

SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: 11/8/2019

School number: 0920

School name: Coober Pedy Area Sschool

At Coober Pedy Area School we value staff, parents and students working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young people in our care.

We aim to develop engaged, resilient learners, committed to life long learning.

Our values are:

Respect Responsibility Resilience

and support our motto: *Coober kids can.*

Coober Pedy Area School is a complex and unique school in the outback of South Australia. It incorporates a preschool. Our students represent 49 different cultures, with 60% being Aboriginal students from various language groups.

1. General information

- School Principal name: Karen Cornelius – New principal in 2020
- Year of opening: 1960
- Postal Address: PO Box 353 Coober Pedy 5723
- Location Address: 17 Paxton Road Coober Pedy 5723
- DECD Partnership: Far North
- Geographical location – 856 kms road distance from GPO
- Telephone number: 0886725077
- Fax Number: 0886725738
- School website address: www.cooberpedy.sa.edu.au
- School e-mail address: info@cooberpedy.sa.edu.au
- Pre School attached: Yes
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service: After school program available
- February FTE student enrolment: 240 with Preschool numbers

Aboriginal student enrolment as at February was 129. School card holders are at 68%. Students from ESL or non-English speaking background make more than 50% of our student population.

Student enrolment trends:

Enrolments are gradually declining, with transience accounting for the variations. Some mining companies are expanding in the area and as a result we are hopeful of a gradual increase in enrolments over the next few years.

Staffing numbers (as at February census):

New – Principal

• Leadership Team

Deputy Principal: Michael Beelitz

Senior Leader, Student Wellbeing: Matt Key

Senior Leader, Intervention: Jackie Williams

Senior Leader, Senior Secondary: Dan Bird

Senior Leader, Aboriginal Education: Catherine Burns

Senior Leader, Early Years: Elyse Kowald

Business Manager: Natalie Beelitz

• Teachers

Preschool: 1 Teacher

Primary School R-6: 7 Teachers

Whole School: P-12: 4 Teachers

Senior School 7-12: 8 Teachers

P -12: 1.0 Librarian

• Support and Ancillary Staff

330 hours of support salaries are paid per week. This is a mixture of DfE allocated hours paid for Literacy and Numeracy, Behaviour Management and Special Needs, as well as for the preschool.

We also receive funding for a Community Library SSO and a part time Outreach Officer.

Coober Pedy Area School has 2 permanent Aboriginal Education Community Officers (ACEOs) who work 35 hours each per week.

• Public transport access:

There is none.

The school provides a bus service as a strategy to support attendance at school. We are also host to the Remote Schools Attendance Strategy (RSAS) who also run school buses to ensure everyone can access school.

A bus and plane service operates between Coober Pedy and Adelaide. (Rex Airlines operates daily and the Greyhound bus service also operates daily).

- **Special site arrangements:**

The school has a new hospitality based Outback Trade Training Academy and has a new 40 place preschool (currently funded for 30).

SAASTA (South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy) is a strategy to support indigenous youth and their attendance at senior secondary level. We host the Far North Academy.

There is an annual Year 10 outdoor ed and work experience camps.

The school is brokering partnerships with various mining companies and employment training companies to support our youth in their training and job seeking in the local area. We currently have 10 students in school based apprenticeships. Our community partners also provide significant scholarships for Year 8 to 12 students.

We focus on two main pathways – post school study, for those on an academic track and alternative pathways for those interested in trades, pathways to work or other options.

2. Students (and their welfare)

- **General characteristics**

Approximately 145 of our students are Aboriginal, 140 have been approved as School Cardholders. Students within the school can speak approximately 20 European and Aboriginal languages. The school has over the years has been described as multicultural with many students being of Aboriginal (Antikirinya+), European and Asian descent.

- **Student Well-Being Programs**

Building school culture and a sense of community is a high priority.

- Use the first week of each semester to make our school values explicit, unpack a 'successful classroom', 'successful student' and 'successful teacher', create a class motto, set up class meetings etc. so that we have the tools to teach the behaviour and social skills needed for learning.
- Consistently use common language and concepts e.g. Emotional Bank Accounts, emotional thermometers, catastrophe scale, anger management and conflict resolution in the curriculum for all students.
- Whole school Anti-Harassment Training including a focus week annually – reviewed and coordinated annually by the Student Wellbeing leader with staff.
- Peer support program – students will be invited to be part of a Friendly Desk for yard support and resources for classroom use will also be available – resources and support provided by the Student Wellbeing leader.

We recognise and reinforce positive behaviours:

- Provide regular and explicit feedback and acknowledgement of students' efforts and behaviours.
- Share good news, contact families by phone or in person with good news and provide positive feedback regularly. Making a phone call about successful behaviour in class time sends a powerful positive message to the whole class.

- Success Lunch - to welcome new students and celebrate student success. One lunch per week. The leadership team will eat their lunch with students. Certificates will be provided by the Leadership Team.

We empower students and use their voice in learning by:

- Building student involvement in Citizenship projects and real participation in the decision-making about a range of school projects/issues and to co-design their learning.
- Involving students in democratic processes and student voice by providing regular opportunities and teaching the skills required to be effective e.g. negotiation, meeting skills, planning, formative assessment and feedback.
- Using Buddy Learning– programs such as GO-Reading, cross-age tutoring, Buddy Classes etc.

The Stride Foundation, also provides opportunity for students to work in media and drama and engage in dance and art programs.

Since 2011 Dusty FM has included students SACE / VET units of work in radio, as well as electives for the middle school.

- **Engagement and Inclusion:**

Our behaviour policy says:

Learning occurs best when students experience a safe, supportive environment in which they have a degree of control over their learning and are treated with respect and understanding.

As educators, it is our role to provide safe learning environments and positive proactive approaches to teaching, whereby students learn appropriate school behaviours and increase their social, emotional and academic skills and understandings.

This requires us to work in partnership with our colleagues, students and families and to take responsibility to respond to, develop and support students learning, behaviour and social skills.

Quality classroom teaching and effective pedagogy underpins effective behaviour processes.

As such, our policy is underpinned by:

- Building mutual respect and positive relationships with learners, with staff doing their utmost to convey to each student the message, *“I see you and you matter to me”*.
- Fresh start – each day is a new opportunity to start on a positive footing.
- Providing clear expectations, known responses and a SUCCESS orientation in classes.
- Developing students’ “interoception” skills to recognise and manage their emotions proactively.
- Using explicit, descriptive, positive language with students and reinforcing positive behaviours.
- Enacting common understandings, processes and values to manage behaviour with a focus on RESTORATIVE JUSTICE to restore, correct and educate students.

And is based on three levels of response:

LEVEL 1: Whole school, proactive, culture building initiatives and strategies in both classrooms and in the yard.

LEVEL 2: Positive and prompt responses, by the adult in charge at the time, to model and maintain learning behaviours. Being “Ready to Learn” is our mantra.

LEVEL 3: Responses to extreme and/or violent behaviours that require assistance from outside the immediate learning environment and may include members of the community or other agencies.

3. Key School Policies

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

The school's improvement plans, annual review outcomes and Annual Reports are available on the school's website. For 2020 the school's priorities are:

Literacy: Ensure that every student at Coober Pedy learns to read.

Numeracy: Adopting the Natural Maths approach to numeracy R-8

Behaviour and Culture: Our Engagement and Inclusion policy is on the school website and we are working with Positive Partnerships in 2019 to build stronger community engagement and inclusive pedagogy.

4. Curriculum

- **Subject offerings:**

The Australian Curriculum achievement standards underpin our two main pathways. The curriculum subjects of English, Mathematics, Science are core across the school and all other learning is taught with multidisciplinary, integrated, inquiry-based, project-based approaches, focused on the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities.

We have:

- an Innovation Studio to support STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) learning.
- primary and secondary intervention spaces for literacy and numeracy support.
- an Interoception Room to support classroom interoception programs and build self-management skills, executive function and self-regulation.
- an Alternative Learning Program funded by the Federal Government and including the support of an intervention officer.

- **Open Access/Distance Education provision:**

The school offers open access education at Secondary level, particularly Senior Secondary. The school has excellent Distant Education Technology to support this, including Video Conferencing.

- **Special needs:**

It is the responsibility of classroom teachers to plan and program for all students under their care. Students with special needs are identified and assessed, and reports guide teacher practice. A One Plan is written and reviewed regularly to meet those needs. This is coordinated by the Senior Leader, Intervention, and supported by SSOs as described above.

- **Teaching methodology:**

The school has a clear performance management policy that outlines support for teacher learning and development and relationships with senior leaders to extend and develop practice.

The Teaching and Learning Framework is central to our practice, and in 2019 we have a specific focus on inquiry/STEM/project based learning approaches.

Literacy and numeracy agreements guide practice across R-12 and R-10 respectively, supporting common research based practices in all classrooms.

There is opportunity for team teaching and specialist teaching. Secondary teachers also support Primary classes using their specialist secondary skills.

- **Student Assessment Procedures and Reporting**

In 2018, the whole staff undertook an online Formative Assessment course, focused on building student voice in assessment and working toward common practices.

Parent interviews occur in terms 1 and 3. Written reports occur in terms 2 and 4. Parents have an opportunity as a result of the written reports to talk to teachers about their children's results.

In 2020 student led interviews will be reintroduced.

There is also an understanding that parents can contact teachers at any time of the school year to talk about their child's progress at school.

Teachers are expected to take a 'no surprises' approach to reporting and will begin the year meeting parents to hear their hopes, concerns and goals for their child.

ILPs are developed and reviewed each year for all Aboriginal students. ACEOs support parents and teachers to manage this process.

Where students are having challenges with being 'ready to learn', teachers will develop support plans with parents (and senior leaders), outlining the proactive practices (including interoception) that will help students learn the key social, emotional and behaviour skills necessary to succeed.

5. Sporting Activities

A Governing Council sub-committee manages a range of grant applications to ensure students have experiences of as many sports as possible.

Community groups offer soccer, table tennis, karate, basketball and other opportunities.

Distance to competitive events is one of the major issues for the town.

- **Town facilities**

Oz Minerals Oval provides opportunity for sporting events. There is a 3km walking triangle around the oval for walkers or runners. The United Club has lawn bowling and basketball courts for hire. Social darts and eight ball is also offered at the Italian Club. The Golf and Rifle Clubs are offer sporting opportunities.

6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

There are extensive opportunities for Outdoor Education and camping excursions in areas around Coober Pedy. Teachers are encouraged to offer both camps and excursions throughout the year. Students are subsidized through the global budget.

The school offers an Aquatics and Swimming Program on site at the community pool.

Out of school Hours Care offers an extensive and individualised program.

We have a staff Special Events Committee that coordinates events such as:

- Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC and other significant Aboriginal events.
- Book Week is celebrated in term 3.
- Harmony Day is celebrated in term 1. The school joins other organisations within the town to celebrate.
- Many of the town's national groups celebrate their National Days throughout the year with weekend celebrations.

Where possible the school encourages visiting performers and supports student attendance by subsidizing the costs.

7. Staff (and their welfare)

• Leadership Structure

The leadership team line manages and supports staff.

Teacher leadership is encouraged through committee participation, and all staff are invited to observe committee meetings as participants when they can/choose.

2020 committees include: PAC, special events, sports and other Governing Council committees.

All staff share responsibility for the social needs of the staff. A quarter of the staff form the committee for each term, organising to celebrate events and birthdays and organising at least one social function.

The school also provides all staff with leadership opportunities in their specialised fields.

Staff Profile

There is a blend of early career and experienced staff. We have an enthusiastic, dedicated and co-operative staff team.

Staff Support Systems

DfE provides a counselling service for all staff. This service is called EAP (Employee Assistance Program). Their website for support is www.eapdirect.com.au and phone number is 1300 687 327. The Student Well Being Senior Leader is also has contacts within the local township to support both staff and students with their needs.

Staff meetings alternate between Training and Development sessions and Primary and Secondary Hub Group sessions.

Performance Management

All staff both teaching and non-teaching are expected to take part in professional planning sessions with their line manager. The aim is to have at least one meeting per term with a leadership team member.

The school has a clear policy on Performance Management, available on arrival.

Support for coming off probation, Step 9 and moving through the AITSL proficiency standards is incorporated in performance management processes.

Staff Utilisation Policies

All staff work as Area School Teachers – not Junior Primary, Primary or Secondary Teachers. As such no matter what their primary focus is they may be utilised in other areas of the school to provide NIT and relief time. Some teachers are rostered on as home group teachers and as such have a classroom pastoral care responsibility in both morning and afternoons. Most additional Tier 2 staffing is converted to SSO hours to provide additional classroom support and access to specialist staff.

Regular visits by Education Director, Leadership and Curriculum consultants are encouraged. The Regional student services team including ISBM, Hearing, Speech Pathology, Guidance, Aboriginal Education and Special Education visit week 4 each term. Other services including Novita, SAASTA, SACE and Curriculum are contacted when needed

Close working relationships exist with TAFE, Families SA, Primary Health, Multi Cultural Forum, Crime Prevention Officer and District Council. A strong working relationship occurs between the Council social worker, police liaison and the school in supporting students' attendance at school.

8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff

Term 4 is shortened by 1 week. (Country incentive conditions.)

Travelling time

To allow for staff to attend conferences in Adelaide or other country areas and in line with OHS driving conditions staff are encouraged to try and align their T&D with weekends and will be provided with driving time to allow them to get to their destination safely.

Participation in school holiday professional learning (in line with performance plan will be paid for by the school) allows staff to claim their holiday travel on their tax.

- Housing assistance

50% Subsidised by DPTI, houses or Dugouts and a water allowance

- Additional increment allowance

Newly appointed staff are entitled to country incentive payments which are incremented each year for 5 years

- Medical and dental treatment expenses

Non-metro award – reimbursement of travel and accommodation for specialist treatment away from Coober Pedy

- Locality allowances

Paid according to number of dependants.

- Relocation assistance

Paid into and out of Coober Pedy for permanent and contract teachers.

9. School Facilities

- **Buildings and grounds**

A new four teacher unit was opened in 2010 as part of BER funding. This houses the junior primary classes. In the 2017-8 there are a number of planned works occurring including some external painting of buildings, carpet and some internal painting. The facilities are an ongoing upgrade project. Over the Christmas holidays 2018-19 most classrooms are being painted and internal restructuring is happening in the Arts block and upper primary block.

- **Heating and cooling**

All buildings are air conditioned.

- **Specialist Facilities and Equipment**

The school has a Community Library, 2 Science Laboratories and an Innovation Studio. There is a Photography Lab and Dark Room, which is planned for re-opening.

The school also has woodwork and metal work facilities, Drama and Music spaces, a dedicated Art double room and Food and Hospitality facilities. There is an extensive staff resource facility.

The school also shares a community gymnasium and pool and has a fully functioning radio FM station.

Computing and ICT facilities are available in all classrooms and the school is on broadband and wireless connected. There are laptops available for year 7-12 students to support learning.

The school also has a Video conferencing suite to support staff and student needs.

- **Student Facilities**

The school has a Canteen facility and the dental clinic visits regularly.

The open access facilities support students seeking subject access not available face to face.

- **Staff Facilities**

There is a Staff Lounge and separate professional learning space. All staff have a work station away from the classrooms and access to IT facilities. Teachers are provided with the latest DELL laptop and have access to an iPad if so desired.

- **Access for Students and Staff with Disabilities**

Ramps and access is available to the Administration building, Community Library and Gymnasium, including the toilet facilities. Access is also available to classroom buildings via paving and ramps. The pre-school has wheelchair access.

- **Access to Bus Transport**

The school leases 2 small buses. These are available to take classes on excursions. RSAS also has a bus to support student attendance at school. Parents, who live more than 7 km from school are encouraged to apply for student travel concession via a form from DECD.

There is no town bus contractor and hiring buses from out of town is expensive, hence the school heavily subsidises school excursions and camps.

- **Other**

Aboriginal Health Workers from Umoona Health and a visiting Dentist for the student dental clinic visit regularly.

10. School Operations

- **Decision making structures**

There is a commitment to open, participatory decision making. Consultation is sought and decision making occurs if a majority vote is made.

Governing Council meets twice per term in weeks 2 and 7. Classes have class meetings at least once per week.

The school has several committees for managing school directions. These have Governing Council representation and report back to that body.

- **Regular Publications**

The newsletter is published twice a term and copies are sent to the partnership office. The publication is also available on the school website. Other communications include the Weekly News and emails are sent out as needed.

The school Facebook page (search for Coober Pedy Area School) and the Skoolbag app supplement communication with the community about school initiatives.

The school has Staff Induction Handbooks.

- **School financial position**

The school has re-established its financial position and is beginning to be more innovative in its spending.

11. General characteristics

Coober Pedy is a unique multicultural town with approximately many diverse different nationalities making up the town population of around 3,000 people. Many cultural groups

have their own clubs, which are open to the whole community, eg Serbian Club, Croatian Club, Greek Club, Italian Club and the United Yugoslav Club. There is decline linked with the reduced income from opal mining and the significant cost increases involved in the process. High diesel prices in particular seem to be making Opal mining a more marginal proposition.

Mining companies within a few hundred kilometres of town such as Oz Minerals are providing a growing number of people with employment and are very supportive of our local community and school.

Coober Pedy offers a range of quality restaurants and different social sporting options. These rely heavily on local people running them and support from school staff is always sought and welcomed. A number of staff are involved in the SES and CFS.

Significant annual events in Coober Pedy include the Opal Festival and the Coober Pedy Race weekend. Other events, Gymkhanas and Cattle Drafts in surrounding towns and stations are also popular events.

- **Parent and community involvement**

Governing Council meets twice per term. There is no active Parent Club. Aboriginal student carers meet with the Ab Ed team twice a term.

- **Feeder or destination schools**

None, but significant transience occurs between Aboriginal Lands Schools, Coober Pedy, Port Augusta and Ceduna.

- **Other local care and educational facilities**

There are 2 Child Care Centres, one of which is adjacent to the school. Baby Bounce and Child Care facilities operate from Child Care. There is a TAFE Campus. The town provides a Links Programme and Playgroup facility through a Child Community Links Officer.

- **Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities**

There is a comprehensive Supermarket, Hardware stores, building supplies and numerous Opal Shops.

- **Other local facilities**

There is the Saturday night Drive In Theatre, Westpac Bank with an ATM, Post Office, hospital and medical practitioners. Some specialists' services are available through the hospital.

- **Availability of staff housing**

Both above ground and dug out accommodation through DPTI are readily available.

- **Accessibility**

Daily flights to Adelaide (and 3 times a week to Port Augusta) through REX Airlines. Costs for return trips are relatively expensive. Cheaper fares can be sourced online if you book in advance. Greyhound bus services are available daily. Staff often pool cars to ease the burden of driving to and from Adelaide. Trip takes approximately 9 to 10 hours.

- **Local Government body**

District Council of Coober Pedy is the Local Government body. They are the suppliers of Power and Water for the community.