

# Murray Bridge North Schools

**Special School – Research Into Action**  
**Information for Families**



**An Anxious Child Is Not A Learning Child**



North Terrace Murray Bridge SA 5253 (PO Box 39)  
Telephone: 0885 325345  
Fax: 0885 325456  
Web Site: <http://www.mbss.sa.edu.au>

Principal Ms Vicki Smith

**Our Young Learners Are At The  
Centre Of Everything We Do**



Enrolment at Murray Bridge Special School means families and carers of our young people agree to support Department for Education and Murray Bridge Special school policy and practice.

## **OUR PURPOSE**

Murray Bridge Special School provides quality specialist learning experiences in an environment designed to engage young learners. Our learning experiences are designed to stimulate young learners' interest in acquiring new information while building on existing interests. Our school purpose is to assist in the development of life long learners.

## **OUR SCHOOL BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING**

The school staffs of Murray Bridge Special School believe quality is vital in learning and care for our learners.

Quality means safe environments in which learners can grow and thrive. It means respectful and friendly relationships that give a sense of belonging and self-worth. It means learning experiences that extend young people's development and build their confidence to try new things. It means recognising and valuing young learners as individuals and as part of their family and culture. **It means deliberately engineering our learning environment and adult behaviours to reduce a learner's level of anxiety so they can focus on learning. It means strategically 'minimalistic' and robust learning strategies devoid of sensory overload. It means providing a learning and care environment that is all about our young learners's and their learning and care needs and not all about the adults who access this environment.**

The staffs of Murray Bridge Special School believe young people learn most effectively when they are able to feel safe and secure in a climate of calm, respect, consistency, support and high expectations. Young people develop and learn at different rates and in different ways: emotionally, intellectually, morally, socially, physically and spiritually. All aspects are important and interrelated. While at home and at school young people develop and practise skills, and form the values, understandings and dispositions for learning that will influence them throughout their lives.

## **OUR SCHOOL VISION**

Murray Bridge Special School is acknowledged as a Centre of Excellence in assisting young learners living with a range of complex disabilities to achieve success in their designated areas of learning. To achieve this outcome the school has developed a collaborative and co-operative culture within itself and the broader community. In this context, the learning needs of our young people, the professional knowledge and enthusiasm of school staffs and the expectations of the community is used to establish quality learning experiences which enable maximisation of learning opportunity and potential for each learner.

The achievement of this vision has relied on the pedagogy of the school being outcomes based and centring upon the needs of learners as individuals.

Professional Excellence is demonstrated by: a shared commitment and pursuit of best practice based on an eclectic approach, active sharing of professional knowledge, the willingness to work in collaborative teams to achieve key outcomes, high personal performance and mutual respect and support for colleagues.

Information Communication Technology is integrated into learning experiences where appropriate to support quality teaching and learning, and is the basis for reporting systems and administration.

## **OUR SCHOOL VALUES**

Safety	Inclusion	Communication	Respect
Happiness	Achievement	Wellbeing	Positive Interactions

## **OUR LEARNERS**

Murray Bridge Special School provides a specialist education and care service to young people with disabilities across school Partnerships from year Reception to Seven. Our learners travel from residential areas such as Murray Bridge, Tailem Bend, and Callington to access the learning, health, and personal care packages offered by the school.

To be eligible for enrolment at our school a young person must be referred by a Department for Education School Psychologist or Speech Pathologist.

Young people assessed as eligible may be enrolled at our school from the age of four years. It is compulsory for our learners to be receiving a Department for Education approved education as soon as they turn six years of age.

Decisions about enrolment and eligibility requirements into Murray Bridge Special School are externally managed by a panel process coordinated by the Department for Education Support Services Team. All enrolment enquiries are directed to the Special Educator at the Murray Bridge Education Office. Telephone: 08 85 320700.

The long term aim for all of our young people is to develop confident, caring adults who are able to contribute to their local and broader community at a range of levels.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

School personnel are not scheduled for duty before 8.30am. Our learners are not to arrive before 8.30am. Learning facilitators are on duty from 8.30am onward.

If your child is accessing the DECD Taxi Transport Service then:

- At 8.30 taxis' begin arriving and school commences immediately for young people as they arrive.
- From 2.30 onward taxi services begin to arrive to take young people home. The last taxi usually departs the school at approximately 3.10pm. The arrival to and departure from school for your young person will be largely dependant on the taxi company schedule. The taxi service contracted to your child's taxi run will provide more information to you once your child has been approved to access the service.

\*\*Learners under 6 years of age are not eligible to be considered for the Department of Education Transport Assistance.

\*\*Families living within a 5 kilometre distance of the school are not eligible to be considered for Department for Education Transport Assistance.

If your child is being transported to school by private transport:

- School commences from 8.30am onward and concludes at 3.00pm.
- Students will not be received before 8.30 am
- A later arrival time for your child may be negotiated with the class teacher.

### **“KISS AND DROP”**

The development of ‘Inter-dependence’ begins immediately on enrolment for our learners.

Our site has a “Kiss and Drop” practice. This practice not only supports the development of essential inter-dependence skills, but also supports the safe, monitored movement of our learners.

**ALL** learners must be delivered and picked up from the front entrance of the school via the foyer area.

ALL vehicles are expected to RANK and WAIT until they are number one in the rank and school staffs are available to check their child in to school.

It is strictly prohibited to reverse out of the ranking area or to exceed speeds in a vehicle any faster than a slow walk while within the ranking area.

As the parcel of land used for ranking into the Special School is owned by the local District Council fines may be issued for non-compliance.

### **LEARNING**

Murray Bridge Special School provides specialist learning experiences for young learners with complex multifaceted disabilities. Staff base practice on current global research into learning for young people with disabilities that has proven success in achieving long term educational learning outcomes. We are advocates of lifelong learning for our young people.

At Murray Bridge Special School we do not subscribe exclusively to any one learning approach, but remain current with evidence-based research and use a complimentary mix to differentiate the learning needs of our young people.

Information Communication Technology is used to support the communication programme of every learner e.g. for engaging learners in early communication skills using iPad apps, or touch screen technology.

Methods of relaxation are used and taught to help young people self-regulate their behaviour.

Learners with very complex multifaceted needs are supported with their learning by exposure to and use of the Intensive Interaction program (Dr Mark Barber) and Active Learning methodologies and equipment devised by Dr Lilli Neilsen.

School Services Officers work collaboratively to support the learning experiences planned by Learning Facilitators.

### **OUR LEARNERS ONE PLANS**

Our learners One Plan, and reporting processes to families reflect the assessment tools used and our progress against learning goals developed from them. As we continue our work toward improving Assessment, Planning, Reporting and Recording processes changes will occur. We believe the changes will reflect our commitment to excellence in achieving continuous improvement in learning outcomes for all of our young people. The review of our learners One Plan is driven by school staff and is reviewed annually. The Learning Plan may be reviewed more often than annually if new information about a child's learning becomes available and school staff and families believe it has relevance to a child's learning at school.

## **REPORTING PROCESSES**

Formal and informal reporting occurs continuously throughout the year. Information may be communicated daily through interviews, communication diaries, telephone contact, face-to-face meetings, and newsletters. Families also receive a report highlighting achievements and areas of participation twice per year. Learners under the guardianship of the Minister will have school reports sent directly to their allocated Family SA case worker who will then provide a copy to the carer/s unless negotiated otherwise.

## **ADULTS MODELLING POSITIVE INTERACTIONS**

We all appreciate as adults how pleasurable, exciting and inspiring it is to be in the company of positive, respectful and calm people. The same applies to our learners. As cooperating adult role models for our young learners it is important we continually focus on the positive aspects of life and learning and promote relationships and language that are respectful and considerate of others. It really does start with us as the adults and guides for our children to model good practice, and set caring and respectful expectations.

## **KEEPING OUR YOUNG LEARNERS SAFE**

The safety and wellbeing of our learners is an absolute priority in our school. Therefore it is necessary to ensure safeguards are in place to protect them from harm as much as practically possible.

We have a movement rule in the school. The rule means all adults arriving and departing from the school sign in and out and acknowledge this with the front office person. Depending on the purpose of the visit, and activities occurring across the school, they may or may not be accompanied by a staff member through the school. When the front office area is unattended, all people arriving are asked to respect our young learner's safety and remain in the foyer area, telephone directly into a learning area and wait for attention.

If the office is unattended it is because staff will be in a direct teaching and/or support role with our young people. It means that you may not be attended to instantly, so your patience is appreciated.

## **ATTENDANCE – ALL DAY EVERY DAY**

We strive for all learners to attend all day, every day. Our learners need to attend school regularly in order to engage fully in the curriculum and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables our learners to access all areas of the curriculum provided, enabling them to reach their full potential.

We also acknowledge learning will only occur when certain physiological and psychological needs are met. Our learners may have fragile unpredictable health concerns or require frequent ongoing medical assessments or appointments. It is important our learners attend only in appropriate circumstances. For example if a learner is unwell or significantly stressed; is recovering from a recent illness; has had recent surgery or hospitalization, or requires a standard of health or psychological care outside of the duty of care abilities of teaching or school support staff, then it is not in the learners best interests to attend.

If your child is unwell or unable to attend school please contact us directly as soon as is practically possible so we can provide any support you may need.

It is important if your child is transported by taxi service that you telephone the taxi company as soon as possible to let them know not to come to your house. It is also a family responsibility to telephone the taxi company if they pick their child up partway through the school day. The taxi company must be informed that their service is not needed that afternoon.

If your child is continuously absent without explanation after 3 days you will be contacted by the school to see if we can assist in any way.

As adults let's work together for your child to attain maximum attendance for maximum outcomes!!

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

It is the families' responsibility to provide the school with up to date emergency contacts and medical information. Delays in enrolment or continued schooling may occur until families supply appropriate emergency and health information.

If medication is to be administered during school times, parents are required to provide the exact, pre-mixed medication to be administered, with full written permission and directions from either the young person's doctor or chemist. Where a learner requires a health care plan, the learner's family is asked to provide the school with more detailed information.

### **ILLNESS**

The school is not equipped to provide appropriate duty of care and the direct, intensive nursing and personal care an unwell learner requires.

All of our learners have very specific health care needs. Many have fragile health, and staffs do their best to protect them at school from illness. By keeping your child home while they are recovering from illness you are assisting in the prevention of illness spreading to perhaps our most vulnerable young people. No one enjoys seeing our learners suffer, especially from illness spread by an unwell learner continuing to attend school. Thank you for keeping your child home while they are ill.

### **MEDICATION MANAGEMENT**

School staff may only store and supervise medication that has been prescribed by a doctor for the individual learner, for the period of time specified. This ensures the medication is medically warranted. Analgesics and other medications that can be purchased over the counter without a prescription must also be prescribed if staff members are to be asked to supervise their use. It should be noted that analgesics can mask signs and symptoms of

serious illness or injury and will not, therefore, be used by school staff as a standard first aid strategy.

It is reasonable for school staff to accept and agree to supervise only medication required during their period of supervision or care (for example, medication required three times a day is generally not required during a school day: it can be taken before and after school, and before bed). This minimizes the quantity of medication held on site.

At Murray Bridge Special School safe storage of medication requires, therefore, as a minimum standard, that the medication is:

- prescribed by a doctor
- provided by the parent, guardian or carer
- within the expiry date of the product
- delivered to staff as a daily supply. This might require the family to organize a second labeled container from the pharmacy for safe storage at home
- provided with written instructions from the doctor. These instructions must match those printed on the product packaging.

School staffs are generally trained to supervise oral and measured dose inhaled medication. They are generally not trained, and so cannot be expected, to administer medication taken by other routes, for example eye and ear drops and ointments.

**A student may not take his or her first dose of a new medication at school.** The student should first be supervised by the family, guardian, carer, or health professional in case of an allergic reaction.

It is not the role of school staff to interpret behaviour in relation to a medical condition. Nor can they be expected to monitor the effects of medication. If staffs are concerned for any reason about a student's health, their first aid training requires them to enact standard first aid emergency procedures.

A Medication Plan must be filled out by the doctor when a medication is prescribed. Doctors have access to these forms from the internet. It is essential the doctor completes this form at the time of consultation if medication is required.

If you have any queries at all concerning Medication Management at school please do not hesitate to contact us.

## **CUSTODY/COURT ORDERS**

It is the responsibility of the family to inform the school immediately if their child is under a Court Order and provide a copy of the Order to the school. It is also the custodial parent's responsibility to keep the school updated to any changes that have occurred to the Order.

## **COMMUNICATION DIARY**

Each young learner is supplied with a Communication Diary by the school. The Communication Diary is a method of keeping families informed about their child. Families are encouraged to communicate with their child's Learning Facilitator as frequently as desired through the Communication Diary. The Communication Diary is usually sent home every afternoon with the child and returned each morning in the child's bag by the family.

## **BEHAVIOUR CODE**

The school is governed by the Department for Education 'School Discipline' policy. From this policy, the Murray Bridge Special School 'Behaviour Code' has been developed. The procedures for management of behaviour outlined in the Department 'School Discipline' policy of 'take home', 'suspension', 'exclusion' and 'expulsion' apply to all learners enrolled at Murray Bridge Special School.

Murray Bridge Special School acknowledges the complexity and interrelationship of complex disability and behaviour.

Therefore the application of procedures for the management of behaviour as outlined in the DECS 'School Discipline' policy of 'take home', 'suspension', 'exclusion' and 'expulsion' will be directed by a range of considerations.

Considerations may include:

- the developmental learning stage of the young learner
- the frequency and/or severity of the behaviour
- advice and planning provided by other groups or agencies
- School principal's right to veto all considerations and action their perception of what is in the best interest of all learners and the school community.

A full copy of the policy is readily available from the school on request.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

Our young people, school community and school staff has a great deal of pride in our school and our achievements. School Council has agreed that school pride is acknowledged and reinforced through the wearing of a uniform. Please refer to the separate information sheet regarding school uniform.

## **ACCESSING RESPITE SERVICES**

Parents and carers need to plan (if at all possible) well in advance for holiday respite.

The school encourages all families to begin accessing regular respite for their child at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate, well-planned respite has significant benefits for everyone involved, particularly our children. The opportunity to develop and/or practice appropriate coping skills in a caring and safe respite environment assists to minimise the possibility of separation anxiety. Severe separation anxiety can have a significant negative emotional outcome for a child and their family. It is not uncommon to observe the effect of severe separation anxiety on young adults and older people with a disability who have never had the opportunity to develop and practice appropriate inter-dependence and coping skills. The incidence of our children (and our-selves) experiencing severe separation anxiety can be significantly reduced through regular, planned, safe and exciting respite experiences.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

It is our aim to assist young people to maximize their participation and enjoyment in activities and programs.

Learners must be sent to school in comfortable and appropriate clothing for particular activities.

If your child has difficulty managing clothing, elastic wadded pants, easily slipped on and off clothing and Velcro fastened shoes are recommended.

It is essential for parents and carers to supply a couple of old complete changes of clothes that can be left at school for their child in case of personal emergency. These should not be good clothes that you would be concerned about if they were lost or damaged.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

On the last day of each term, school will dismiss approximately one hour earlier than usual. School Council may approve such early dismissal in other special circumstances.

### **SCHOOL CLOSURE & PUPIL FREE DAYS**

Up to five times a year, all Department for Education schools may be closed for either a School Council sanctioned 'Day Of Local Significance', or days for school staff professional learning. On these days the closure will have the approval of School Council and/or the local Education Office. The school will be CLOSED for those days to young people. Families are notified as far in advance as possible to enable them to make alternative arrangements for their children.

### **HATS**

Our young learners are expected to wear their hats when outside. However the Special school acknowledges hats cannot be kept on some young people. Learners not wearing hats when outside will be encouraged to sit, or play in the shade. Hats are to be labelled clearly with the learners' name and will remain at school.

### **LUNCH ORDERS**

Young people can order lunches through the North Primary school canteen. Lunch price lists will contain all items available and are sent home as they are updated. Lunch bags need to be purchased by individuals from the canteen.

### **MATERIAL & SERVICE CHARGES**

The Materials and Services fee assists in enabling your child to safely, comfortably and successfully access equipment and consumables essential for learning.

What your child will access in each area of learning and well-being will depend on the learning outcomes as agreed to in the One Plan.

There are many ways of paying schools fees including regular part payments. If you would like to discuss any options around fee payment, or school card eligibility please do not hesitate to contact the Special School Administration Officer.

### **MONEY COLLECTION**

All school money is managed by the Special School Administration Services Officer at the Special School. Any money sent in to school must be in a secure container or envelope and accompanied by a note in the Communication Diary.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

School photographs are taken each year usually in term four (4). The photographers organise the date and time.

### **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The school has an active School Council membership. Staff and parents represent the school on Council. The Council meets once per term on a Friday at a location that is negotiated between the members. If you are interested in joining School Council please do not hesitate to contact the principal of the Special school.

### **SWIMMING PROGRAM**

The elective swimming program is held in the Hydrotherapy pool at the Murray Bridge District Hospital. These lessons are an elective and families can choose whether their child participates or not. Appropriate activities and supervision are provided at school for those learners not participating.

### **WEATHER POLICY**

**Hot:** The classrooms in the Special school are air conditioned so continuous temperatures of 38° or more should not have a serious effect on our young people.

**Wet:** In times of wet weather, young people will remain indoors during breaks with duty staff supervising.

### **CATASTROPHIC BUSHFIRE ALERT**

If this is confirmed for an area your child may travel through to get to school, no school buses or DECD taxi services will run.

The school will remain open. Families have two choices:

- 1) Arrange for your child to be transported to and from school.
- 2) Keep them at home for the day.

This alert will be confirmed on the following radio stations:

1062 ABC, 891 ABC, 1125 AM

Parents are also invited to visit the following website for further information [www.bushfirereadyschools.sa.gov.au](http://www.bushfirereadyschools.sa.gov.au)

### **REPORTING THE SUSPICION OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

We believe all learners have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times. Our children are our most precious resource and it is our responsibility to ensure we provide the best possible life experiences for them. In South Australia a wide range of people are required to notify the Department of Child Protection of cases where child/young person abuse and neglect is suspected.

Under Section 11(1) & (2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993, the following people are obliged by law to notify Family and Youth Services if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child/young person has been or is being abused or neglected and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or in carrying out official duties.

A medical practitioner

A registered or enrolled nurse

A dentist

A psychologist

A member of the police force

A probation officer

A social worker

A teacher in any educational institution (including a kindergarten)

An approved family day care provider

Any other person who is an employee of, or volunteer in a government department, agency or a local government or non-government agency or instrumentality that provides health, welfare, education, childcare or residential services wholly or partly for children/young people, and is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children/young people; or

Holds a management position in a relevant organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for; or

Direct supervision of the provision of those services to children/young people

The above people are referred to as mandated notifiers.

Failure to notify is an offence under the Children's protection Act 1993 and carries a maximum penalty of a \$2000 fine.

Early identification of ongoing abuse and neglect can enable relevant agencies and workers to provide appropriate intervention and services to the family and assist them in their responsibility for the young learner's wellbeing and safety. Failure to notify suspected cases of child abuse and neglect may result in the abuse or neglect of the child continuing, and/or the death of the child. Abused children may carry the trauma associated with their experiences into adulthood unless appropriate treatment, assistance, and support are provided.

As a staff we are here to support our learners and their families.

If you would like more information about the schools responsibility regarding reporting suspicion of child/young person abuse or neglect, or you would like more information as to the services which are available to support families, please do not hesitate to contact us.