

Aranda Primary School boundary fence proposal - have your say

The Education Directorate is seeking the views of Aranda Primary School families on a proposed boundary fence around the school.

A boundary fence would help keep students safe and protect the school from vandalism.

The proposed design includes gates to allow the community to access sections of the school grounds – including the Kindergarten undercover playground and bike track – after school hours, on weekends and during school holiday periods.

The proposal has strong support from the Aranda Primary School staff and leadership.

A fence would:

- reduce the possibility of students absconding from the school grounds. Any student leaving the school grounds without supervision is exposed to significant risks including busy and dangerous roads.
- limit the risk of external dangers e.g. trespassers, dogs, etc.
- reduce the risk and frequency of physical hazards being left on grounds after hours (broken glass, sharps, faecal matter, drug paraphernalia, rubbish, etc).
- assist in managing the increase in vandalism being experienced by the school, which has damaged school grounds and resulted in significant costs to remedy.

The vast majority of ACT public schools already have fences that have been designed to support school needs while balancing community access to school grounds.

You are invited to share your thoughts on this proposal through the short survey of parents/carers running until COB Friday 16 December 2022 emailed to families. One response per household, please. You can also email feedback to us at: act.education@act.gov.au

Next steps

Feedback received through the survey will inform the level of support within the school community and any changes to the draft designs. It will also help us consider how best we consult on this proposal.

In term one 2023, we will hold an information session at the school to discuss the next steps. Representatives from the Education Directorate as well as some principals who have already navigated this process will be available to answer questions.

You will have the opportunity to provide comment on the draft designs before they are finalised.

We will keep you up to date on this process via our school newsletter, email and website. You can also email the Education Directorate at act.education@act.gov.au with any questions or to provide feedback.

Q&A about the current survey of families

Q: Parents/carers who do not share a common view have asked if they can respond individually?

A: One response per family/household is the request.

Q: Parents/carers who live in separate households have asked if they can respond per household?

A: The survey was sent to all preferred contacts, which is the usual process for all school communications. If you need to update your contact details, please contact the school.

Comment: We are aware that some people have already responded twice as they were unaware the other parent/carer in their family had responded. This raises questions about the consistency and fairness of the poll if some households have submitted two responses and others one.

Comment: It would be hard to quantify the effect of that on anecdotal evidence alone. We can note such a possibility as a caveat when reporting the result. It is quite normal and best practice to report polling results with caveats regarding methodology. One response per family/household is the request.

The primary aim of the survey is to understand the current level of support for a school fence among the school community. Primarily we are seeking a temperature check ahead of a more fulsome consultation process in 2023.

Q: Who was the survey sent to? All parents/carers? Or just the first parent/carer contact?

A: The survey was sent to all preferred contacts, which is the usual process for all school communications. If you need to update your contact details, please contact the school.

Q: Can a parent/carer submit a response anonymously?

A: Yes. The survey can be submitted anonymously, or you can provide your name.

Q: Is a similar fence being proposed to replace the preschool one?

A: Not at present. The Education Directorate is assessing the preschool fence to ensure it is still appropriate.

Q: Given that the response is based on a sliding scale, how do you propose to accurately reflect this in the final decision?

A: Responses to the survey will be reported as percentages and proportions. They also will be visualised as a bar chart or a pie chart, or something similar.

Q: What response rate does the Directorate consider adequate to be representative of the school community?

This survey is designed to gauge sentiment towards the fence among the school community and inform further consultation next year. We are confident that this 'temperature check' survey of how families feel about the proposal will be a valuable feedback tool.

Q: Who is collating the responses, the school or the Directorate?

The school is facilitating the survey on behalf of the Education Directorate's Communications & Engagement team, who will then analyse the responses.

Q: When can we expect the survey results to be released?

In term one 2023, we will hold an information session at the school to discuss next steps. We will release the survey results prior to that to families and the P&C.

Other opportunities for the school community to provide feedback will be provided in term one 2023 as part of the wider community consultation process. Community consultation will be promoted through letterbox drops to local residents, the school newsletter and school website.

The proposed engagement strategy will be discussed with the P&C in early 2023 ahead of consultation commencing.