



## SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: July 2020

**School number:** 0448

**School name:** Upper Sturt Primary School

### **School Profile:**

Our school delivers the Australian Curriculum through a nature play-based learning approach, in context with the uniqueness of our site, and the children's interests in the world around them. We aim to bring together the latest research in education around teaching, learning, student wellbeing and engagement to create a holistic approach to learning.

Our school is a small school situated within the beautiful bushland of the Adelaide Hills. At "Bush School" we enjoy and value a community way of learning. We aim to support each other as part of a "village" learning community. Being a small school, staff care deeply and know about all the children. Many of our learning activities also involve the entire school or mixed age groups, which helps facilitate each child feeling part of our community. We endeavour to provide a collaborative, flexible and supportive environment that challenges every learner to achieve their potential. We aspire for school and home life to be connected as we know this is beneficial for the children's sense of security and trust.

Bush School values children learning through unstructured play, while at the same time learning how to play safely. When connected to the natural world, children's sense of wonder, curiosity, imagination and learning is heightened.

Staff have observed that being connected to nature allows children to develop the ability to assess risks and solve problems; so essential in our modern world. Equally, children become better at managing their emotions, relationships and self-management skills.

# 1. General information

School Principal name: Ngari Boehm

Deputy Principal's name, if applicable: N/A

Year of opening: 1878, moved to present site in 1968

Postal Address: PO Box 486, Stirling SA 5152

Location Address: 118 Upper Sturt Road, Upper Sturt

DECD Region: Hills

Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km): 20kms

Telephone number: 08 8339 2640

Fax Number: N/A

School website address: <https://www.uppersturtps.sa.edu.au>

School e-mail address: dl.0448.info@schools.sa.edu.au

Child Parent Centre (CPC) attached: N/A

Out of School Hours Care service: Happy Haven – after school

February FTE student enrolment:

Primary	2017	2018	2019	2020
Reception	19	17	15	12
Year 1	16	18	13	14
Year 2	20	19	19	17
Year 3	10	21	16	15
Year 4	11	15	20	20
Year 5	6	13	15	15
Year 6	10	6	16	18
Year 7	5	13	6	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>116</b>

- **Student enrolment trends:**

There is a strong interest in ‘Bush School’ and our connection to nature. Enrolment numbers have remained steady at around 120 for the past three years and look to continue at this level into the future. We currently operate with five classes (Nests).

	2017	2018	2019	2020
School Card	6	12	20	22
NESB	4	4	4	4
ATSI	3	2	1	1
Born o/s in Aust <1 year	0	0	0	0

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

17 staff (4 males, 13 females) including Principal, 9 Teachers and 7 Ancillary Staff.

Teachers include 7 classroom teachers (full-time and part-time), 1 Performing Arts teacher, and 1 French Teacher. NIT PE is delivered by one of our Nest teachers.

Ancillary Staff include a Finance Officer, grounds person and 4 curriculum, disabilities and admin support SSOs.

A student counsellor works one day a week

- **Public transport access:** Limited bus route.

- **Special site arrangements:**

The school has a positive relationship with the Sturt Upper Reaches Landcare Group. SURLG members help care for the Heritage bush on site and members volunteer their time to assist with other nature-based projects.

Our OSHC service is outsourced to Happy Haven and currently operates an after-school care program. Care is also available on Pupil Free days and school closures.

Other external groups and third-party providers have hire of facilities agreements with the school.

## 2. Students (and their welfare)

- **General characteristics**

Upper sturt ‘Bush School’ attracts students from across the Adelaide hills and greater surrounds. Approximately 20% of students come from our ‘local area’ with the majority from outside this area. Families are drawn to the unique offerings of the site, and the alignment to their own individual ideologies.

- **Student well-being programs**

Student well-being is the responsibility of all members of staff and especially the class teacher. Where required, special counselling is provided by appropriate staff members including the school's counsellor.

We currently offer 'What's the Buzz' to targeted students in Junior Primary, and the 'Grow' program to Upper Primary. This is delivered by our Student Counsellor.

Snapshots of student well-being (My learning survey) are taken as part of our Assessment and Reporting policy twice per year across the whole school. Data from this is analysed and key findings inform future priorities.

- **Student support offered**

: Students with identified disabilities are supported with individualised learning programmes. This can take the form of quality differentiated teaching right through to extensive support. Teachers identify students who require support and mostly this support is provided by SSOs. The support can vary in length of time and frequency, depending on how well each student responds. The support is targeted and precise and is based on the teacher's assessment of the student and delivered in consultation with the SSO. Extra support is also provided as identified and required by the school counsellor. All aspects of support and the progress being made is assessed and recorded.

- **Student management**

Clear policy and strong supportive classroom practices allow staff, students and parents to work together. The school's value of KAMANA kindness permeates through everything we do.

- **Student government**

Whilst no formal student governance model exists, students are given multiple opportunities to share and direct their own learning, the directions of the school, and interest based extra curricula opportunities.

- **Special programmes**

**Kamana** (Hawaiian word for 'power') is a weekly half-day outdoor practice at Bush School that serves as an opportunity for positive authentic learning, encouraging student wonderings, inquisitiveness, experimentation and skills development in a safe mentor-lead environment. Relationships between child and teacher (who in the context of Kamana becomes a mentor), is also more readily fostered in Kamana than in the nests and is an important aspect of developing children's sense of belonging and well-being. Kamana provides a safe environment for exploring the development of social skills and relationships between children through collaborative problem-solving.

- **WIFI AND WIRELESS DEVICES**

Upper Sturt Bush School is a WiFi – aware school. Children access the internet using cabled devices. At school, we request that mobile phones and wireless devices are switched to flight mode and left at the front office.

See our Wifi Policy on our website for further details. Older children access computers to assist and support their learning, research and communication possibilities.

### **INSTRUMENTAL PROGRAM**

Private, individual or small group tuition in guitar and ukulele is available on a paid/private basis. Children are withdrawn from class for 30 minutes during the school day.

### **MOBILE LIBRARY**

Adelaide Hills Council Mobile Library Service visits the school on alternate Fridays and has become the children's school library, and resource library for teachers. An application form comes as part of the enrolment process and families are expected to observe and support the borrowing timetables and processes to enable this service to continue.

### **SHOWCASE**

A celebration of student learning is usually held on the last Wednesday of each term. This is an event that the students and the whole community looks forward to. It is wonderful for our students to showcase their learning, opinions and ideas. It also encourages participation, engagement, self-esteem and wellbeing that is so vital today.

## **3. Key School Policies**

- Site Improvement Plan and other key statements or policies:

Please refer to the school's website for copies of the Site improvement plan and other key statements and/or policies.

- Recent key outcomes:

Refer to the school's Annual Report on the school's web page

## 4. Curriculum

- **Subject offerings:**

At Upper Sturt Primary School teaching and learning is conducted within a safe, enjoyable, friendly environment, which provides a variety of challenging and meaningful learning experiences. The integrated curriculum is delivered through the following - English, Mathematics and BIO Learning.

French was introduced in 2020 as out LOTE offering as a NIT subject. The Performing Arts are provided as a NIT subject as is Health and PE.

- **Special needs, including students requiring extension.**

Students at risk are identified and monitored for intervention and support. The learning needs of students with One Plans are supported through flexible classroom methodologies, parent support and individual or small group withdrawal. Students with learning difficulties are also supported in areas of specific need.

Students who are working above their year level ability are given the opportunity to move further through negotiated learning opportunities.

- **Special curriculum features:**

Bush School delivers the Australian Curriculum through a nature play-based learning approach, in context with children's interests and the world around them. We aim to bring together the latest education, wellbeing and engagement research to create a holistic approach to learning.

We wish to apply the Australian Curriculum in a way that allows children to:

- Be happy and well to learn
- Be hands-on and learn through experience and play
- Be aware of their environment and develop their senses through it
- Be conscious of their impact on nature and their surroundings
- Be responsible for their actions and lifestyle, through sustainability and critical analysis
- Be part of a community that is supportive and socially integrative

At Bush School, learning occurs in and with nature. Nature is the umbrella for all learning themes because it is the connection between the child and their world - it is real, visual and enables meaning and purpose for learning.

The 'Bush School' Curriculum draws interesting and profound wonderings from children. At the beginning of each term we collect these 'wonderings' from the children and base our lesson plans around them. Once the dynamic of children's interests is established, teachers are able to thread the core elements of the Australian Curriculum into the learning cycle. Children know they have been considered and valued for what they have contributed, and it is not unusual to find teachers enthusiastically learning with the children!

- **Teaching methodology:**

Classes are all currently vertically grouped.

BIO-Learning originated as Both Inside and Outside Learning – contextual project-based experiential learning. We have the perfect context for experiential learning (PBL). Applying learnt knowledge in a practical way helps children embed the learning.

Within each topic, children devise explicit experiments using scientific terminology and frameworks to test their theories and put mathematical and scientific concepts in practical self-learning situations. Teachers assist children to devise experiments or different ways to solve problems.

BIO-Learning is student-led, and as such the children at Bush School initiate their own learning. Each new topic is collaboratively developed, with all staff using an ‘Understanding by Design’ template outlining the Big Questions and Learning Goals. The goals are contextual and consider real life problems. In the context of learning and involving our community, experts are invited to share their knowledge and experiences with children.

- **Student assessment procedures and reporting**

Written reports are sent home Mid Year and at the end of Term 4. On the last Wednesday of each term, families are invited to a showcase of the term’s learning.

Our current Assessment and Reporting policy is outlined in our Bush School reference document which is located on the school’s web page.

- **Joint programmes:**

There are planned and formal transition programmes for new Reception students and for Year 7 students to their school of choice for Year 8.

## **5. Sporting Activities**

The school holds an annual sports day and students regularly walk to the Belair National Park for orienteering and other activities. The PE program promotes fitness and skills development for individual sports.

Interschool opportunities are available for SAPSASA swimming, athletics, football, netball, cricket, volleyball, hockey, soccer, softball and cross country. There rely heavily on the help provided by volunteer parents to organize, communicate, officiate and transport.

## **6. Other Co-Curricular Activities**

- Circle Time starts and concludes the week up at the Bush Village. This is a chance for the whole school to come together and set the scene for the week, acknowledge achievements, and update students and families on any upcoming changes. It also helps to strengthen our sense of community.
- Sports Day, swimming carnival and SAPSASA opportunities
- Fundraising activities to raise money for school items
- Year 7 Graduation

## **7. Staff (and their welfare)**

- **Staff profile**

Covered earlier

- Leadership structure

Principal

- Performance Management

There are both formal and informal Performance Management structures. Performance development meetings support staff in meeting school priorities and their own professional goals. They also provide the opportunity to recognise the outstanding work of staff members.

## 8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff

Our school is considered 'Metropolitan' in terms of teacher conditions

## 9. School Facilities

- Buildings and grounds

Upper Sturt Primary School consists of 6 buildings and 13 sheds. Building 1 is a SAMCON constructed building circa 1966 and all remaining buildings are of metal transportable construction. The school is located on approximately 2.2 Hectares of land in the Mount Lofty Ranges. This region is an extreme risk bushfire zone with its proximity to Belair National Park.

Typical of the site is its undulating topography, slip, trip and fall hazards. Ordinarily these risks would be managed differently, however key to the educational programs at Upper Sturt Primary School is the outdoor nature play component, hence these 'risks' are a key aspect of the educational outcomes.

The remnant woodland area of the school grounds is the only school site in Australia covered by a Heritage Agreement. Community, parents and students involved in management within the guidelines, including minimal disturbance maintenance and adaptive management, eg. path reduction, signage.

- Heating and cooling

All areas have reverse cycle air-conditioning

- Specialist facilities and equipment

The Stirling Mobile Library visits the school fortnightly.

- Staff facilities

A newly appointed staff room is available for staff use. Staff have access to the curriculum computer network, which includes internet and e-mail access.

- Access for students and staff with disabilities

Access ramps have recently been installed to classrooms and the office area.

- Access to bus transport

Limited public bus route. Private providers utilised as required.

## 10. School Operations

- Decision making structures

GOVERNING COUNCIL

school-context-statement 2020.doc

Our Governing Council is made up of 16 parents, of varying skill sets, educations and passions. They conduct business in a professional manner, working within their Constitutional duties, and aim to govern the school in a way that represents the wishes and needs of the families who attend, and that of a public education school.

#### PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents at Bush School are integral and valued members of the school community. Beyond the formal role of Governing Council, parents support the school through regular School Care evenings where individual talents come together to enhance the school's outdoor play areas, gardens and indoor spaces in a spirit of community building.

Parents also participate in a number of groups (PoDs) with specific focus areas such as Master Planning, Bush School and Sustainability PoDs. The latter is a particularly active and significant PoD which coordinates a number of projects and initiatives such as Food/Seedlings Swap Table, engaging with the Upper Sturt Reaches Landcare Group and caring for our Heritage Bushland, rainwater runoff/harvesting, boardwalk and other community outreach initiatives, such as grant applications, and recently, bush fire recovery propagation.

- **Regular publications**

From the Desk... is a weekly update, produced to keep the school community informed, whereas our From the Nest publication (also weekly) celebrates all things 'Bush School' and regularly highlights childrens achievements and their learning. The school utilises 'skoolbag' to distributes updates, Nest notifications as well as community notices.

- **Other communication**

The school has a designated Facebook page for our wider school community including interested parties who align to our philosophy of learning. The staff team utilise an electronic calendar and messaging system.

- **School financial position**

The school is in a sound financial position with some flexibility to be able to purchase items and resources to better support staff and student learning and to generally improve the school.

## 11. Local Community

- **General characteristics**

Mentioned above

- **Parent and community involvement**

Mentioned above

- **Feeder or destination schools**

Varied due to the demographics and large proportion of students attending from outside of the local area. A number of students apply to attend Urrbrae each year as their school of choice for secondary attendance.

- **Other local care and educational facilities**

Our closest secondary school is Heathfield High School

- **Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities**

Stirling offers most facilities, with Blackwood a larger alternative.

- **Availability of staff housing N/A**  
General rental market
- **Accessibility**  
Limited Public transport. Close proximity to the South Eastern Freeway
- **Local Government body**  
Adelaide Hills Council