

# Our School



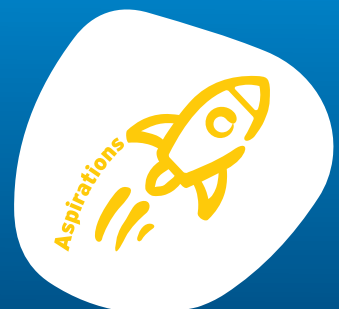




# Our Purpose

**a different brilliant<sup>®</sup>**

understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum



# Meet our Principal



## Welcome to Aspect Macarthur

Aspect Macarthur School is a thriving learning community of students, parents, teachers and school support staff who are committed to providing a rich, challenging and rewarding education that is specifically designed for children who are on the autism spectrum.

At Aspect Macarthur School we believe that every child can achieve when given the right support, educational environment and time. With this belief, the school's staff place a high value on literacy and numeracy as the building blocks for learning and success across the curriculum, and upon providing opportunities for our students to prepare them for life at, and beyond school. We are committed to meeting the needs of children on the autism spectrum and to supporting their families.

Aspect Macarthur School caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 10, consisting of a main campus at Cobbitty, with "satellite classes" in the following locations;

- St. John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School in Campbelltown (Kindergarten - Year 6)
- St. Christopher's Primary School in Holsworthy Campbelltown (Kindergarten - Year 6)
- Clancy Catholic College in West Hoxton
- Sarah Redfern Public School in Minto Campbelltown (Kindergarten - Year 6)
- Briar Road Public School in Airds Campbelltown (Kindergarten - Year 6)
- Howard Street Campus in Coffs Harbour (Kindergarten - Year 6)

The main campus site at Cobbitty caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Class composition is based on many factors, including learning levels, age, social and emotional and behavioural skills. The classes are not always year or stage-based as we review the individual learning profile of each student. Beyond Main-site we have a number of satellite classes with students ranging from Kindergarten to Year 10.

The satellite classes provide a range of services for our families, including the opportunity for a "transition and integration" arrangement. Students in the satellite classes are located within "host" schools, where students have an autism-specific educational experience within their Aspect classroom, whilst at the same time participating in opportunities within the host school.

In many cases, over time, students build their life and educational skills and are able to transition from their Aspect class to the host school or a similar "mainstream" class. This arrangement gives students the opportunity to transition into a mainstream environment while maintaining small class sizes and additional autism-specific learning support to guide the student along their educational journey.

Having learnt many valuable lessons from the online learning environment of recent years, teachers and students at Aspect Macarthur School continue to explore and implement new technologies to develop students learning capacity across all Key Learning Areas. We aim to develop the strengths and interests of each student through understanding and implementing the Aspect Comprehensive Approach, and the development of each student's Individual Learning Plan using the Aspect 5 Point Star, which focusses on each student's individual likes, preferences and strengths. In doing so, we get to know each child deeply, sharing and celebrating their successes with you along their educational journey.

I'm proud to be the Principal of Aspect Macarthur School; a caring and thriving learning community where we see each child as *a different brilliant!* Why not give us a call - we would be delighted to meet with you to discuss what Aspect Macarthur School can do for you and your child.

**Geoff Fouracre**  
School Principal

## Acknowledgment of Country

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

# About Aspect School Macarthur

## About Aspect School Macarthur

Since 2010, Aspect School Macarthur has given students on the autism spectrum a warm, welcoming and supportive place to learn. The only autism-specific school in our region, we're passionate about making sure our students enjoy an educational experience that's both progressive and personalised.

Right now, we're working with over 100 students across Macarthur and regional areas throughout Northern NSW - whether it's through our main site at Cobbitty, a satellite class, or in a student's own home. Everything we do is grounded in a genuine commitment to personalised learning, and evidence-based best practice in autism.

At Aspect, we focus on what works best for each individual and through tailored programs, every student is encouraged to become a self-determined learner. Unique interests and strengths are celebrated, and harnessed as part of the learning journey!

We also know that what happens outside of school is important, too. By supporting positive home/school relationships, we strive to build our students' confidence and skills in partnership with their families. And by keeping in mind 'what happens next' we help equip our students for transitions to the broader community.

## Focusing on transitions

At Aspect, we focus on preparing students for successful transitions, as research suggests that this leads to better educational and social outcomes. Taking a collaborative approach, we help to equip students with the skills they need to succeed in new environments, settings and the wider community - aiming to prepare them to be as independent as possible.

To make this happen, we integrate future and transition planning as part of each student's Individual Plan (IP). The IP process involves students and their parents, guardians, or responsible adults - and discussing a student's next steps is a key part of each IP meeting.

*"The transition was unbelievable. They came and did a home visit. Aspect was just so incredibly holistic and supportive from the get-go. We shared with them some of our experiences and some of the things that we were feeling uncomfortable about, and how they would manage my son's needs and behaviour. And they just reassured us every step of the way."*

Parent

## Planning made personal

While students on the autism spectrum may share some common traits, it's vital to remember that each one is an individual, with their own unique profile of strengths, difficulties and learning styles.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, personalised planning is the most critical thing to consider when it comes to educating people with autism.

At Aspect, we know that a 'one size fits all' approach will never meet the needs of all students at all times, so Individualised Plans (IP) form the cornerstone of our approach. IPs are developed in collaboration with parents and students, based on developmental and/or functional assessments. The process is ongoing and dynamic, designed to promote the potential of every learner throughout their journey.

*"The IP meetings are very good. They're very structured. The information is collaborative between families and teachers. So that's also very good. They do those quite well and I'm very impressed with that."*

Parent

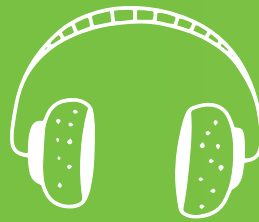


# Inside our classrooms

With a maximum of six students, classes are small, so everyone gets more intensive individual support.



The classroom environment is purpose-built and carefully structured, with clearly defined work stations and autism-specific supports and strategies - such as calming spaces, key visuals and established routines.



We take part in a range of community activities, such as equine therapy and weekly sensory gym visits.



A new, multi-purpose classroom will be introduced in 2023, giving us even greater flexibility.



Our growing high school program encompasses work education, work experience and travel training.



We're proud to have a student mentor who is on the autism spectrum working three days a week. Not only does he support the social and emotional learning of our high school students, but he also acts as a positive role model for the school community.







# Why choose our school?

Located in the beautiful rural setting of Cobbitty, only 8 minutes from Camden village and 25 minutes from Campbelltown, Aspect School Macarthur is the ideal place to start your child's education journey - and there are lots of reasons why.

## **We understand autism like no other school**

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) has been leading the way in providing services to people with autism for 50+ years - and we offer the largest autism-specific education program in Australia. Our students benefit from decades of experience and research into how to best support people with autism. Everything we do is evidence-informed and aims to give students the best opportunities possible throughout their lives.

## **Get a great education, tailored to you**

Aspect is a registered and accredited school with highly trained, capable teachers who are passionate about what they do. While we follow the NSW curriculum, we carefully adapt learning and development based on each individual student's strengths and interests. So, every student has a positive experience that's personalised for them.

## **A community where you'll feel right at home**

We're more than a school - we're a close-knit, caring community of families and carers who are experiencing similar things. When you join us, you'll have an instant support network to share your journey with Aspect and beyond. Together, we share experiences and advice, and celebrate milestones and achievements.

*We run coffee mornings, run parent groups, grandparent groups and things like that so they can support each other. We've had parents hook up as Facebook groups and do little plays."*

**Staff member**

## **The conversation is always open**

Communication is a key part of a student's education to make sure we're on the same page - and at Aspect, we're open, honest and supportive at all times. We encourage ongoing two-way conversations with every family, so it's never hard to bring up an issue or ask a question. After all, we're here to help.

*"As a parent, just knowing that he'd be supported, knowing that he's somewhere where he's understood, and knowing that these people are working as a team to help bring out the best in my child... it's been amazing."*

**Parent**

*"The teachers communicate with me whenever something happens, both positive and negative. I have found that it's been really good. It made me realise that I have made the right decision"*

**Parent**



## The journey doesn't end with us

A student's education journey usually has a few key transition points, and at Aspect, we are here to support you through these times of change. That includes coming into our school, and going out of our school into other educational environments or post-school programs. We also support students for up to 12 months after they've transitioned out of an Aspect school.

## We work in partnership with the 'home team'

In 2021 Aspect began developing a Working in Partnership Charter to provide an overarching set of principles to guide Working in Partnership at Aspect into the future. This charter will be finalised in 2022 and rolled out across the organisation to provide guidance and support to Autistic and non-Autistic staff around what working in partnership looks like.

*"The teacher gives me feedback about how he's going, and I also discuss with my son afterwards. So, it's just a joint effort and everyone's on the same page"*

Parent

## Choose your own study option

At Aspect School Macarthur, we offer a range of study environments to suit different students' skill development and support needs. Here's an overview of where we operate and what we offer.

### Main site

Located in Cobbitty, our main site has six classes catering for children from Kindergarten to Year Six. Each class is small (six students per class) and has a teacher and teacher aid.

### Satellite class program

A satellite class is an autism-specific class operated by Aspect Schools, but located off campus in a mainstream school (either a NSW Department of Education school, a Catholic school, or an Independent school). These classes can make the transition to mainstream education easier for certain students, and the approach has proven to be incredibly successful.

Aspect School Macarthur currently has satellite classes in Holsworthy, Minto, Campbelltown, West Hoxton, Briar Road (Airds) and Northern Rivers (Coffs Harbour).

### Distance Education

Aspect is proud to be the first school to offer distance education for students on the autism spectrum, opening up new options for students who may not have a satellite class located nearby.

Through our program, our students can learn from home by connecting with teachers via digital learning tools - plus, they take part in 15+ face-to-face days at the Aspect Hunter School in NSW each year.

*"They transitioned him from the main site at the end of the year last year, and he went to satellite class at the beginning of year 2. He was really nervous about another move. So, they did a lot of work to help him establish a sense of safety, give him all of the information about what he could expect, give him options, and what he could do when he's feeling overwhelmed. He was really into Harry Potter then. And the teacher at the satellite class actually sent a letter in the school holidays to my son saying that he has been accepted into the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."*

Parent



# Your need-to-knows



## School hours

Official school hours are 9:00am to 2:45pm. Students arrive at school in the morning between 9:00am and 9:30am



## Wet weather days

On rainy days, students work and play inside their classroom, supervised at all times by Aspect staff.



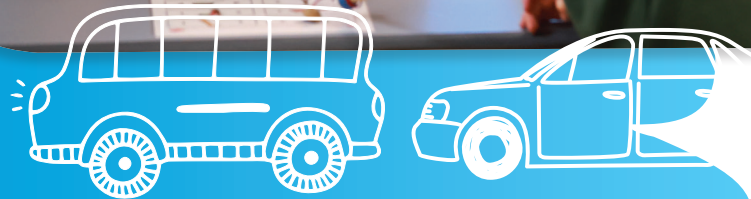
## Breaks

Morning tea is between 11.10am - 11:55am and lunch from 1.10pm - 1:55pm.



## Parent info and meetings

Each term, parents will receive a copy of the class timetable as well as a term overview. 'Meet the Teacher' evenings for parents are held in term one. IP meetings are held with the teacher in term one with a review meeting in term three.



## Drop off and pick up

Students are dropped off and picked up from school by parents and special transport. They're dropped off at the top carpark and walk down the path into school (with support if needed).

At the end of the day, transport drivers will wait at the top of the path in the carpark until the students and teachers arrive.



## What to wear

Aspect students are encouraged to wear the full Aspect Macarthur uniform at all times - to find out more, just call the school on 4651 3900.

## Staying in touch

At Cobbitty, we use the See-Saw app to communicate with students and families. Teachers use the app to post updates around three times a week. If there are any important forms or notes that need to be completed and returned, they'll be sent home in a document wallet. If there's ever an urgent matter you need to discuss, just call the school office on 4651 3900.

# How enrolment works

1.

## **Come to a school info session.**

Give us a call on 4651 3900 to find out when the next one will be held.

2.

## **Join the wait list.**

To register a student, just fill out a registration form (you can either get this at the info session, or by contacting Aspect School Macarthur).

3.

## **A spot opens up.**

When a position becomes available at the school, the School Enrolment Committee considers all the students on the waitlist, and decides who to offer the place to. This decision is made based on a number of factors - it's not simply on a 'first come, first served' basis.

4.

## **Family interview.**

Before a student is officially offered a place, they may be invited to meet with our team (together with family or carers).

5.

## **Enrolment offer.**

Once there's a place available, we'll send a formal letter of offer and an Enrolment Contract to the student's parents or guardians. You'll need to accept the offer by signing and returning the Enrolment Contract and paying the non-refundable enrolment fee.

## Who is eligible?

### **Eligible students:**

- Are Australian citizens, permanent residents of Australia, or hold an eligible Australian visa.
- Have had a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder in the last two years.
- Have had a psychometric assessment in the last two years.



# Our approach

## Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA)

Aspect uses an evidence-based, comprehensive approach to support people on the autism spectrum, and their family and carers. The ACA is implemented across our whole organisation, and it reflects our 50+ years of expertise in providing services to children, young people and adults on the autism spectrum.

The ACA provides for the development of 'individualised' or 'person-centred' supports. This means really getting to know and understand our students, identifying their interests, strengths (for some, their exceptional abilities) and their aspirations, and then developing individualised supports.



## The Five Point Star

The Five Point Star is our relationship-based approach to understanding and supporting students on the autism spectrum. The approach recognises the strengths of autistic students – and also that autistic students and non-autistic people need to work together to understand each other, and to adapt to meet each other's preferences and needs. Aspect staff collaborate with students to develop their Five Point Star profiles, which are used to guide positive empathetic trusting relationships.

## Our guiding principles

- We focus on the strengths and interests of each student.
- We work in partnership with students, their families and their communities.
- We work to understand students from their perspective.
- Our approach is autism-specific.
- Our research focuses on best practice.
- We expect positive change and progress.
- Together we can achieve positive outcomes.

## Our values

We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible.



# What else does Aspect offer?

Aside from our educational program, Aspect provides a number of services that may come in handy for students and families, now or down the track.

## Assessments for autism across the lifespan

These are provided face-to-face in Sydney, Melbourne and Coffs Harbour, or via telehealth for people who can't get to an assessment clinic (or prefer the telehealth format).

## Therapy

Aspect Therapy is a registered NDIS provider with a large team of allied health professionals (speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and social workers) and educators. Together, we develop and deliver individualised and small group autism-specific therapy and positive behaviour support.

## Support coordination

Our Support Coordination team can help NDIS-funded students to understand their budgets, how to start using their plans and how those plans are managed.

## Adult Community Services

In Sydney and Melbourne, we offer a range of individualised programs and supports for school leavers and adults on the autism spectrum. Programs are designed to be fun and engaging and help build confidence and skills.

## Workshops

Aspect offers a broad range of autism-related workshops and webinars for parents, carers, educators and health professionals. We deliver practical, real-world solutions to benefit families, communities, professionals and organisations.

### Aspect Macathur School main site

229 Macquarie Grove Road  
Cobbitty NSW 2500

Phone (02) 4651 3900



## Any questions? We're here to help.

If you have a question or would like to chat, we would love to hear from you. Don't hesitate to get in touch.

Phone +61 1800 277 328

Email [customerservice@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:customerservice@autismspectrum.org.au)

Visit [autismspectrum.org.au](http://autismspectrum.org.au)

For the full range of Aspect services, please scan the QR code or visit [autismspectrum.org.au](http://autismspectrum.org.au)

