



# SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: 2017

**School number:** 0214

**School name:** Mid North Education Centre

## School Profile:

Our vision is to be a safe, caring place of learning where staff, students and parents/carers work in partnership for positive student outcomes. Students receive a broad, relevant and effective curriculum and parents/carers and the community are welcome. We are a school within the Pirie Partnership. As with other Pirie Partnership sites our qualities for learning are Respect, Responsibility, Persistence and Confidence. The main learning areas are addressed using adapted curriculum to suit individual learning needs. We focus on presenting individual and small group learning programs inclusive of a range of student abilities and disabilities, R-12. The One Plan format for negotiated goals is being introduced for all students in 2017.

We work collaboratively to develop proactive approaches for positive student behaviour. Student's health and safety needs are included in a holistic approach. Short and long term planning supports students to develop capabilities and positive attitudes for life in the community. Staff are involved in professional learning to continuously improve.

# 1. General information

- School Principal name : Anna McNeil
- Year of opening:
  - New School Opened in 1981
  - Redeveloped school opened in 2003
  - School Name Change in 2007 (from Port Pirie Special School)
- Postal Address : 56 David Street
- Location Address : 56 David Street
- DECS Region : Pirie Partnership
- Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km) : 225 kms
- Telephone number : (08) 8632 1091
- Fax Number : (08) 8632 3963
- 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
- February FTE student enrolment:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Primary	15.6	20	24	18	19
Secondary	10	11	13	17	15
TOTAL	25.6	31	37	35	35
School Card Approval	29	29	29	28	29
NESB	0	0	0	0	0
Aboriginal FTE enrolment	6	6	6	6	6

- Student enrolment trends: There has been a trend of increasing enrolments from 2011. In 2016 the ratio of PS & SS students was 19 PS & 15 SS.
- Staffing numbers 2016
  - 1.0 Principal
  - 6.35 FTE between 6 Teachers inclusive of 0.1 Librarian.
  - SSO Ancillary staffing - There are five permanent SSO's, 4 full time contracted SSO's and 7 other part-time contracted SSO's. There is one SSO in each class with additional ancillary allocation varying annually according to student needs.

## 2. Students (and their welfare)

- General characteristics

Students enrolled and attending are identified by a Psychologist and/or Speech Pathologist in line with the DECD Student with Disabilities Policy. 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. All students have a One Plan. 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 programmes

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 a Health Support Officer and documents and plans are renewed each year. Student wellbeing and engagement is integrated into the Site Improvement Plan. From 2014 the site started the Kids Matter programme and this has continued running parallel with the 'Qualities For Learning.'
- Student support offered

The school works closely with other agencies - Options Coordination, Kilparrin, Autism Association, Down Syndrome Society, and Port Pirie Health Service. Referrals to DECD support services (Psychology, Speech, Disability, Behaviour, Education Support, Attendance & Engagement etc) are made on an individual needs basis. Students with challenging behaviours referred to Student Support Services for additional support. We also have a Pastoral Care Worker and an Aboriginal Community Education Officer who support students and families.
- Student management

The school operates on a non aversive behaviour learning model. Student goals focus on effective communication of needs/feelings and interpersonal skills to support students learning effective and appropriate ways to communicate and have their needs met. 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, PECS, visual timetables supplement verbal and signing communication are used. Behaviour consultation and collaboration is highly valued, working with parents in a wholistic way. Student wellbeing and individual programmes are discussed regularly in staff meetings.

A Behaviour Code was established in 2010 and has been further developed to be aligned to the Partnership Qualities of Respect, Responsibility, Confidence and Persistence with “thumbs up” and “thumbs down” behaviours.

- 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. In 2016, 6 student leaders were elected by the students and this initiative has been continued into 2017.

- Special programmes

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is used throughout most classes for students who are nonverbal or with limited communication. Speech Pathologist provide advice and assessment for teaching staff. Significant training has occurred with staff, and continues. Dedicated SSO time is factored in to prepare visual resources and provide 1:1 additional speech support for early intervention with students as possible.

Swimming and water safety: Students are eligible for the student with disabilities swimming program when documented through their One Plan. In Port Pirie there is an outdoor and indoor pool. We use a combination of models, with some block class attendance in Term 1, 2 afternoon swimming groups in Term 2 & 3 and senior class blocks in Term 4.

Work Experience Senior students have a range of options for work experience and post school option placement. Port Pirie has services available of Bedford (Living Skills and Business Services), Orana, SCOSA, Interworks, CBS Jobnet, Career Systems. Post school option planning is supported through the Personal Learning Plan established in Yr 10. New SACE transitions are considered well before the final year of schooling to allow time for learning, family awareness and adjustments. NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) can be involved in the final year of schooling especially when assessments for funding are required. 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:

- Our Trademark Purpose statement is “We aim to make a difference for our students by identifying and meeting the student’s individual needs enabling them to learn to the best of their ability, in a safe and supportive environment.”
- Targets are set each year related to the focus. In 2017, students have goals set in prereading & reading, numeracy and problem solving and student wellbeing.
- Our site improvement focus 2015-2017 is based on the themes of “Telling our Stories” & “This Place, Our Space.” In Telling Our Stories the intent is to strengthen student’s capacity and confidence as communicators in order to express ideas effectively-inclusive of reading and building student voice. With This Place, Our Space” the main intent to affirm student identity, contribution & connection, build student voice, develop confidence using inquiry and problem solving skills especially in outdoor play areas. In all areas developing student’s communication skills remains a high priority and we use a range of interventions. In 2017 a review of the Site Improvement Plan and other recommendations will form the basis for a new cycle in Site Improvement Plans.

### 4. Curriculum

- All programmes are adapted or written to suit the needs of individual learners and support student learning goals.
- The Australian Curriculum informs our curriculum. Individual student goals are aligned with the Australian Curriculum 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.
- Community programs: Classes regularly access a range of other programmes and venues in the community as a part of curriculum. These include the Road Safety Centre, bowling, playgrounds and parks.
- Senior students participate in SACE with modified assessment plans. All Year 10 students start with Personal Learning Plan.
- Teaching methodology: Teachers use a range of communication methodologies to address the needs of students. Visual strategies, including Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and signing are integrated into practice to assist students to be able to communicate more effectively and to understand routines. As a R-12 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 vision and hearing impairments. Students work best in small group and individualised attention. SSO’s 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 ongoing basis. Teachers communicate with parents frequently via phone and communication book and meet for individual case management. The student learning goals involving parents in discussions about student progress, learning needs, agreed plans and the setting of learning 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.

## **5. Sporting Activities**

- Physical engagement is an important part of the wellbeing curriculum. Daily fitness sessions are incorporated into classroom programmes and as a whole school focus with fitness sessions regularly each week in the Hall. The school has a range of bikes to be able to engage more 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 Senior School. Bi annually there is a 'Life Be In It' style of Combined Sports Day with other special schools and classes. This is usually well attended and provides opportunities for all students to participate and succeed. An "Exersite programme" located at the school, apart from playground facilities and a grassed area is used for Aus Kick and cricket. 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 – Port Pirie Library, Bowling Club, 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 Michelle 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.
- The Leadership structure consists of the Principal and B1 Leader.
- Staff support systems: The school uses a teacher as 0.1 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 project and inquiry development rather than separate committees. Each day at 3.15pm there is a short staff meeting with an additional teacher meeting each week. Sound working relationships exist between staff in WH&S, PAC, AEU rep. Staff are supported by debriefing processes as required. Support from DECD Support Services is available from the Employment Assistance Program.

- Performance Management: The Principal coordinates a Professional Development Plan with all staff. 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. Staff expertise and interests are considered in the afternoon programme process. SSO's are rostered to work in several classrooms to support flexibility in the site. The afternoon wellbeing programme works on student groups from across the school, thereby enhancing staff familiarisation with a wide range of students in a whole school approach. A SSO2 is allocated to coordinate Health Care Plans and also provide intensive speech and language intervention. All SSO's are expected to work cooperatively with rosters. Several SSO's are trained and work also as Health Service Officers (HSO's) for specific student's needs.
- Access to special staff. The school receives support from consulting teachers from Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment Unit each term. Health Support Officer's are trained through the Access Assistant Programme. Autism Association and Downes Syndrome Society provide a service to the school as per their practices with other DECD sites.
- 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

- Complexity placement points: 1.0 per year.
- Isolation placement points: 2.0 per year.
- Travelling time: Port Pirie is approximately 2½ hours from Adelaide, one hour from Port Augusta and 2 hours from Whyalla. The Yorke and Mid North Region has regional offices in Port Pirie, Clare and Kadina which are approximately one hour travelling from Port Pirie.
- Housing assistance: Some government housing is available in Port Pirie and is accessed through DECD processes.
- Designated schools benefits: Teachers are eligible to apply for Special Class Allowance. Staff are eligible to claim for Protective Clothing Allowance each year
- Relocation assistance is as per DECD Policy when teaching staff are newly appointed to sites.
- 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 buildings and a Sensory Room, Art Room, Home Economics Room, Meeting Room, Staff Room, Principal, Bursar and Front Office. Each classroom has phone access, Soundfield systems, 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. The Resource Centre is located in a transportable building. There is a Flexible Learning Area used as a hall for classes and whole school sessions and 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 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 pick up 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 Mid North Education Centre.
- Heating and cooling. The main building has reverse cycle airconditioning. All other buildings have airconditioning.
- Students have access to recreational/leisure options such as pool table, table tennis and indoor soccer game. Under-cover raised garden beds provide wheelchair access with secure facilities with a bird cage. There have been

significant upgrades of ICT facilities with interactive whiteboards, laptops and ipads. Review and improvement with ICT facilities is ongoing.

- Staff facilities: There is a staff room with staff pigeon holes, lockers and computer access.
- Access to bus transport: The school has 2 Variety Club buses with wheel chair provision which supports access to the community and for excursions. Currently DECD bus is stored close by and is used to transport for some students with approved transport support.

## 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 to be held more regularly to discuss issues. The Governing Council meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> week of term at 9.00am. Staff meetings, which includes SSO's, are held daily 3:15-3:30 and teacher meetings are held weekly on a Tuesday.
- The school newsletter is published several times per term. Each student has a communication diary for communication between home and school. Phone contact is often made with parents/carers on a needs basis.

School financial position

- The school is in a sound financial position. The Site Improvement Plan reflects in budget allocations. A monthly financial report is submitted to Governing Council via the Finance Committee. Each teacher is responsible for his or her class budget; other budget lines may be delegated with guidelines according to school priorities. The schools finances are managed according to EDSAS and FABSnet systems.

## 11. Local Community

General characteristics:

- Port Pirie is a large regional centre within a farming district and there is a large 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 gulf and near 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 Thursday Week 3 & 8 in the term.
- 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 special needs classes at Solomontown Primary School and John Pirie Secondary School.

- Mid North Education Centre is a part of the DECD Pirie Partnership. There are total of 10 DECD sites in Port Pirie with four kindergartens, after hours care in one school and a Child Day Care Centre. Port Pirie has four DECD primary schools and one large secondary school, a R-12 Special School. Port Pirie also has a R-12 Catholic complex and a Christian School. There is a TAFE campus which is a part of the Spencer Institute of TAFE.
- 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, supermarkets, specialty shops, three motels (servicing the Flinders Ranges), cabin park, two caravan parks, furniture/carpentry, hardware, homeware, car dealerships and light construction to service the city and surrounding rural area.
- 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. 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). Private rental is and a range of housing is available.
- Accessibility: Port Pirie is several kilometres off National Highway One. Accessibility by highways is 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.