

# Talara Primary College

QUADRENNIAL SCHOOL REVIEW



*Excellence in Education*

# Talara Primary College Context

## Talara Culture

Talara Primary College is committed to providing a dynamic and innovative curriculum that responds to and reflects the changing society in which we live. It is our relentless pursuit of improvement, and our understanding that the target of excellence is ever moving, which drives our staff and community to search out the best educational practices for our students.

We have earned our impressive reputation for creating a safe and supportive learning environment, and we have built it on a clear set of traditional values, a strong sense of belonging and school pride. We understand the importance of teaching a futures-oriented curriculum where our students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become lifelong learners. It is with these skills that we will prepare our students to actively investigate, think, create, communicate, participate, reflect and understand within the globalised society.

Talara's success can also be attributed to our highly professional, dedicated and caring staff and their sense of shared responsibility for all students' learning and personal development. We enjoy a vibrant working environment, where we hold dear a climate of mutual respect and support.

We enthusiastically foster positive, productive partnerships with our parents and community members, and recognise that together, we can achieve more for our students. Our strategic decisions are guided by our insightful School Council, reflecting the increased autonomy of Independent Public Schools. Our dynamic P&C are continually seeking ways to provide financial and classroom support, as well as strengthening our existing community spirit.

Talara Primary College has an enrolment of just over 1100 students. The school is situated in the suburb of Currimundi, northwest of Caloundra.



Talara Primary College is guided by our *Big Rocks*, forming the cornerstone of all strategic decision making and ensures that our future direction is aligned to our core values.

### Our Rocks

- ☆ Curriculum is the Foundation
- ☆ We commit to shared ownership for student outcomes
- ☆ We value and support the holistic development of students through engaging pedagogy
- ☆ We are a progressive school with a futures orientated curriculum
- ☆ We develop a community of lifelong learners
- ☆ We are a collaborative, supportive team
- ☆ We pursue excellence
- ☆ We develop innovative, collaborative school partnerships
- ☆ Technology is an integral component of what we do

## Learning and Attainment

### Introduction

Talara's curriculum is designed using the Australian Curriculum's 8 Key Learning Areas, in consultation of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) for reporting and assessment. We achieve this through a whole school approach to curriculum delivery, and an emphasis on differentiation for individual student needs.

We are committed to delivering a constructivist approach to education by providing seamless building blocks for life long learning and achieving greater continuity for the learner. Central to this, is for our students to learn how to think, not what to think. They construct their own meaning by learning to reflect, raise essential questions, see connections, discover patterns, make good decisions, think creatively, understand and value diversity, work cooperatively with others, take risks and manage change. We foster critical, creative and higher order thinking and expect students to produce work of quality at their own individual level.

Our two Head of Curriculum (Prep-2 and Yr 3-6) lead Talara's curriculum, who together with the Principal, Deputy Principals and the Curriculum team make decisions following whole staff consultation. Year level teaching teams are provided with 4 planning cycles, including 1 planning day each term to collaboratively develop stand alone and integrated units throughout the school year.

Learning is celebrated with the Talara community by showcasing student work samples or presentations at Open Afternoons or Culmination, marking the conclusion of each unit. These opportunities are highly valued by the school and our parents, evidenced by the very high level of parent attendance and voiced through formal feedback processes.

### High Expectations

## Improvement

In our pursuit of excellence, Talara Primary College has a transparent agenda for improvement so we can maximise learning for all students. Our school leadership team, in consultation with all stakeholders, annually develop a set of key deliverables that focuses our collective efforts and informs our practices.

Explicit school-wide targets for improvement have been established and communicated with accompanying timelines. Progress is closely monitored to ensure we are on track to meet our goals.



## Deep Knowledge

### Expert Teaching Team

Professional sharing of best practice is a fundamental facet of our teaching model. These onsite professional development experiences are directly aligned to our Key Deliverables. In recent years we have invested significantly in developing our capabilities in the teaching of numeracy, writing and digital pedagogy.

Talara also capitalises on staff demonstrating a rich knowledge and passion for student wellbeing, Indigenous Education and Gifted Education by utilising the flexible staffing allocation and allowing these staff to lead professional development and projects across the college. The introduction of teaching mentors for literacy, numeracy, enrichment and eLearning has been invaluable support as our teachers' continuously improve their teaching skills.

Professional Development is also provided to address systemic imperatives, Caloundra Coalition of Schools priorities and specific interest or needs of staff through online learning courses, twilight learning sessions and from external providers. A total of \$102 000 was spent on professional development for staff. All new staff to Talara engage in a comprehensive induction program to support their seamless transition to our college.

We live and breathe our philosophy of lifelong learning by individually meeting with all teaching staff to reflect on practices, celebrate successes and identify priorities for professional growth, based on the *Professional Standards for Teachers*.

## Targeted Teaching

### Differentiated Learning Classroom

At Talara, teachers place a high priority on identifying and addressing the learning needs of individual students. They regularly assess students and group according to prior knowledge and ability. This allows our teachers to tailor teaching according to their students' needs. A wide range of tools and strategies are used when differentiating which are based on the Maker Model. Inclusivity and diversity is embedded across the college with experienced classroom teachers, support teachers, Extension and Enrichment Mentor, Literacy, Numeracy and eLearning Mentors who continue to facilitate new initiatives which enrich the learning for all of our students.

### Systematic Curriculum Delivery

Talara's curriculum framework has been developed in alignment with the Australian Curriculum and QCAA. Content descriptors and Scope and Sequence documents support the 'vertical' alignment of our curriculum to ensure continuity and progression of learning across the all year levels, with teaching building on, and extending learning from previous years. Our Heads of Curriculum monitor these sequences closely to ensure they have been explicitly taught by the conclusion of each year. In Term 4, teaching teams meet with their students' future teachers to discuss pertinent information to support a seamless transition.

## Targeted Use of Resources

Collaboratively defined key deliverables and school-wide data determine the targeted use of all resources (i.e. staffing, expertise, finance, facilities and materials). A range of initiatives have been employed to maximise student outcomes such as, pooled teacher aide time for targeted intervention, and the use of flexible staffing for expert teachers to mentor or provide specialised lessons. Our Student Resource Scheme empowers the teaching and learning process, as this ensures all children have exactly what they require, at the time it is needed. Parent Partnerships are highly valued, with regularly timetabled and relevant parent education workshops delivered throughout the year. Parents with specific skills or knowledge are welcomed to join the teaching team to enhance the unit work at home or school. Supporting resources, including reading vignettes and reading tips are published on our website and in each newsletter for parents.



## Effective Teaching Practices

"...students placed with high performing teachers will progress three times faster than those placed with low performing teachers" (Barber & Mourshed 2007). Based on this evidence our teachers strive to improve their teaching practices and are committed to excellence. Our Whole School Pedagogical Framework, 5e, emphasise the need for teachers to Engage, Explore,

## Engagement

### Introduction

Talara Primary College fosters a culture of excellence where all students are viewed as capable, competent learners. We recognise that our students come to us with their own individual, unique needs and backgrounds. We celebrate diversity and have established flexible, targeted initiatives to ensure all student progress is maximised.



### Indigenous Education

Talara recognises the significance of embedding Indigenous perspectives within our curriculum and school culture to positively influence the educational outcomes of our indigenous students. We continue to recognise the culture of local Gubbi Gubbi people through our tribe structure of Dingara, Djaa and Noring (sea, earth & sky).

### Students with Disabilities

Talara Primary College aims to provide comprehensive and responsive support programs, through an inclusive, coordinated whole school approach, in order to maximise learning outcomes for students with disabilities. Our Early Childhood Development Program provides specialised support for 40 children from birth through to 6 years of age, while our Special Education Program currently caters for 40 students from students in Prep – Year 6.

Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate their own teaching practices and plan for effective teaching and learning based on this model They recognise the value of delivering a challenging, rigorous curriculum and providing students with quality feedback on ways to improve their learning. Talara staff also understand the importance of establishing and maintaining a safe, supportive classroom environment where students are encouraged to challenge themselves to be the best they can be.

Innovative, flexible and effective use of technology enhances student learning and prepares them for the future. Our goal for students, staff and the community is to harness the use of digital systems in a range of settings.

Staff share best practice teaching strategies and moderate assessment tasks within our school context, and with our Caloundra Collation of Schools, ensuring consistency of tasks and common expectations.

### Continuous Monitoring

#### Analysis and Discussion of Data

Cultivating an authentic assessment and reporting culture is a high priority. This allows decision making, interventions and initiatives, at all levels, to be informed and driven by reliable and current data. Student progress is monitored over time with all staff sharing accountability for student outcomes.

A clearly articulated internal monitoring process is embedded in our curriculum framework. We are continually revolutionising our internal monitoring processes to align with our ever-moving target of excellence.

An extensive range of systemic and localised data (e.g. NAPLAN, School Opinion Surveys, PAT-R, PM and PROBE, Maths Check-ins) is used to inform class and year level planning, as well as the whole school strategic direction. Teachers are supported to analyse data to identify patterns and trends, and to ensure our school and student achievements are continually improving.

## Students with Learning Difficulties

Two highly skilled Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy lead various intervention programs for students with learning difficulties across our school. They possess a deep knowledge of current research and relate this to their intervention programs. A high priority is given to collecting and tracking student performance data and targeting support for individuals and small groups in their specific area of need.

### Student Attendance

We believe very strongly in the Education Queensland policy of 'Everyday Counts'. In light of this our school actively promotes that students are at school everyday, on time and ready to learn. The average attendance rate for our students over the past twelve months was 94%.



## Wellbeing

### Introduction

Talara Primary College is committed to the holistic wellbeing of all students. Our pursuit of 'Excellence in Education' values and empowers the school community's success and wellbeing. Personal belonging within the school and community in an ever-changing world driven by 21st Century learning is at the forefront of our vision. A positive mindset, as well as developed social and emotional skills are celebrated through processes that embrace high standards, clear expectations and productive relationships to support our school community to flourish.

## Attributes of a Lifelong Learner

The central purpose of education is the development of attributes that enable our students to be active contributors to their own ongoing learning journey and to a sustainable and ethical society. The attributes of a lifelong learner guides the way we interact and informs curriculum at Talara Primary College. The six attributes of a lifelong learner are:



Creating Communicating Investigating



Participating Reflecting Critical Thinking

## Responsible Behaviour Plan

Our school-wide Responsible Behaviour Plan (RBP) has been developed in consultation with many stakeholders, and is based on research from William Glasser, specifically his *Choice Theory*, where students chose the way in which they behave within our Code of Conduct.

At the core of our program is a proactive and positive approach that ensures all students receive a curriculum and learning environment that meets their needs, values them, and engenders success, pride and a feeling of belonging. We celebrate good behaviour through 'Gold Pass Days', 'Good One', 'Student of the Week' certificates and behaviour reports in term 1 and 3.

Additional strategies employed at Talara include:

- ✚ Anti-bullying lessons delivered across the school
- ✚ Restorative approach where students require support to meet our behaviour expectations
- ✚ Talara Integrated Play Support (TIPS)
- ✚ Active parent involvement through parent workshops, regular communication and explicit expectations outlined during new family enrolment interviews
- ✚ Proactive lunch clubs and groups are available which cultivate school pride.

## You Can Do IT Program

Our school has adopted the tenets of the "You Can Do It" program to build capabilities that promote excellence, positive relationships and emotional wellbeing in our students. These "Keys to Success" are modelled and explicitly taught by staff and our older students through peer support. Through this exposure, the language and use of these capabilities form a fundamental part of our school culture.



Resilience Confidence



Persistence Getting Along Organisation

## Peer Mentoring/Support

Peer mentoring and support at Talara sees our Year 5 and 6 students practice their leadership skills, and provides another opportunity to discuss our Code of Conduct and its inherent skills. It is based on research evidence that

children learn values best from other children. Our older students teach our values by:

- ✚ sitting with our younger students on parade to model good listening skills
- ✚ eating lunch with our Prep students in their first few weeks of school to help them open their lunch and feel safe at school
- ✚ teaching our younger students a six week social skills skills program in small groups
- ✚ supporting learning in various contexts (e.g. sports day, buddy reading, etc)



## Extra Curricular Activities

An extensive range of extra curricular activities are available, catering to the varying interests of our students. Some of the disciplines include various sports, dance, drama, singing, visual arts, academic extension and robotics.

We proudly boast local, state and national award-winning teams in academic, arts and culture and sporting fields. Complimenting our college initiatives are a series of enrichment programs led by external providers after school. These include sporting clinics and specialised instrumental lessons.

## Pathways

### Introduction

In alignment with Department Education and Training Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022, Talara Primary College aims to facilitate successful transitions to our school and beyond to ensure seamless learning experiences in all phases of learning.

### Early Years Partnerships

Acknowledging the significance of the Early Years for laying the foundations for all further schooling, Talara implements strategies to bridge the transition from Early Childhood Education Centres to our school environment. Being an integral part of a strong Early Year's Coalition involving 8 local schools allows for robust professional conversations and the development of cutting edge practices. We acknowledge the need for children to become acclimatised to new environments and through the employment of a dedicated Transitions Teacher, who oversees our Ready Set Prep program, we offer families the opportunity to take part in up to 7 weekly transition sessions.

### High School Partnerships

Our Year 6 students further their education at one of five local secondary schools. In their final year at Talara, students are given several opportunities to participate in enrichment and transition days held at Caloundra SHS, Meridan SC or Kawana SC. Students are invited to apply for scholarships and are well represented amongst the successful scholarship recipients.

### Tertiary Education Partnerships

Talara actively contributes towards the Department Education and Training key priority of creating a capable, agile and sustainable organisation by working in partnership with Universities, TAFE and high schools to provide a quality training ground for over 28 future teachers, 17 Certificate iii and iv training Teacher Aides, and 12 high school work experience students.

In addition, Talara once again welcomed three international pre service teaching students for Term 3 2018. Two from SUNY Cortland, New York, and the other from Italy. The rich cultural & curriculum experiences provided to our Talara students, staff & community as a whole was immeasurable.

In 2018 Talara was awarded the Sunshine Coast Universities Teacher Education Excellence Award for its outstanding support, mentorship and teaching of tomorrow's teachers.

### Community Partnerships

Our local community contributes positively to our school through involvement in special events, sharing their expert knowledge in classrooms, and financial contributions to enhance learning opportunities.

## Sustainability

### Introduction

Talara Primary College aims to minimise our environmental footprint and engages in sustainable, environmentally friendly practices.

### Adopting Energy Efficient Practices

We have explored various energy efficient options that work with our Talara environment. Water efficient measures include flow control devices and rain water tanks. National Solar Grant has enabled the college to install limited solar panels. Over the past few years, we have also upgraded our lighting to meet energy efficient standards.

Students are active contributors in our efforts to care for our environment. T.E.A.K (Talara's Environmentally Aware Kids) is a passionate group of students and staff who meet regularly to proactively care for our environment, in particular our 'Living Classroom'. Classes visit our Living Classroom to experience real-life examples of Australian flora and fauna. Our students have also played an integral

part in reviewing and improving our recycling practices, through peer education and advocating for additional recycling bins.

### Workplace, Health and Safety

Maintaining a healthy and safe working environment is a collective responsibility at Talara Primary College. A dedicated team of 17 staff, from across the college form the School Welfare Team who meet regularly to ensure that inspections, processes and procedures are sustained and improved.

### Facilities

Talara has been built in the PS88 building model, which allows for single classrooms or double teaching spaces as teachers desire. Embracing our commitment to ICT, our school also boasts an extensive use of interactive whiteboards, a STEM design lab, a full learning lab and our Information Access Centre. We are very proud of our performance hall, including its impressive stage and audio visual resources which enhance our strong Performing Arts Program. We also have outdoor, double multipurpose courts, which are fully covered, providing great shade from the Queensland sun.

### Finance

Financial decisions are collaboratively negotiated through strategic planning days. The Finance committee, consisting of the Talara Leadership team, teacher and P&C representatives, allocate funding based on annually developed key deliverables. Our 2018 revenue and expenditure totalled \$2,387,075. Talara Primary College praises the efforts of our dynamic P&C and their financial support of approximately \$70 000 per annum, contributing to curriculum delivery and long-term infrastructure improvements.