SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT  Updated: 02/2013
School Name: Gordon Education Centre
School Number: 1645

1. General Information

Part A
School name : GORDON EDUCATION CENTRE
School No. : 1645  Courier : Limestone Coast
Principal : Mr. Robert Barton
Postal Address : PO Box 2488, Mount Gambier 5290
Location Address : 18 Brownes Road, Mount Gambier 5290
District : Limestone Coast
Distance from GPO : 445 kms
Phone No: 87231043
CPC attached : NO
Fax No. : 08 87231662

2013
February FTE Enrolment
Primary Special, N.A.P. Ungraded etc. 35
Reception – Year 7
Secondary Special, N.A.P. Ungraded etc. 36
Year 8 – Year 12
TOTAL 71
July total FTE Enrolment 71
Male FTE 47
Female FTE 24
School Card Approvals (Persons) 44
NESB Total (Persons) 1
Aboriginal FTE Enrolment 4

Note: Placement points for Complexity and (Base plus Isolation) can be obtained from the document 'Placement Points History' in the 'schools/placement' section of the 'Legal and Policy Framework Library' available on the departmental CD-ROM or web-site.

Part B
- Principal: Mr Robert Barton
- School e-mail address: dl.1645_info@schools.sa.edu.au
- Staffing numbers
  Principal (Male) 1.0
  Deputy principal (Female) 1.0
  Co-ordinator – 3 (Female) 1.0
  Teacher/Librarian(Female) 0.2
  Teacher (Male) 4
  Teacher (Female) 6.8 including 3 part time.
  Flexible staffing 0.65.

GEC is a self-governing school
- Enrolment trends: There is an increase in middle school enrolments. Currently enrolments at 72 students (72 FTE).
- Year of opening: Gordon Education Centre opened in 1992. Stage 1 of a redevelopment programme saw the opening of the Browne’s Road site in 2003, with the development of Stage 2 at Browne’s Road in 2008-2009. The whole school is now located on the one site.
- Public transport access: Students mainly travel to and from school on bus or taxi. A small number of students walk, ride bicycles or are transported by parents/caregivers.
2. Students (and their welfare)

- General characteristics: Students who are enrolled and attend Gordon Education Centre are identified by Guidance Officer and/or Speech Pathologist in line with the DECD Students with Disability policy.
- Support offered: The school provides extra support for students as determined by the Negotiated Education Plan, recommendations made by service providers and additional resources according to staffing formula.
- Student behaviour management: Some students have challenging and unpredictable behaviours. The school behaviour policy recognises that students can have inappropriate or limited approaches to establishing communications and interpersonal relationships. Practice is based on defusing escalating behaviour, diverting the student from expressing anger, frustration, anxiety etc in physical ways, and deflecting attention to some other preferred activity. The school has started to implement Non Aversive Management of Behaviour (NAMB) and has a bullying policy on the school’s website.
- Student government: SRC (Student Representative Committee) meets approximately twice a term. It is convened and supported by staff members. Students are elected from their class peers. Suggestions are made about social activities, special programs and school improvement. Involvement is dependent on communication and cognitive level of elected students.
- Special programmes: Picture Exchange Communication System, (PECS) is used throughout the school for students who are non-verbal or with limited communication. Students are assessed by the speech pathologist as a suitable for the program. Students learn to initiate communication and make choices contributing to their own learning and social behaviours. The students can advance through stages to the point where they can use sentences. These programs are also used in the community.

Swimming and water safety, Students are eligible to the equivalent of ten lessons per year. Students with limited ability to access other physical education programs may swim for a longer period through the year.

Community programs, Classes access a range of other programmes in the community. These include gymnastics, local shops, playgrounds, parks etc.

Work experience, Students have the opportunity to access a range of work experience placements, including sheltered type workshops and local open employment if appropriate.

3. Key School Policies

- Partnership Plan
  - Vision
  The vision of Gordon Education Centre is to provide accessible, high quality, purposeful education learning programs, care and support for each students’ individual needs and strengths. By doing this in collaboration with professionals and families, students have the confidence to prepare themselves for living in the community. This is reflected in the our motto: `Towards Independence`.
  - Contextual Influences
  Gordon Education Centre opened in 1992. The school is now completely located on one site at 18 Browne’s Road.
Enrolments have steadily grown from 28 to over 70 students with the current enrolment at 72. The two district special classes have minimal impact on enrolments with the majority of our students attending their neighbourhood school prior to attending our school.

Gordon Education Centre serves the students of Mt Gambier, surrounding towns and agricultural areas. Most students travel to school on either bus or taxi, while some students travel up to 60 kilometres into Mt Gambier. This can impact, on the amount of face-to-face contact we have with parents. Therefore communication books and phone calls are an important way to maintain contact with parents and caregivers.

**Core Business**

Gordon Education Centre’s core business is teaching, learning and care for all students within a supportive and safe environment. Student outcomes are achieved by working collaboratively with students, parents, caregivers, staff, service providers and agencies, local schools and the community.

The Negotiated Education Plan (NEP), documents the provisions needed for each student to attend, participate and achieve within a variety of learning environments. The process includes timely reviews of individual student goals and progress.

A broad and relevant curriculum is integrated in learning areas within current curriculum, South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework, South Australian Certificate of Education and vocational educational training at an individual level. Curriculum is modified and adapted in content and delivery to meet developmental needs and ensure success. Staff are committed to their own learning in improving educational outcomes through professional development.

The school has a strong commitment to learning methodologies incorporating learning technologies, augmentative communication, practical life skills and key competencies

**Values and Principles**

We value:
- Caring Initiative
- Flexibility Respect
- Fairness Equity
- Collaboration Community
- Responsibility Trust.

Our values underpin a commitment to these principles in our programs and working relationships:
- Student focused attitudes
- Safe practices
- Respect for the dignity and rights of others
- Working together for continuous improvement
- Taking responsibility and being accountable

**Strategic Directions**

The school priorities currently are:

Communication, literacy for all, use of visual strategies, PECS, augmentative communication, adapted technology, sensory programs, functional
communicational and literacy and resource making.

Relationships, anti bullying, peer support, code of conduct, consistant behaviour management, collaboration with services and agencies.

Community Connections, futures connect – transition and pathways through school and into the community.

Health Education, Health care plans, medication management, nutrition, protective behaviours, partnerships with other health services and educators. WH&S psychological health and well-being.

4. Curriculum

• Special curriculum features
  Students are involved in work education and work experience programs in collaboration with local agencies eg: Bedford Industries, Orana Incorporated, Gambier Contracts and Millicent Work Options Centre.

• Teaching Methodology
  Teachers use a range of communication methodologies that meet the needs of all students. GEC has a focus on PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and visual strategies for students with no or limited verbal communication.

Assessment procedures and reporting
  Informal assessment and reporting occurs on an ongoing basis using the LitCon Special (Literacy).
  Take home packs, diaries and digital photographs give regular feedback on student progress. Reports are written at the end of Terms 2,3 and 4 using a combination of formal reports and portfolios. Frequent communication to and by parents using phone and communication book.

5. Sporting Activities
  Most sporting activities are included within the curriculum. This includes options for fitness, swimming and aquatic activities and electives such as gymnastics, bowling, bushwalking. Students access sport and recreation within the community.

6. Other Co-Curricular Activities
  Electives are included in the curriculum eg: woodwork, craft, gardening. Students have the opportunity to attend a school camp. A sports day is planned for term 4. An end of year student/family get together is held each year. It is an opportunity to celebrate and award the successes of the year and is well attended by families and friends of the GEC community. Year 12 students have a “formal” at the end of the year.

7. Staff (and their welfare)

  • Staff profile
    Stability of staffing is important in this setting to effectively manage the complex curriculum and behavioural challenges presented by many students. Policies for OHS&W safe work practices, behaviour management and staff support
mechanisms ensure good working conditions and strong collaboration between all staff.

- Leadership structure
  : Principal, Deputy Principal, Co-ordinator 3 and PAC.

- Staff support systems
  : Service agreements with service agencies, classroom teams, use of consultants from disability support agencies, EO representative, grievance procedures, PAC.

- Performance management
  : Performance management is in line with departmental policy, staff meet with their site line manager. Teachers and staff have clear understandings of their roles and responsibilities which may change through mutual agreement. The school has a strong, positive culture focussed on student learning through team work.

- Staff utilisation
  : Staff are deployed flexibly according to assessments of student learning needs, managing student anxiety and communication needs. Some additional staffing is negotiated to manage the needs of some students with very challenging behaviours, personal care needs, and health care.

- Access to special support staff
  : The school receives support from district service providers for students with visual impairments, hearing impairments, and multi-sensory impairments. The school receives support from a Guidance Officer, a speech pathologist and a behaviour support team. Occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists and technicians from non-government disability support agencies also support their clients through visits and collaboration with the school. Educators from the Down Syndrome Society, Autism Association and Kilparrin visit the school to support planning and review of teaching programmes.

8. Incentives, support and award conditions for staff

: Teachers at GEC receive incentives in the form of complexity points (1 per year).

All teachers are eligible to apply for Special Class Allowance.

Teachers are eligible to claim a Protective Clothing Allowance.

All teachers are eligible to receive a rural isolation allowance in line with DECS guidelines

9. School Facilities

- Access for students and staff with disabilities
  : The site has ramps, and have wheel-chair accessible toilet facilities for students and staff.

- Access to bus transport
  : Transport into the community is provided by three vans, two with wheel chair access.

10. School Operations

- Decision making structures:
  : Leadership team consists of Principal, Deputy Principal and Co-ordinator. Site teams – staff working together who share responsibility for student groups. A weekly staff meeting for teachers. The Governing Council and Finance Committee meet twice a term.
• Regular publications: GEC newsletter is published once a fortnight. Staff and parent handbooks are updated each year. The site runs a day book for incidental changes and information.

11. Local Community
• General characteristics: Mount Gambier is a service centre for local industries of farming, timber and fishing.
• Parent and community involvement: This is limited due to distance from school, working parents, high level of support needs for students with disabilities.
• Feeder schools: Potentially all schools in the district are feeder schools. In the past few years pre-school children in local sites have enrolled at the reception level as the preferred schooling option.
• Other local care and educational facilities: A range of options are available. Mount Gambier is well served by a large shopping centre and numerous smaller regional shopping centres. Its sporting facilities are very highly regarded and outstanding for a city of its size. Cultural activities are catered for by visiting performers, exhibitions and some local groups. Most religious denominations are well catered for. The community tends to be close knit as is the educational community; it is well serviced by service organisations.
• Availability of staff housing
Staff housing is available in Mt Gambier.
• Accessibility
Road quality to Mt Gambier from Adelaide and within Mt Gambier itself is very good. Flight and bus services are available to Adelaide and Melbourne.
• Local Government Body: Member for Barker:
Mount Gambier City Council Patrick Secker
10 Watson Terrace 37 Adelaide Road
Mt Gambier 5290 Murray Bridge SA 5253
Phone 8721 2555. Phone 8531 2466