

UNLOCK YOUR SCHOOL'S FUTURE

Factsheet for parents and communities

- 1. What does it mean if my local school becomes an Independent Public School?**

The Independent Public Schools initiative is a State Government commitment to empower school communities by giving them greater capacity to shape the ethos, priorities and directions of their schools. Independent Public Schools assume greater responsibility for their own affairs and have greater flexibility to respond to their communities. They create more diversity in the public school system and help build strong communities that are more able to respond to the needs of students.
- 2. How many Independent Public Schools are there?**

There are 255 schools operating as Independent Public Schools: 34 commenced in 2010, 64 in 2011, 73 in 2012, and a further 84 began as Independent Public Schools in 2013.
- 3. How will my school change if it becomes an Independent Public School?**

Your school will change according to the needs and expectations of your school community. There will be more freedom and flexibility to make decisions about important matters that impact on students' education such as the curriculum, student support, staff recruitment, financial management, governance and accountability.
- 4. Can Independent Public Schools do what they like?**

Independent Public Schools, like all public schools, are bound by a framework of legislation, industrial agreements and policies including, but not limited to the:

 - *School Education Act 1999*
 - *School Education Regulations 2000*
 - boards' *Terms of Reference*
 - Government's policies
 - mandated Department's policies.
- 5. What kinds of schools are selected?**

Independent Public Schools represent all categories of country and metropolitan schools (primary, district high and secondary schools, clusters of schools) and socioeconomic areas.
- 6. What happens to those schools which choose not to become Independent Public Schools?**

They continue to operate in the normal manner.
- 7. Can my child attend the local school?**

Enrolment procedures do not change. Independent Public Schools provide education to students in their local intake areas. Enrolment procedures for Gifted and Talented Programs remain the same.
- 8. What are the fees and charges at an Independent Public School?**

Independent Public Schools are bound by the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Act Regulations 2000*. The structure for contributions, fees and charges remains the same as all public schools.
- 9. What are the uniform requirements of an Independent Public School?**

Uniform requirements are determined by the school council (board) in consultation with the school community.
- 10. What is taught in Independent Public Schools?**

Independent Public Schools are bound by the requirements of the *School Curriculum and Authority Act 1997*.
- 11. Can Independent Public Schools select their own staff?**

Yes, they can select those staff who best meet the needs of their students. School boards play a significant role in selecting principals when vacancies arise. Like all schools, Independent Public Schools are required to adhere to public sector standards when selecting staff.

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12. Can Independent Public Schools exclude disruptive students?

As is the case for all public schools, students can only be excluded for reasons permitted under the *School Education Act 1999*.

13. Will funding to our school change if it becomes an Independent Public School?

Independent Public Schools are funded on the same basis as all Western Australian public schools. They do, however, operate with one-line budgets which afford greater flexibility because resources can be directed to areas of greatest need, adding educational value.

14. What would it mean for my school council?

The principal makes a decision as to whether to roll over the current school council, or start a new process and call for nominations for a new school board. Current council members are able to nominate for positions.

Strong community and industry representation is encouraged to ensure the school board makes a significant contribution to the development of the school. Induction is provided for new and existing school board members.

15. How are Independent Public Schools held accountable?

Independent Public Schools comply with all legislation and industrial agreements and are subject to financial audits.

A Delivery and Performance Agreement is signed by the principal, Director General and chair of the school board.

The school is independently reviewed in the final year of the agreement and the report is made public.

The school also produces an annual report and business plan for school board consideration and endorsement.

16. What does it mean for the Parents and Citizens' Association?

The important role and functions of Parents and Citizens' Associations do not change.