



SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated:02/24

School number: 0935

School name: Para Hills School

Para Hills School began its first year of operation in 2013 as a result of the amalgamation of the previously co-located, '*Para Hills Junior Primary School*' and '*Para Hills Primary School*'. Our new Preschool was built in 2016, located next to the playground on the lower level, with an extended ramp built to provide easy access to the main part of the school. The school offers a range of programs from Preschool to Year 6 which have been serving the local community for over 60 years. The school caters for approximately 250 children including two Special Options classes (R-2 & 3-6). A well supported OSHC, provided by YMCA is located on the ground floor.

The school celebrates a rich mixture of children from a broad range of different cultural, socio economic and language backgrounds. Each year level has its own breadth of social, cultural and academic diversity. Very strong community ownership and participation exists within the school.

All staff and students use the unique, '*Rational Emotional Behaviour Education*' (REBE) program to support students in achieving their personal best and to develop a strong sense of self worth. Student learning is underpinned by a relentless focus on the school's values of '*Respect, Commitment and Honesty*'.

The school received a STEM grant to upgrade facilities in 2017. This took place on the ground floor of the main building with the creation of indoor/outdoor spaces to accommodate STEM learning. These spaces include a kitchen, green screen and robotics room, 3D printers, virtual reality headsets, and outdoor vegetable gardens.

Teaching and learning practices in all classrooms are based on 21st century pedagogies. The school is a member of the Montague Partnership in the Para Hills 3 Portfolio and works collaboratively with both the Montague Partnership and Orion Partnership, with a dedicated focus on improving student learning outcomes across the Partnership/Portfolio, with a strong focus on Reading improvement.

Whilst student learning outcomes have been consistently very good over time (as measured by NAPLAN) we have also seen significant improvement in school based assessments. In 2021, Para Hills School was in the top 20 schools in South Australia for overall growth in NAPLAN reading results. Based on this, we changed our Site Improvement Plan targets to aim for more students to achieve results in higher bands in 2022. Since that time we have continued to achieve high percentages of students reaching higher bands in all areas of NAPLAN.

In 2021 we changed our strategic directions to an evidence based, 'Science of Reading' approach, using 'Explicit Direct Instruction' (EDI) as our instructional pedagogical framework. Our teachers embed the 'Orton Gillingham' (OG) approach to the teaching of reading, writing, and spelling. (These directions are reflected in our very positive NAPLAN data in 2022/23 with results showing outstanding growth in years 3 and 5.) We pride ourselves on our collaborative staff culture and providing high quality teaching in recently upgraded 'clutter free' classrooms, as per EDI practices. To build Phonological Awareness in to our literacy blocks, teachers use Heggerty in the junior primary years and David Kilpatrick's 1 minute a day resource in primary classes. Teachers plan and map alongside the DfE units of work in English to build the connection between spelling, reading and writing in their literacy blocks. This is

supported by our Intervention Team (Intervention Teacher and a dedicated intervention SSO). **1.**

General information

- Principal: Erin Wilson
- Deputy Principal: Amanda Mlynowskyj
- Year of Opening: 1961
- Postal Address: PO Box 240 Para Hills SA 5096
- Location Address: 2 Frances Ave Para Hills SA 5096
- DfE Partnership: Montague, Northern Adelaide
- Geographical location: Road distance from GPO (km): 16
- Telephone number: (08) 8264 2033
- Fax Number: (08) 8396 1934
- School website address: <http://www.parahillsschool.sa.edu.au>
- School e-mail address: dl.0935.info@schools.sa.edu.au
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service: Available onsite, located within the main building, operated by YMCA
- February FTE student enrolment:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Special Options	20	20	19	16	18
Reception	36	32	33	33	37
Year 1	35	36	33	31	36
Year 2	41	32	30	31	30
Year 3	29	39	34	29	32
Year 4	26	32	35	30	29
Year 5	30	24	31	27	35
Year 6	29	28	20	31	28
Year 7	22	26	24		
TOTALS	258	266	259	212	227

School Card Percentage: 44%

EALD Enrolment: 28%

Aboriginal Enrolment: 9%

Student enrolment trends: Enrolment levels dipped in 2020 and 2021 following Year 7 to high school. During 2023, enrolments grew during the year with an additional 25 enrolments after census.

Preschool enrolments are nearing the 2024 cap of 50.

- Staffing numbers (as at February 2024 census):

Leadership FTE 4.0 (4 leaders)

Teachers FTE 22

Aboriginal Education Teacher (AET) 0.2 (1 day per week)

Aboriginal Community Education Officer (ACEO) 2 days per week

GSE 14hrs per week

SSO - 10 Permanent (Curriculum and Administration)

SSO - 10 Contract (Curriculum)

Pastoral Care worker: 9 hours per week

Public transport access: Bus Services are available from the north, south and northeast areas of Adelaide.

2. Students (and their welfare)

General characteristics:

There are currently 11 Mainstream classes and 2 Special Options Classes (R-2 & 3-6) A total enrolment in mainstream Years R – 6 of 243 students grouped in 11 classes. Two Special Classes, R-2 (7 students) and Yr 3-6 (10 students) are also located on site. The local community is made up predominantly of English speaking families, although there are many families with other cultural backgrounds and languages. The main language group is Dari with other main groups being Arabic, Hindi, Kurdish, Malayalam, Hazaraghi and Mandarin. EALD students represent 28%. 23 Aboriginal students are currently enrolled.

Student Well-being programs:

Our school has three values: *Respect, Commitment, and Honesty*. These underpin all learning and are continually referred to and focused on across the curriculum to support student learning.

Rational Emotional Behaviour Education (REBE): This program is unique to our school and aims to improve mental health outcomes for students by actively teaching them about their behaviour and behaviour choices. All teachers have ongoing training to improve their competency in this program. Our philosophy in this area is... *'to educate, not punish.'*

The, *'Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum'* is explicitly taught throughout the year.

Student Support offered:

Students experiencing learning difficulties receive additional support through programs operated by SSOs and coordinated by our Literacy/Intervention Teacher. We offer a specialised reading and literacy intervention program consisting of a teacher and an SSO. This team run several programs with students from Reception to Year 6 (including MiniLit, MacqLit, Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach to synthetic phonics) and this has resulted in significant improvement in our Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, reading and phonics knowledge and improved site based data across all year levels. Students with High Intellectual Potential are also identified and appropriate differentiated teaching and learning programs implemented. Frequent data collection and 5 weekly check-ins through Professional Learning Teams support continuous improvement and consistency across the school.

Student Management:

Our Behaviour Codes for classroom and yard are built around our School Values and REBE principles. Building a Learning Community and focusing on effective relationships is an ongoing priority. Classes focus on student-negotiated codes of behaviour through the development of a class code of conduct, which reflects our school values. All classes have training in anti-harassment/bullying and in using grievance procedures. All staff have had extensive training in *'Effective Classroom Management'* and REBE which has built shared understandings and a

common language across the school. At Para Hills School, '*learning leads behaviour, behaviour does not control the learning*'.

Student Government:

Students actively participate in creating their learning program where appropriate, in collaboration with their class teachers.

We have a Student Executive Committee, elected from Year 6, to oversee student leadership across the school. Other student leadership roles that students in Years 5 and 6 are eligible to apply for are: including Tech Crew, Library Monitors, Social Justice Crew, Media Group and Sports Monitors.

Special programmes:

Peer tutoring between the Primary, Junior Primary classes and Preschool operate as '*Buddy Class*'. Ongoing Parental support is developed to foster increased involvement across the school.

Additional Programs:

- Music: Brass, Guitar, Keyboard & Vocal Tuition
- Strong SAPSASA participation
- Glee Club (dancing/acting)
- Breakfast Club
- We have an ongoing relationship with the Australian Business Community Network (ABCN) who through Optus and Stockland Retirees have provided mentors for the SPARK (reading) and 121 (Maths) Programs for groups of students to improve their skills. Participation in the ABCN national 'STEMpreneur' program has also complemented our work in STEM learning

3. Key School Policies

At PHS we support students to become successful learners, problem solvers and thinkers through a focus on quality teaching and learning. Our current SIP goals are in Reading and Maths with strategic priorities of:

1. Increase the number of students achievement in Reading R-6.
2. Increase the number of students achievement in Maths R-6.

Recent and ongoing key outcomes:

Significant improvements in students' Literacy & Numeracy outcomes.

Significant improvement in students' successful behaviour, both in the class and yard.

Improved Preschool-Reception and Year 6-7 transition processes for all students, particularly for students with additional needs.

4. Curriculum

- Subject offerings: All 8 areas of curriculum are offered with L.O.T.E being Auslan.
- All classrooms have been recently redesigned and refurbished to support the Explicit Direct Instructional approach to all teaching areas Classrooms are sensory friendly with minimal distractions.

Additional Programmes/Approaches include:

- Tailored support programmes for students with One Plans
- 2 Regional Special Options Classes (Junior Primary and Primary). These classes provide ongoing learning for all of our community in the understanding of difference, disadvantage and diversity.
- Tailored support for students with additional needs
- Rational Emotive Behaviour Education (REBE)
- Orton-Gillingham (OG) - explicit phonics program
- Explicit Direct Instruction – our instructional approach in all classrooms
- Morphology in Years 3 to 6 which blends the phonemic, whole word and morphemic approaches to teaching spelling.
- Heggerty phonemic and phonological awareness

The school has excellent resources to support all curriculum areas. We have a Virtual Reality classroom kit, 4 classroom sets of laptops and 30 iPads. Each class has an additional 10 iPads. A well equipped and fully automated Resource Centre with 30 workstations supports student learning.

Other features include:

- An inclusion program for our Special Class students to enable them to access mainstream classes weekly.
- Cooperative planning and teaching in year level teams through effectively structured Professional Learning Teams (PLTs)
- A dedicated focus on 'Classroom Walkthroughs' following the Justin Baeder model, which sees leaders in classrooms providing feedback daily.

Special needs:

- Students who do not qualify for a One Plan may receive additional support from SSO's.
- Intensive 'Phonological Awareness', 'MacqLit MiniLit', 'Quicksmart' and 'Toosmart' Programs for students at risk in their learning.
- Our Aboriginal Education Team (Principal, AET and ACEO) meet weekly and liaise with staff and cooperatively support our Aboriginal students and families. Participation in cultural celebrations is a focus for our school. For example, 'Reconciliation Week' and 'Cultural Week'.

Teaching methodology:

Staff are employing 21st Century teaching strategies in all aspects of the Australian curriculum, working towards:

- Students being actively engaged in negotiating their learning with teachers.
- Students confidently communicating how they are learning, why they are learning and how they know they have been successful.
- Students understanding the Learning Intention and Success Criteria during each lesson.
- Students using a range of information and communication technologies to enhance their learning.

Student Assessment Procedures and Reporting:

- Staff have reviewed and improved the parent report format to reflect the Australian curriculum and the A – E grading.
- A parent information night is held in early in term 1 with teacher interviews late term 1. Other interviews are held on a needs basis across the year. Mid year and end of year written reports are provided to parents/caregivers. Communication between school and

home is strengthened through the use of ClassDojo, with over 98% of families actively connected.

5. Sporting Activities

- The school has a full time PE/Health teacher who takes all classes R-6 several times a week for a skill based PE program.
- The school invests heavily in SAPSASA District Carnival participation - including athletics, swimming, soccer, football, softball, rugby league and cross country for year 5/6 students.
- Regular coaching clinics are conducted at the school in a variety of sports by external organisations which complements the schools PE program and SAPSASA participation.

6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

- Instrumental Music tuition for keyboard, vocals and guitar is offered on a weekly basis by Department for Education and private tutors.
- Annual Sports Day
- Assemblies are held fortnightly that are student organised and conducted.
- Lunchtime activities, including Glee Club, Gardening, LEGO Club, Mindfulness and Computer room, are provided each day per week
- Book Week Parade
- Whole School Excursions
- End of Year Concert Performances
- Fortnightly parent coffee catch ups

7. Staff (and their welfare)

Staff profile:

A supportive collegial teaching approach exists with teaming a fundamental component. Professional Learning Teams are established in levels of schooling to work towards achieving the goals of the Site Improvement Plan. Teachers are released regularly to cooperatively plan and moderate students work to ensure consistency of practice and a seamless curriculum.

Leadership structure:

Principal (1.0)

Deputy Principal (1.0 FTE)

Coordinator (School) (1.0 FTE)

Coordinator (Preschool) (1.0 FTE)

Staff Support Systems

Financial support for T&D as per our Site Improvement Plan.

Teams of staff are regularly released for specific T&D eg: STEM, 21st Century Pedagogy, Literacy and Numeracy, Understanding ASD, One Plan development

Performance Development:

A comprehensive Performance Development program is in place with all staff participating.

All staff are responsible for developing their own Performance Development Plan aligned to the school Site Improvement Plan and with a focus on areas of specific professional growth. Regular formal meetings with Leadership and comprehensive written feedback is given as a

result of these meetings. All staff are encouraged to access Leadership for regular informal feedback. Staff are encouraged to explore other roles and Leadership opportunities.

Regular observations in classrooms with both written and informal feedback compliment other aspects of staff Performance and Development

Staff utilisation policies:

Staff are expected to develop cooperative practices with colleagues.

8. School Facilities

Buildings and grounds:

The school is on a sloping site of 3 levels. The main school building is a double storey building with classrooms, Resource Centre, Activity Room, STEM facility, bathrooms, OSHC, staff facilities and Administration area.

A fully equipped Hall/Gymnasium.

The site is suited for mobility difficulties with ramps connecting the 3 levels and a lift in the main building.

The grounds are attractive with large play areas including an adventure playground, oval, nature play areas, hard play areas and a large COLA (Covered Outdoor Learning Area).

A lunch order service is supplied by a local delicatessen for school lunch orders.

A school based Preschool with 'state of the art' facilities, interactive whiteboards, multiple indoor and outdoor spaces to accommodate a range of activities and a playgroup.

Extensive heating and cooling systems across the school: All areas have split system air-conditioning, the Gym Hall has Evaporative Cooling and Gas Heating.

Student facilities:

Extensive play and work areas with access to sports equipment for recess and lunchtime use. 2 sandpits. Full size gymnasium and Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA). Dedicated STEM facilities on the ground floor.

Staff facilities:

Safe enclosed parking area, staffroom with access to a covered outdoor vergola. Dedicated work/preparation areas on all levels.

9. School Operations

Decision making structures:

All members of the school community are given the opportunity to participate in the decision making process. Avenues for this that are open to all parents include:

- Governing Council nomination
- Governing Council sub-committees:
 - Finance
 - OSHC
 - Fundraising
- Parent Voice through 'Class Dojo'

Staff are represented on all committees.

Teaching staff meet weekly before school for administration issues and after school for PD sessions with meetings being chaired on a rotating basis. A consensus decision-making model operates within a clear timeframe.

All staff have designated areas of responsibility in curriculum and school administration.

Regular publications:

- A Weekly Bulletin is published for staff and the school newsletter is published fortnightly on Class Dojo. Class newsletters are posted to families (Class Dojo) at the beginning of each term.
- A comprehensive enrolment pack is provided to all new parents on enrolment.

Other communication:

Home visits, regular phone communication and ongoing communication via ClassDojo are features of our commitment to keeping open communication lines with our school community.

School financial position:

The school is in a sound financial position with resourcing targeted at the school's Site Improvement Plan priorities and succession planning of technology equipment and ongoing classroom upgrades.

Special funding:

APAS Funding available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on an annual basis. Students with Disabilities receive additional funding, dependent on needs and Service Provider verifications. The school uses the annual IESP grant to support students who are not verified for specialised support.

10. Local Community

General characteristics:

Families come from a variety of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

The school borders a reserve, which separates it from the local shopping centre, large supermarket and community hub, all a short walking distance away.

We are actively involved with the local Neighbourhood Watch Association who meets with our Student Executive during the year.

The local community is well serviced by public transport along two of its three perimeter roads as well as a service along the major arterial, Bridge Road.

Parent and community involvement:

Parent involvement is on the increase. A strong and dedicated Governing Council includes parents of Preschool – Year 6 students . Regular feedback is sought from our community through, morning teas, written surveys, attendance at assemblies and sporting events.

Feeder or destination schools:

Our site based Preschool provides 95% of incoming Reception students. Other local Preschools provide other Reception students

Year 6 students transition to a number of high schools in the area: Para Hills High, Valley View Secondary, Roma Mitchell Secondary College, Salisbury East High and The Heights School.

Other local care and educational facilities:

The City of Salisbury local library with recently opened community centre are adjacent to the school.

Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities: Supermarket and smaller speciality shops are located nearby the school and are accessed by many of the parents and staff.

Other local facilities:

The surrounding area is well serviced with medical facilities, banking and post office services.

Within walking distance from the school are large recreational and sporting grounds maintained by Salisbury Council. Sporting clubs include Football, Soccer, Netball, Cricket, Lawn Bowls.

Local Government Body: Para Hills School is located within the City of Salisbury Council area.

11. Further Comments

Para Hills School is being recognised within the education community for our evidence based and innovative approaches to the teaching of reading.

Our staff are continually learning and updating their practice to reflect current research and to meet the needs of our students. All staff maintain a high standard of professional development, attending trainings in work time and their own time, as part of our collective commitment to achieving excellence in the education we provide.

Explicit and systematic teaching of fundamental knowledge and skills is what underpins everything we do at PHS. Through quality delivery with Explicit Direct Instruction, we provide the best possible environment for all students develop the ability to read, write and understand the rules of the English language.

A school culture of inclusivity is evident, with high staff and student retention rates and a general 'feeling' of safety and calmness.