



Minlaton District School

'By Deeds Not Words'



Dear families & friends,

As we reach the end of another successful year at Minlaton District School, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude and pride to our entire school community. This year has been filled with growth and remarkable achievements by our students and staff. It's truly inspiring to look back and see how far we've come together. In a school "where everyone thrives," each day has shown the power of working as one community dedicated to our children's learning and wellbeing.

From our youngest Reception students to our Year 12 graduates, we have witnessed joy in learning across all year levels. Our educators have embraced inquiry-based learning approaches, encouraging students to ask questions, explore real-world problems, and take charge of their own learning. This shift has sparked curiosity in our classrooms. Students have been actively engaging with content and developing a deeper understanding of their subjects. It's been wonderful to see learners of all ages more confident in voicing their ideas and tackling challenges with enthusiasm. The increase in student engagement and the joy of discovery in our classrooms have shown that when we put students in the driver's seat of their learning, amazing things happen.

One of our key focuses for the last three years has been strengthening student wellbeing and fostering a positive school culture. I am delighted to say we have continued to make great strides in creating an environment where every student feels safe, supported, and valued. Students have shown kindness and respect to one another, contributing to a more inclusive atmosphere at school. It's been heartening to observe older students looking out for younger ones, embodying the family spirit of our R-12 school. The introduction of activities like the morning "Rise & Run" fitness club and mindfulness sessions have helped students start their days energised and focused, underscoring our belief that a healthy body and mind support better learning. Xander was the star of the show clocking in over 150km run! All the students' distances totalled came to an astounding 2800km that's almost here to Brisbane going through Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Awesome work!! I would like to say a huge thankyou on everyone's behalf to Erin Cock who came up with the idea and has overseen the project... check out the distances run here <https://www.minlatonds.sa.edu.au/risenrun>

A highlight in building belonging and connection this year was the Middle School Camp where so many students attended that we had to find additional transport and accommodation for it to go ahead. Our Year 6 to 9 students ventured out on a memorable camp in the South East where they challenged themselves, bonded with each other, and learned new skills beyond the classroom. This experience undoubtedly strengthened friendships and confidence, and we will see those benefits carry back into the school environment.

This year offered numerous opportunities for families and community members to join us in celebrating our students' talents and hard work. A standout event was the recent Primary performance of "The Circus." Our primary students put on two fantastic performances of *The Circus* – a matinee and an evening show – which absolutely delighted audiences. The students' creativity, confidence, and teamwork shone through every act. From the comedy, colourful costumes to the enthusiastic singing and dancing, *The Circus* was a triumph that showcased the arts alive and well at Minlaton. It was wonderful to see parents, grandparents, and friends fill our school gym to support the budding performers. The pride on our children's faces (and perhaps a few happy tears in the audience) said it all – events like this truly bring our community together.

Another key occasion was our School Presentation Evening, which capped off the year on a high note, and wow, what a night it was! We took the time to recognise academic excellence, improvement, citizenship, and sporting and artistic achievements across the school. It was a joy to see so many proud faces as students walked on stage to receive their



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awards and certificates. Our Presentation Evening wasn't just about awards though – it was a celebration of every student's effort and the collective support of teachers and families.

Beyond these events, our students also shone across a wide range of activities throughout 2025. Our individual athletes and sports teams displayed determination and great sportsmanship in inter-school athletics, achieving some terrific wins and, more importantly, many personal bests. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of Mr Fitzgerald, who has successfully secured \$14,750 in sporting grants for our school this year. These funds have supported high-quality coaching sessions and the purchase of new sporting equipment, creating richer opportunities for our students to develop skills, confidence, and a love of physical activity. Our students and staff are incredibly grateful for Fitzzy's time, effort, and commitment in applying for and managing these grants, which have made a significant and lasting contribution to school sport at Minlaton. In recognition of this strong sporting culture, we were also selected to receive a Play Well Way Awards pack worth over \$500 from the Australian Sports Commission, placing us in the top 50 most engaged "Sporting Schools" nationally.

Alongside our strong sporting culture, students also excelled in the Arts this year. Across visual art, drama and music, students demonstrated creativity, skill, and pride in their work. Many students shared impressive artworks through classroom displays and school-based showcases, while others developed their musical talents through rehearsals and performances, including participation in the Yorke Peninsula Band. These opportunities allow students to express themselves, build confidence, and engage with learning in different and meaningful ways.

A pinnacle of 2025 was Minlaton District School winning the South Australian Area School Leaders Association (SAASLA) Best Practice Award. This prestigious state award recognised our school's strength in leadership and our community-focused approach. It was an incredible honour to have our school's hard work acknowledged at the state level. Hearing our school's name called and accepting that award was an amazing moment! This accolade belongs to everyone, our dedicated staff who continually strive for excellence, our students who embrace learning with zest, and our supportive families and community partners who stand with us. The award highlighted that what we are doing here in Minlaton is truly "best practice," and it inspires us to continue innovating and improving. We should all be very proud of this achievement.

We also saw strong engagement in SAASTA programs this year, with a number of our students taking up opportunities to extend their learning, build confidence, and explore future pathways beyond the classroom. A particular highlight was the achievement of Mia Warrior, who designed the winning polo for the 2025 Santos Aboriginal Power Cup. Mia's success was proudly celebrated through SAASTA and reflects her creativity, effort, and willingness to step forward and embrace new opportunities. We are incredibly proud of Mia and all students who represented Minlaton District School through SAASTA this year.

As we conclude the year, it's important to acknowledge the people who make our school such a special place. To our amazing staff thank you for your passion and unwavering commitment to our students. Every success we've noted this year is built on your hard work and care. I want to especially acknowledge a few staff members who deserve a special mention:

- Farewell to Owen Lamb: After five years of dedicated teaching at Minlaton District School, he will be moving on at the end of this year. Owen has been an inspiring science teacher over the years. We thank Owen for his enthusiasm and the positive energy he brought every day. He will be greatly missed by students and colleagues alike. We wish him all the very best in his next chapter and hope he carries fond memories of Minlaton with him.
- I would also like to farewell Clare Deverson: who has made an outstanding contribution to our primary years this year. Clare has consistently drawn positive comments from parents, staff, and students for her caring approach and her warm, genuine manner. She has built strong relationships with children, creating calm and



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supportive learning environments where students feel known and valued. Clare's dedication and kindness have had a meaningful impact on our primary learners, and we thank her sincerely for the difference she has made. We wish her every success and happiness in her next chapter.

- Thank You to Mary-Jayne Hickman: MJ stepped in to teach Middle School Mathematics and Science, and we could not be more grateful for her contributions. We look forward to seeing you around our school community and hope to work with you again in the future.
- Appreciation for Kimberly Hoyle: I also want to express our sincere gratitude to Kimberly for her outstanding work as a Classroom Support SSO this year. Kimberly has been a friendly face and a pillar of support for so many of us. Her patience, kindness, and dedication to student wellbeing have made a real difference in our classrooms. Thank you, Kimberly, for your invaluable contributions.

To all our staff, whether you are continuing next year or embarking on new adventures, please know you are appreciated beyond words. The care and expertise you bring to Minlaton District School are the heart of our success.

Finally, to our students and families: thank you for an incredible year. Students, you have worked hard, grown in character, and achieved so much – be proud of yourselves. Parents and caregivers, your support, be it helping with homework, attending events, or serving on committees, underpins everything we do. This partnership is what makes our school a true community.

As we break for the summer holidays, I encourage everyone to reflect on the wonderful moments we've shared. There is so much to be hopeful for as we look ahead. We will return in the new year with renewed energy, ready to build on our successes and tackle new goals together. Until then, I wish all our families a safe, joyful holiday break. Spend quality time with loved ones, celebrate your children's achievements, and please stay safe if you're traveling over the summer.

Warm regards and best wishes for the New Year,

Andrew Dickinson, Principal