



# SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated:

**School number:** 0214

**School name:** Mid North Education Centre

## School Profile:

Our vision is to develop resilient, creative and confident learners where staff, students and parents/carers work in partnership for positive student outcomes. Students receive a broad, relevant and effective curriculum.

The main learning areas are planned using the Australian Curriculum (ABLES SA version) to suit individual learning needs. We focus on presenting individual and small group learning programs inclusive of a range of student abilities and disabilities from R-year 12. The One Plan (OP) format for negotiated learning goals is used for all students in the school.

Students' health and safety needs are incorporated in a holistic approach. Short and long term planning supports students to develop capabilities and positive attitudes for life in the community. Staff work collaboratively to develop proactive approaches for positive student behaviour, using such programs as the Zones of Regulation

All teachers and Student Support Officers are involved in professional learning to continuously improve their knowledge and skills.

Parents/carers and the community are welcome into the school. We are the only Special School within the Port Pirie Partnership.

# 1. General information

- School Principal name: Jayne Mainprize-Potter
- New School opened: 1981
- Redeveloped school opened 2003
- School Name change in 2007 (from Port Pirie Special School)
- Postal Address: 56 David Street, Port Pirie 5540
- Location Address: 56 David Street, Port Pirie
- DECD Region: Pirie Partnership
- Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km): 225km
- Telephone number: (08) 86321091
- Fax Number: (08) 86323963
- School website address: [www.midnorthecc.sa.edu.au](http://www.midnorthecc.sa.edu.au)
- School e-mail address: [dl.0214\\_info@schools.sa.edu.au](mailto:dl.0214_info@schools.sa.edu.au)
- February FTE student enrolment:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Primary	18	19	15	18	17	
Secondary	17	15	15	15	16	
TOTAL	35	35	30	33	33	
School Card Approval	28	29	27	31	31	
NESB	0	0	0	0	0	
Aboriginal FTE enrolment	6	6	6	5	7	

- Student enrolment trends: Student numbers have average at 33 students in recent years. In 2019, the school had 3 year 12 students graduating with a Modified SACE.

- Staffing numbers (as at February 2019 census):
- 1.0 Principal
- 7.4 FTE between 7 teachers including a Band B1 leader
- SSO ancillary staffing- There are eight permanent SSOs, 5 contract

## 2. Students (and their welfare)

- General characteristics:  
Students enrolled and attending are identified by a Psychologist and/or Speech Pathologist in line with the DFE Student with Disabilities Policy. All students have a One Plan. All students have an intellectual disability. Students may also have additional disabilities e.g. vision, hearing, physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments. Many students also have Autism Spectrum Disorders. We have students with severe and multiple disabilities. Some students have Health Care and Support Plans. Student can present with challenging behaviours. As the school is R – 12 students ages range from 5 years old to 18yrs. Students are often in classes with varied age range.
- Student well-being programs  
Student well being is considered integral with behaviour and communication programmes. Catering for students sensory needs is important and is included in the curriculum. Student Health Care needs are attended to by Health Support Officer and documents and plans are renewed each year. Student wellbeing and engagement is a priority in the school curriculum. From 2014 the site started the Be You (formerly Kids Matter) programme and has introduced the Zones of Regulation program. The school is a focus school for Shine SA. The School has a part-time Pastoral Care Worker.
- Student support offered  
The school works closely with other agencies -Kilparrin, Autism SA and Down's syndrome Society. Referrals to DFE regional support (Psychology, Speech, Disability, Behaviour, Attendance etc) are made on an individual needs basis. Students with challenging behaviours are referred to Student Support Services for additional support. A number of NDIS care providers offer services on the school premises by negotiation with the Principal.
- Student management  
Student goals focus on effective communication of needs/ feelings and interpersonal skills to support students to learn effective and appropriate ways to communicate and have their needs met. Currently the school uses Proloqu2go, PODD, sign language and visuals. Teaching practice is based on defusing behaviour and deflecting attention in times of escalation in order to explicitly teach skills at other times. Integrating successful behaviour

learning is a core within the curriculum. Visual strategies such as social stories, visual timetables and schedules supplement verbal and other communication devices. The school works holistically and collaboratively with parents to develop behaviour strategies. Student well-being and individual programmes are regularly discussed in staff meetings with all teaching and non-teaching staff.

- Student government

Students are encouraged to play an active part in determining class/school matters. This is done through choice making, expression of personal preferences and feedback from students. Whenever possible classes operate on class based decisions with projects to develop decision making skills and promoting student voice in opinions and recommendations. Several initiatives have been implemented to develop student voice, this includes student leaders representing each class.

- Special programmes

Swimming and water safety: Students are eligible for the student with disabilities swimming program. In Port Pirie, students can access the indoor or outdoor pools. We use a combination of models, with a one week block class attendance in Terms 1 and 4. During Terms 2 and 3 there are once/week swimming lessons in the indoor pool.

All classes participate in weekly gymnastics sessions at the local sports complex.

Work Experience : Senior students have a range of options for work experience and post school option placement. Port Pirie has services available from Bedford (Living Skills and Business Services), SCOSA, CBS Jobnet. Post school option planning is supported through the Personal Learning Plan established in Yr 10. SACE options are considered well before the final year of schooling to allow time for learning, family awareness and NDIS planning requirements for post-school options. Our school strives to place students in the most appropriate setting for open employment, supported employment or day options.

### 3. Key School Policies

Site Improvement Plan and other key statements or policies:

- Goals and Targets are set each year as part of the School Improvement Plan to support the Department's 10 year vision to make South Australia a world class Education System.

The MNEC two main goals are

- To improve Literacy skills
- To improve Numeracy knowledge

These will be achieved using the Departments recommendations in the Literacy and Numeracy Guidebooks, based on world class research and recommendations. In Literacy, the school has introduced a phonic program throughout the school, introduced decodable readers and a basic grammar program. In Numeracy, the school is implementing aspects of the Big Ideas in Number and STEM 500 to support individual learning programs.

- Recent key outcomes

The acquisition of phonic knowledge has shown improvement as measured by the Early Years PATr testing and school devised assessments. The use of decodable readers is further developing reading skills in some individuals.

In Numeracy, the emphasis on Trusting the Count and Place Value is providing a solid basis for mathematical understanding.

## 4. Curriculum

- All programmes are adapted or written to suit the needs of individual learners and support individual One Plans.
- The Australian Curriculum informs our curriculum. Individual student goals are aligned with the Australian Curriculum, ABLES SA and Site Improvement Plan. We refer to both the Australian Curriculum standards and capabilities and our professional knowledge of students to determine their level of achievement within the learning continuum. We also refer to the Early Years Framework (including Indicators in Literacy & Numeracy) for relevant learning for student needs.
- Senior students participate in SACE with modified assessment plans. All Yr 10 students have a Personal Learning Plan to develop competencies/capabilities.
- Community programs: Classes regularly access a range of other programmes and venues in the community as a part of curriculum. These include the gym, swimming pool, Road Safety Centre, bowling, shopping, playgrounds and parks.
- Teaching methodology: Teachers use a range of communication methodologies to address the needs of students. Visual strategies, including PODD, Proloqu2go and signing are integrated into practice to assist students to be able to communicate more effectively and to understand routines. As a R-y12 school, methodologies progress according to situations e.g. from early play and language development to skills training for post school options. Pedagogies are inclusive of visual and hearing impairments. Students work best in small group and individualised attention. SSOs support these programmes. ICT supports alternative communication with specialised

software and hardware. The school is open to using new digital technologies that create new opportunities for student learning. Each classroom has an electronic whiteboard and a suite of iPads used to support student learning. Mini iPads are dedicated for the speech programme Proloquo2go to support student communication.

- Student assessment procedures and reporting: Informal assessment and reporting occurs on an on-going basis. Teachers communicate with parents frequently via phone and communication books and meet for individual case management. The One Plan is updated each year, involving parents in discussions about student progress, learning needs, agreed plans and setting of annual goals. Reports are sent home at the end of each semester addressing progress with individual goals and the content and skills focus of the class. These reports include a range of photos of students learning as additional visual reporting. Students are assessed using the ABLES SA (Pre-foundation levels of the Australian Curriculum as adopted by the DFE), Early Years PATr and Early Years PATm, PATr and PATm (as appropriate for the individual student) and school based phonic testing.
- Joint programmes: As various occasions arise, the school engages with the special options classes at Solomontown Primary School and the John Pirie Secondary School (JPSS) for joint activities. These have included Harmony Day activities, Outdoor Education Day, Bike riding, Science Day activities and Child Studies classes (JPSS). The school has collaborated with JPSS on designing and producing of murals to decorate the school fences. The MNEC has hosted one-off events such as The Australian Ballet to which other schools have been invited.

## 5. Sporting Activities

Physical engagement is an important part of the wellbeing curriculum. Daily fitness sessions are incorporated into whole school programmes. The school has a range of bikes and scooters to engage students. Students also have regular access to the Road Safety Centre and regular swimming and gymnastics programmes.

Secondary Students participate in the annual Combined Basketball Carnival at Port Pirie, creating teams with other sites including Port Augusta Special School and John Pirie Secondary School. The MNEC organises a biennial 'Life Be In It' style of Combined Sports Day with other special schools and classes in the region. This is usually well attended and provides opportunities for all students to participate and succeed. The school has playground facilities including a Liberty Swing for wheelchairs and a grassed area that is used for AusKick, cricket and other sports. Senior students use a gym set for age appropriate fitness.

## 6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

The students of the Mid North Education Centre make extensive use of the local and closeby community facilities – pool, gymnasium, various parks, shopping centres and other amenities. The students enjoy local cultural and arts exhibitions at the Tourism and Arts Centre and visiting performances at the Keith Michel Theatre.

## 7. Staff (and their welfare)

- Staff profile: The school operates with 4 classes, with a teacher for each class. As a country school, staff usually live in Port Pirie and a range of close areas/ towns. Three of the teachers are within their first two years of teaching.
- Leadership structure consists of the Principal and a Band B1 leader. Teachers are encouraged to develop and use leadership skills. Teachers work collaboratively on aspects of the School Improvement Plan.
- Staff support systems: The school uses a SSO as the school librarian. Professional development is strategic to whole school development in line with school priorities to develop staff expertise and shared understandings within the team. As a small school, staff meetings are inclusive of professional development, school priorities and SIP goals rather than separate committees. At 3.15pm, there is a short meeting for all staff. Teachers meet weekly for more formal discussions and development. Sound working relationships exist between staff in WH&S, PAC and AEU rep.  
The SSOs hold twice termly meetings to discuss SSO related issues. Staff are supported by debriefing processes as required.  
Support from DFE Student Support Services and the Local Education Team is available from the Port Pirie Education Office.
- Performance Management: The Principal coordinates a performance management programme with all staff, in line with the Department's Performance Development Plan Policy. Staff negotiate their individual learning goals in line with the Site Improvement Plan.
- Staff utilisation policies: Staff are deployed flexibly across the site with consideration to the needs of students, staff expertise and current professional development interests. SSOs are rostered to work in several classrooms to support flexibility in the site. The school has a SSO3 Business/ finance Manager. A SSO2 is allocated to coordinate Health Care Plans. All SSO's are expected to work cooperatively with rosters. Several SSOs are trained and work also as Health Service Officers (HSO's) for specific student's needs. SSOs undertake additional tasks such as archiving, WHS, bus driving to meet the demands of the school.
- Access to special staff. The school receives support from consulting teachers from Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment Unit once per term. Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech Therapists and Development Educators visit the school as part of Students' NDIS plans. The school is able to assist families to access the NDIS program through the NDIS Local Area

Co-ordinators. HSOs are trained through the Access Assistant Programme. Autism Association and Down's syndrome Society provide a service to the school as per their practices with other DFE sites. SHINE SA also supports the site in student developmental issues.

- Staff at the Mid North Education Centre needs to have a commitment to and empathy with students and their families and an understanding of the impact of various disabilities on student learning. Working collaboratively and flexibly as a team is essential. Staff are challenged to be creative, innovative and thorough to constantly modify educational programmes to suit student needs, responding proactively to learning needs and any inappropriate behaviours.

## **8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff**

- Country Zone allowance (\$1,811-\$9,133).
- Travelling time: Port Pirie is approximately 2 ½ hours from Adelaide, one hour from Port Augusta and 2 hours from Whyalla. There is a DFE regional office in Port Pirie.
- Subsidised Housing assistance: Some government housing is available in Port Pirie and is accessed through DFE processes.
- Relocation assistance is as per DFE Policy when teaching staff are newly appointed to sites.
- Location allowances.
- Designated schools benefits: Teachers are eligible to apply for Special Class Allowance. Staff are eligible to claim for Protective Clothing Allowance each year.
- The Principal's telephone costs related to the conduct of school business are met.

## **9. School Facilities**

- Buildings and grounds: The school was redeveloped in 2003. There are 4 classrooms located within the main building and a Sensory Room, Art Room, Home Economics Room, Meeting Room, Staff Room, Principal, Bursar and Front Office. Each classroom has phone access, an interactive whiteboard, a storeroom and small learning room connected to it. Each classroom has access to a fenced outdoor area from the classroom. There are male and female toilets and an access toilet room. An internal courtyard with playsafe and equipment provides an extended learning area joined onto the Art and Home Economics Room. The Home Economics room is designed as a large cooking area with a communal eating area. There is a separate laundry with an additional shower and toilet. The Resource Centre is located in a transportable building. There is a Flexible Learning Area used as a hall for classes and whole school events. The grounds are spacious and are well

developed with several developmentally designed playground zones. There is a basketball court, grassed area and sheltered area. A Liberty Swing was installed in 2019. A shed provides storage for bikes and physical education equipment and another shed for the groundsman equipment. All areas are fenced safely. There is a drive through facility for taxi, buses and cars to drop off and collect students. The school is next to the Road Safety Centre which is accessed by sites in the area. Bookings for this are made through the Port Pirie Regional Council.

- The school received a new roof and air-conditioning units in 2018 and further upgrades occurred in 2020. The laundry was completely rebuilt in 2019 due to termite damage occurring in the structure. In 2020, the grounds and buildings were upgraded under the Lead minimisation scheme
- Heating and cooling. All buildings have reverse cycle air-conditioning or ducted air-conditioning. The main building was upgraded in 2020 to reduce noise levels and to minimise fluctuations between rooms. Some of the systems work on a timer system to increase efficiency. Wheel chair students can access a Liberty Swing. All students can access the sensory garden. Students have access to raised vegetable beds, indoor shade house. The school has some chickens.
- Student facilities: students can access a daily breakfast club sponsored by the Nystar smelter. Some classes cook on a regular basis providing lunch for those students.

The school has upgraded the computer system as is now on the NBN. Classes enjoy wireless access for ipads and laptops in the classrooms. All classes have interactive whiteboards

- Staff facilities: There is a staff room with staff pigeon holes, lockers and computer/internet access. Staff have use of microwaves, toasters, fridges and hot water urn for personal use.
- Access to bus transport: The school has 2 Variety Club buses with wheel chair provision, which support access to the community and for excursions. Currently a DFE bus is stored at the school and is used to transport some students with approved transport support. Some students access approved taxis through their NDIS/ school transport plans.

## 10. School Operations

Decision making structures:

There are a number of decision making forums and staff have the opportunity to participate in these. Democratic decision making forums are through staff meetings, P.A.C., Governing Council and school reviews. P.A.C. meets as required, with minutes available to all staff. SSO meetings are held twice per term to discuss issues. The Governing Council meets Friday of week 3 and 8 of each term. Staff meetings, which includes SSOs, are held daily 3:15-3:30pm and teacher meetings are held weekly on a Tuesday.

- Regular publications: School newsletters are published fortnightly. These are published on the school Facebook page, emailed to parents/ caregivers or hard copies sent to families
- Other communication: Regular phone contact is made to parents/ caregivers on a needs basis. Teachers use student diaries to communicate with parents/ caregivers.
- School financial position: The school is in a sound financial position. The Site Improvement Plan is reflected in budget allocations. A financial report is submitted to Governing Council via the Finance Officer. Each teacher is responsible for his or her class budget; other budget lines are delegated with guidelines according to school priorities. The schools finances are managed according to EDSAS and FABSnet systems
- Special funding: The school can apply for extra funding through IESP/ RAAP funding to support individual student's needs that are above and beyond what would normally be accepted as reasonable. In these instances, the school applies to a central panel, which meets twice per term to access these additional needs.

## 11. Local Community

- General characteristics  
 Port Pirie is a large regional centre within a farming district. There are a variety of employment opportunities within the government and service agencies. The main employer in the town is the Nystar Smelters. Port Pirie is located on the Spencer Gulf and close to the Southern Flinders Ranges.  
 Parent and community involvement  
 The school encourages family support but also acknowledges the difficulties and time constraints by families who have a child with special needs. The Governing Council meetings are held on Fridays, weeks 3 & 8 in the morning.
- Feeder or destination schools  
 All schools and preschools in the Mid North have the potential to be feeder schools/preschools. Students accessing the school from country areas can travel long distances. The other closest special school site facilities are in Port Augusta, Peterborough, Clare and Kadina. There are Primary special option classes at Solomontown Primary School and John Pirie Secondary School

- Other local care and educational facilities

Mid North Education Centre is a part of the DFE Pirie Partnership. There are total of 10 DFE sites in Port Pirie with four kindergartens, after hours care in one school and a Child Day Care Centre. Port Pirie has four DFE primary schools, one large secondary school, and a R-12 Special School. Port Pirie also has a private R-y12 Catholic school and a R-y12 Independent Christian School. There is a TAFE campus and a Uni-hub.

- Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities

Port Pirie is well serviced by a variety of retail and business outlets which are located in the City Centre, Pirie Plaza and along Main Road. These include hardware, major supermarkets, speciality shops, various motels/ hotels offering hospitality and accommodation, cabin parks, caravan parks, takeaways, homewares, car dealerships and light construction to service the city and surrounding rural areas.

- Other local facilities

The community has a strong sporting focus with a wide variety of sports available throughout the year. Good facilities are available for a variety of sport and recreational activities including a recently built indoor swimming pool and gymnasium. The city has a quality public library service. Cultural events are frequent due to the Northern Festival Centre, an excellent facility that hosts live entertainment and films. There is a Tourism and Arts Centre, which has quality art and craft displays and a range of exhibitions. Port Pirie is close to the Flinders Ranges for camping and bushwalking, and close to the Yorke Peninsular for water activities. Port Pirie has three large medical centres supported by a large hospital with a wide range of visiting specialists conducting day surgery. There is an Ambulance, Metropolitan Fire Service and Regional Police Station.

- Availability of staff housing: some housing is available through Office Government Employee Housing (OGEH). A range of housing is available through the private rental market.

- Accessibility: Port Pirie is six kilometres off National Highway One. Accessibility by the highway is from Adelaide to the south, Port Augusta to the north and Eyre Peninsular via the north. The Premier Stateliner coach group offer a number of regular services each day with coaches from Alice Springs, Ceduna, Port Lincoln, Whyalla and Port Augusta making scheduled stops in Port Pirie.

- The Local Government body is the Port Pirie Regional Council. The mayoral and council offices are located in the city centre. More information about Port Pirie community can be obtained from the Port Pirie Regional Council phone 08 8632 1222 and the Tourism and Arts Centre phone 08 8633 0439.