



## Annual Report 2023

### **Message from the Co-Principals**

Sydney Science College is Sydney's STEM high school, designed for year 11 & 12 students who are passionate about science and aspiring to become our future Scientists, Doctors, Inventors and Engineers. The school, established in 2021, was born out of our ambition to create a place where high school science education can flourish, with students receiving the stimulating challenges and individual mentorship they need to develop the depth of thought, work ethic and lifelong learning skills that will see them thrive in their tertiary studies and future STEM careers. Students also build character and independence as they study under the mentorship of good role models, developing into mature and socially responsible young adults with the drive and confidence to make the most out of opportunities and make a difference in the world.

Joey Tsao & Shaun Balnave,  
Co-Founders & Co-Principals

### **Contextual Information about the School**

Sydney Science College is an independent co-educational secondary school from Year 11 to Year 12, located in Epping, NSW, with an academically focused entry policy. The school had 17 students on the first school day of 2023, which was consistent with the student count from the previous year.

The school offers a narrowly focused curriculum, designed for students seeking to pursue STEM related studies at university, and also offers a wide range of enrichment, extension, and co-curricular programs for highly gifted students, such as coding classes and training for the Australian Science Olympiads. Student wellbeing is enhanced by a schoolwide mentorship program, and participation in a range of co-curricular, sporting & fitness activities.

### **Characteristics of the Student Body**

4 female and 13 male students comprised the Year 11 & 12 cohorts on the first school day of 2023. All pupils must be Australian citizens or hold appropriate permanent residency visas. Students attending Sydney Science College are drawn from diverse geographic locations around Sydney, and the composition of the student body reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of our region. Additional information regarding the characteristics of the student body is available from the My School website.

### **Professional Learning Undertaken by Teachers**

In 2023 all teaching and non-teaching staff attended extensive in-house professional development, on topics including information communication systems training (Microsoft Teams, and Microsoft OneNote), compliance training (including mandatory child protection), and all major school policies and procedures familiarisation.

### **Workforce Composition & Teacher Accreditation**

In August 2023 the number of teaching staff delivering NESA curriculum was 7 (or 6 full-time equivalent). Of these staff, 6 had a recognised teacher training qualification. All teaching staff had a relevant recognised tertiary degree, and among those staff 2 had a doctorate. The school also had 2 non-teaching administrative staff. In 2023, no staff members elected to be included in a count of staff identifying as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

In August 2023, teaching staff delivering NESA curriculum held the following levels of accreditation:

Level of Accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	3
Proficient	3
Total	7

### **Actions undertaken by the school to promote respect and responsibility.**

Respect and responsibility are instilled in students each day from the way they are treated with respect as young adults by staff, and from observing the way in which staff treat each other in the mixed use work area and kitchen that staff and students share. Close mentorship and positive feedback from staff help students to develop self-respect, fairness and encourage respect in conduct towards others.

### **Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction**

A core tenet of the school is to have well-qualified staff, with commensurate compensation and conditions. As a result there is a strong level of satisfaction on the part of the parents, staff and students. Students feel supported by the staff in achieving their potential at the school, with small classes and an individual mentorship program allowing staff to be in tune and responsive to the learning needs of each student. Students have a valued voice at the school, and are encouraged to share with the staff areas that can be improved to help make Sydney Science College an even better school. Parent teacher nights, regular staff meetings on student welfare and progress, and a direct line of communication between students & parents and the Co-Principals ensures that the school is in touch with the feelings of all the stakeholders in the students' education, and is working in partnership with families to encourage the best educational outcomes for each student.

### **Student Attendance Rates**

Attendance rates remain consistent with previous years. The average rate of attendance in 2023 for the whole school was 96.5%, with the attendance rate for Years 11 and 12 being 96% and 97% respectively.

### **Retention Rate**

The proportion of students completing Year 11 that continued to complete Year 12 in 2023 was 100%.

### **How the School Manages Student Non-Attendance**

Rolls are called by each teacher at the start of each period, and the school keeps electronic records of attendance and absence. Students and parents are required to submit approval requests for absence, including early departures or late arrivals on the morning of the absence or in advance, and parents are also required to email or call in to explain absence. Families are contacted if the absence goes unexplained. Any extended or recurring problems of non-attendance are taken seriously and discussed with parents. Support is given to students with ongoing illness or who are isolating, including the provision of work to be done at home, the opportunity to join lessons online, and online marking and feedback on work. The school experiences extremely limited problems with unexplained absence, attributed to the quality of education on offer at the school and the level of engagement of our students and staff.

## Year 12 Outcomes and Post-School Destinations

In 2023, all Year 12 students remained to complete the Higher School Certificate at the school and seek university entry. Students went to the University of NSW, The University of Sydney, and Western Sydney University, with one student electing to take a gap year before beginning university. Outcomes for the 2023 Higher School Certificate are given below in this Report. The school does not offer any vocational courses.

## Standardised National Testing & Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

The school, accredited for Year 11 to Year 12, does not grant a RoSA, nor were there any students who underwent any standardised national literacy and numeracy testing in 2023.

## Higher School Certificate Results

In 2023, 8 students sat for the NSW Higher School Certificate in 7 courses, with 50% of all students' course entries achieving a Band 6 (90-100 marks). In the sciences and advanced mathematics, student achievement was significantly above state average levels.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 below detail the School and State means for each Higher School Certificate course and indicate the percentage of Sydney Science College's candidature in each band for each course. Note percentages for some components may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 1: Higher School Certificate results in non-extension courses for 2023**

All students achieved band 4 or higher (70 marks or more) in non-extension courses, with 58% of these results placed in Band 6 (90-100 marks), and 96% of these results placed in the highest two performance bands (80-100 marks).

Subject	No. of Students	Bands 3-4	Band 5	Band 6
Biology	4	0%	25%	75%
Chemistry	5	20%	40%	40%
English Advanced	3	0%	33%	67%
Mathematics Advanced	5	0%	20%	80%
Physics	7	0%	57%	43%

**Table 2: Higher School Certificate results in extension courses for 2023**

In extension courses, 91% of students achieved marks in the highest two performance bands (35-50 marks).

Subject	No. of Students	Band E2	Band E3	Band E4
English Extension 1	2	0%	50%	50%
Mathematics Extension 1	5	20%	60%	20%
Mathematics Extension 2	3	0%	66.7%	33.3%

**Table 3: Comparison of School and State Higher School Certificate results**

Course	School Mean	State Mean
Biology	90.8%	73.3%
Chemistry	85.4%	74.1%
English Advanced	87.6%	81.7%
English Extension 1	41.0%	42.17%
Mathematics Advanced	94.5%	78.0%
Mathematics Extension 1	78.2%	77.8%
Mathematics Extension 2	78.2%	82.2%
Physics	86.8%	74.8%

**ATAR outcomes**

Sydney Science College's average ATAR score was 93.0, with 20% of Sydney Science College students achieving an ATAR over 99, 40% achieving an ATAR over 95, 60% achieving an ATAR over 90, and 100% achieving an ATAR over 85.

## **Enrolment Policies Including all Prerequisites for Continuing Enrolment**

Admission to the school is made on the basis of entrance examination and interview, and continued attendance at the school is dependent on satisfactory conduct and progress, and on adherence by parents or guardians to the Conditions of entry and continuing enrolment, including payment of fees due. Further information about enrolment and admission can be found in Appendix A and also made available on the school's website.

## **Student Welfare Policies and Procedures.**

The school commenced the 2023 academic year using an updated Child protection policy which included the latest wording required in the updated ACE manual for schools, and the previous version of the school's other policies and procedures, with no significant changes to these policies throughout the year. A summary of policies is provided below:

- **Discipline**

Discipline is viewed as a positive process enabling people to participate as productive, responsible members of the community. An important part of education is to lead students to develop effective self-discipline so that at all times they behave in a manner that is safe, legal and considerate. Each student is expected to speak and behave in a manner that reflects well on herself, her family and her school. Parents/guardians agree to support the School in its discipline policy, including its Student Code of Conduct. The policy includes statements on the School's expectations of students, teachers, student leaders and parents.

- **Complaints & Grievances**

The School has positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances. These processes build strong relationships, dispel anxiety and ultimately provide students with an enhanced learning environment. A student has an assigned mentor who they can bring up any issues, and students and parents have a direct line to the Co-Principals and are available to meet with any student or parent to discuss any concerns. This policy includes guidelines for students, staff and parents and information pertinent to the general community.

- **Child Protection**

The school's Child Protection policies set out various categories of child abuse, explains what is referred to as Reportable Conduct in various provisions relevant to schools, and outlines possible signs of abuse such as marks of injury, poor health or hygiene, behavioural problems and symptoms of emotional distress or low self-esteem. Screening protocols and investigation procedures are detailed. The school's Child Protection policies requires staff to report allegations or suspicions of Reportable Conduct to the school, and set out requirements for notification of allegations of Reportable Conduct to the Office of the Children's Guardian, and Mandatory Reporting to the Department of Communities and Justice where a child is at risk of significant harm and to the NSW Police where a child abuse offence is suspected to have occurred.

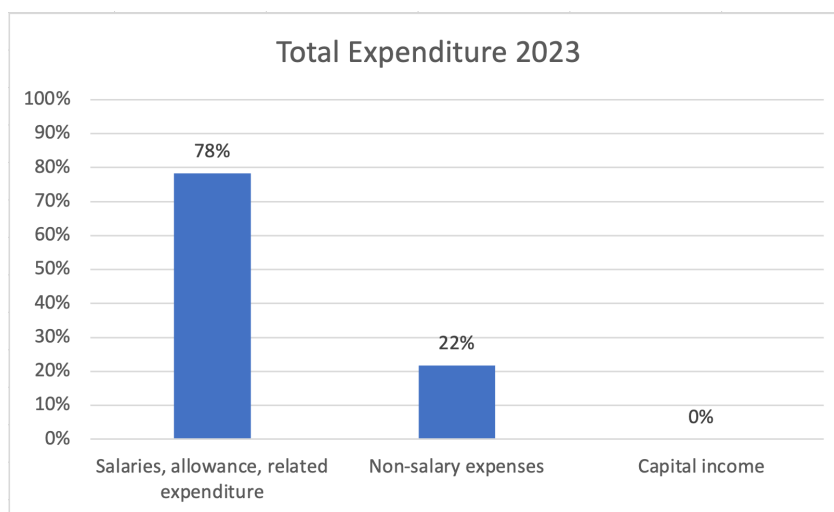
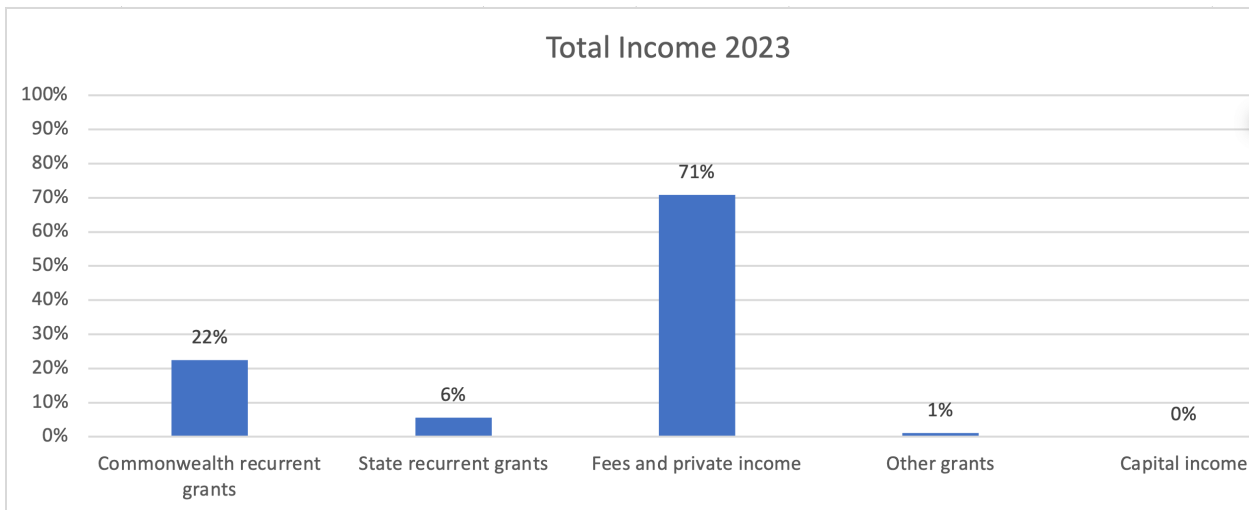
The full text of these policies, and other welfare policies including:

- Student code of conduct (Rationale, Expectations, Consequences, Behaviour management responses based on procedural fairness and involvement of parents, Travel, Use of technology, Corporal punishment is prohibited expressly)
- Staff code of conduct (Personal and professional behaviour, Duty of care, Physical contact, Copyright, Security of information, Use of School facilities and equipment, Discrimination and harassment, Personal interests, Media contact, Gifts and benefits)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (Strategies, Preventative measures, Examples/Explanations, Reporting, Investigating, Responding, Parent notification and involvement)

are issued to students and parents in the enrolment handbook, to staff during induction and are available on the staff intranet. Members of the community wishing to view the full text of the policy can access and download the Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Complaints Handling Policy, and Enrolment Policy from the school's website at <https://www.sydneysciencecollege.nsw.edu.au/policies-and-procedures/>

### Summary of Financial Information

Analysis of the school's income and expenditure is shown on the following charts:



# Appendix A

## Conditions of Entry & Continuing Enrolment

These conditions are to be agreed to by parents or guardians when they accept an offer of a place for a child at the School.

### ***Fees And Other Charges***

01. We agree to pay the School all fees for tuition, extra subjects, excursions, camps, facilities and the supply of goods and services to the student as determined by the School and as published in the Schedule of Fees from time to time.
02. Fees are due in monthly instalments, on the 15th of each month, from January to November, where invoices will normally be sent 14 before the due date.
03. The School may suspend or terminate the enrolment of a student whose fees are in arrears. We understand that the student will not be permitted to return to School for another term if the fees for the previous billing are unpaid. In addition, the School may charge an additional fee where fees are paid after the due date to compensate the School for the loss that it has suffered because the fees were not paid by the due date.
04. A full term's notice in writing must be given to the Principal before any student is removed. The notice must be given no later than one week prior to the end of the preceding term. If this notice is not given, we agree to pay ONE term's fees in lieu of notice.
05. We understand that no remission of fees, either in whole or in part, will be made if the student is absent due to illness, leave or suspension.
07. Application and Enrolment Fees are non-refundable whether or not a student takes up a position at the School.

### ***Expectations And Behaviour***

08. We understand that our acceptance of the School's offer of a place for the student implies that he will complete his schooling at the School unless unforeseen circumstances arise.

09. We acknowledge that the School is built on the foundations of Wisdom, Integrity and Compassion, and on the behaviours and attitudes that these qualities engender. We agree that all communication between students, parents, visitors and staff members should be conducted in a courteous and respectful manner and where, between us and the School, using appropriate channels. We agree to avoid confrontation and criticism in public and accept that there is no place in the School community for, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.
10. We agree to support the ethos and to abide by the policies and rules of the School as set out in the appropriate publications such as the *Parents' and Students' Handbooks* and the *Volunteer Code of Conduct* and as published from time to time at the Principal's discretion. We note that the student must do the same and we agree to encourage him/her in this. We have particularly noted the School's requirements for discipline, home study, attendance and leave.
11. We accept the School's discipline policy contained in the Student Handbook and other relevant documents. We agree to support the administration of the School's discipline policy. In particular, we accept that the Principal (or his delegate) may in his absolute discretion, but subject to affording the student procedural fairness, suspend or dismiss the student:
  - (a) for breaches of rules or discipline; or
  - (b) for behaviour prejudicial to the welfare of the School, its staff or students.
12. We accept that the School may determine which particular courses and activities are offered and/or provided at any time and which of these courses and activities are compulsory. All students must participate in and/or attend the following activities, as determined by the Principal:
  - (a) sporting or fitness programs;
  - (b) important School functions as required by the Principal from time to time;
  - (c) various excursions that occur from time to time as an integral part of the School curriculum.



13. We acknowledge that the Principal may, by giving us reasonable notice, ask us to remove the student from the School at the end of a school year where the student has, in the Principal's opinion, failed to meet the requirements of the New South Wales Education Standards Authority.

#### ***Health And Safety***

14. We acknowledge that we have fully disclosed any special needs (including but not limited to any medical, physical, learning or psychological needs) of the student. Where any disclosed special needs change or where any special needs arise, we agree to notify the School immediately. We also agree to complete the student's medical form accurately and provide annual updates for the School.
15. If the student is ill or injured, necessitating urgent hospital and/or medical treatment (for example injections, blood transfusions, surgery) and if we are not readily available to authorise such treatment, we authorise the Principal or, in his absence, a responsible member of the School staff, to give the necessary authority for such treatment. We agree to pay all medical and ambulance expenses incurred on behalf of the student.
16. We acknowledge that the School seeks to maintain an environment that is safe for all students and in which learning can take place. We also acknowledge that to this end the Principal or his nominee may search the student's possessions including bag, locker, mobile devices, computers and storage devices where there are reasonable grounds to do so.
17. We understand that the School requires parents and visitors to observe School security procedures for the protection of students from direct contact with those outside the School during school hours and that we are only to make contact through the School office.
18. We acknowledge that the student's personal property is not insured by the School which does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage.

#### ***Leave***

19. We understand that requests for leave from School activities, including academic and extra-curricular programs, and for early departure at the end of term and/or late return from breaks must be applied for in advance in writing to the Principal.

#### ***Privacy***

20. We acknowledge that the School may from time to time collect personal information about parents and students which may be necessary for the School's function or activities. We authorise the School to use and disclose information in such a manner as the Principal may deem appropriate for the purposes of the student's education, health, care, welfare or development. We have read and agree with the School's Privacy Policy.
21. We give permission for photographs and videos of the student to be placed in the School's records, displayed from time to time around the School, be published in School publications, on its website, in the media, online in various forms including on social media and blogs and in other marketing and promotional material.
22. Where relevant, we agree to provide to the School all current Family Court or other court orders relating to us and the student. We note that the School's Privacy Policy deals with the confidentiality of such information.

#### ***Changes To These Conditions***

23. We agree that the School may change these Conditions provided it gives us at least two terms' notice and that the new Conditions take effect from the beginning of a calendar year.