

PARENTS SAY

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COMMUNITY HARVEST FESTIVAL AT BLYTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Six ways to support your children when they finish school

School has been a significant part of your child's life. They may have mixed emotions as they approach the end of it. They may be excited or unsure about their post-school plans or feel a bit anxious or overwhelmed. As their parent, you can support your children through to their first big career transition, whether into study, work or play.

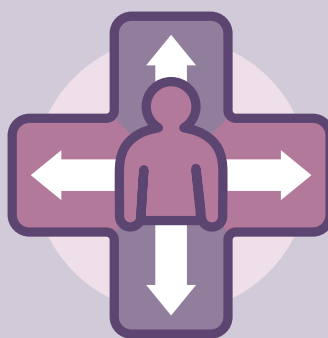
1 Reflect on your child's success.



Take some time with your child to reflect on their last few years of school. Help them recognise their achievements and highlight their strengths, no matter how big or small. Help them add their achievements to their resume.

► [myfuture career article: Write strong achievements](#)

2 Help your child understand their pathways.



Help your child understand how university or TAFE works compared to school. Together, research the academic, career and wellbeing support services and social activities available to them.

► [myfuture Career articles](#)

3 Support students into work.

A job will do more to support your child's transition than anything else. It will put money in their pocket and skills on their resume. Help them find and apply for jobs, including through your own personal and professional networks.



► [myfuture's Job seeker resources](#)

4 Promote professional social media.

A professional approach to technology is essential in the modern world. Encourage your child to set up a professional email address to use while job-hunting, and to review their social media accounts and activity.



► [myfuture Career article: Clean up your digital footprint](#)

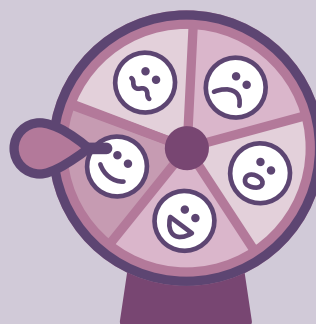
5 Keep an open mind about gap years.



For some students, a gap year might be their best post-school plan, especially if they're unsure about what they really want to do. Discuss with your child the benefits and risks of a gap year and help them identify proactive, reasonable options.

► [The Guardian article: Considering a gap year? A note for parents](#)

6 Look after your child's wellbeing.



The end of school is likely to be your child's first big career transition. They may feel anxious about leaving the familiarity of school for an uncertain future. Be attentive to their emotional states and be there for them if they need a chat.

► [myfuture Insights report: The power of career conversations](#)

PRESIDENT'S SAY



JENICE ZERNA
PRESIDENT

Welcome everyone to the last issue of *Parents Say* for 2025, we hope that you have found the information interesting and informative throughout the year.

The end of the year is fast approaching, and as always term 4 is very busy. Preschools and schools are preparing for the children to transition to school and high school; organisation is well underway for the end of year events such as graduation ceremonies; and year 12s are undertaking their exams to complete their 12 years of education. On behalf of SAASPC we wish all students finishing their school years the very best into the future.

On looking back over the year and how it's gone so quickly, I realized it's almost the end of the first quarter of the 21st century – where on earth has that time gone? It seems the year 2000 only began a short while ago. I have wondered at how over these years things have changed so much and the pace at which we do things has moved so quickly. And how much education has changed – like teaching and learning the use of technology whether at home, school or work and how it is such a large part of life now, and that we need to try to keep up with it, whether we think it is a good thing or not – either way it is here to stay.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people that we have met with, worked with and who have assisted us over the

past 12 months, including the Minister for Education Hon Blair Boyer, Chief Executive of the Department for Education (DfE) Dr Martin Westwell, various DfE personnel and the preschool and school staff when we have held a Responding to Abuse and Neglect session or a Merit Selection session.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all SAASPC officers for the valuable work, commitment and time that they put in throughout the year to support the association, parents, parent groups and public education in general. To our families, a BIG thank you to you for your support and patience – without it we would find it very difficult to continue the important work at the level that we do.

In closing, thank you to all parents and community members in schools and preschools for your support of SAASPC and for the work and support that you give to your children's preschool and school by volunteering your valuable time to help others learn and achieve.

On behalf of SAASPC we wish you a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a relaxing and safe holiday.

SA SCHOOL TERM DATES

2025	28 January-11 April	28 April-4 July	21 July-26 September	13 October-12 December
2026	27 January-10 April	27 April-3 July	20 July-25 September	12 October-11 December
2027	27 January-9 April	26 April-2 July	19 July-24 September	11 October-10 December

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BLAIR BOYER MP
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND SKILLS



EVERY SCHOOL DAY IS A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN – IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

We all know that to get the most out of school – you have to actually be at school to start with. That's why as a government we have put such a strong emphasis on school attendance, which is the foundation for all learning.

We are taking steps to reduce barriers, to ensure public education meets the needs of a diverse range of students and to support families, all with the aim of increasing the number of students who attend school regularly and consistently.

We have recently introduced legislation to state parliament to strengthen laws governing attendance of children and young people at school in South Australia. Under the South Australian Education and Children Services Act 2019 children of compulsory school and education age (6 to 17 years) must be enrolled and attend a government or non-government school or an approved learning program.

The changes to the legislation include the introduction of a statutory warning letter that can be sent to parents for failing to enrol a child or failure of a child to attend. These letters ensure that parents or caregivers are aware of their obligations around their child's schooling and have an opportunity address any concerns.

Nationally school attendance fell dramatically following the global COVID pandemic, and it has been slow to return to pre-2020 levels. Since we came to government in 2022, we have been working hard to do all we can to combat absenteeism and get more kids to school more often.

We are seeing improvements in the data, with an attendance rate at the end of term 2 of 87.6 % compared with the term 2 2024 attendance rate of 85.9% - a positive indication that investments we are making to keep students engaged is having an impact. These results come on top of South Australia's attendance rate in 2024 being higher than the national average for the first time since COVID.

We know that most parents are diligent in making sure their kids attend school, but it's vital that when it is necessary, we have the tools to act swiftly and decisively to get kids to school. Every school day is a missed opportunity to learn, and we have to be willing to take strong action when parents do not do the right thing by their child.

DID YOU KNOW YOU SAASPC HAS BROCHURES ON...

Parent teacher interviews • Parental engagement in student learning

Starting school • Transition to secondary school • Finding support

Fundraising • Information sessions for parents

Affiliated committees and parent groups

Connecting families with preschools and schools

you can find them at: www.saaspc.org.au/publications

EDCHAT – THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION’S WORLD-LEADING AI TOOL



DAN HUGHES
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has got the world talking, and while some of the chatter has been mixed, the Department for Education is taking innovative steps to safely support and educate students and staff in the use of this tool. This forward-thinking stance on the use of AI in South Australia’s public schools, focusing on it being used responsibly and ethically, is world-leading.

Recognising that for the coming generations of young people, this tool will be as common as Google is now, or calculators were for students in a past era, the department has developed a custom-built digital tool to specifically work in the field of education, called EdChat. This has been developed in partnership with global tech giant Microsoft, but with extra safety features to improve data security and protect students from accessing inappropriate content. Since 2023, the testing and progressive development of EdChat has been underway at selected secondary schools.

AI works by using computer systems designed to think and learn like humans. It processes large amounts of data, identifies patterns or relationships, and applies this knowledge to provide answers, perform tasks, or solve problems. This results in a highly individualised experience, which can support a student’s own learning journey.

The added safeguards which are in place in EdChat, as opposed to other AI tools such as ChatGPT or CoPilot, include a content filter removing inappropriate questions or information, controlled access, and limits on image generation. Additionally, all information entered into EdChat stays within the department’s secure systems.

A recent independent impact report found that students have been predominantly using EdChat in school hours as a learning tool (93% of student prompts are related to curriculum subjects at these times), with 94% of inquiries to EdChat relating to subjects within the curriculum.

Examples to date showed students using EdChat to:

- Rephrase instructions when they are having trouble comprehending a task (for example, a high functioning autistic student asking EdChat to provide instructions that are rephrased based on where that student is on the spectrum).
- Enhance comprehension of challenging mathematics problems by using EdChat to deliver alternative explanations.
- Work through roadblocks in their thinking by using EdChat to rephrase their thoughts or find difficult to access information, or to provide examples of specific tasks (for example, using EdChat to generate a poem that can be reviewed for ideas to support creative writing).
- Test their French language skills in preparation for an upcoming test.

From term 4 this year, all South Australian public secondary schools will be able to opt-in to a rollout process for EdChat, supported by the department. Schools will be provided with additional guidance on whole-of-school considerations for student use, as well as practical tools to support in-classroom explorations.

Exciting, time-saving elements have already been installed as part of EdChat, but further technical features and upgrades are being considered to ensure this tool continues to deliver the best possible learning outcomes and teacher support.

As each school starts to use EdChat with its secondary students, parents will be advised. If you have any additional questions about EdChat at that time, please contact your child’s school for more information.

LEARNING THROUGH AGRICULTURE AT BLYTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blyth Primary School is situated 145 kilometres from Adelaide in South Australia's Mid North. We are predominantly a farming community and 10 minutes from the regional centre of Clare. With 48 learners we are a community-oriented school which strives to recognise the potential of each learner and encourage them to reach their full potential. With a number of buses heading through the town to Clare to private schools, there is a need to provide a unique approach that helps to build and retain our enrolments.

A number of years back the stars aligned with former principal, Lynne-Maree Hastings recognising the importance of promoting the key industry in our area of agriculture, and local farmer and teacher AJ Wood being open to the idea of delivering primary school science through an agricultural lens. AJ had completed a Bachelor of Ag and a Diploma of Teaching and shared his work time between his family farm and Balaklava High School. When the concept was proposed AJ was a little reluctant at first, but since the first lesson has not looked back.

With the introduction of the Strategy for Public Education in South Australia, this approach has been a wonderful example of providing deep, contextually appropriate learning for the area. Learners are having hands on experiences with livestock, trial plots, and gardens. Just north of Blyth is South Australia's northern most dairy, owned by the Zweck family. Learners have been visiting the dairy over the past few years and have observed how the dairy has transitioned from hand milking and feedlots to cows living in an environmentally managed barn 120 metres long with robotic milkers and robotic feeding. Chickens and ducks, and lambs are regular visitors to the school to enrich the

learning and build an understanding of agriculture. The learners are also involved in caring and maintaining 2 orchards that provide fresh seasonal fruit for daily consumption at fruit time.

Each class has a specific garden area with wicking beds used to grow seasonal vegetables. The school also keeps chickens and the Upper Primary Class are responsible for the daily feeding, collecting of eggs, and looking after the chooks. Principal Matt Stewart brought his love of bee keeping to the school and the 5/6 class also support the care and maintenance of 4 bee hives. All of these practical hands on areas are linked back to the SA Curriculum and help to provide a richness to learning and provide an understanding of what occurs in the paddocks and sheds around the town.

Blyth Primary School is a Berry Steet Education Model trained school and we utilise a number of our outdoor spaces to support learner regulation and wellbeing. We have a large area along side the oval where learners of all ages spend an hour on Friday developing relationships, building structures and problem solving and negotiating around different equipment. A number of learners spend time painting bee hives or putting together frames. We also have a school dog, Sam, who comes in each day and supports learner regulation when required. The outcome of the above is that with consistent predictable routines our learners have greater space to learn and flourish in the school environment.

The town of Blyth has a strong history of community focus and engagement, and as a site, we work to build on this history. A local artist has an amazing native plant nursery and understanding of species that thrive in our soils. We have



worked with him to do tree plantings at local farms and learnt about the benefits of planting trees and shrubs for modern agriculture. Blyth Primary School regularly engages with the local council to do tree planting events to support the beautification and spaces around the area.

The school has also worked with the local community to partition a section of unused space at the school and repurpose it as a community garden. Learners have done learning to measure the space, plan and propose a layout and provide information on setups. With the first working bees completed a number of learners were present with their family to support the setup of the space.

In 2022 the school held an Ag fair when local farmers and truck companies brought machinery to display, learners designed and ran stalls, and an auction was held. We also welcomed Emergency Services to the event to showcase what they do and how they attract volunteers. In 2024 this event was rechristened a Harvest Festival and merged with the end of year concert. The community was invited in and we celebrated all that is great about our school, the surrounding industries and our community connections. A wonderful celebration of all of these things.

MATT STEWART
PRINCIPAL
BLYTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



WORLD LEADING GIRLS' EDUCATION EMPOWERING ALL TO ACHIEVE: MITCHAM GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Mitcham Girls High School (MGHS) is South Australia's only unzoned public secondary school dedicated exclusively to girls' education - and that distinction matters. Research shows that girls in single-sex environments are more likely to pursue leadership opportunities, engage in STEM, and achieve strong wellbeing and academic outcomes without the overt and passive gendered expectations that can otherwise limit participation.

Our commitment to developing the whole student is grounded in the Department for Education's Strategy for Public Education. At Mitcham Girls, learning is designed with the understanding that students thrive when they feel safe, connected and supported. At the same time, the school recognises the paradoxes at the heart of education. Students need security to take risks, yet real growth occurs at the edge of their comfort zones. They require support and scaffolding, but also space to test their independence. They flourish through belonging and connection yet must also develop autonomy and voice. At Mitcham Girls, these tensions, safety and stretch, support and independence, connection and autonomy, are not contradictions but complementary forces. Wellbeing is never about removing challenge, but about ensuring students have the resilience, confidence and strategies to embrace it.

The school's vision statement, 'Equity starts here. World-leading girls' education, empowering all to achieve', captures the dual priorities that guide our work. Mitcham Girls is committed both to excellence in learning outcomes, ensuring that graduates are well prepared for further study, training or employment, and to equity, recognising that students need more than strong results alone. They need a place where they feel safe, valued, and inspired to shape their futures with confidence. This commitment is lived through the school's values: Together we belong, we grow, we achieve; inspired for our futures.

Mitcham's values statement was intentionally structured, with belonging placed at the heart of the experience. From the moment students begin Year 7, they are supported to find their place and their voice. Peer Leaders walk alongside the Year 7 cohort from their first transition visit through to the end of their school year, supporting the design and delivery of LEAP (pastoral care program – Leading to Empower and Aspire Program) and providing students with opportunities for connection, challenge and growth. LEAP also continues through Years 8–12, providing a structure for students to shape their school community while engaging in critical learning



on issues including child protection, consent, friendships and resilience. Being a single-sex school enables students to examine these topics deeply, challenge misconceptions, develop empathy, and understand personal boundaries.

The school's overarching student leadership model, VISION, was designed by students for students. Unlike traditional SRC structures, VISION is structured around the school's values statement, providing authentic opportunities for students to take agency in both curriculum design and wider school issues. Beyond VISION, Mitcham Girls offers a suite of leadership pathways including House Captains, Debating Team Assistants, the Zonta Leadership Program, Raise Mentoring program, Youth Opportunities Leadership program and a range of sporting opportunities. These initiatives extend leadership well beyond the classroom and ensure students gain resilience, communication skills, and responsibility in real-world contexts.

At Mitcham Girls, staff recognise students' diverse social, emotional and academic needs, nurturing growth through a responsive curriculum that maintains high expectations with personalised support. Opportunities are created for students to learn in real-world contexts, develop agency in how they

demonstrate learning, and engage in inquiry that stretches their thinking. Strengthening the curriculum is the iconic Gift Dance program, a special entry pathway that builds belonging and allows students to extend their talents in performance and creativity within the Dance discipline. Gift Dance, offered from Year 7–12, also opens pathways into further education and careers in the arts.

STEM is another area of strength and innovation. Mitcham Girls is pioneering opportunities for girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, empowering them to pursue STEM pathways and see themselves represented in these high-demand fields. The school has partnered with Flinders University to offer guaranteed pathway entry into a range of STEM degrees, creating a powerful bridge between secondary and tertiary education. Strong links with universities, industries and community organisations give students access to industry visits, mentoring programs and hands-on projects that highlight the real-world application of STEM. This approach helps address gender equity gaps while equipping students with the confidence and capability to pursue futures in areas traditionally under-represented by women.



Achievement will always remain a central focus of the Mitcham way. While the school has a proud track record of 100% SACE completion, an average of 88% of Year 12 grades in the A and B bands, and results above state averages in NAPLAN, we know that achievement is more than grades or ATARs. Success is defined broadly at Mitcham Girls, encompassing resilience, curiosity, critical thinking and personal growth. Through a deliberate focus on wellbeing for learning, targeted teaching and a belief that every student is capable of success, Mitcham ensures learning prepares students for life within and beyond school.

Looking ahead, the MGHS Strategic Directions 2025–2029 set a clear improvement course with an emphasis on excellence in girls' education, innovative pedagogy, strengthening belonging, and striving for equity and excellence provide a roadmap for the next chapter. The focus is on deepening these initiatives so that every student not only succeeds academically, but also leaves with a strong sense of identity, purpose and possibility.

For families considering secondary schooling options, Mitcham Girls High School offers something distinctive. Here, equity is more than words on a page - it is daily practice. High expectations sit alongside support and compassion, and students develop the knowledge, skills, capabilities and dispositions for life. It is a school where belonging is felt, growth nurtured, and achievement celebrated in all its forms.

Most importantly, Mitcham Girls is a place where students discover that their voices matter, their ideas have value, and their futures are theirs to shape. As the values statement reminds us, students want to be 'inspired for their futures'. Parents, students and staff are partners in this journey, united in a shared vision of world-leading girls' education that begins in the heart of Adelaide.

ROSIE HEINICKE
PRINCIPAL
MITCHAM GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL



THE WONDERFUL BIENNIAL MATSURI DAY AT MODBURY WEST SCHOOL

My son attends Modbury West School and last week he came home with the biggest smile on his face saying "Mum I had the best day ever, I loved it so much!" It brought me so much joy, watching him express every detail of his day with so much excitement and enthusiasm.

Modbury West held a Biennial Matsuri Day, with students from Reception to year 6, immersing themselves in Japanese culture through a range of activities and the children were invited to dress up in cultural clothing. With a large range of activities throughout the day, including hula hoop janken showdown, momotarō story telling, onigiri, temaki and sushi making, Japanese bookmarks, origami kabuto, jankenpon championship, shodō, and fūrin (Japanese glass wind chimes).

It didn't stop there, at recess and lunch play time, students were given play money 'Yen' and the notes were used as currency and entry tickets to games and activities and to purchase items from stalls, which were all being run by the senior students. The activities at play time were konbini (Japanese convenience store), kimono dress-up station, kingyo/superball sukui, shuriken (ninja star) throwing and the chopsticks challenge.

My son came home with a variety of goodies, that he won from playing the games and that he purchased from the stalls, (the pokemon cards were a hit).

Continuing the play time fun, their Japanese teacher with many teachers in tow, went above and beyond as they dressed up in characters in the yard. To name a few there were Mario, Cinnamoroll, Kuromi, Pikachu and My Melody.

To finish off this amazing experience, all students watched a fabulous duet performance presented by the master Taiko drummer Toshi Sakamoto and Noriko Tadano the Shamisen artist. This offered students to experience the soul and groove of traditional Japanese music while witnessing some of the most exciting and vibrant elements of traditional Japanese culture coming to life.

What an absolutely amazing experience! I just wish I was back in primary school so I could have attended this wonderful cultural experience that Meryl Sensei and all the teachers at Modbury West School offered to each student that attends.

What a lovely community they have, fantastic to see and hear that everyone was involved. Thank you from one truly grateful parent of the Modbury West School community.

HANNA CHAHOUD
A TRULY GRATEFUL PARENT
MODBURY WEST SCHOOL



IT TAKES A TEAM: EVERYONE PLAYS A PART IN MAKING PUBLIC SCHOOLS GREAT

Walk through the gates of any public school and you'll find more than classrooms and ovals—you'll find a community. Public schools are places where children discover passions, build resilience, and learn to navigate a complex world. They're also where remarkable stories unfold every single day—stories of growth, innovation, and community spirit.

At the heart of these stories are school staff and students. School staff dedicate themselves not just to academic learning but to the wellbeing of the whole young person. They create safe, welcoming spaces where young people can take risks, make mistakes, and grow stronger for it. But the magic of public schools doesn't come from teachers alone. It takes a team—parents, carers, support staff, school leaders, and the wider community—all playing their part in helping students thrive.

When we celebrate these stories, we shine a light on more than individual success. We strengthen the foundation of our communities. Because public education is about more than test scores—it's about growing futures, **together**.

Commitment to Partnership

Every parent knows teachers go far beyond delivering lessons. They notice when a student is struggling, they cheer on the small wins, and they walk beside families during the tough times. Their commitment to young people's wellbeing builds the trust and connection that makes real learning possible.

Importantly, schools want families to be part of that journey too. Partnership means being there not only for the good news but also when questions or worries arise. Parents and carers should feel comfortable reaching out when something doesn't make sense or when they're unsure about what's happening. Together, schools and families can provide the encouragement and guidance young people need as they grow into their best selves.

This commitment to partnership sits at the centre of the South Australian Secondary Principals Association's (SASPA) campaign to strengthen the ties between schools, families, and the wider community. SASPA is highlighting the ways public education thrives when everyone works together—and how that collaboration helps young people flourish.

A Complex World for Young People

Today's children and teenagers are growing up in a world that

offers incredible opportunities but also plenty of challenges. They are learning in a digital landscape filled with constant information, shifting expectations, and global issues that weren't as visible in previous generations. They're figuring out who they are while navigating new pressures and, like all of us, sometimes stumbling and starting again.

That's why the team around them matters more than ever. Families, school staff, and community groups all play a vital role in guiding them through these ups and downs. Working together, we can help build resilience, nurture curiosity, and create futures full of promise.

Stories of Success and Collaboration

Every day in public schools there are stories that show what's possible when communities pull together. Here are just three.

1. Students finding their voice in democracy

The recent lowering of public transport fares for students was the result of young people engaging in democratic processes—speaking up, debating respectfully, and putting forward their views. These skills are nurtured in classrooms and strengthened through opportunities offered by community leaders. Schools plant the seed, but it's the broader community that helps those voices be heard.

“Public education is not just a pathway to opportunity — in many cases, it's a lifeline. It supports the wellbeing of young people and helps them find safety, stability, and hope. We need to work together to ensure public education is valued by all, which in turn will provide the best environment for our youth.

JOSEPHINE JUDGE-RIGNEY
ASETO



“I love teaching at a public school because I believe that learning should be for everyone. That’s what public education is all about.”

Mordecai

Teacher
Thebarton Senior College



2. Overcoming barriers and leading change

Youth advocate and musician Antony Abbracciavento, who lives with visual impairment, turned his challenges into opportunities to drive inclusive change. Through leadership with the Marion Youth Collective Committee, he created Beyond Site, raising funds for Guide Dogs SA and training young leaders. His teachers, family, and community supported him every step of the way. Antony’s story shows how schools connected with families and communities can help young people not only succeed but also make a difference.

3. Racing to the world stage

At Charles Campbell College, Team Fusion Racing proved what teamwork can achieve. After winning the 2025 STEM Racing National Championships, at the time of writing, they are representing Australia at the world finals in Singapore. Their success depended on teachers mentoring, families supporting logistics, and community fundraising. The collective effort giving students world-class experiences and skills that will carry them into the future.

Strong Schools, Strong Communities

Public schools are more than places of learning; they are cornerstones of thriving communities. They bring people together around a shared purpose—the growth and wellbeing of young people.

That’s why SASPA’s campaign is so important. By promoting strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities, SASPA is helping ensure public education continues to be a source of pride across South Australia.

It’s also why sharing positive stories matters. Whether it’s students shaping policy, overcoming barriers, or achieving recognition on an international stage, these moments belong to all of us.

When parents and families amplify these stories—by resharing posts, telling their own experiences, or celebrating student success—we strengthen the reputation of public schools and remind everyone that incredible things are happening every single day.

How Families Can Play Their Part

Families are essential members of the team that make public schools thrive. Here are some simple, practical ways parents can contribute:

- **Partner with teachers:** Share your pride but also reach out when you’re unsure or worried. Open communication helps everyone work together in your child’s best interest.
- **Celebrate the small wins:** From a kind gesture to a great project, everyday moments matter just as much as the big achievements.
- **Support opportunities:** Encourage your child to try new programs, attend events, and take part in experiences that stretch them.
- **Spread the word:** Reshare school stories, tell your own, and highlight the positive impact of public education.

Growing Futures, Together

Public education is about growing futures—futures filled with possibility, resilience, and hope. But this work doesn’t happen in isolation. It takes a team: school staff who give their all, families who offer love and encouragement, and communities who create opportunities for students to shine.

Every time we celebrate a school story, show up for an event, or lend our voice to support public education, we strengthen that team. And when the team is strong, so are our schools, our communities, and our children’s futures.

That’s the message at the heart of SASPA’s campaign: schools are at their best when they are deeply connected with families and communities.

So, let’s celebrate public schools together. Share the stories you see, reshare the ones we tell, and add your own. Because when it comes to making schools great places for students to learn and grow, every one of us has a part to play.

KIRSTY AMOS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY PRINCIPALS’ ASSOCIATION

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

The South Australian Department for Education (the department) is committed to strengthening safe and inclusive environments, where all children and young people and their school communities can learn and thrive. Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) is integral to this effort.

Effective RRE requires a whole-school approach which includes classroom learning and extends to the school's culture, policies, and procedures, while fostering inclusivity within the school community. RRE addresses the drivers of gender-based violence, and the rise in misogynistic and sexist ideas, attitudes and behaviours.

RRE addresses all relationships within a school community, including between classmates, friends, students and teachers, and school staff.

Enhancing practice through Commonwealth support

The Commonwealth's Consent and Respectful Relationships Education measure (2024-2028) – www.education.gov.au/schooling/consent-and-respectful-relationships-education-crre – supports schools to strengthen the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based education to prevent gender-based violence and promote healthy relationships. This aligns with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 – www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-end-gender-based-violence – and recommendations from key national inquiries.

The department will develop resources for students, staff and parents, and schools will be supported to implement a whole-school approach to gender equality, with specific advice on promoting positive relationships and healthy masculinities, and challenging harmful stereotypes.



Respectful Relationships Education Student Forum, Adelaide Oval, June 2025

Consultation

The department recognises students, staff, and parent communities as key stakeholders in preventing gender-based violence, and the need for their voices to be heard. The project began by engaging with students, staff and school communities to understand their needs and perspectives, and the RRE team held 29 in-school consultations in metropolitan and regional schools.

From initial consultation, students said that they:

- want to see themselves in respectful relationships education, acknowledging their different experiences in relationships and promoting healthy outcomes
- would like more education about how to identify and respond to disrespect and 'red flags' before something goes wrong
- want to learn more about respect, and learn it younger, including about manipulation, gaslighting and racism
- want more in-depth lessons about understanding gender stereotypes and how they can be unhelpful
- value diversity in their education and want to learn more about different cultures and identities
- would like more opportunities to embrace the local community, including learning about local Aboriginal relationships with land and culture.

Building on what we heard during initial consultation, over 470 students attended metro forums in Adelaide and a regional forum in Millicent, to explore the unique needs of their school communities and start co-designing resources (figures 1 to 4).

Student voices on respect

"I think we need to support boys to notice and call out sexist and disrespectful behaviour from their mates when they see it. It will be more effective if mates call out behaviour of other mates than other adults"

Year 12 male student

"Learning about respectful relationships at a young age is something that is really good and helpful for people, especially since if you learn it while you're still young then you can always take these things into the future"

Year 10 female student

"I think teaching them [students] what it means to other students"

when they are respectful and how it impacts a student's wellbeing and how they feel during the day is what we can do to make students be more respectful"

Year 5 female student

Curriculum connections

The respectful relationships curriculum connection of the Australian Curriculum highlights RRE across learning areas, and through the general capabilities, and also supports implementation of the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum. Students will learn to:

- recognise respect and practise respect
- develop personal and social skills
- recognise how gender norms and stereotypes can influence choices and actions
- take action to create equal and respectful communities.

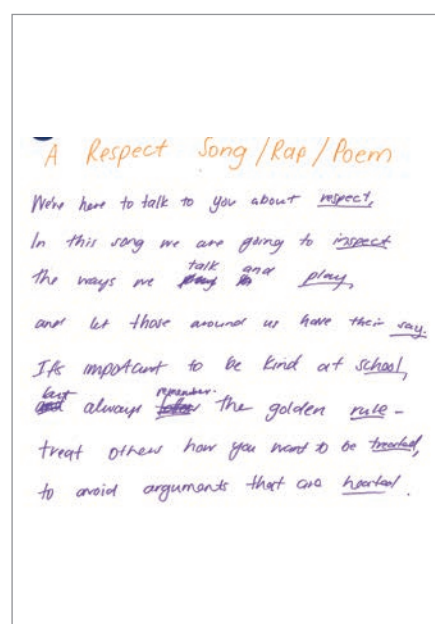
For early years educators, respectful relationships are embedded through the Early Years Learning Framework – www.acecqa.gov.au/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework – and preschools and schools are supported through the Reflect Respect Relate resource for critical reflection of their practice.

The initiative is also looking at opportunities to reinforce RRE within the senior secondary curriculum (year 10 to 12 students) – www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/curriculum-and-learning/primary-and-secondary/curriculum-year-10-12-students. For example, staff may embed site-based initiatives, workshops, seminars, student-led projects, or utilise homegroup or pastoral care, for developmentally and age-appropriate links to RRE.

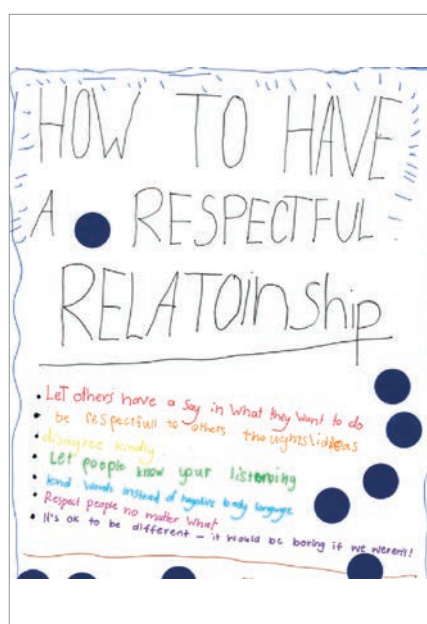
Next steps

The department will continue to consult with students, schools, and parents as we develop, test, and refine professional learning and resources. This is not a new curriculum – rather it will enhance teacher and leader confidence, support a whole-school approach to RRE, and provide families with tools to keep the conversations going at home. Your feedback plays a vital role in shaping and enhancing resources to better support parents and carers.

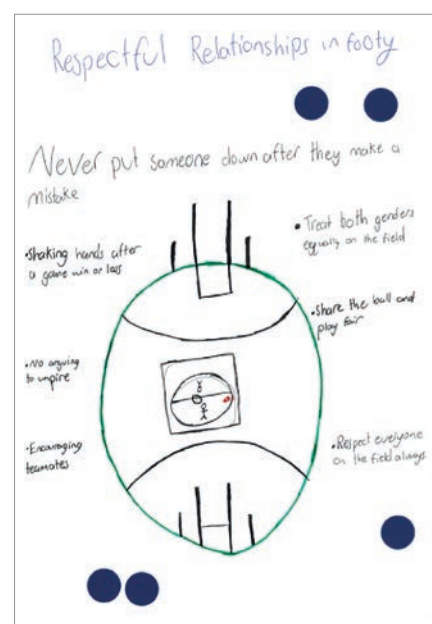
Please scan the QR code to provide feedback to the RRE team.



Co-designed song promoting respect



Co-designed poster for primary schools



Co-designed poster describing respectful behaviour for a football club.

BREWING SUCCESS: WOODVILLE HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-LED COFFEE SHOP EXPANDS IN 2025

In an exciting milestone for Woodville High School, 2025 marks the expansion of our first-ever student-led entrepreneurial coffee shop, proudly operated by our Year 10 students. This initiative is more than just a place to enjoy a freshly brewed coffee; it is a vibrant learning hub where innovation, creativity, and hands-on experience come together to prepare students for the future.

Nestled in the heart of our Woodville community, the coffee shop reflects the passion and dedication of our students. It has been co-designed with them at every stage, from initial planning to daily operation, giving them ownership over their learning and empowering them to see the direct relevance of their studies in a real-world context.

From Classroom to Café: A Real-World Learning Experience

The coffee shop project has transformed traditional learning by breaking down subject silos and offering students a unique chance to engage in applied, project-based education. Over the past year, our Year 10 students have worked collaboratively to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will serve them well beyond school, whether in further education, training, or employment.



Students have gained first-hand experience in:

- **Financial Literacy:** Creating business plans, analysing costings for start-up, and understanding profit margins
- **Budgeting:** Managing cashflow and estimating profitability to ensure sustainable operations
- **Business Establishment:** Exploring structures such as sole traders, partnerships, companies, and trusts
- **Communication Skills:** Learning to interact confidently and professionally with customers and colleagues
- **Barista Skills:** Mastering the art of making quality coffee and understanding the science behind flavour and texture
- **Marketing and Promotion:** Designing logos, crafting a mission and vision statement, and planning business growth with new products
- **Human Resources (HR):** Creating rosters, assigning personnel roles, and managing responsibilities effectively
- **Understanding the Science of Coffee:** Investigating the journey from bean to cup, sustainability practices, and quality control.

This hands-on approach allows students to develop transferable skills such as critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving, while building confidence in applying theoretical knowledge to practical tasks.



Community and Industry Partnerships

The success of this initiative would not be possible without the generous support of our community and industry partners. Woodville High School has proudly collaborated with:

- PAA Group – providing financial literacy mentoring and guidance on start-up planning.
- Cirelli Coffee Roasting – offering high-quality coffee beans and barista training.
- 4Art Design Company – assisting students in creating professional branding and promotional materials.
- MilkLAB – supplying premium milk alternatives and supporting sustainable beverage options.
- Gallipo Foods – contributing products and insights into food supply and distribution.

These partnerships have allowed students to gain real-world industry insights and build connections that could lead to future career pathways.

Beyond Coffee: Building Future-Ready Skills

While the aroma of freshly brewed coffee is a highlight of the project, the deeper impact lies in the life skills and employability attributes students are developing. By running every aspect of the business, students are learning about workplace health and safety (WHS) requirements, start-up costs, capital expenditure, and the licensing processes required to operate a food and beverage venture.

This immersive experience also helps students:

- Increase their participation and connection within the school community.
- Understand the realities of managing a small business, from budgeting to customer service.
- Develop resilience and adaptability when responding to challenges.
- Recognise the value of collaboration and shared responsibility.
- See tangible links between their curriculum and future career opportunities.

A Co-Designed Curriculum in Action

One of the most significant outcomes of the coffee shop is how it exemplifies co-designed curriculum planning. Students are not just passive recipients of learning; they are

active contributors, shaping their learning environment and outcomes. This approach fosters a sense of ownership, pride, and achievement that is evident in the enthusiasm they bring to the project.

The coffee shop also provides a platform for students to think critically and creatively, working together to solve real business challenges and innovate new ideas, whether it's introducing seasonal menu items or marketing campaigns to engage the school community.

Looking Ahead

The coffee shop will continue to operate throughout the school year, serving as a gathering point for students, staff, and community members. As the program evolves, future cohorts will have the opportunity to expand on this foundation, introduce new products, and further refine the business model. This ensures the project remains dynamic, sustainable, and responsive to both student learning needs and community interests.

The launch of the Woodville High School coffee shop is a proud moment for our school, a shining example of what can be achieved when students are empowered to learn by doing, supported by dedicated staff and strong community partnerships. It is more than a coffee shop; it is a symbol of the entrepreneurial spirit thriving at Woodville High School.

DANIELA PITEO

**SENIOR LEADER OF THE SENIOR YEARS AND THE SACE
WOODVILLE HIGH SCHOOL**



MINDFUL MENTORS: CONNECTING ABORIGINAL STUDENTS WITH HEALTHCARE, COMMUNITY, AND OPPORTUNITY

Since 2021, Alberton Primary School and Calvary hospitals have shared a strong partnership through the development of a unique program tailored to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls with meaningful opportunities to engage with Calvary health care professionals and volunteers.

The Mindful Mentors program emerged from the collaboration between Calvary's Mission Integration Coordinator Belinda Chapman, Alberton Primary's Wellbeing Leader Christine Vlass, and Alberton Primary School Principal Dan Jarrad. Having previously worked together on a project at Elizabeth Grove Primary School, Belinda, Christine and Dan were inspired to reimagine an existing Calvary mentoring initiative. Their renewed focus was to support Indigenous students as part of Calvary's National Reconciliation Action Plan.

Sharing a passion for meditation and driven by the desire to support wellbeing, Belinda and Christine explored a range of strategies to encourage both staff and student wellbeing in educational and healthcare contexts. Together, they laid the foundation for Mindful Mentors, centring on mindfulness and gratitude practices.

Christine organised weekly catch-up sessions with 12 Aboriginal students at Alberton Primary, focusing on mindfulness and gratitude, while Belinda prepared an Executive Proposal. This

ultimately led to the program's launch, marked by a student-led mindfulness session involving Alberton Primary students and Calvary's executive and management teams. The event was a resounding success, paving the way for the creation of a sustainable and effective ongoing program. The goal: to enhance learning opportunities and outline career pathways in healthcare for Indigenous students.

Over the past five years, Mindful Mentors has enabled Calvary staff to build lasting connections with Alberton Primary students, welcoming them into the Calvary family through shared sessions each term. Students participate in experiences across various Calvary departments, such as Allied Health, Aged Care, and Volunteer Services. Mentors from these areas run reciprocal sessions with the girls as part of site visits.

A key strength of the program is the way Calvary staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students connect, sharing culture and embedding mindfulness and gratitude into everyday practice. Both groups learn from each other, with staff often adopting new wellbeing practices introduced by students. Dan Jarrad, Principal of Alberton Primary School, and Christine accepted an invitation to present to Regional Executive and Managers at a Reconciliation Breakfast held at Calvary North Adelaide Hospital to highlight the importance of the program.



The ongoing support of Dan has been instrumental to the program's growth over the following years.

Mindful Mentors has made a tangible difference in the educational experience of Aboriginal students at Alberton Primary, but its influence extends even further—fostering broader community engagement and shifting practice in significant ways. The program's innovative blend of mindfulness, gratitude, and Aboriginal education within healthcare settings has positively impacted both Calvary hospitals' operations and patient care. Staff report improvements in their own wellbeing and a deeper respect for Aboriginal cultural values. The mentoring sessions foster a culture of inclusivity, encouraging greater understanding of First Nations perspectives among Calvary staff.

Feedback from all involved has been overwhelmingly positive. Practices such as 'butterfly breathing', taught by the students, are now routinely used by hospital staff to manage stress. As one Calvary staff member reflected: *Thank you to everyone for making me stop and take a breath. I will do my butterfly breathing every day and share with my staff what I have learned – We must look after ourselves so we can look after others.*

This cross-pollination of ideas between education and healthcare highlights the transformative power of breaking down barriers to achieve sustainable, meaningful change.

In a recent Mindful Mentors session at Calvary Adelaide Hospital, with over 50 staff and volunteers in attendance, Alberton Primary students prepared a range of foods—including damper, biscuits, and tea using traditional native ingredients. The food became a focal point for the guided meditation designed by the girls. Guided by Sam Anderson, the current Alberton Primary Student Wellbeing and Engagement Leader, the girls recorded the meditation in advance, enabling them to fully participate in the mindfulness practice alongside Calvary staff on the day.

The reciprocal nature of Mindful Mentors shines through in many aspects, such as the students' ongoing partnership with local business 'Brewed by Belinda' to create and market a 'Mindful Mentor' herbal tea blend. Other community service projects, like the Sewing for Charity initiative which has donated hand knitted teddy bears for the students every year,

and the annual Calvary Christmas Care Packs, have allowed the girls to deepen their connection with the local community and experience the personal rewards of giving back.

Recently, Indigenous Maternity Mentoring sessions at Calvary North Adelaide Hospital have further expanded the breadth of healthcare experiences available to current Mindful Mentors.

Looking ahead, it is exciting to imagine how the program will evolve as more schools adopt this model. The efforts of the Mindful Mentors at Alberton Primary have set a new benchmark for how educational programs can actively engage diverse stakeholders, enriching learning and extending their impact far beyond the classroom.

SAM ANDERSON
STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT LEADER
ALBERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



THE BRIDGEY RETREAT: INCLUSION, RESPECT, AND WELLBEING AT BRIDGEWATER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Do you remember being a school kid, waiting for the bell to ring so you could burst out of the classroom and dive into recess or lunch play? For many students, that moment is exciting and they love the playground being flooded with the energetic sounds of children laughing, chatting, and balls bouncing.

But what about those children who experience playtime differently? What about the ones who find it overwhelming, struggle to join a game, or are navigating one of friendship's lows? For these students, playtime can feel daunting. How do we support them? How do we make school a space where every child feels included and safe?

At Bridgewater Primary School, students asked these questions—and importantly, staff listened to the answers from our own students. The kids were inspired to create The Bridgey Retreat.

In education, we often hear about “Student Voice,” which is the idea of empowering children to shape their learning experience and environment. While it sounds straightforward, truly acting on students’ ideas requires commitment, bravery, and resources. At Bridgewater Primary School, authentic student voice is embedded in our approach.

Our Student Parliament, which won the 2022 Governor’s Civics Award for its powerful work, gives students genuine

decision-making power. It was through this forum that the idea for The Bridgey Retreat was born. Once the idea took shape, the hard work began.

In one standout moment, a Student Prime Minister candidate ran her election campaign on a promise to create a safe, cosy, and quiet place in the schoolyard for students who needed it. Her message struck a chord. She was elected in a landslide—with 70% of first-preference votes—the largest margin in the 12-year history of Student Parliament at BPS. Students and staff were united in support of the initiative. Wellbeing and Engagement Collection (WEC) data showed social bullying was correlated with lower wellbeing for students. Bridgewater Primary School wanted to address this through a positive, preventive approach.

Inside classrooms, we already had retreat spaces where students could self-regulate. The Bridgey Retreat extended this idea to the playground—a calming outdoor space where social behaviours could be modelled, taught, and supported by staff.

Crucially, the school received \$12,450 in funding through the 2024 Safe Spaces initiative, tied to ‘Bullying No Way: National week of action’. These funds were used to transform the amphitheatre into a functional, year-round space by adding sheltered seating.



To make the retreat a success, teachers volunteered to add an extra yard duty to supervise the area. Their role is not just about overseeing behaviour—it's to model positive social engagement and support students in building connections. At first, attendance was slow. But numbers grew steadily as students recognised The Bridgey Retreat as a safe, inviting space. Children came to relax, recharge, and even forge new friendships. Today, it's a go-to destination during playtime.

The retreat has even helped transform how we respond to poor behaviour. Instead of detention or punitive measures, students experiencing unregulated moments are encouraged to join The Bridgey Retreat. Here, they engage in structured, positive interactions with other children, supported by a teacher's guidance. These interactions often lead to better social skills, restored peer relationships, and improved behaviour choices.

This approach has been so effective that very few children are now referred to the retreat for misbehaviour. In fact, many who do are quick to seize the opportunity to reset emotionally and socially before independently rejoining their peers.

Buoyed by the success of The Bridgey Retreat, students proposed a second outdoor seating area for calm play and quiet socialising. This "calm zone" wasn't just a wish—it materialised thanks to the trust and ownership students now feel in shaping their environment. This space doesn't require direct supervision and is popular with students who enjoy activities like reading, drawing, playing Dungeons and Dragons.



Perhaps more importantly, staff have gained deeper insights into students' needs through candid conversations in these retreat spaces. While loneliness might seem like the primary reason children visit the retreat, many shared that they simply enjoy having a place to unwind in peace before returning to their busy classrooms.

You know an initiative is making a difference when teachers line up for extra yard duty! Staff report that supporting students at The Bridgey Retreat is not only rewarding but also fun. Families, too, are noticing a ripple effect, with some saying it has inspired more family time spent playing games together or having conversations around the dinner table.

The success of The Bridgey Retreat proves what can happen when student voice shapes solutions. Everyone benefits—especially the children who need it most.

By listening to and acting on students' ideas, Bridgewater Primary School has built something special: a legacy of inclusion, respect, and wellbeing.

JONAH HAINES
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
BRIDGEWATER PRIMARY SCHOOL

PHOTO CREDITS: HEIDI WHO WWW.HEIDIWHO.COM



LEARNING TO LEARN – LEARNING FOR LIFE AT ROBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

This year, Robe Primary School proudly launched *Learning to Learn – Learning for Life*, a whole-school focus designed to shift our attention from teaching to learning — and from teachers' learning to students' learning.

Our goal is to deepen our collective understanding of *how we learn*. We want the legacy we leave for our students to be one of resilience, curiosity, resourcefulness and agency — empowering them to be active, engaged participants in their future at school, at home, and within the wider community.

To support this vision, we've introduced students to three key constructs that are helping us build a *collective and shared language for learning*:

- The Engagement Continuum
- The Learning Pit
- Brain Science and Regulation (through our 'Ready to Learn' plans)

Together, these ideas are helping both teachers and students understand what it means to be an effective learner.

The Engagement Continuum encourages students to recognise the different states of engagement and how being positively engaged in classroom activities can make a real difference. By developing vocabulary around engagement, students are learning to take greater ownership of their learning and to actively drive their own progress.

The Learning Pit helps learners understand that challenge is an essential part of growth. It encourages persistence, reflection, and the development of problem-solving strategies — helping students become more comfortable when learning feels difficult.

Brain Science and Regulation helps students understand how different parts of the brain affect learning and emotions:

- The Amygdala is our 'survival brain,' detecting potential threats and controlling our stress responses (fight, flight, freeze, flop/drop, or fawn).
- The Hippocampus supports memory and connects past experiences with current reactions.
- The Prefrontal Cortex, often called the 'thinking brain,' manages higher-order thinking, planning, and decision-making — and continues to develop well into adulthood.

By learning how their brains work, students are developing practical strategies for emotional regulation and focus — essential skills for learning and wellbeing.

Our early results are already showing positive shifts in key areas of our Wellbeing and Engagement data:

- Academic self-concept: 85% (2024) → 92% (2025)
- Perseverance: 84% (2024) → 87% (2025)
- Wellbeing literacy: 62% (2024) → 65% (2025)

These improvements reflect the growing confidence and engagement of our learners as they take an increasingly active role in understanding themselves as learners.

At Robe Primary School, *Learning to Learn – Learning for Life* is more than a theme — it is our legacy - our passionate commitment to helping every child become a lifelong learner.

ANNE GRAYSON
PRINCIPAL
ROBE PRIMARY SCHOOL



EDUCATION STANDARDS BOARD – SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S INDEPENDENT REGULATOR FOR SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

The Education Standards Board (ESB) is South Australia's independent regulatory authority responsible for the registration and regulation of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services and all primary and secondary schools within South Australia.

Our vision is that all children and young people have access to high quality education and care and in safe, well-governed and well-managed services. Our regulatory activity ensures a high standard of competence and conduct by education and care service providers.

As the Chief Executive and Registrar of the Education Standards Board I am excited by the opportunity to lead a regulator that can make a meaningful and positive impact across South Australia's education and care sector. Since commencing in April 2025, I've had the privilege of witnessing the breadth of excellent work being carried out across our diverse sector. I've also gained a deeper appreciation for the challenges faced and the unwavering commitment of the many organisations and individuals who support children and families throughout our state.

ECEC Services

ECEC services are regulated under the National Quality Framework (NQF) – www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide. The framework incorporates the National Law and Regulations and National Quality Standards (NQS) which services are assessed against.

The ESB is responsible for monitoring compliance with legislative requirements to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children. This includes proactive monitoring against regulatory priorities, and reactive visits to services in response to complaints or notifications of serious incidents. The ESB may choose to issue statutory actions such as compliance notices, or emergency action notices against services who are in breach of the National Law and Regulations. Details about current compliance action against services are outlined on the ESB website – www.esb.sa.gov.au/early-childhood/compliance-and-enforcement/current-compliance-action.

Assessment and Rating visits are completed periodically by the ESB to all ECEC services in South Australia, with the exception of residual services. These services are still regulated but have certain exemptions. All other services are provided a rating for the seven quality areas of the NQS and provided an overall rating based on these results. Parents can check their centre's compliance data, service ratings, and safety insights on the Starting Blocks website – www.startingblocks.gov.au.

Applications for provider approvals, service approvals and amendments are reviewed and approved by the ESB. This ensures

new services or changes to service provision meet the required standards and are fit for purpose.

Schools

All government, catholic and independent schools providing primary and secondary education to domestic and international students are regulated by the ESB.

The ESB uses the Standards for Registration and Review of Registration of School in South Australia (The Standards) (www.esb.sa.gov.au/advice-and-guidance/standards-registration-and-review-registration-schools-south-australia) to assess applications for new schools, changes and reviews of registration. This extends to CRICOS registered (Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students) schools where ESB is the designated state authority to recommend registration, renewal and ongoing monitoring of compliance under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 – www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00757/2017-09-15/text.

Registered schools demonstrate their compliance through reviews of registration. The ESB ensures all school registrations are reviewed in accordance with the Standards for Registration and Review of Registration of Schools in South Australia.

Recent funding

In August, the State Government announced the release of \$20.9 million to the ESB over five years, along with an immediate \$900,000 boost. This funding will allow the ESB to increase assessment and rating visits and further expand compliance monitoring activities to raise the standards of services across the state.

When to contact the ESB

We encourage staff, families, and members of the public to report any concerns or complaints about ECEC services through our website – www.esb.sa.gov.au/early-childhood/families-and-educators, via phone 1800 882 413 or email at educationstandardsboard@sa.gov.au.

School based complaints should be directed to the school in the first instance. For more information, or to progress a complaint to the ESB visit – www.esb.sa.gov.au/schools/complaint-about-school.

For more information, latest news and updates, visit the ESB's website – www.esb.sa.gov.au.

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