SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

School number: 0214

School name: Mid North Education Centre

School Profile Text:

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. Our core value is respect, supported by fairness and honesty. We focus on presenting individual and small group learning programs inclusive of a range of student abilities and disabilities, R-12. All students have Negotiated Education Plans (NEPs). We cover the main learning areas using adapted curriculum to suit individual learning needs. Our site improvement focus is on communication, behaviour and student wellbeing. To develop student’s communication skills we use a range of interventions. As a small supportive school community we work collaboratively to develop proactive approaches for positive student behaviour. Student's health and safety needs are included in a holistic program. 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: Yorke and Mid North
- Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km): 225 kms
- Telephone number: (08) 8632 1091
- Fax Number: (08) 8632 3963
- School website address: www.midnorthec.sa.edu.au
- School e-mail address: dl.0214_info@schools.sa.edu.au
• Child Parent Centre (CPC) attached : No
• Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service : No
• February FTE student enrolment:

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<th>January FTE Enrolment</th>
<th>2007</th>
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• Student enrolment trends: Stable with a previous average over 5 years of 30.2 with capacity of 32. Students transition into MNEC traditionally at Reception or Yr 8 stages although transfers from other special schools and sites occur in and out as required.
• Staffing numbers (as at February census):
  o 1.0  Principal
  o 4.0  Teachers
  o SSO Ancillary staffing There are six SSO’s with permanent status, some part time and currently eight SSO’s on other contracts. Through EB arrangements 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 DECS Student with Disabilities Policy. All students have a Negotiated Education 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. There has been an increase of students on school card ifrom 46.9% in 2009 to 67.3% in 2010 and 76.3% in 2011.
• **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 support offered**
  
  The school works closely with other agencies- Options Coordination, Kilparrin, Autism Association, Down Syndrome Society, Novita and the Port Pirie Health Service through Child Development Unit meetings. Referrals to DECS regional support (Psychology, Speech, Disability, Behaviour, Attendance etc) are made on an individual needs basis. Students with challenging behaviours referred to Behaviour Intervention Services for additional support.

• **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.

  Behaviour Policy was reviewed in 2009 with a new Behaviour Code established and published in 2010.

• **Student government**
  
  There is no traditional student representative team, however 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. Staff are committed to encouraging student voice and options for adapted student representative groups.

• **Special programmes**
  
  Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is used throughout most classes for students who are nonverbal or with limited communication. Speech Pathologist assessments and provide advice 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 withdrawal 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 NEP. 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. Disability SA is involved in the final year of schooling especially when Vermont Assessments 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

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.” The Trademark Behaviours adopted by staff are to be respectful, supportive, dedicated and student focussed. Our core value is respect, with the other values of fairness and honesty.

A new Site Improvement Plan 2012 – 2014 was established in 2012 with the main focus areas of

- improving student capacity to communicate using digital and visual tools across the curriculum.
- improving student engagement in learning by focussing on individual wellbeing.

Targets are set each year related to the focus. A Site Improvement Plan pamphlett is available to the community.

4. Curriculum

- All programmes are adapted or written to suit the needs of individual learners and support negotiated education plans.
- All curriculum areas except LOTE are offered within the SACSA framework, with reference to both Developmental Learning Outcomes and Standards according to individual learning and achievement. Subject skills are developed considering a range of developmental levels, recognising the role of preferred learning styles and learning needs of students.
- Community programs: Classes regularly access a range of other programmes and venues in the community as a part of curriculum. These include the Men’s Shed, Road Safety Centre, bowling, playgrounds and parks.

- Senior students participate in SACE with modified assessment plans. From 2009 onwards all Yr 10 students have a Personal Learning Plan with the New SACE to develop competencies/capabilities. On site facilities (woodshop, horticulture centre) are available to support simulated work place training programmes. As a small R-12 school we are able to discuss student progress and make the connections from early intervention learning to later independence skills for community engagement and post school option preparation.

- Teaching methodology: Teachers use a range of communication methodologies to address the needs of students. Visual strategies, including Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), 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 visual 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 to support the learning program and in 2012 i-pads will be introduced.

- 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 Negotiated Education Plan is updated each year, involving parents in discussions about student progress, learning needs, agreed plans and setting of annual goals. Formal reports are sent home at the end of each semester addressing each subject area, based on the content and skills focus in the class. Students are assessed on a continuum from ‘needing total help’ to ‘competent’. The report also contains progress with individual goals and “Work habits, social behaviour, skills and attitudes”. The final year report includes an overview comment. The reporting format is being reviewed in 2012 to reflect achievement in individual learning goals and Australian curriculum requirements.

5. Sporting Activities

Physical engagement is an important part of the wellbeing curriculum. Daily fitness sessions are incorporated into classroom programmes as appropriate. This includes visits to the Road Safety Centre, and regular swimming programme.

Secondary Students participate in the annual Salisbury High School Basketball Carnival, creating teams with Port Augusta Special School. An
“Exersite programme” located at the school, apart from playground facilities and a grassed area is used for Aus Kick and cricket. AFL and Cricket Clinics visit the school. Senior students use a gym set for age appropriate fitness. Younger students regularly access a range of bikes. The school uses the Sports Ability program located at the school. (This is also accessed by other sites.)

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 Mens Shed, supported by the local community, provides an opportunity for students to construct items with wood. The students enjoy local cultural and arts exhibitions at the Tourism and Arts Centre and visiting performances at the Keith Michelle Centre.

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, with teachers encouraged to develop and use leadership skills within roles of project management and in short term Acting Principal opportunities. Traditionally any Key Teacher/Coordinator allocations have been converted for additional SSO classroom support and for teacher release days within school priorities.
- 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 OHS&W, PAC, AEU rep. Staff are supported by debriefing processes as required. Staff support is also available from the Yorke and Mid North Regional Office.
- Performance Management: The Principal coordinates a performance management programme with all staff. Staff negotiate 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 programme works on student groups from across the school, thereby enhancing staff familiarisation with a wide range of students in a whole school approach. Non-Instructural Time is structured into the afternoon programme.
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 once per term. Novita staff (Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech Therapists) also visit once per term. Individual student referrals are needed for both of these services. For Child Development Unit clients referrals can be made to Pt Pirie Health Services for Occupational Therapy consultation. HSO’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 DECS sites.

- Staff at the Mid North Education Centre need 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 2 ½ 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 DECS processes.
- Designated schools benefits: Teachers are eligible to apply for Special Class Allowance. Staff are eligible to claim Protective Clothing Allowance each year
- Relocation assistance is as per DECs 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 this is due to be upgraded in 2009. With Building Education Revolution in 2010-2011 the school will add a Flexible Learning Area to be used primarily 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 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.

- A Simulated Work Place environment has been established where students have access to a workshop and horticultural facilities. 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 has been significant upgrades of ICT facilities with interactive whiteboards, additional laptops and infrastructure by SERU grants, DER funding and Site funding. Review of ICT facilities is ongoing.

- Staff facilities: There is a large staff room with staff pigeon holes, lockers and computer access. The “Bursar Room” is used mainly as a staff work area with access to computers.

- Access to bus transport: The school has 2 Variety Club buses with wheelchair provision which supports access to the community and for excursions. A DECS bus is stored close by and is used to supplement taxi transport for students enrolled at the school.

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 third Tuesday of each month in the afternoon. Staff meetings are held weekly on a Tuesday.
• Regular publications: The school newsletter is published three times per term. Classes provide a report regularly on a rotational basis. 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 and the Abattoirs. 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. Parents attend meetings as required. The Governing Council meetings are held in the afternoon on the third Tuesday of the month.
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, Clare and Kadina. There is a Primary School Special needs class at Solomontown Primary School.

- Other local care and educational facilities: There are total of 10 DECS sites in Port Pirie with four kindergartens, after hours care in one school and a Child Day Care Centre. Port Pirie has four DECS 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 readily available. A wide range of quality 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 schedules stops in Port Pirie.

- Local Government body: The amalgamated Port Pirie and Districts Council is the local governing body. The mayoral and council offices are located in the City Centre. More information about Port Pirie community can be obtained from the Port Pirie Council phone 08 86321222 and the Tourism and Arts Centre phone 08 86330439.