

SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

**School Name: MURRAY BRIDGE SPECIAL SCHOOL
YEARS RECEPTION TO SIX**

School Number: 0116

Updated: 2025

Murray Bridge Special School is a Reception to Year Six (R-6) specialist public school.

The school is located on grounds alongside of Murray Bridge North Primary. Together the schools are known locally as the North Schools.

Murray Bridge Special School provides a learning environment for learners with complex multifaceted disabilities who may reside across local school Partnerships. Our learners travel from residential areas such as Murray Bridge, Macclesfield, and Mannum to access the learning, health and personal care packages offered by the school.

To be eligible for enrolment at our school a learner must be recommended through assessment by a Department for Education (the Department) Educational Psychologist and/or a Department Speech Pathologist.

The recommendations are assessed by a placement panel of specialist staff from the local Department Student Support Services team based at the Murray Bridge Education Office. The placement panel then makes recommendations to families as to the most appropriate place of learning for their child.

Our site is notified of enrolments by the local Student Support Services team once agreements have been made between families and staff from the local Student Support Services team through the placement panel process.

To ensure every attempt has been made to identify the best possible education setting for a learner, our school is unable to accept enrolments unless they have been through the Department panel placement process.

The school motto of 'Research into Action' is reflected in all facets of our culture, teaching and learning programs and pedagogical practice.

Globally recognised educational leaders in research such as Professor Barry Carpenter, Dr Jim McDonald, Stanley Greenspan, Mark Barber, Dr Phoebe Caldwell, Dr Lilli Neilson and others demonstrate learners living with complex multifaceted disabilities think differently, see differently, hear differently, feel differently and therefore learn differently.

Based on this staff at Murray Bridge Special School endorse the following values and behaviours:

- The importance of using documented evidence-based programs and pedagogy to support the learning and care of young people with complex multifaceted disabilities;
- A gentle, calm, non-coercive, uncluttered learner focussed environment.
- Unconditional positive regard for all learners
- Strategically engineered learning spaces where a learner is in control of their choice making and learning.
- Strategically engineered adult helper responses to a learner's communication/s.
- Our role as 'Learning Facilitators'. A learning facilitator has a deep theoretical and practical knowledge of child development, cognition, and complex multifaceted disabilities.
- Effective communication which is built on respectful, open and honest relationships between members of our community.

- The role of research and data in the assessment, planning, review and reporting process
- The role of assessment in determining the entry point to learning, and appropriate learning experiences and environments where a learner can actively engage.
- The role of specialised evidence-based learning programs which support access to the achievement of the South Australian Curriculum e.g. Learning4All literacy, numeracy and child protection programs, and the Intensive Interaction program.
- The importance of communication using a learners preferred communication style which moves forward according to the learner's interest in communicating with others.
- The right of every young learner and adult learner to work in a safe, predictable and calm environment.

The school does not subscribe exclusively to any one learning approach for learners with complex multifaceted disabilities. Staff base practice on current global research into learning for learners with multifaceted disabilities that has proven success in achieving long term educational learning outcomes.

A requirement for each learner identified through Department processes as living with a complex multifaceted disability is to have a documented One Plan. The One Plan identifies learning aims, goals, learning experiences and learning outcomes to support learning growth.

Planning and facilitating an individual package of learning is dependent on the agreed learning outcomes of the learners One Plan.

All young people enrolled at Murray Bridge Special School receive rigorous, appropriate and ongoing assessment to provide the most challenging, engaging and relevant experiences for learning.

Risk assessments in all areas of learning and care plan facilitation are completed and regularly reviewed. This is done to assist select the most appropriate learning tools and options to achieve successful learning outcomes.

It takes a minimum of at least ten weeks to build learner relationships and trust, and conduct new and/or review existing assessments to build a quality One Plan.

An essential component of the One Plan review and renewal process for learners includes review meetings. Therefore, due to the time required to build a One Plan of quality, these begin with families and other relevant individuals at the beginning of term two (2) of each year.

Other reporting to families and carers occurs continuously throughout the year. Information is communicated daily through SEESAW, interviews, emails, communication diaries, telephone contact, face-to-face meetings, and newsletters. Families and carers also receive a report tracking achievement and areas of participation at least twice per year. Other reports are made when required or requested.

Our Learners

Staff at Murray Bridge Special School believe all behaviour is a form of communication. It is the responsibility of the adult helpers to interpret and seek meaning from the communication and modify their response (the adults') accordingly.

Staff at Murray Bridge Special School believe quality is vital in education and care for learners.

Quality means safe environments in which learners can be happy, grow and learn. It means respectful, calm and consistent relationships that give a sense of belonging and self-worth. It means learning experiences that reinforce and then extend learners development and build their confidence to try new things. It means recognising and valuing learners as individuals, contributors to community, and as part of family and culture.

The ability of staff to assist support our learners and their families achieve desired learning outcomes are dependent on the partnership between family, caregivers, other organisations and the school. Consistency of pedagogy, predictability of outcomes, reinforcement of learning, rehearsal of developing skills, and transferral of skills learnt become powerful and positive in a cooperative learning partnership.

Staff at Murray Bridge Special School acknowledge all learning is subject to a learner's readiness to engage. Levels of participation and motivation can vary significantly for our learners from day to day. It is staffs' responsibility to best positively engage and encourage learner participation and motivation.

Staff at Murray Bridge Special School believe learners who feel safe, have their personal and health care needs met in a timely and appropriate manner, and are provided with the opportunity to access engaging, relevant and challenging learning experiences are less likely to communicate using behaviour which interferes with their own and others right to learn.

The school is governed by the Department 'Behaviour Support' policy. From this policy, the Murray Bridge Special School 'Behaviour Code' has been developed.

The procedures for management of behaviour outlined in the Department 'Behaviour Support' policy of 'take home', 'suspension', 'exclusion' and 'expulsion' apply to all learners enrolled at Murray Bridge Special School.

At Murray Bridge Special school learning and care pedagogies acknowledge the complexity and interrelationship of complex multifaceted disability, communication and behaviour.

Promoting Leadership and Learning

The development of quality staff is a site priority. Resourcing staff professional learning is a site priority. Resources additional to the Department 'training and development' grant are allocated through the site annual budget process.

The professional learning staff negotiate to participate in must relate directly to the achievement of learning aims and goals as documented in learners One Plans and/or the School Improvement Plan.

Professional learning foci include: communication (literacy) and numeracy and positive behaviour strategies.

Enrolment Trends

Total Number of FTE Enrolments 2025: 22

Total Number of Aboriginal Learners 2025: 5

Total Number of School Card Approvals 2025: TBC

Enrolment data collected since 1999 indicates the complexity and range of multifaceted disability of learners enrolling at Murray Bridge Special School has and will continue to increase. There has been a notable increase in the enrolment of learners on the autism spectrum with significant complex learning requirements.

Continuous Improvement Planning (referred to as 'Performance Development')

Learning Facilitator meetings, staff mentoring, School Services Officer role statements, learning teams, pro-chats, professional conversations, and de-mystifying practice are all part of the overall continuous improvement process. The school has a strong, positive culture focussed on improving our learners' educational outcomes through teamwork. All staffs are encouraged to use the process of reflection in collaboration with peer mentors and others for professional improvement. Time is provided during staff and team meetings to support reflection. Formal continuous improvement planning meetings occur with learning facilitators at a minimum of once per semester. The deployment of service providers to meet the complex needs of the site is negotiated. An intervention process has been established with consultation from all staff. This process relies on detailed data collection, inquiry, collective teamwork and support if required from other services.

Staff at Murray Bridge Special School continuously review Continuous Improvement Processes. Staffs have developed a statement of intent;

'Active participation in Continuous Improvement (staff Performance Development) at Murray Bridge Special school looks and sounds like:

- Shared learning at team meetings
- Mentoring
- De-privatisation of practice
- Formal scheduled meetings with line management
- A Culture of Inquiry
- Achievement of Learning Plan goals
- Achievement of Site Improvement Plan Outcomes
- Active participation and contribution to local and broader professional learning communities
- Support of achievement of Department and local Partnership priorities

Staff Utilisation

Staffs are deployed flexibly according to the learning goals documented in our learners One Plans. Staffing is also deployed specifically to support the life skill development and personal care needs of some of our learners.

Incentives for staff include placement points for complexity. (Base plus isolation) These can be obtained from the Department web-site. All Learning Facilitators can receive the Special Class Allowance. All staffs are eligible to claim a Protective Clothing Allowance. School Services Officers working directly with learners requiring toileting support are able to apply for a 'Toileting Allowance'.

The school environment is continuously engineered to best accommodate our learner and staff wellbeing, and staffs facilitation of learners One Plans. The school has a variety of safe indoor and outdoor learning areas. All indoor learning areas have direct access to toilet and personal care areas.

Murray Bridge Special School has a well-equipped staff and meeting room and all learning areas are well resourced.

Out of School Hours Care facilities are located on the grounds of Murray Bridge North Primary school.

The school remains in a sound financial position due to careful planning and management.

Major planned expenses to be incurred by the school within the next three years include maintenance of staffing both Learning Facilitator and School Services Officer well above the Department allocation in order to support quality staff development and improved learner outcomes.

Local Community

The rural city of Murray Bridge has a population which includes people from Aboriginal, Turkish, Italian, Vietnamese, Philippine, Sudanese and other non-English speaking backgrounds, as well as families in rural and urban settings. The community is diverse and includes single parent, two parent and extended families; there are also employed and unemployed families. Many of our learners come from surrounding rural districts.

The local community has been significantly impacted by the fire and resulting closure of one of the largest employers in Murray Bridge – Thomas Foods.

Murray Bridge has a large public hospital and medical centre. There are also chiropractic, physiotherapist and optometrist services available and a number of specialists regularly visit. There are numerous religious groups in Murray Bridge. There is also an aquatics centre, gym, community library and numerous sporting clubs (netball, basketball, hockey, football, sailing etc).

The Rural City of Murray Bridge Council has a free resident pack which includes a Tourist Guide, Bridge Clinic information, bus timetables, maps, electoral forms, a change of address pack and an eating out / accommodation guide.

Local bus companies operate regular services within the town. There is a limited service to and from Adelaide. Murray Bridge Special School fronts a local road (North Terrace) and is easily accessible by vehicles.

School Name: Murray Bridge Special School

General Information

Org No:	0116
Full Name:	Murray Bridge Special School
Address:	North Terrace, Murray Bridge SA 5253
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Website:	www.mbss.sa.edu.au
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Principal:	V. Smith
Type:	Special Education
Designation:	Reception to Year 6
Index of Disadvantage:	3
Partnership:	Murray Bridge 2
Local Government Area:	Murray Bridge (RC)
Latitude:	S 35.115818
Longitude:	E 139.269550
Distance from GPO Km:	80
Opened:	1 January 1965