

# Learning Neighbourhoods



# PARKHURST STATE SCHOOL

## Learning Neighbourhoods

### Our Vision for Learning

'Every Parkhurst Learner is literate, numerate, safe, happy and learning everyday.'

### Our Catchphrase

'Tomorrow's Teaching and Technology Today !'

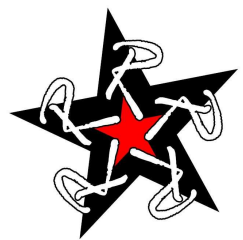
### Our Mantra

'The Village raises the Child'

Parkhurst State School is organised into distinct Learning Neighbourhoods, endorsing a strong multiage philosophy that allows us to provide flexible learning environments to cater for the full range of learners over a two year period. The Dictionary describes a Neighbourhood as ...

1. the area or region around or near some place or thing; vicinity: the kids of the neighbourhood; located in the neighbourhood of Parkhurst
2. a district or locality, often with reference to its character or inhabitants: a fashionable neighbourhood; to move to a nicer neighbourhood.
3. a number of persons living near one another or in a particular locality: The whole neighbourhood was there.
4. neighbourly feeling or conduct.
5. nearness; proximity: to sense the neighbourhood of trouble.

With these definitions in mind, our learning neighbourhoods further assist us to achieve our values of **respect, responsibility, rigour, resilience** and **relationships**, whilst building positive **reputations** as individuals and a community within caring, nurturing, warm and stimulating environments. These ideals underpin all we do in both our work and learning. The African proverb of "It takes a village to raise a child" accurately describes our commitment to ensuring every individual learner achieves their potential across all areas of their education.



At the centre of our vision are our learners, signifying our efforts to create a personalised, supportive learning environment which values individual needs, interests and learning styles, cultural diversity, prior knowledge and understanding and supports students to identify and achieve high standards of success. Learning neighbourhoods are more than a grouping of learners. Learners are physically grouped together, similarly to houses in a street.

The location of our Neighbourhoods provides the flexibility of a number of learning spaces to facilitate and deliver learning experiences in varied ways at varied times, using a wide range of resources, including human resources.

The ongoing development of positive and caring relationships through developing the ways in which members of the four learning neighbourhoods and school community work together are also a key undertaking. Just as we need to find our own place in society and abide by community expectations, our Learning Neighbourhoods also strive to achieve this through supportive risk taking, negotiation, choice and high expectations.

As Neighbourhood teams, teachers assume responsibility for all learners as a collective, providing a multifaceted insight into each learner's performance and achievement through meaningful and ongoing data collection, analysis and action.

Our Learning Neighbourhoods promote curriculum consistency in regards to what learners learn and how their learning is assessed and reported. It is reassuring to know that every learner has access to the same curriculum, which is differentiated and personalised according to their individual interests, talents, needs, circumstances, backgrounds and abilities. As in a regular Neighbourhood or community, diversity exists, which can only enhance our lives and in this case, learning.

A cross curricula, integrated and collaborative approach to learning encourages learners to work independently, and in teams. All learners are provided with a broad and rich learning experience that builds on their individual learning styles, preferences and talents with a focus on academic excellence, personal growth and development and an enriching social experience that encourages active and responsible citizenship. Each Neighbourhood facilitates a global and informed citizenship project that enables learners to take action to make a real difference to an issue within the world. These projects further reinforce the need to work together in collaboration, connecting with others to achieve a common goal.

Each of our Learning Neighbourhoods are overseen by a talented, enthusiastic, caring and motivated teacher team, each with their own areas of expertise, talent and interest. Our teachers are highly skilled facilitators of learning, innovative and professional, each striving to provide the most engaging education possible for every learner. Working as a team, teachers share their expertise, talents and areas of expertise, delivering a relevant and challenging twenty first century education, connected to the real world.

Learning Neighbourhoods also assists ...

- to provide unique learning experiences for learners based on individual pathways and learning goals established for each learner
- teachers as a learning guide to support learners to demonstrate accountability for their learning through discussions of their learning goals and achievements to a timeline
- the development of rigorous, ongoing learner assessment based on demonstrated and consistent learning achievements in a variety of settings over time
- to deliver high standards in literacy and numeracy

- in the provision of flexible learning spaces, allowing students to negotiate when, where and how they learn depending on their needs, interests, learning styles and goals
- students to develop and value lifelong learning skills and the attributes of twenty first century citizenship, whilst engaged in a global community
- provide strong links between home, school and the greater community
- provide a nurturing environment that fosters positive interactions with peers, teachers, and the entire learning community
- assist learners to prepare for NAPLAN (National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy) over an extended period of time
- teachers to share resources
- develop twenty first century citizenship to develop eco, healthy, democratic, creative, informed, digital, global, literate and numerate citizens

At Parkhurst State School, our Learning Neighbourhoods are visually defined by their location with outstanding facilities to support learners for the future. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are integrated across all learning experiences as teaching and learning tools to enhance understanding and assist learners develop as autonomous and reflective learners. We acknowledge the impact our rapidly changing world can have upon teaching and learning, harnessing readily available, new and emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning.

At Parkhurst, we maintain a clear focus on the future, deliver quality teaching and learning using a range of resources. We also believe academic excellence comes from explicitly teaching our learners how to think about world problems, themselves and others, whilst maintaining high expectations.

### **Who are the People in Your Neighbourhood ?**

Our Learning Neighbourhoods have been designed and structured for many educational purposes and may vary year to year based on enrolments. As a school, we have maintained a need to avoid the overlapping of juncture years to maintain two distinct Early Years and Middle Years sectors. Maintaining these distinct identities assists us to maintain the integrity of Early Childhood and Middle Schooling, celebrating milestones, collaborating as groups whilst maintaining learner connectedness.

Teaching Staff are complimented by a talent non teaching team, with Teacher Aides allocated to specific Neighbourhoods to develop a quality understanding of each learner, their individual needs, learning goals and interests in order to support them over an extended period of time, promoting sustainability.

### **Special Education Program**

Our Special Education Program (SEP) was established in 2010 and allows us to 'attach' teachers to each of our Neighbourhoods, rigorously supporting individual learners requiring specialised support in the context of their classroom.

SEP teachers assume responsibility for the ongoing case management of their identified learners and are an integral resource within each Neighbourhood.

## **Routines and Rituals**

At Parkhurst State School, a number of schoolwide routines and rituals are in place to endorse our Neighbourhood philosophy and celebrate our connectedness as a learning community. Examples include, dedicated group eating areas, weekly assemblies, daily Jump Jam, curriculum groups, excursions, performances, sport, Challenge Days, unit culmination activities and parent participation programs.

The establishment of routines and expectations are essential for all learners. Many of the classroom routines at Parkhurst State School include ...

- Having equipment ready, sharp pencils, etc
- Home reading and set homework tasks
- Changing home reading books
- Homework correction
- Morning Tea and Lunch times
- Tuckshop
- Reading and Maths groups
- Art lessons
- Science lessons
- Banking
- Zone 21 visits
- Library lessons and borrowing
- School assemblies
- Physical Education Specialist lessons
- Music Specialist lessons
- Religious Education classes
- Borrowing sports equipment
- Wearing hats for play, assemblies and Physical Education
- Playing in correct designated areas
- Computer Centre visits
- Smart Moves

## **Our Beliefs around Learning**

At Parkhurst State School, we share six beliefs common beliefs around teaching and learning, developed in collaboration with all members of our school community. These beliefs underpin all we do in classrooms and our actions to develop independent, twenty first century citizens.

1. Our learners are individuals who learn at their own rate using their preferred learning styles to reach their full potential.
2. High expectations are essential for high performance.
3. Our environments are warm, caring, nurturing and stimulating to develop independent, 21st Century learners.
4. Children learn best by doing and through modelling.
5. Negotiation, choice, risk taking and challenges are an important part of the learning process.
6. Learning must be engaging, futures orientated and connected to the real world.

## **Multiage Teaching and Learning**

Multiage learning has been a philosophy of Parkhurst State School and many other small, medium and large sized schools across Queensland and Australia for many years. The term 'multiage' in its simplest form refers to a class comprised of learners of different ages intentionally grouped for learning. Because of the many desirable social and learning experiences and flexibility that this kind of classroom organisation affords, we are pleased to be able to continue to provide multiage classrooms within each of our four Learning Neighbourhoods.

Multiage classrooms provide role models for learners across many areas as well as affording opportunities for teachers to differentiate, personalise and individualise learning offerings for students requiring extension and support.

### **What we hope to achieve through our multiage philosophy**

- create positive, and supportive social contexts for learning
- develop and promote collaborative learning attitudes and skills
- promote the development of shared responsibilities
- promote self motivated learning and achievement
- promote the development of each learner through catering for individual differences at a variety of levels
- develop creativity, risk taking, problem solving and thinking
- promote continued growth and development in children through the extended time period spent within the multiage classroom structure
- promote the development of the skills required for life long learning
- provide opportunities for learners to learn with a range of peers

### **The Role of our Teachers**

The role of the teacher is flexible. A key role is that of a facilitator of learning. The emphases tend to be on questioning rather than telling, on finding out and 'having a go' rather than being told and on active learning rather than passive listening. Mistakes are accepted as a natural part of learning and earnest effort will be encouraged and rewarded.

In this context, teachers seek to provide ...

- a positive and challenging environment
- enthusiasm for teaching and learning
- planned, purposeful learning experiences
- collected and prepared related resources
- assistance
- encouragement, care and support
- positive, responsive role models

Much of our classroom work directly relates to a current learning context or topics involving real life and life like experiences. There are naturally times when curriculum work will not specifically relate to the learning context, but will be organised according to the children's needs.

## **The Role of our Learners**

All learners are individuals. They are uniquely different and need to be accepted and valued for the skills and personal qualities they bring to the classroom. Being the same age as someone else does not necessarily mean that abilities are the same. Each child has preferred learning styles and learn at a different rate. All children need to develop both cooperative and independent work skills, depending on the situation. In our multiage classrooms, the following skills and attitudes are valued and time is spent on their positive development.

### **Skills**

- Cooperation
- Creativity
- Communication
- Independence
- Reflection
- Participation
- Thinking
- Responsibility for own actions
- Adoption of a variety of roles
- Awareness of choices and decision making

### **Attitudes**

- Self confidence and self esteem
- Tolerance and acceptance of others
- Flexibility in work situations, activities and groupings
- Risk taking

Learners will have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Classroom expectations have been collaboratively written aligned to the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan, are prominently displayed and regularly referred to. Children are expected to take responsibility for their own actions and follow the established classroom routines. Children will be encouraged to take risks in their daily learning and to accept that making mistakes is a natural part of learning.

## **The Role of our Parents and Carers**

The home, parents and carers are a child's first teachers. Teachers, parents and carers are both facilitators of learning. As such, it is important for us all to positively encourage children, listen to them, provide resources for learning and appropriate role models. It is also important to foster growing independence and responsibility for actions, belongings and behaviour.

There will be regular opportunities for parent involvement in our classrooms. Positive communication between home and school is essential. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to initiate a discussion with us regarding concerns or the progress of their child/children. Similarly, we may need to contact you to discuss a child's learning or behaviour.



## **For Further Information**

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