



Specialised Assistance School for Youth

Creating exceptional learning spaces
for young learners



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The Specialised Assistance School for Youth (SASY) based in South Australia was founded on the belief that every young person deserves an education environment where they feel safe, understood, and supported.

Established in 2016 by Dr Maria La Pietra, Nic Pellegrini, and Rosie Stavrou, SASY supports young people who have disengaged from mainstream education.

Once a small site on Chesser Street in Adelaide with just 16 students, SASY is now South Australia's first Special Assistance School. Today, SASY supports more than 240 students across two campuses, employs close to 60 staff, and continues to expand its impact through strong community partnerships.

A holistic model built on trust and wellbeing

SASY's approach is grounded in holistic learning, restorative practice, and trauma-informed care. Rather than focusing solely on academic results, the school looks for innovative ways to meet the needs of young people, and to make them feel confident and able to thrive in their studies.

Co-founder Nic Pellegrini began his career in youth work and vocational education and found that while mainstream education works well for many, it doesn't meet the needs of all young people.

After joining forces with Maria and Rosie to support students with foundational skills and in vocational subjects, this soon grew into supporting young people with the subjects they needed to complete high school.

Nic says students arrive at the school seeking an environment better suited to their needs, and they are warmly welcomed by SASY's inclusive community.

"After we established SASY, enrolments increased steadily through word of mouth, reaching almost 100 students within the first three years. As awareness grew, so did demand. By 2021, our headcount was around 210 students, with waitlists exceeding 100 young people," recalls Nic.

In 2026, demand for middle schooling led to the development of a second campus in Thebarton, separating junior and senior students and enabling more tailored support.

The importance of safe, well-managed spaces

"As SASY continued to grow at pace, the need for consistent, well-managed environments became even more important. Staff move constantly between learning spaces, students require calm and predictable settings, and the school needed a way to manage access across campuses without adding complexity or cost.

Nic says that for SASY, security meant creating spaces where students could feel safe, staff could focus on care and education, and the organisation could continue to grow sustainably.

"The existing security system in place at the original campus was no longer fit for purpose as the school expanded. Operating separate systems across sites made it difficult for us to manage access consistently and it limited our ability to plan," says Nic.

The SASY team wanted a single, scalable security solution that could support multiple campuses, simplify daily operations, and grow alongside the school.

A partnership built on shared values

Based in South Australia, AHT Group has a long-standing relationship with SASY and understood both the practical requirements and the deeper purpose of the school.

"When we looked at what SASY was trying to achieve, it was clear this was about more than a standard security project," says Tim Corbel, Senior Security Engineer at AHT Group.

"This is a community organisation doing critical work, often with limited resources. We wanted to support that in a meaningful way – our wider team has a strong connection to SASY's mission and the impact it has on young people and families across South Australia."

Tim recommended Gallagher Security as the best fit for SASY's needs, particularly for its ability to operate across multiple sites under a single system and scale over time.

After successfully partnering with Gallagher on a variety of projects in sectors like healthcare and local government, Tim reached out to the team to work together again.

Gallagher's Keith Neville, Sales Manager – South Australia and Northern Territory, was pleased to work alongside AHT Group again and to contribute towards the project.

"SASY is doing incredible work in the South Australian community, so we were pleased to support them," says Keith.

Considering SASY's contribution to the community, Gallagher provided a discount on hardware and supplied all software at no charge. AHT donated labour, resources, and all cabling at the new Thebarton campus.

"We deployed Command Centre to support the future migration of the existing city site. This was enhanced through Active Directory integration and car park management for hot-desking. Alongside this, SASY is using OneLink while network infrastructure is being established, and C7000 Controllers and Multi-Tech Readers," says Keith.

This ensured every door was future-ready, giving SASY flexibility to expand or adapt without additional infrastructure costs.

Both the Chesser Street and Thebarton campuses now have a unified approach to access and site management. This allows staff to move seamlessly between campuses and reduces administrative overhead.

Importantly, the system has been designed with flexibility in mind. As SASY continues to grow, it can introduce new workflows, automate processes, and integrate additional sites without disruption.

Strengthening the wider community

"For SASY, community partnerships and in-kind support are critical to its ability to operate and grow," says Keith.

"This project demonstrates how organisations can work together to create meaningful social impact. By combining Gallagher's technology, AHT's expertise and generosity, and SASY's deep understanding of its community, the partnership has helped create safer, more supportive learning environments for our future generations in South Australia."

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Nic Pellegrini, Co-founder - SASY



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