas of personal information and privacy. The reporting of student achievement information needs to be managed according to appropriate privacy provisions and needs to ensure that publicly available information is accurate and easily interpreted.

There are many Queensland schools that have small enrolment numbers, particularly at individual year levels. For this reason, care needs to be taken not to identify individual students. Care also needs to be taken in the interpretation of information where trends may be volatile. When reporting on small numbers or 'cohorts' of students, an annual variation in enrolment of just one or two students can have a significant effect on data from one year to the next. This is where setting information in context is of prime importance.

When publishing information on student achievement and school performance:

- Careful consideration should be given to the nature of reporting where there are fewer than five students in a group, cohort or reporting field;
- Information should not be published where all persons in a particular group have achieved identical results, irrespective of group or cohort size.

All published information must:

- Maintain the privacy of individual student information;
- Minimise the likelihood of false assumptions and conclusions being inferred from the data.

School principals may decide that it is not possible to report certain data publicly in ways that maintain student privacy or minimise misinterpretation of performance. Where a decision is made not to report specific data for these reasons, a narrative or descriptive comment on student achievement or school performance would meet the requirements of the Annual Report.

### **Year 12 Outcomes: \*<sup>10</sup>**

This is not currently applicable for Birali Steiner School.

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<sup>9</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(e)

<sup>10</sup> Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(h)(i)