



SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: 2023

School number: 1021

School name: MCDONALD PARK SCHOOL

School Profile:

VISION

The McDonald Park School community will work collaboratively to develop respectful, thriving and engaged problem solvers. Our core values are:

- Respect
- Generosity
- Honesty

CORE BUSINESS

The core business of McDonald Park School is teaching and learning in a supportive environment.

As a learning community we are committed to:

- Focusing on student learning through practices that build assessment capable learners, achieved through teacher clarity and students owning their learning. McDonald Park School Learner Profile provides a common language for learning for teachers and students.
- Providing a balanced and challenging F-6 curriculum in the eight areas of study using the Australian Curriculum, where students are aware of learning processes and how they can continue to grow as learners.
- Providing flexible learning plans to achieve individual growth.
- An emphasis on collaborative learning, providing an opportunity for students to talk about their learning and share knowledge.
- Maximising the sharing of skills and expertise by providing a range of opportunities for leadership and teamwork.
- Wellbeing practices are tailored to individual needs, with the ultimate outcome to prepare individual students for learning.

CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES

McDonald Park School is a F-6 school under the collaborative and cooperative leadership of Principal and Deputy, supported by a Senior Leader and Wellbeing Leader.

Enrolment numbers have declined over the past few years, initially due to year seven transition to high school, but also due to local context and preschool numbers for each cohort not being as high as in previous years.

Family and employment situations cover a wide range of the social and economic spectrum, with an increasing percentage of families accessing school card support.

The community has pride in the school. There is a high level of parent participation and support; this is particularly evident for whole school events.

Staff are committed to providing the best educational opportunities for the students in their care. Our school is held in high regard and is educationally valued by the community. Staff turnover is minimal.

1. General information

- School Principal's name: Ms Kirsty Hill
- Deputy Principal's name: Mrs Sharon Day
- Year of opening: 1969
- Postal Address: 57 North Terrace, Mount Gambier
- Location Address: 57 North Terrace, Mount Gambier
- DfE Partnership: Blue Lake - Mount Gambier 1
- Geographical location – i.e. road distance from GPO (km): 468kms
- Telephone number: 08 8724 9811
- Fax Number: 08 8725 0254
- School website address: www.mcparkr7.sa.edu.au
- School e-mail address: dl.1021.info@schools.sa.edu.au
- Child Parent Centre (CPC) attached: No
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service: Application submitted
- February FTE student enrolment:

Primary Special, NAP, Upgraded etc.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Reception	65	74	59	58	55	47	61	45
Year 1	74	64	75	61	60	53	49	58
Year 2	77	72	69	76	64	57	56	46
Year 3	83	74	75	71	77	61	61	51
Year 4	77	82	70	75	72	77	64	61
Year 5	87	74	85	70	72	71	76	62
Year 6	66	83	76	82	71	72	75	73
Year 7	78	65	79	77	84	74	0	0
TOTAL	607	590	588	570	555	512	442	396

July total FTE enrolment

	607	590	588	570		516	434	399
Male FTE	323	319	315	301		263	213	203
Female FTE	284	271	273	269		253	221	196

School Card Approvals (Persons)

	196	181	183	187	222	190	172	147
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NESB Total (Persons)

	10	9	10	11		21	34
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Aboriginal FTE Enrolment

	30	26	24	24	31	34	34	29
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Leadership Team work together collaboratively and teaching staff operate in year level working teams, which meet regularly for planning, moderation, observation and professional dialogue.

- Student enrolment trends: Slight decline
- Staffing numbers (as at February census):

Teaching Staff: (M) 1.2 (F) 20.2

Teacher Librarian: (F) 0.6

Combined SSOs: (F) 10.9 (M) 2.9 ACEO (F) 0.6

Student Support Worker: (F) 0.2

Leadership Positions: Senior Leader - Teaching and Learning 0.6

Student Wellbeing Leader 1.0

Enrolment trends: Slight decline

- Public transport access: Access to Mount Gambier by city buses. Access to Adelaide and Melbourne is via buses and planes.

2. Students (and their welfare)

- *General characteristics*
Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. We have a small number of Aboriginal students (currently 24). Approximately 37% of our students are school card holders.
- *Student wellbeing programs*
The school has a Student Wellbeing Leader, who facilitates class programs that focus on self regulation and coaching teachers to utilise trauma informed practices. The whole school has a focus on growth mindset and knowing self as a learner, including the barriers to learning and strategies to prepare for learning.
The development of self-regulation has been a school wide focus with the introduction of interoception activities at class and site level. The school is currently trialling 'Zones of Regulation' program.
The Student Wellbeing Leader works with individuals and small groups of children on a needs basis, focusing on social skills, mental wellbeing, goal setting and growth mindset strategies to improve student wellbeing and regulation.
The Student Wellbeing Leader is supported by the Student Support Worker, who provides individual support to students on a needs basis, one day a week.
- *Student support offered*
Support is given via differentiated learning programs, speech therapy programs, and early intervention and LAP. Our learning support for those who qualify or are identified as a school priority, is facilitated by SSOs. The programs reflect the teacher programs and planning and focus on goals identified in individualised one plans. Additional support is also provided for students as identified through monitoring of achievement data. This support is provided through a structured 1:1 early intervention program, either Minilit or Multilit, Read Write Inc, or Too Smart. Identified primary students may access a targeted maths intervention program. Foundation and year one classes have additional support to provide a literacy phonics program that is taught as a collective team.
- *Student management*
We have a behaviour policy covering both classroom and yard behaviour based on restorative justice principles and practices. Everyone's right to learn/teach is known and understood by staff, students and parents. PD builds upon best practice and ensures consistency in this area.
- *Student government*
We have a Student Representative Council (F-6). This consists of two representatives from each of the classes across our school community. Students have an active role in the school's decision-making process via

SRC and class meetings. There is an executive SRC group who facilitate and lead student voice with the younger students. SRC work together to discuss student ideas, concerns and implement student initiatives across our community.

We have a large Student Leadership Team, who are responsible for various responsibilities and initiatives, including:

- Ambassadors - organise fortnightly assemblies and represent school for events such as ANZAC Day.
- Events and PR - depending on school need this group have been involved in planning special events such as Art Show and McPark's Got Talent. On a regular basis they provide play time music and take photos for assembly award winners and events such as Book Week.
- Sports Captains have an active role in planning and organising lunch time sports activities and assist with Sports Day organisation.
- Environment Group - this group have an awareness project each year and work with the school to increase environmental awareness.
- *Special programs*

Successful transition programs operate from preschool to school and year 6 to year 7.

All classes in the school buddy with another class to develop links across the different sectors of the school and to encourage peer support in the yard. Children value these relationships and eagerly anticipate in buddy lessons.

3. Key School Policies

- Site Improvement Plan: Site Improvement Plan priorities 2022-2024 include writing and numeracy. The over arching focus has been the visible learning program that we have been involved in.

4. Curriculum

- *Subject offerings*

Our curriculum covers areas of study as outlined in the Australian Curriculum. We offer Japanese in the junior section of the school and also specialist classes in science and PE.

- *Special needs*

Refer to student support

Students with specific needs; physical, health and/or intellectual are accommodated for based on need and in consultation with professionals in their case management network.

- *Special curriculum features*

In 2009 we successfully gained funding to be part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. This provides opportunity for students in years 3 to 6 to engage in garden and kitchen lessons; planting and harvesting vegetables, to prepare and share freshly cooked meals. We have an

extensive vegetable garden, which was developed with strong support from the community and is run by our garden specialist. Classes have 45 minute lessons for six months of the year. Our kitchen provides a modern environment for the specialist teacher and volunteers to support classes to produce exciting menus using produce from the garden. Kitchen lessons run as part of our non-instructional allocation, within the health and technologies curriculum.

The Early Years team work collaboratively to plan and implement an environment that encourages a smooth transition from preschool, this includes a 'discovery time' session encouraging exploration and provocation. This and bookmaking provides continuity of practice from kindy to school setting.

A whole school concert is held bi-annually and provides a relevant and exciting opportunity for students to engage with performing arts and utilise our local theatre.

Consistency of teaching literacy and numeracy occurs through the site's literacy and numeracy agreements.

- *Teaching methodology*

Teaching practice is guided by the AITSL Professional Standards and the best practice knowledge gained by our work in Visible Learning. There is a strong focus on collaborative learning and increasing student voice. Key directions as identified by the 2019 external review and evidenced in our revised focus on having a common language for learning, have increased the level of teacher clarity and student knowledge in own learning.

Digital technology is embedded in the curriculum with the use of the internet for research. Our Acceptable Use Policy guides use of the internet, intranet and email access. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in all classrooms. Wireless access enables classes to use Chromebooks and iPads in classrooms. iPads are also available to classes to maximise student learning opportunities and assessment strategies. The ratio of electronic devices per student is high (1:2).

Our four year focus on teacher clarity and creating assessment capable students has provided staff with an opportunity to reflect on their impact on learning and modify aspects of their teaching practice to include a common language for learning, greater clarity over what is being learnt, why and how, planning at surface deep and transfer levels to stretch learning and providing students with effective feedback for growth.

- *Student assessment procedures and reporting*

Include an acquaintance night, student led three way conferences, student portfolios and written reports at the end of terms 2 and 4. It is expected that formative assessment practices drive effective teaching practice and include ongoing feedback strategies from a variety of sources.

5. Sporting Activities

F-6 students are provided a physical education program, which includes daily fitness and swimming instruction for all children. We hold an annual sports day

which involves both tabloid and championship events. Skills clinics in sports such as basketball, cricket, hockey, soccer and rugby are run by visiting instructors.

After hours interschool sports are offered in softball, cricket, t-ball, football, soccer, netball, hockey and basketball. We have a strong representation at SAPSASA sports in all the above sports, as well as swimming, athletics and cross country.

6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

Students have the opportunity to join a choir that participates in the Adelaide and South East Music Festivals each year. Students from years 4 to 6 are also able to be involved in our instrumental music program, receiving tuition in brass, woodwind, percussion and stringed instruments.

Other activities include camps and excursions. A camp policy provides progressive expectations across the primary spectrum.

The McPark Art Show and Musical are biannual events that involve the whole school and provide relevant community based learning events for all students.

7. Staff (and their welfare)

- *Staff profile*

We have a mix of experienced and earlier career teachers with a blend of permanent and contract teachers.

- *Leadership structure*

The school has a cooperative leadership team consisting of a principal, a deputy, a senior leader and a student wellbeing leader.

- *Staff support systems*

Teachers plan and work together, cooperatively in teams, which are formed at the beginning of each year primarily in year levels. Staff teams meet regularly to exchange ideas, plan, and moderate and observe in each other's classrooms as part of the professional development and staff meeting structures.

Induction – mentors are identified to support new staff. Induction meetings are held on a fortnightly basis at the beginning of the year for a term and on a needs basis thereafter.

Representatives from each team hold a position on the site's steering committee and also event committees such as concert, sports day etc.

- *Performance Management*

Performance development at McDonald Park School is a multi-faceted professional responsibility, which includes informal and formal elements, individual and site initiated foci and an ongoing focus on improving teaching

pedagogy. It continues to be refined regularly in response to DfE policy, current research, staff feedback, TfEL and National Professional Standards and SIP priorities.

The process is underpinned by the key role that teacher teams have in providing a collegiate and supportive system, this includes collaborative planning, moderating student work, giving and receiving feedback, observing teachers, induction and mentoring.

- Release time for teachers to work within teams has been built into the staff meeting structures, additional release time is provided for teams to plan, moderate or conduct team activities such as camps.
- Teams will develop goals to support the identified site performance improvements (team action plans to lift student achievement).
- Teams have been structured to include like year levels / teaching responsibilities, this creates a balance of personnel, providing natural opportunities for mentoring and support.
- Learning check-ins provide staff with an opportunity to target student learning achievement within a SIP priority focus. Staff are provided with the raw data gathered from student learning interviews.
- Individual teachers participate in prochats in terms 1 and 3, the focus includes a discussion about programs, SIP goals, team action plan progress and personal development.
- Staff meetings focus on professional development in areas identified on the Site Improvement Plan. The cycle provides professional development input, with follow up required within the classroom or in teams. The professional development cycle also provides opportunities for staff to discuss strategies trialled, share concerns, problem solve, refine and review practice.
- Access to special staff
 - Regional support staff are based at the Regional Office and are able to provide staff support in a range of areas such as curriculum, Aboriginal education and student wellbeing.

8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff

Staff receive a small locality allowance and country incentives removal allowance.

9. School Facilities

- *Buildings and grounds*

The main building is a two storey solid construction with an administration area, staffroom, toilets, classrooms, kitchen, a computer hub, withdrawal areas and a canteen. An additional solid building consists of two, two teacher units, an art area, a small common area and toilets (including a disabled toilet). We also have six classrooms in a transportable block, which has a teacher preparation room, a small withdrawal room and a covered deck. The latest classroom block consists of eight classrooms, including a performing arts area, a central shared ICT suite and toilets. Throughout the school classrooms are arranged in pairs with a connecting doorway that can be opened to facilitate team teaching. We have a purpose built library, which includes a technology suite and teacher resource room. We also have a large gymnasium, which provides access to a basketball court as well as volleyball, badminton and netball courts. The school has large grassed areas, including two ovals. There are also four shaded playgrounds, and beach volleyball court. There are two hard play areas, one is for active play and has a number of games marked on the asphalt, the other is a passive play area with three shade structures, providing areas to sit and talk. The kitchen garden has become an integral part of the school grounds and is available to classes and students outside of the designated garden lesson times.

- *Heating and cooling*

: All buildings are fully air-conditioned.

- *Specialist facilities and equipment*

The borrowing and research systems in our resource centre are completely computerised (Accessit). We also have access to the public library data base. A music room with a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments support music education. The ICT unit in the library has 32 computers, which are networked and there are also pods of computers in other areas of the school. Each classroom teacher has access to an iPad and class sets of iPads and Chromebooks may also be borrowed through our IT borrowing system. Our gymnasium accommodates the whole school for assemblies and performances and provides a quality indoor sport facility. We have a number of withdrawal rooms to support small group activities.

- *Student facilities*

Canteen is open daily and is supported with payments via Qkr!. The resource centre is open all day including before school with access to books, games and computers. Children have access to sporting equipment during the break times.

- *Staff facilities*

Staffroom, preparation areas, access to computers.

- *Access for students and staff with disabilities*

Disabled student toilets, ramp and rail access to transportable block and main building. All other areas have disabled access, including lift access to upstairs.

- *Access to bus transport*
City buses are available for local excursions. Private buses can be hired for other excursions.

10. School Operations

- *Decision making structures*
Decisions are made based on a consultative model. Staff, students and parents have the opportunity to be involved through the various committees, team or representative groups, such as SRC, Governing Council. Or surveys requesting feedback.
- *Regular publications*
McPark Toolbox (an electronic resource that provides staff with a range of resources, including electronic access to policies) is provided through OneDrive, staff meeting minutes are completed live through this resource also. Staff bulletin is accessed through the staff intranet, newsletters to parents fortnightly on a Thursday, daily notices on staff whiteboard, yearly and term planners and curriculum information boards all provide valuable information to staff and/or parents.
- *Other communication*
Internet, intranet and email, and internal phone system. SeeSaw is the common communication program used by all classes.
- *School financial position*
The budget is formed in term 4 of each year as an interim budget for the following year. System and site based processes are in place to ensure compliance and consultation occurs. Ultimately the budget is managed by the principal and finance officer and regular monitoring structures are in place. The Finance Committee oversees the budget, with monthly meetings prior to each Governing Council meeting. Classroom teachers manage their own budget for class stationery, classroom materials, art/craft and printing requirements. Some teachers are also given budget manager responsibilities. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are current priorities for additional resourcing.

11. Local Community

- *General characteristics*
Mount Gambier is the largest provincial city in South Australia. The community consists of a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. A wide range of employment opportunities are available including within agricultural and farming industries, as well as retail and business.
- *Parent and community involvement*
Parents are actively involved in school life and decision making. Current involvement includes Governing Council. Parents are also encouraged to assist in classrooms, the kitchen, garden and the Resource Centre, as LAP parents, attending camps, excursions and electives and volunteering to work

in the canteen. Parent participation is an important aspect of the learning program.

- *Feeder or destination schools*

McDonald Park School is a feeder school for all of the local kindergartens, predominantly Akuna and Gladigau, who we have strong connections with. In 2023, First Choice Early Education Centre opened on North Terrace. It is anticipated that strong connections will also be formed. Mount Gambier has two public high schools, Grant High School and Mount Gambier High, both of which are destination schools for McDonald Park students.

- *Other local care and educational facilities*

Day care centres, kindergartens, primary schools, two state secondary schools and three private schools. Uni SA and TAFE offer tertiary level courses.

- *Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities*

A wide range of modern shopping facilities - three large supermarkets and other shopping complexes.

- *Other local facilities*

A wide range of sporting facilities, swimming pools, a modern community library, a cinema complex, the Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre, a modern hospital, three medical centres and a dental service.

- *Availability of staff housing*

Residences and flats available privately or through Government Housing.

- *Local Government Body*

Two local government bodies operate - the City Council of Mount Gambier and the District Council of Grant.

12. Further Comments

- The McDonald Park School community is proud of the educational program that we provide. Staff and parents work collaboratively in a mutually supportive manner to provide a high quality education for the students attending the school.