



103 Nicolson Ave  
Whyalla Norrie SA 5608  
P (08) 8645 7261 F (08) 8645.1255  
E: [dl.0559.info@schools.sa.edu.au](mailto:dl.0559.info@schools.sa.edu.au)  
[www.whyllasp.sa.edu.au](http://www.whyllasp.sa.edu.au)

## SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

School Number: 0559

School Name: WHYALLA SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTRE

Whyalla Special Education Centre is a Foundation to Year 12 specialist public school for students living with a disability and complex learning needs.

Whyalla Special Education Centre is located in the Council of Whyalla adjacent to Nicolson Avenue Primary School.

A proud history of providing high quality education since 1963 as Whyalla Special School has continued after relocating to a new site under a new name, Whyalla Special Education Centre.

The state of the art facility opened in 28 January 2014 was purpose built for students and their specific requirements. High quality assistive technology is a feature in all learning areas. The school has a focus on being eco-friendly to the environment and, as such, energy and water saving systems are in place.

The school motto "Independence through education" reflects the values of the school. Quality teaching and learning to ensure students have the opportunity for success. This is reflected in the school culture.

Students are engaged in learning experiences where a strong emphasis is placed on communication and independence. The Australian Curriculum provides a broad range of learning activities. All students access an individualised learning program.

### 1. General Information

**INDEPENDENCE THROUGH EDUCATION**



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Education and  
Child Development



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School Principal: Alison Kennedy  
Year of Opening: Whyalla Child Occupation Centre 1962  
Whyalla Special School 1963  
Whyalla Special Education Centre 2014  
Location Address: Russell Street, Whyalla Norrie 5608  
Postal Address: 103 Nicolson Avenue, Whyalla Norrie 5608  
Email: [dl.0559.info@schools.sa.edu.au](mailto:dl.0559.info@schools.sa.edu.au)  
DECD Partnership: Whyalla  
Telephone Number: 08 8645 7261  
Fax Number: 08 8645 1255

#### School Enrolment:

	2014	2015	2016	2017
F-7	22	24	30	33
8-12	20	17	16	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>54</b>

#### Student Enrolment Trends:

Enrolments at Whyalla Special Education Centre have steadily increased over the past four years.

#### Staffing Allocation (2017):

Leadership Structure:

Principal A3: Alison Kennedy

Coordinator B1: Robyn Lindholm

Teaching Allocation: 8.5.FTE (6.7 Females 2 Males)



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Ancillary Allocation: 15.5.FTE (12.5 Females 3 Males)

**Vacation Care:** Currently no Vacation Care available

**OSHC:** Currently no OSHC available

**Classes:**

In 2017 there are seven classes consisting of:

Junior Primary: Jarrah and Acacia

Primary: Myall, Banksia and Cassia

Secondary: Wattle and Eucalypt

**Whyalla Partnership:**

The Whyalla Partnership promotes collaboration and innovation between sites. Sites included in the Whyalla Partnership are:

Whyalla Special Education Centre	Whyalla Town Primary School
Nicolson Avenue Primary School	Memorial Oval Primary School
Long Street Primary School	Fisk Street Primary School
Hincks Avenue Primary School	Stuart Primary Campus R-7
Edward John Eyre High School	Stuart High School
Whyalla High School	Gabmiddi Manoo Children and Family Centre
McRitchie Crescent Children's Services	Neta Kranz Children's Centre
Norrie Stuart Children's Services Centre	Whyalla Stuart Children's Centre
Win Newby Kindergarten	

## 2. Students

Whyalla Special Education Centre is a school for students from Reception to Year 12 who are living with an intellectual disability including students who have severe and/or multiple disabilities. The majority of students live with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Students travel from all parts of Whyalla to attend the school.

All students have a documented Negotiated Education Plan (NEP) that contains individual goals set in collaboration with families, teachers and service providers. These goals are reviewed regularly.

Class numbers average eight students per class. The classes are formed according to age. Each class is allocated one teacher and one School Services Officer (SSO). Some classes may have more SSO's due to different complexities of classes.

Each year students and staff elect two School Captains. School Captains are responsible for being role models for other students and are called upon to undertake special duties such as conducting tours for visitors and representing the school at formal events.

### **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC):**

AAC is used to assist students in developing and complimenting their communication skills. At Whyalla Special Education Centre, the staff are highly skilled in using these modes to model, and communicate with students. Most students use Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) or AAC apps on iPads. These are used in combination with other modes of communication including key word signing, Picture Exchange Communication System, aided language displays and verbalisation. Our staff supports other sites in the Whyalla Partnership to develop and implement these communication modes for students in mainstream schools.

### **Student Well-being Programs:**

DECD Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum is delivered to all students at our school.

## 3. Key School Policies

Whyalla Partnership and wider community:

- Is supportive and involved in the school
- Has high expectations of the school
- Has high expectations of learning
- Values the school and its staff



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### **Core Business:**

Core business of the school is the delivery of quality and engaging teaching and learning programs so all students can achieve independence and success. This is achieved by recognising student and staff success, working collaboratively, encouraging the support of our wider community and developing clear communication, decision making and reporting policies.

### **Moral Purpose:**

To provide high quality educational opportunities, with focus on independent living skills, for students with complex learning difficulties and disabilities.

### **Post School Pathways:**

Students work towards independence from their first day at school. Staff explore potential pathways for students, including Day Options, Australian Disability Enterprises such as Bedford Industries, Open Employment opportunities and leisure and recreation activities.

### **Site Improvement Plan Priorities (2017):**

Staff and students, students and students, naturally communicate with each other and engage in learning, using agreed modes of communication, with a high level of automaticity.

All students have a voice and a choice, a means of communicating needs, wants and are expressively involved in differentiated learning programs.

All students develop the skills required to use mathematics to solve problems, with a focus on independent living skills, and will be engaged in differentiated learning programs.

All students develop skills to interact safely and appropriately in social situations, with a focus on independence, employment and leisure experiences.

### **Student Behaviour Management:**

Students who display challenging behaviour or behaviours of concern will have an individualised behaviour plan designed and implemented, in negotiation with their family. The school adheres to the DECD School Discipline Policy Statement in relation to student behaviour management. The

Behaviour Management Policy can be found on the school's website.

#### 4. Curriculum

The school provides learning programs using the Australian Curriculum, for students in Years Foundation to Year 9, and SACE Modified for students in Years 10-12.

##### **Literacy:**

Literacy is a main focus in teaching and learning programs. A dedicated engaging literacy block occurs daily. The school uses the 4 Blocks to Literacy Framework, which has communication at its heart. Students experience daily activities in handwriting, working with words, guided reading and self selected reading.

##### **Communication:**

Students are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas through a variety of communication modes. Students are provided opportunities to experiment with different modes to suit their need. All staff are trained in multiple modes of communication.

##### **Numeracy:**

The school is using Numicon to explore mathematics and problem solving. All staff are trained in this resource.

##### **SACE Modified:**

SACE Modified is offered to students in Years 10-12. Subjects include Personal Learning Plan, Research project, Cross Disciplinary Studies, English, Mathematics and Health. The focus for senior students is their Post School Pathway. Senior students participate in an off-site school to work transition program with Bedford, as well as leisure activities throughout the year. Students work towards developing skills for life after school.

##### **Swimming:**

Students attend a weekly swimming lesson with DECD qualified swimming instructors with their class.

##### **Subject Offerings:**

Outdoor Education, Science, Library and the Arts are taught by Non Instruction Time teachers.

### **Assessment and Reporting:**

NEP meetings are held with families in Term 1 and goals are set. All students receive a Mid Year and End of Year Report.

### **ABLES:**

An assessment, planning and reporting program called ABLES is used to assess student progress in Literacy and Numeracy. The program enables teachers to assess students using four levels that sit underneath Foundation level of Australian Curriculum.

### 5. Staff

#### **Leadership Structure:**

The school has been allocated a Principal and one coordinator .2 FTE. Two teachers who are AST2 also sit on the leadership team. Each member of the leadership team has an area of responsibility. The Principal has Line Management of all staff.

#### **Performance Management:**

The school uses the DECD Framework for Performance Management and all staff use a Performance Development Plan in discussion with their Line Manager to set goals and improve practice. This is aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Leaders.

#### **Principal Advisory Committee:**

PAC makes decisions about staffing and provides support to the Principal in relation to staff deployment and other relevant issues.

### 6. School Facilities

#### **Building and Grounds:**

The site has seven classrooms in three buildings. These buildings contain learning spaces, Administration Areas, a Teacher Preparation Area and Library. Each classroom has an inside and outside learning area, inside breakout space, teacher resource storage area, Interactive TV, a kitchen and toilet facilities.

A playground, oval, hall and library are utilised as alternative learning spaces.

#### **Heating and Cooling:**

All inside learning areas have reverse cycle air conditioning.

### **Specialist Facilities and Equipment:**

The school was purpose built for students ever changing and complex needs. Extensive options are available for staff to utilise as learning spaces. The school is structured around the Breezeway, a central walkway that links all classes together. Grounds are well maintains and provide pleasant learning and leisure areas. Students have opportunities to play in areas with synthetic and natural materials.

### **Access for Students and Staff with Disabilities:**

All areas of the school are accessible for students and people with physical disabilities.

### 7. School Operations

#### **Decision Making Structures:**

Governing Council consists of parents and members of the wider community who are responsible for school policies and aspects of decision making for the school.

The school has a collaborative leadership model where all staff members participate in decision making processes.

There are a number of strategic planning teams that meet regularly to discuss and review current and future directions.

#### **Newsletter:**

A school newsletter is sent out regularly to all families.

#### **Communication with Families:**

Communication with and between staff occurs through email, phone calls, Day Book, weekly staff bulletin and students diary.

#### **Family and Community Involvement:**

Families are always welcome at the school and are encouraged to become actively involved in all aspects of school life, including Governing Council, the fundraising committee, Working Bees's and assisting in special events.

Regular informal opportunities are provided for Families to meet at the school to share ideas and connect with other families.

We are currently exploring creating a Family Group to meet a few times per term to connect with other families and to share ideas.