



SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT Updated: November 2022

School number: 0763

School name: Penola Primary School

School Profile:

Values:

Respect, Responsibility and Inclusivity

Vision:

Penola Primary school will be a supportive and progressive community where all individuals are respected and valued. Leading teaching practices, high expectations and inquiry-based learning will inspire our students to become informed, compassionate, active global citizens.

Core Business:

The core business of Penola Primary School is to provide quality teaching and learning programs to meet the current needs of our students and enable them to be successful beyond school.

Penola Primary School is a dynamic and progressive Foundation to Year 6 School with strong links to the community. The school's focus is to develop the whole child: intellectually, academically, physically, and socially/emotionally. The learning opportunities at Penola Primary School are stimulating and challenging, with an emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy. The school is proud of its commitment to the provision of a wide variety of programs and activities, including, STEM, Japanese, Sapsasa, After School Sports, Music, Arts, and Environmental programs.

The school has a commitment to pedagogical approaches that see students as capable and competent learners. Programs provide authentic learning experiences that are hands-on, contextual and engaging. There is a commitment to embedding the Australian Curriculum, including cross-curricular priorities and the general capabilities. We see the child as the centre of an educational partnership between home, school and community.

1. General information

- **School Principal:** Sam Currie
- **Year of opening:** 1855
- **Postal Address:** 11 Riddoch St, Penola,5277
- **Location Address:** 11 Riddoch St, Penola, 5277
- **DECD Region:** Limestone Coast
- **Geographical location:** 382 km from Adelaide GPO
- **Telephone number:** (08) 87372 300
- **Fax Number:** (08) 87372 877
- **School website address:** www.penolaps.sa.edu.au
- **School e-mail address:** dl.0763.admin@schools.sa.edu.au
- **Child Parent Centre (CPC) attached:** NIL. McKay Children’s Centre is located next to the school.
- **Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service:** McKay Children’s Centre @ Penola Primary School
- **February FTE student enrolment:**151
- **Student enrolment trends:**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Foundation	32	19	25	21	21	15
Year 1	18	32	20	25	20	24
Year 2	25	18	28	19	26	23
Year 3	22	25	19	27	17	23
Year 4	24	23	22	20	26	19
Year 5	21	24	22	22	20	28
Year 6	25	20	26	20	21	22
Year 7	27	22	19	27		
TOTAL	194	183	181	181	151	153

School Card Approvals: 49

EALD: 0

ATSI Enrolments: 8

Student Enrolment Trend: Steady over the last 5 years

- **Staffing numbers** (as at February census):

Leadership – 1.0 Principal, 0.4 Intervention and Wellbeing Coordinator, 0.2 Numeracy Improvement Coordinator

Teachers - 9.4 FTE

SSOs – 14

Pastoral Support undertakes 8 hours per week.

22 Females. 4 Males

- **Public transport access:** NIL
- **Special site arrangements:**

School is serviced by seven private bus providers to transport students from outlying districts.

2. Students (and their welfare)

- **General characteristics**

Penola Primary School is situated in the Limestone Coast in an active and involved community. Well maintained contemporary facilities including a gymnasium, environment centre, STEM resources and Computer room support specialist subjects in STEM and Design Technology, Arts, Cultural Studies and Japanese. Nature play is a strong feature of the school environment with several play areas dedicated to this, providing numerous opportunities for outdoor learning. Learning dispositions of resilience, persistence, communication, confidence, respect and responsibility are specifically taught and underpin all teaching and learning programs. A collaborative staff works with a committed Governing Council and Parent Volunteer Group, contributing to long and short term strategic planning. Our Student Representative Council (SRC) has a strong voice in school governance.

- **Student well-being programs**

All staff at Penola Primary are trained in Berry Street, SMART trauma, Dyslexia, Managing Difficult Behaviours, and Autism training to effectively support all students. A Wellbeing Coordinator supports students, teachers and classroom programs. A Pastoral Support Worker offers student counselling. Intervention for children with additional needs and classroom support is considerable with both Foundation/Year 1 classes.

- **Student support offered**

Interception is currently being introduced across the school. MiniLit and MultiLit provide additional support for students in Literacy. The school boasts a highly successful gardening program as well as 'Matt's Crew' which provides hands-on learning experiences outside the classroom for disengaged students.

One Child One Plans have been completed for all verified students with a disability and ATSI students to enable them to fully access the curriculum in a differentiated way, with family and student support services input.

- **Student management**

The school (staff, students and parents) has developed Behaviour Guidelines outlining expectations. Staff are trained in the principles of Play is the Way and Berry Street.

- **Student government**

The school has a Student Representative Council managed by a member of the teaching staff. Two representatives are elected from each class (Years 4-6). Each class conducts their own class meetings where issues are raised for SRC, staff, School Council and Families and Friends discussion. The SRC actively promotes and organises special events and fundraising ventures, and assists with school-based decision making. SRC executive reports to Governing Council once a term at meetings. Students also have the opportunity to be Environment Group leaders and House Captains. Students nominate for a leadership role and are voted in by peers after giving a speech and/or writing an application.

- **Special programs**

Educator Exchange, shared agreements and a transition program exists between the school and McKay Children's Centre. Students have the opportunity to participate in Choir (Year 4-6) and take musical instrument lessons.

3. Key School Policies

- **Site Improvement Plan and other key statements or policies:**

Contextual Influences:

Penola Primary School is situated 380kms from Adelaide. Approximately 150 students attend the F-6 school.

Penola Primary School operates in a rural setting where education is valued and supported by a high level of parent participation.

The partnership in Education is evident in:

- parent involvement in classroom support programs
- Parent Volunteer Group (Families and Friends)
- Canteen volunteers
- Special events eg. Swimming & Athletic Carnivals etc.

- Sports coaching, camp and excursion volunteer help

There is also a strong community expectation of high student achievement, reflected in high participation from a range of academic competitions (UNSW).

The majority of staff live in the town. As a result, contact and communication with parents is ongoing. Accountability issues, focusing on school achievement and expectations, are often topics of discussion.

From 2021 to 2023 Penola Primary School has had relatively few staff changes. Their enthusiasm, ideas and expertise are appreciated by staff and the parent community. Collegiate support among staff is a strong factor in the success of the school.

The community's relative isolation restricts the school's access to cultural performances due to time and travel costs. Teachers too, need to plan for Training & Development pursuits, visits to other schools and education centres to help offset the effects of the school's somewhat insular location.

Approximately 30% of students travel to and from school by bus, effectively extending their school day by up to two hours. Younger students are often tired.

Student numbers are relatively stable but are influenced by the presence in Penola of a private school. Penola Primary is working to further strengthen links with the McKay Children's Centre and Penola High School through transition programs and resource sharing.

Core Business (Refers to the primary role the school fulfils)

Staff at Penola Primary strive to provide high quality teaching and learning in a supportive and caring environment. All school activities are designed to maximise student learning.

We are guided by official DfE policies combined with our own school initiatives.

Recent policies that have been introduced include:

- Assessment and Reporting
- Planning and Programing
- Professional Development
- Camps and Excursions
- Uniform
- Request for Leave
- Step 9
- Literacy and Numeracy Statements of Practice

Our core business is further supported by:

- developing individual learning programs for children with specific needs
- involving parents in the learning process as partners
- maintaining an effective decision making process
- striving towards excellence and maximum achievement for all
- recognising and celebrating achievement
- ensuring equity and social justice underpin access to learning programs
- providing leadership opportunities and decision making involvement for students e.g. SRC, assemblies, class meetings, Sports' Carnival organisation
- enhancing pre-school to Foundation, JP to MP and Year 6 - 7 transition opportunities
- arranging for orientation visits and conducting school tours for parents of prospective students.
- The school has 35 networked curriculum computers for student use. A computer suite houses 28 whilst the remaining computers are located in the library. This has been further enhanced by the purchase of additional laptops, iPads, Interactive White Boards, 3D printer and teacher professional development.

The Site Improvement Plan vision, goals and targets were developed through an analysis of data and consultation with leadership, staff and the parent community.

SIP Goal:

Goal 1 - Increase student achievement in reading

This is supported by specific targets and Challenges of Practice.

4. Curriculum

- **Subject offerings:**
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Technologies
 - Health and Physical Education
 - Languages – Japanese
 - HASS
 - The Arts
 - Specialist subjects: Japanese and Digital Technologies and STEM
- **Special needs:**

Students with a verified disability, requiring additional support or requiring extension are supported through specialist programs and classroom support. SSOs regularly attend Training and Development and work with teachers to plan for students. Teachers are supported by Student Support Services and external providers.
- **Special curriculum features:**

Playful and Inquiry pedagogies, Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop, Buddy Class, Natural Maths and Garden Groups.
- **Teaching methodology:**

Teachers plan, assess and moderate in teaching teams. Teachers are supported by an Improvement and Pedagogy, and Numeracy Improvement Coordinators to implement engaging learning programs with high expectations. Formative assessment, success criteria and learning intentions are an integral part of programs. Junior Primary classes run ‘Discovery’ sessions every morning for 30 minutes.

- **Student assessment procedures and reporting**

Family Engagement Evening early in Term 1 offers a chance for families to meet staff, hear about the school's directions for the year, and to meet with class teachers.

Meet and Greet interviews are held in the middle of Term1 and is an opportunity for parents/carers and teachers to discuss a student's areas of strength, areas for improvement, concerns, and to set goals for the year.

A report, in conjunction with an interview is held at the end of Term 2.

Optional Interviews are available in Term 3.

Written reports are sent home at the end of Term 4.

- **Joint programs:**

A close association exists between the McKay Children's Centre and the School. The OHSC program is operated at the school by centre staff.

5. Sporting Activities

The School has a strong sports program. Students are involved in swimming programs culminating in swimming and splash carnivals, athletics, fitness and class based physical education programs.

Some School teams operate on Saturday mornings.

Each term F-6 students participate in Sporting Schools programs, they include – Volleyball, Tennis, Basketball, Softball and Baseball.

Students are encouraged to try out for SAPSASA teams with considerable success in the past. The school is well represented through participation in football, softball, swimming, netball, hockey, soccer, basketball, cross country, cricket, tennis and athletics.

6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

The School produces an annual concert that is highly valued by the local community. The school choir performs at the concert and the Adelaide and Millicent Music Festivals.

Learn to Swim lessons are held each year with the Year 6s also attending an aquatics camp at the end of the year.

Instrumental music lessons are offered by DfE personnel and private providers.

Students participate in a variety of excursions, dependent on the curriculum focus.

Each class participates in an annual camp. The location and duration of the camps are dependent upon year level.

7. Staff (and their welfare)

- **Staff profile:**

Staff at Penola Primary School often make a long term commitment to the school and district. Teaching experiences among staff vary from short term contract work to many years' experience. Staffing has remained stable with very little staff turn-over.

Leadership structure

- Principal
- Numeracy Improvement Coordinator (0.2)
- Intervention and Wellbeing Coordinator (0.4)
- Leadership meets regularly, with leadership responsibilities widely delegated. Staff with Step 9 qualifications are expected to support Early Years Career teachers.

- **Staff support systems**

Staff are members of Learning Teams (JP, MP, UP). Staff meetings are held weekly. Training and Development or Learning Teams are held for an hour – hour and a half every week. SSOs meet every week facilitated by the Intervention and Wellbeing Coordinator.

- **Performance Management**

Each term teachers meet with the principal to reflect on their classroom practice, planning and assessment. Individual Performance Development Plans are an integral part of this process and are conducted twice a year, as per DfE Guidelines. Teachers are expected to set goals that align with the Site Improvement Plan and their personal development.

- **Staff utilisation policies**

PAC (Personnel Advisory Committee) functions well, to advise the Leadership on staffing matters. SSOs have generally moved to specialist roles, with some job rotation. The school grounds person works 17.5 hours per week to maintain approximately 6ha.

- **Access to special staff**

Students attending Penola Primary are able to access musical tuition from both DfE instrumental teachers and private providers in stringed, woodwind, piano and Choir.

The school is able to access Student Support Services, through the Mount Gambier District Office. They provide a range of support personnel that assist with verifications and funding applications for students who are struggling to access the curriculum or have behavioural/social issues.

- **Other**

N/A

8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff

- **Travelling time**
Mount Gambier 40 minutes south and Naracoorte 40 minutes north
- **Housing assistance**
Government housing is available or housing assistance can be applied for private rentals.
- **Cash in lieu of removal allowance**
Available to eligible staff
- **Additional increment allowance**
N/A
- **Designated schools benefits**
N/A
- **Aboriginal/Anangu schools**
N/A
- **Medical and dental treatment expenses**
As per non-metropolitan award
- **Locality allowances**
Yes - minimal
- **Relocation assistance**
By arrangement with DfE
- **Principal's telephone costs**
N/A

9. School Facilities

- **Buildings and grounds**
Penola Primary buildings are set in expansive, well-cared for grounds. The buildings vary in age and architecture. The administration and junior primary classrooms are part of the 100+ year original structure. Both have recently been upgraded. A large Open Space Unit houses three classrooms and the resource centre. A well-equipped science/art room is available for specialist lessons.

The school has a large oval, tennis, basketball and netball courts and a gymnasium incorporating a stage and internal kitchen. A canteen operates on Thursdays and Fridays for recess snacks and lunches.

Part of the lunch shed has been converted to a Loose Parts Shed. 'Matt's Crew', students and members of the community established two nature play

spaces, one in the JP area and one near the playground. These include a creek bed, large red gum climbing logs, mud pit and sandpit.

Contractor buses are available for excursions – licensed teachers can access these buses for excursions.

- **Heating and cooling:**

All buildings are air conditioned

- **Specialist facilities and equipment:**

The school has an excellent library, ICT room with updated computers and tablets, combined Science and Art room, intervention spaces and excellent sporting facilities.

- **Student facilities:**

Canteen, grounds, lunch time – sporting equipment and outdoor library.

- **Staff facilities:**

Staff room, staff library, work space, laptop per classroom

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

An access ramp provides access to the main building. Steady rise steps have been fixed to other buildings as required.

- **Access to bus transport:**

There is no regular local bus service. Bus charter is available from DfE buses and several local companies.

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10. School Operations

- **Decision making structures:**

There is a close working rapport with the Governing Council, Families and Friends Group, SRC and staff. Many decisions are taken collectively through consultative processes that include students. The Governing Council has significant input into the direction and priorities of the school. This often reflects areas identified by staff and students for improvement. Financial management of school funds is based on these directions and priorities. A system of committees is established to undertake specific roles.

- **Regular publications:**
 - School Newsletter Weeks 3, 6, 9 of each term
 - Website
 - Facebook Page
 - School Stream app
 - SeeSaw
 - Parent Information Pack
 - Staff Handbook
 - Staff bulletin
 - Community Notice board
 - Yearly Magazine

- **Other communication:**
Emails as required. Local paper “Penola Pennant”.
- **School financial position:**
Currently the school is in a healthy financial position.
- **Special funding:**
Sporting Schools; Rural and Isolated grant and Early Years Grants

11. Local Community

- **General characteristics:**
Penola is a small country town surrounded by the Coonawarra wine region and extensive livestock and forestry enterprises. As a service centre for the wine and tourist industry, the town has experienced a strong growth phase. Accommodation is limited due to the already high demand. Many people employed in the area travel from towns such as Millicent, Naracoorte and western Victoria. There is a high degree of optimism in Penola’s future.
- **Parent and community involvement:**
The community is very supportive of the school and education is highly valued. Parent support in areas such as sports coaching, working bees, canteen help, classroom support and fundraising is strong. The Families and Friends Group raises significant funds for the school that are invested in a wide variety of learning programs.

- **Feeder or destination schools:**
The majority of enrolments are attracted from McKay Children’s Centre. There are some enrolments from neighbouring towns.
- **Other local care and educational facilities:**
The McKay Children’s Centre provides excellent child care facilities and OSHC program. Penola High School offers very good facilities for secondary students.
- **Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities:**
Shopping facilities are of a high standard with access to an IGA, hardware store, bakery, pharmacy, bank, and clothing stores. The Penola area boasts a number of excellent restaurants and eating facilities.
- **Other local facilities:**
 - Local doctor and hospital
 - Swimming pool
 - Sports ground – football, netball, tennis, cricket
 - Community Library
 - Town hall (Rymill Hall)
 - Churches
 - Gym
- **Availability of staff housing:**
Some Government housing available. Private rentals may be available
- **Accessibility:**
N/A
- **Local Government body:**
Penola is part of the Wattle Range Council area.

12. Further Comments