

# Learning at School of the Air

## Port Augusta Campus - Open Access College

The School Of The Air students are geographically remote and isolated, living to the north, south, east and west of Port Augusta. A sense of community, belonging and commitment characterises the SOTA community. Families and supervisors work together with teachers to encourage and motivate students' participation and learning based on the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability framework (SACSA). With a commitment to developing cutting edge flexible online learning materials, literacy and numeracy are integrated across all learning areas. An innovative music programme offers choir and instrumental music lessons to students. Language lessons including Spanish or Indonesian are part of all Year 1 – 7 curriculum. Students with differentiated learning requirements are supported in a range of ways including learning intervention and Learning Assistance Programme. Transition points are supported as students move from pre-school with their Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise teacher and as they move on from year 7 to their new learning environments in high school. Destinations for our students include private and public schools including continuation at Open Access College.



Students at School of the Air work in year level class groups with their teacher and participate in daily Centra lessons. Graphics and images are widely used to improve engagement and promote supportive learning environments. Emails and telephone contact are used to enhance communication between students, teachers and supervisors.



The learning programme is enriched with visitors from around Australia and the world. Outreach education services such as the Museum, Art Gallery or Botanic Gardens connect with students through Centra, or face to face visits at Mini Schools.

Assemblies are held each morning promoting a whole school identity. It is a great way of getting messages out to the community. All students have the opportunity to share their news, to discuss the week's work, have a quiz or share work samples. Singing "Happy Birthday" to students celebrating a birthday and recognising "Students of the Week" are assembly highlights. Each year level gets to 'run' an assembly and the children present work sharing, read a poem or story, or tell jokes.

Library lessons are provided each week, with new resources introduced to students and opportunities for students to enter borrowing requests online. The Big Read from the Open Access College Marden Library is a story telling session students of all ages look forward to.



Staff at School of the Air understands the isolation experienced by students and their families and are dedicated to ensuring that students receive an education which is considered first class. As our children grow and develop in this unique situation, isolated by the nature of their environment, it is essential that their formal education be “*out side the square*” Their natural environment, our great Australian outback, including historical records and aboriginal culture are all important parts of a rich and engaging learning programme. Today’s curriculum teaches students to explore diverse cultures and their relationship as Australians with countries around the world.

Students usually receive one home visit a year, from their class teacher. The teacher works with the student, exchanging information with the home supervisor to help with day-to-day school work. These home visits also provide an opportunity for the teacher to assess the student’s progress through testing and observation, something that the student and whole family look forward to.

Four SOTA based itinerant teachers work from host schools: Port Augusta School of the Air, Coober Pedy Area School, Leigh Creek South Area School and Burra Community School. Itinerant teachers provide valuable extra support to remote and isolated Open Access College students from Reception to Year 12.

During the year families, students and school staff make the most of a number of opportunities to come together and participate in face to face learning and celebrate students’ achievements. These include whole school Camp, School Experience Weeks, Host School Days held at the ‘local schools’, Mini-schools, etc. where students are given the opportunity to participate in a face-to-face classroom at SOTA. This can be for two days to five days. The students spend the time working with their teacher peers and friends. Social interaction and group activities are emphasised during classroom experiences.



The SOTA school year culminates in the traditional Get Together in December. Most families and friends of SOTA gather in Port Augusta to celebrate the end of their children’s’ year of learning. This is a very busy time for all, and sometimes it is the only time that students / families get to catch up with each other. The Get Together includes the Wool Show, a Street parade, Sports Day, School Social and Footprint games, ending with presentation awards for various achievements. Santa visit at this time!

Port Augusta School of the Air is one of the three schools that constitute Open Access College. The participation of parents and supervisors is highly valued and central to the success of every student. Parents participate in governance and decision making through the Open Access College Governing Council and a wide number of School of the Air committees, including Outback Parents and Friends and the Committee of Governing Council. We look forward to working in partnership with parents and community as distance education is developed further to make the most of flexible on line environments and technologies.