



## Research Strategy Overview 2026

The Sycamore School's 2026 Research Strategy strengthens our commitment to improving life outcomes for autistic young people. It continues to embed inquiry, reflection and student voice into everyday teaching and support, using a strengths-based approach that recognises the capabilities of young people, staff and families. Through action research, staff explore real classroom and wellbeing needs, try new ideas, learn from what works and continue improving their practice over time.

### Our Approach to Research

Research at The Sycamore School is:

#### **Collaborative**

We work alongside autistic young people, families and external partners. Staff, young people and families are not just participants in research, they actively co-design questions and solutions.

#### **Applied**

We focus on real-world classroom, playground, wellbeing and transition needs. Research is not something that happens "to" practice, it is part of practice.

#### **Reflective**

We use continuous inquiry cycles and action research to refine what we do, learn from it and embed improvements over time.

#### **Ethical and Inclusive**

We value strengths, dignity, self-determination and informed participation. We seek to build environments that empower young people to explore, express and work towards their goals, supported by trusted adults who guide them in safe, realistic and respectful ways.

#### **Purposeful**

Through this approach, research directly informs how we enhance outcomes for young people and strengthen our shared practice across the School.

## **What We Are Focusing on in 2026**

The strategy identifies broad research areas that reflect the needs and aspirations of our young people, staff and families. In 2026, our work focuses on:

### **Quality of Life and Young People's Voice**

Strengthening how young people define their own success, wellbeing and future goals and ensuring their perspectives inform planning, learning and whole-school decisions.

### **Young People's Agency, Goal-Setting and Growing Independence**

Enabling young people to set and act on meaningful goals, develop emotional literacy, self-advocacy skills and increasing independence.

### **Educator Wellbeing and Sustainable Practice**

Ensuring staff have supportive, energising and practical tools to sustain their work, collaborate with colleagues and feel professionally fulfilled. This includes valuing the insights of autistic educators.

### **Partnerships and Impact**

Working with universities, schools, networks and community partners to strengthen our impact, share what we are learning and contribute useful knowledge to the wider autism education community.

These areas help ensure that our teaching, wellbeing and transition programs remain responsive, evidence-informed and aligned with what matters most to our young people.

## **How We Monitor Impact**

Progress against the 2026 Research Strategy will be reviewed through:

- Staff feedback on research engagement and wellbeing.
- Action research projects in classrooms.
- Perspectives of young people and families.
- Partnership outcomes with universities and networks.
- Showcase events and publications to share learning with the community.

Findings will help shape the next iteration of the Research Strategy, ensuring our work remains responsive, inclusive and strengths-based.

## **Research Enquiries**

If you would like to learn more about our Research Strategy, or have any questions about research at The Sycamore School, please contact: [research@sycamore.qld.edu.au](mailto:research@sycamore.qld.edu.au)