

2015 - MOUNT PLEASANT PRIMARY IS INDEPENDENT

In 2014 Mount Pleasant Primary School, in consultation with the School Council, parents and school staff, was successful in gaining Independent Public School (IPS) status.

Within our state, there are currently 441 schools who have successfully applied to become IPS.



What is an Independent Public School?

An IPS is a public school where the Principal has been given increased flexibility and responsibility to make local decisions across a range of school operations.

Principals of an IPS have more freedom to make decisions about important matters that impact on students' education such as student support, staff recruitment, financial management, governance and accountability.

An IPS caters to the specific needs of its students by determining the curriculum and specialist teachers required that best support them.

Like all public schools, Principals of IPS must comply with relevant legislation, industrial agreements and the whole of government policies and initiatives.

IPS are leading the movement to greater school autonomy and are benefiting from the extension of flexibilities and greater capacity for local decision making.

In the past, for example, schools were allocated staff through a centralised process; in IPS there is much greater flexibility of staff.

This year, every school has received funding as dollars in a one line budget through the new student-centred funding model. That means the Principal, in consultation with the School Board, will have greater flexibility to determine how the funding will be deployed to provide the very best education for students at the school.

What Does this Mean for Mount Pleasant Primary School?

As part of the IPS process, two main focal areas were identified. The first area was to do with Academic Improvement and the second was to do with the enhancement of the school buildings and grounds.

Academic Improvement

Part of the Mount Pleasant vision is to make sure that every child at every level is working to their maximum potential. Academic rigour is valued at all stages, and the classroom focus is on challenge, engagement and achievement. To this end, Mount Pleasant Primary has finalised a four year plan to achieve Literacy and Numeracy results at a target level that matches or betters like schools. The flexibility to adopt various curriculum strategies, appoint specialist staff and to allocate appropriate resources to support this plan ensured its success. School self-assessment processes, embedded across the school, are rigorous and well-constructed with all staff committed to school improvement and actively involved in the process. Data is used to drive School Planning processes. A thorough analysis of all available data is undertaken in order to develop strategic plans, identify target areas and develop case management plans. The next stage to this plan will be identified in our Business Plan.

School Building and Grounds

We strongly believe that having a stimulating and developmentally appropriate school environment will better enrich our students' learning opportunities and afford them the ability to practise positive social skill development at break times by engaging in activities which best suit their individual needs. The international evidence, along with WA evidence indicate that the students' sense of connection to school is enhanced by a developmentally appropriate school environment that provides opportunities for learning, makes young people feel like they belong and provides safe places to play. The link between school connection and academic performance has also been well documented, however is largely overlooked in our focus on teaching and learning.

It is our belief that the school grounds improvement will make all young people, staff and parents feel welcome in our school, feel like school is a place they want to spend time and feel safe. Being an IPS school will allow us greater flexibility to make local decisions in a timely manner to improve our school grounds. Mount Pleasant Primary School would also have the flexibility to engage and manage contractors to support this priority.

Benefits for Mount Pleasant Primary School

As Independent Public School, Mount Pleasant Primary School remains part of the Western Australian public school system, so benefits such as professional learning, support services for staff and access to specialist services are still available.

The Principal, teachers, parents and local community have greater control and ownership of our school with the following benefits:

- Greater flexibility than other schools while still operating under the governance and accountability framework;
- The Principal can recruit his own school psychologist based on the needs of the school;
- The Principal has a direct reporting line to the Director General whereas other Principals report to a Regional Executive Director;
- Mount Pleasant Primary School now has a Delivery and Performance Agreement signed by the Director General, Principal and chair of the School Board.