

Our purpose

*Making connections with our environment.
Living and learning together.*

Arbury Park Outdoor School is a community where students, parents and teachers from all parts of South Australia come to live and learn together. In our bush setting, we make connections with the natural environment and with each other through experiential outdoor learning.

Living and learning at Arbury Park inspires ongoing growth for students and teachers alike.

Our values

Curiosity is an eagerness to discover new things, to wonder and to learn. When we are curious we explore the mysteries of our world.

Care means giving love and attention to people and things that matter. When we care about something or someone we try to give our best.

Community is about the connections in our lives; connections between each other, with places and with things. Our community is the web of our relationships. It gives us a sense of belonging.

Learner dispositions

Qualities of mind and character that lead to habits of thinking and doing.

Seeking challenge means being willing to risk going beyond our current boundaries so that we can grow our skill or understanding.

Using imagination opens new possibilities that help us visualise a world beyond here and now. Using imagination creates ideas and actions.

Being resilient means being able to bounce back from difficult or challenging experiences. It means we don't give up when things are stressful, we find a way to keep going.

Being reflective is when we make an effort to explore our feelings and thinking so we understand ourselves better. We try to recognise our own strengths and improvement areas so we can learn and grow.

Making connections means we are linking new learning, places, people and feelings to our personal life. Connections help us make sense of how experiences build on what we already know.

Learning collaboratively happens when people help and challenge each other. Comparing our ideas and perspectives with others helps us to clarify and deepen our learning.

Pedagogy

Sharing our understanding of what research tells us is good practice.

Being intentional about what the students are *learning*, rather than what they are *doing*.

Structures

Enabling a collaborative approach to deprivatising our practice

Assessment for Learning (Dylan William) *Classroom strategies that are effective in promoting formative assessment practice.*

- **Strategic use of questioning** Not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a deliberate way for the teacher to find out what students know, understand and are able to do.
- **Effective teacher feedback** Focusing on established success criteria and telling students what they have achieved and where they can improve.
- **Peer feedback** Students using established success criteria to tell another student what they have achieved and where improvement is necessary.
- **Student self-assessment** Encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. Incorporates self-monitoring, self-assessment and self-evaluation.

Visible Learning (John Hattie) *When teachers see learning through the eyes of students, and students see themselves as their own teachers. A visible learner:*

- Applies effective habits of thinking and doing (dispositions)
- Seeks, receives, acts on, and gives feedback, closing the gap between where they are and where they need to be.
- Explains and understands progress – where they are at, where they are going, and what their next steps are.
- Understands how to learn – learning strategies and meta cognition.

Questioning *Good questioning causes deeper thinking. Good question delivery extends participation of all learners in the class.*

- “Pose, pause, pounce, bounce” (Basketball not table tennis).
- Open and closed questions both have a purpose. Effective teachers know the difference.
- A ‘hands down’ classroom. Hands up only to *ask* a question, not to *answer* a question. All students have to do the thinking. The teacher distributes answers around the group.

Feedback *Closing the instructional gap. “Where am I going?” “How am I going?” “Where to next?”*

- Task level feedback: does your answer meet the success criteria?
- Process level feedback: what strategies did you use?
- Self-regulation feedback: what is your self-assessment of your learning?
- Praise: unhelpful feedback that directs attention from the task to the self.

Learning intentions *A statement that describes clearly what the teacher wants the students to know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the learning and teaching activities. A learning intention emphasises what the students will learn, rather than what they will do.*

- A carefully framed learning intention will direct students' attention to the learning, rather than the activity.
- Can be shared with students at the beginning of a lesson or unit of work, or not mentioned until after the engagement activity.
- Focusing on the learning rather than on the context means it is more likely students will be able to transfer their learning from one context to another.
- Success criteria describe the range of ways students can demonstrate the learning intention.

Task design *Designing challenging tasks where students do the thinking. Providing intellectual stretch. Low floor, high ceiling. Re-designing learning tasks from:*

- **closed to open.** Many entry points, many pathways, many solutions, different perspectives
- **telling to asking.** Explore before explain, using dialogue, Socratic questioning, student voice
- **information to understanding.** Compare and contrast, generalise, make connections, find relationships
- **procedure to problem solving.** Provide only some of the steps, provide insufficient information at first

Small group collaborative dialogue *“Those who do the talking do the learning.” Practicing the skills of speaking and listening without judging.*

- Think/pair/share, to explore ideas on a particular challenge or provocation.
- Actively seek divergent views.
- Do your thinking out loud, so others can understand and share in it.
- Use paraphrasing and clarifying questions to check for understanding.

Professional Learning Teams *Small teams of teachers use an emergent planning process to provide feedback to each other about pedagogical practice. They:*

- Analyse video segments of lessons using an agreed tool or protocol.
- Meet once each term.
- Use norms for respectful peer reflection: Open mindedness, Whole heartedness, Collegiality.

Program staff meetings *All teachers plus curriculum SSO meet for 90 minutes weekly (usually Monday morning)*

- Agenda includes professional learning priorities and daily operations
- Reflection of previous week's program and planning for current week.

Performance and development *Everyone has a right to feedback about their performance. Everyone is expected to contribute to improvement at APOS.*

- All staff develop an annual performance and development plan.
- A mid-year and an end of year reflective report meeting for all staff.

Feedback mechanisms *Tools and procedures that help us reflect on our intentionality, effectiveness and consistency.*

Feedback from students

- Individual lesson feedback questionnaire, providing feedback for individual APOS teachers, and also summarised to show patterns across teachers.
- End of camp student focus group with a small group of students.

Feedback from visiting teachers

- Annual client survey using a 2 page questionnaire.
- End of camp teacher focus group with 2-4 teachers.