



SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

School number: 0962

School name: Riverland Special School

The Riverland Special School is situated in Berri, in the Riverland in South Australia. The school was relocated, next to the Glossop High School Senior Campus in January 2014.

To attend the Riverland Special School, a student must have a verified intellectual disability and have been through a Special Options placement process. Some students may also have Down Syndrome, Fragile X, physical, sensory, communication or multiple impairments. 46% of our students have Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The school is the only Special School in the Riverland and Upper Mallee and comprises young people from the Berri-Barmera, Renmark-Paringa and Loxton-Waikerie Council areas. As an R-12+ site, students range in age from 5 to 20.

At Riverland Special School we believe:

- children and young people are at the centre of everything we do.
- all children and young people are able to learn.
- all children and young people have abilities, skills and talents and part of our role is to identify and develop these talents.
- we all have the right to be safe.
- our school is part of a 'team around the child'
- wellbeing is essential for successful learning.
- all behaviour is communication

Our Purpose: *To provide excellence in special education for students with intellectual disabilities*

Our Vision: *That all students have suitable and successful post school pathways.*

Our Values: *Respect, Responsibility, Service, Success*

Our Motto: *"celebrating ability"*



1. General information

- School Principal: Carolyn Trifonoff
- Deputy Principal Luke Morrow
- Year of opening: 1962 New site: 2014
- Postal Address: 12a Stadium Drive Berri 5343
- Location Address: 12a Stadium Drive Berri 5343
- DECD Region: Berri Barmera Partnership
- Geographical location 240 kms from GPO
- Telephone number: 08 85821258
- Fax Number: 08 85823215
- School website address: www.riverlansp.sa.edu.au
- School e-mail address: dl.0962_info@schools.sa.edu.au
- Child Parent Centre attached: No
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC): No
- February FTE student enrolment: 59

SCHOOL ENROLMENTS					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Primary	30	40	39	41	32
Secondary	37	26	28	26	27
Total	67	66	67	68	59
Total School Card: currently approved					32
Male FTE					40
Female FTE					19
Aboriginal FTE Enrolment					11

Student enrolment trends:

Over the past 4 years, our numbers have been relatively stable, although high numbers at the end of 2018 resulted in a cap of 64 students, which will affect future offers of enrolment.

In 2019, however, our numbers went from 68 in May to 59 in October when 5 families relocated intrastate, interstate and overseas. Enrolments for 2020 matched the number of graduates who left at the end of 2019.

There continues to be a predominance of male students, with twice as many male students than female students.

Staff numbers (as at February census)

Teaching Staff

- Principal 1
- Deputy Principal 1
- Co-Ordinator 0.8
- Teachers 11

Non Teaching Staff

- SSO 589.75 hrs
 - ACEO 9.1 hrs
 - GSE 6.0 hrs
 - PCW 18 hrs in total
- **Public transport access:**
 - ❖ RSS is 2.7 kms from the Berri Post Office and while there is no specific public transport to the school, there is a local inter-town bus service and bus services to Adelaide and interstate.
 - ❖ The Department for Education provides transport assistance for eligible students with disabilities. Eligibility is dependent on issues including, distance from the school. Students must be 6 or over to be eligible to travel on the departmental buses/taxis.
 - ❖ Transport must be included on the student's NDIS plan. Transport may be provided either as direct or indirect assistance. Direct assistance is bus/ taxi transport and indirect assistance provides some reimbursement for car mileage.

2. Students (and their welfare)

- **General characteristics**
 - ❖ While RSS students must be verified as having either an intellectual disability or global developmental delay (pre-8 years of age), the school's focus is on students' abilities, strengths and talents and these young people can be assisted to become as independent as possible.

- ❖ There is growing evidence of the high risk of emotional and mental health issues, connected to disability. In response to this, student wellbeing is an essential aspect of the school's curriculum. Strategies and practices, including Emotion Coaching, Positive Behaviour Support, Non-Restrictive Practices and de-escalation of behaviours, as well as a variety of personal development programmes, are actively used to promote student wellbeing.

- **Student well-being programs - optional**
 - ❖ Class Breakfast programmes
 - ❖ Christian Option programme : *Follow Jesus* – Externally provided

- **Student support offered**
 - ❖ Pastoral Care Worker
 - ❖ Wellbeing Team
 - ❖ Each classroom has additional SSO staff to support student learning and personal developmental needs.

- **Student government**
 - ❖ Prefects – elected by Senior students aged 16 and over
 - ❖ House Captains – elected by students in each of the 3 houses; Bonney, Katarapko and Murray
 - ❖ Student Representative Council (SRC)– students nominated by staff.
 - ❖ Student leader meetings and activities are held each week.

- **Special programmes include**
 - ❖ The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award
 - ❖ Special Guides Unit
 - ❖ Dance/Drama Ensemble
 - ❖ Core Skills Programme
 - ❖ Move To Learn Programme

3. Key School Policies

- **Site Improvement Plan and other key statements or policies:**
 - ❖ Site Improvement Plan
 - ❖ Annual Report
 - ❖ Policy on Bullying and Harassment
 - ❖ Parental Complaint Policy
 - ❖ Behaviour Policy

4. Curriculum

- ❖ The School's curriculum framework is specifically designed to support students with intellectual disabilities
- ❖ Students are assessed developmentally using the ABLES (Abilities Based Education Support) online assessment tools.
- ❖ Assessment areas in ABLES are English: Speaking and Listening; English: Reading and Writing; Mathematics; Critical and Creative Thinking; Digital Literacy; Movement and Physical Activity; Personal and Social Development: Self; Personal and Social Development: Social and Personal and Social Development: Emotions.
- ❖ Students assessed at ABLES A-D levels (Below Foundation) access the ABLES curriculum at their developmental level and this includes play based pedagogy.
- ❖ Students assessed as being at Foundation level and above access the Australian Curriculum at their developmental level.
- ❖ Year 10, 11 & 12 students work towards achieving their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
- ❖ Senior students also participate in Work Experience opportunities and access TAFE and other courses through external providers.
- ❖ The Arts are also an important part of the school's curriculum, with Dance, Drama, Visual Arts, Pottery Woodwork and Choir.
- ❖ The school has won awards for drama in the Focus on Ability Awards and for visual arts in South Australian Living Artists (SALA) Week.
- ❖ Science and Physical Education are specialist subject areas at the school and STEM is a current focus for the school.
- ❖ The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is an integral part of our programme for students 15 and over.

- **Student assessment procedures and reporting**

- ❖ Student reporting occurs at least twice a year.
- ❖ In 2018, we began transitioning from the NEP (Negotiated Education Plan) to the online OCOP (One Child One Plan).
- ❖ Currently all students at RSS have a One Plan document and meeting.
- ❖ OCOP meetings are held at least once a year, usually at the end of Term 1 and all parents receive a copy of the Plan, which includes the student's individual goals in areas of Curriculum, Social and Other.
- ❖ At the end of each school year, all students receive a formal report which includes a review of the goals set.
- ❖ In 2016, the Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) programme was introduced. This has become an integral part of the school's assessment, data collection and reporting.
- ❖ Senior students are assessed for SACE.

- **Joint programmes:**

- ❖ Future Pathways Meetings are part of the senior student transition (*Preparing for Post School Options*) and include Disability Employment Services and parent- invited NDIS providers.
- ❖ Community Recycling Programme with Riverland Respite & Recreation Services and local recycling businesses.
- ❖ *Brain Builders* movement programme with local OTs at CNSHQ

5. Sporting Activities

- ❖ Swimming
- ❖ Soccer
- ❖ School Sports SA Cross Country
- ❖ Basketball Carnival/Camp in Adelaide
- ❖ Specialist Teacher in PE, Fitness and Outdoor Education.

6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

- ❖ Student Leadership Camp/Activity Day
- ❖ Core Skills (Weekly thematic activities for students who need extra support in core skill areas)
- ❖ The Duke of Edinburgh Award Camps
- ❖ Community Recycling Programme

- ❖ School Fashion Parade/Senior Prom (run on alternate years.)
- ❖ Special Guides Unit
- ❖ School Shop – (once/week – Lunches prepared by SACE students)
- ❖ Class camps/sleepovers/stay-backs

7. Staff (and their welfare)

• Staff profile

- ❖ Including both part time and full-time staff, the school currently has 14 teaching staff and 20 school support officers (ssos).
- ❖ Teachers and ssos, both male and female, range in age and experience across the spectrum, from early career to over 20 years experience in the profession.

• Leadership structure

- ❖ The formal leadership structure consists of the Principal and Deputy Principal and Senior School Co-ordinator. Informally, all staff have opportunities for leadership, in curriculum, well being and special programmes.
- ❖ Many staff members are available for outreach assistance, mentoring or advising staff from other schools in areas of Special Education.
- ❖ All teachers who have been eligible have achieved Step 9.
- ❖ Several staff members have considered HAT leadership.
- ❖ 5 SSOs have achieved SSO2 level and 2 are currently working for reclassification to SSO3 level.

• Staff support systems

- ❖ The Leadership team provide support and redirect staff to other agencies when necessary. (eg Employee Assistance Programme, Return to Work, Injury Management, AEU etc).
- ❖ The school's Pastoral Care Worker works 4 days a week and is an integral part of the school's well being and support team.

• Performance Management

- ❖ The Department's Performance and Development Policy is adhered to, included staff Personal Development Plans, with regular professional discussions between leadership and both teaching and ancillary staff.
- ❖ Formal Performance Development meetings with the Principal and Leadership team are held twice a year.

8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff

- ❖ Housing assistance
 - :Government housing is available

9. School Facilities

• Buildings and grounds

- ❖ The new school situated adjacent to Glossop High School Seniors Campus was opened in 2014.
- ❖ The original address changed, from 50a Burgess Drive to 12a Stadium Drive, with the completion of a community stadium behind the school.
- ❖ Buildings and facilities include an Administration Block and Multipurpose Hall and 2 classroom blocks with 4 classrooms in each, separated by a covered Playway. There is also a COLA (Covered Outdoor Learning Area) and a bike track.
- ❖ Storage areas include a sports shed, a groundsman's shed, a large recycling and furniture storage shed and a smaller storage shed.
- ❖ In 2018, our designated Nature Play area was fenced and the area includes a grassed area, for student use.

• Heating and cooling

- ❖ Reverse cycle air conditioning in all classrooms.

• Specialist facilities and equipment

- ❖ Recycling Shed as part of a community Recycling project.
- ❖ Multipurpose Hall
- ❖ Library
- ❖ Independent Living Skills area including kitchen, bathroom and work skills area in the Senior wing

• Student facilities

- ❖ All classrooms have kitchen facilities, including refrigerators, microwaves and stoves and small appliances.
- ❖ Play facilities include a wheelchair swing, playground equipment, sports equipment for use at break times and 2 & 3-wheeler bikes and trikes, for use on the bike track.
- ❖ New playground equipment is being installed this year, through a successful grant application.

• Staff facilities

- ❖ Administration building with reception, staffroom, staff preparation area and staff toilets.
- ❖ Staffroom with kitchen facilities (microwave, stove, freezer, refrigerator)
- ❖ Staff lockers and pigeonholes

- ❖ Staff prep area has photocopier/scanner/fax and 4 new desktop computers

- **Access for students and staff with disabilities**

- ❖ All areas are accessible for people with physical disabilities.

- **Access to bus transport**

- ❖ The school owns 3 buses, which are used for school excursions, camps, and events.

10. School Operations

- **Decision making structures**

- ❖ The Governing Council comprises parents, a staff representative, a community representative and Principal. They meet twice each term and are an important part of the school's governance.

- ❖ The Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) is a strong and efficient committee, representing the views of all staff members. The PAC provides a collaborative process for making decisions that may affect personnel and staffing.

- ❖ Curriculum development and assessment across the school have been a key focus for teaching staff. This has been an excellent opportunity for collaborative decision making, sharing of skills and whole school agreements. Support staff are also an important part of this process and contribute as part of each classroom team.

- ❖ SSO meetings are also held weekly and are coordinated by an SSO2, who also works as part of the school leadership team.

- **Regular publications**

- ❖ School Newsletter (fortnightly)

- **Other communication**

- ❖ The school has a Facebook page which is followed by the majority of parents and many community members.

- **School financial position**

- ❖ The school is in a sound financial position.

- ❖ Curriculum and classroom budgets are managed by leaders and teachers.

- ❖ Fundraising is important to the school and we have been well supported by the communities in the Riverland.

- ❖ Staff members have been very active in preparing applications for funding and/or grants, which benefit the students and special programmes within the school.

- **Special funding**

- ❖ Country Areas program funding enables our students to participate in camps and performances
- ❖ Resource Allocation Adjustment Panel (RAAP) funding has been applied for, to support students with complex needs.
- ❖ This year we have been able to bring in additional teaching and support staff, to support students with specific learning or behavioural needs, through successful RAAP applications.
- ❖ Some additional SSO Classroom Support has been accessed through Disability Support Funding.

11. Local Community

- **General characteristics**

- ❖ Although the Riverland is an agricultural area with citrus, grapes and a wide variety of fruit grown, there have been significant long term effects from the drought. Many local growers and businesses have been adversely affected and this has impacted families, both socially and economically.
- ❖ Our students come from towns and homes throughout the Riverland, and each town has its own particular history and traditions. Variations in cultural diversity and socio-economic levels are evident across all the communities.
- ❖ There is a strong interest and participation in a wide range of sporting and recreational activities and healthy competition between the towns.

- **Parent and community involvement**

- ❖ RSS families come from throughout the Riverland and Upper Mallee, and as the majority of students travel to and from school on buses and taxis, most parents are not seen on a daily basis.
- ❖ Our families are important to us and we have an 'open door policy' for those who need support, assistance or referral to Government Departments, Disability Service providers or community support groups.
- ❖ Our Pastoral Care Worker organises information sessions (NDIS, Parents helping Parents, etc) and social opportunities for parents and carers to meet and support each other.
- ❖ Parent/ Carer attendance at One Child One Plan meetings for students is excellent.
- ❖ We have an active Governing Council and good community attendance at school functions and activities. (Sports Day, Presentation Night, Fashion Parade, Prom etc)
- ❖ Our school recycling team collects recyclables from the Senior Citizens Cottage Homes, St Catherine's

Nursing home and the local vet.

- **Feeder or destination schools**

- ❖ Students assessed as eligible for the Riverland Special School come from preschools and schools throughout the Riverland and Upper Mallee areas.
- ❖ Eligibility for attending the school is through the Special Options process.

- **Other local care and educational facilities**

- ❖ Glossop High School Senior Campus and Berri TAFE are adjacent to Riverland Special School.
- ❖ Berri Primary School, which includes an OSHC facility is situated approximately 2 kms from RSS.
- ❖ Berri Preschool and Berri Regional Childcare Centre are approximately 1.2 kms from RSS
- ❖ Berri also has a local Catholic Primary School.

- **Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities**

- ❖ Berri is a regional centre for most Government departments, including Disability SA and DCP
- ❖ The School is situated adjacent to a large Shopping Centre, and there is another shopping precinct within 2 kms of the school.
- ❖ Fruit growing, wineries and tourism are local industries.

- **Other local facilities**

- ❖ Most sporting facilities (football, netball, hockey, soccer, cricket, softball/ baseball, tennis, lawn bowls) are within walking distance of the school.
- ❖ A Medical Centre, St John Ambulance and a Regional Hospital are located in the town.
- ❖ Berri also has a public swimming pool and a new community Recreation Centre has been built on on land behind the Riverland Special School, which local schools are able to access.
- ❖ Churches of all denominations can be found in and around Berri.

- **Local Government body**

- ❖ Berri Barmera Council