

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

Clifton Hill Primary School

July 2009



PRINCIPLES

The Clifton Hill Primary School community values each student as an individual. We seek to challenge and inspire all our students and to provide them with opportunities to achieve their potential in a purposeful learning environment. We recognise that all students are unique individuals, who learn at different rates, have different requirements within the curriculum and we value the contribution made by every student.

- We will vary the pace and depth of teaching to cater for individual needs.
- We will use and develop programs, resources and materials that address our students' specific needs.
- We will maintain the fundamental principle that fair and equitable access to the school's resources will be afforded to all students.
- We acknowledge that parents have a vital and valuable role in supporting the programs being provided by the school and classroom teachers.
- We believe that education encompasses students' intellectual, social and emotional development in both the classroom and the playground.
- We recognise that participation at school can be challenging for a student with special needs and aim to provide a positive, accepting and non-judgemental environment.
- We will endeavour to use the full resources of the wider community to help students fulfil their potential.

Clifton Hill Primary School:

- welcomes parents of students with special needs, acknowledging that the neighbourhood school is the first point of contact for all students because of the importance of maintaining and building local networks.
- is committed to providing accurate information regarding Clifton Hill Primary School as an educational option for students whilst liaising with relevant Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) specialists to ensure parents are provided with detailed and balanced information about available educational options and are thereby able to make a choice of school location(s) for their child.
- recognises the importance of accurate and thorough assessment conducted in a range of settings as critical in determining the appropriateness of enrolment and as a basis for a student's school program.
- will join with parents to advocate for students in achieving adequate resources at school.

- acknowledges the importance of providing adequate support for parents during the enrolment process and throughout their child's schooling.
- recognises the actual or potential vulnerability of students with special needs and seeks to address this in the playground and classroom.
- promotes educational opportunities for students with special needs which are non-discriminatory and in accordance with the relevant Acts and DEECD guidelines.
- considers the attitude, skills and knowledge in the area of special needs as part of the selection process for all prospective teaching and integration staff.
- encourages good practice by promoting appropriate professional development opportunities for all staff.

Within the diversity of students who come to our school there exists a group of students who would be educationally at risk if they were not offered a specific education policy and program. These students are identified as having special needs. The Special Needs Policy incorporates three program initiatives:

Students with Disabilities
Gifted and Talented Students
Underachieving Students

Some students may have needs that can be addressed by more than one of these program initiatives. All information provided as part of this policy will be handled in accordance with the Clifton Hill Primary School Privacy Policy and DEECD guidelines.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PURPOSE

To reflect the school policy of supporting all students in reaching their potential. To cater to the needs of students with disabilities, by offering educational challenge, stimulation, acknowledgement and support to these students. To acknowledge the importance of considering the welfare of all students, parents and staff in the school community. To reflect the Special Needs Policy principles within each of the program initiatives.

GUIDELINES

The Disabilities policy and program is based on the following resources:

- Program for Students with Disabilities Handbook – DEECD.
- Victorian Essential Learning (VELs) framework.
- Related course advice.
- Relevant literature and teaching resources.

DEFINITION

Disabilities are defined by criteria based on guidelines set by the World Health Organisation. The DEECD considers the allocation of resources to students with a physical disability, a severe behaviour disorder, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, visual impairment or autism spectrum disorder. Clifton Hill Primary School acknowledges that the guidelines adopted by the DEECD do not cover all students with a disability that significantly impacts on their ability to learn. The school will, in conjunction with parents, continue to advocate for an appropriate level of resources to meet the educational needs of these students.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Disabilities program will be implemented according to DE&T guidelines. Input, resourcing and on-going support will be provided by a range of individuals, including:

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| * parent(s)/guardian(s) of student | * integration aides |
| * parent/guardian advocate | * Principal |
| * Special Needs coordinator | * class teachers |
| * specialist teachers | * associated professionals eg |
| * DEECD professionals | paediatricians, psychiatrists, |
| | psychologist, speech therapist, |
| | counsellors, Human Services staff |

The involvement of these individuals will be appropriate to the needs of individual students and situations. Implementation of each student's program will be planned and monitored through the Program Support Group. (Refer to the Disabilities Handbook for a full description of Program Support Groups).

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The Disabilities program for each student funded under the *Students With Disabilities* criteria will be assessed and evaluated every term, via the regular meetings of Program Support Groups for each student. Program Support Groups will operate according to DEECD guidelines, planning, monitoring and reviewing each student's progress. The Program Support Group will provide

advice to the Principal on the specific educational needs of each student with a disability and the most appropriate use of available resources.

Teachers will develop their own assessment and evaluation strategies for monitoring student progress, taking into account the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, where appropriate. Reports prepared by other professionals will provide additional assessment and evaluation tools, as required.

Priorities will be re-assessed and the overall program re-evaluated, by the Principal and Special Needs Coordinator, whenever new applications, re-applications or re-appraisals are submitted during the school year.

Information regarding program content, program delivery and student outcomes should be developed in collaboration with the relevant class teacher(s) and/or coordinator.

Concerns regarding the process followed by the Program Support Group or the management of resources by the school should be resolved, if possible, with the Principal. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved at the school level, the concern should be forwarded in writing to the relevant Student Wellbeing branch of DEECD.

UNDER ACHIEVING STUDENTS

PURPOSE

To reflect the school policy of supporting all students in reaching their potential. To cater to the needs of the students who are identified as underachieving, by offering educational challenge, stimulation, acknowledgement and support to these students. To acknowledge the importance of considering the welfare of all students, parents and staff in the school community. To reflect the Special Needs Policy principles within each of the program initiatives.

GUIDELINES

DEFINITION

Underachievers are students who, in a significant way, and for a variety of reasons, are not working to their potential. Underachievement can be defined as a discrepancy between the child's actual school performance and their expected level of performance.

IDENTIFICATION

Underachieving students can display learning difficulties in the areas of literacy and/or numeracy. They may experience a delay in the acquisition and use of skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning and mathematical abilities. Problems in the areas of behaviour and social interaction may be present in parallel with these learning difficulties, but do not by themselves characterise a child as being identified as an underachiever. Underachieving students can also be those who are not reaching their expected potential due to disengagement with school. This impeded progress may be caused by a variety of factors, including inappropriate curriculum, the impact of factors related to the home environment or other social/emotional issues.

Speaking English as a Second Language (ESL) may result in students under achieving. They may not have a learning difficulty, however their understanding of English may result in underachieving in areas of the curriculum.

Identification procedures may include teacher referral, behaviour checklists, parent nominations, self-nomination and standardised testing. Identification and monitoring will be ongoing.

IMPLEMENTATION

Classroom teachers will use a variety of teaching/learning strategies to provide for the needs of students with specific learning difficulties and those who are not reaching their potential. These include:

- Parent/teacher interviews where students' strengths and weaknesses are identified and recommendations on programs are made. Individual student learning plans may be developed at this stage based on assessment of the students.
- Flexible groupings within each classroom, in particular during daily Literacy and Numeracy blocks.

The School, in conjunction with the DEECD, will provide access to external classroom support wherever practical. This includes programs such as:

- Speech Therapy.
- Psychological/Guidance Support ie assessment, family counselling.
- Remedial Support ie one-to-one or small group support for focus on specific learning needs.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment and evaluation for individual students will follow school assessment and reporting policy.

An annual evaluation of the policy implementation will include:

- Student achievement as compared to expected level of performance.
- A range of assessment tools used by teachers in accordance with the school assessment and reporting policy.
- Parent, student and teacher feedback.
- Reports prepared by other professionals to provide additional assessment and evaluation.

Information regarding program content, program delivery and student outcomes should be discussed with the relevant class teacher(s) and/or coordinator.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

PURPOSE

To reflect the school policy of supporting all students in reaching their potential. To cater to the needs of the students who are identified as gifted and talented, by offering educational challenge, stimulation, acknowledgement and support to these students. To acknowledge the importance of considering the welfare of all students, parents and staff in the school community. To reflect the Special Needs Policy principles within each of the program initiatives.

GUIDELINES

DEFINITION

Gifted and talented students are those who excel, or have the potential to excel, in general or specific areas. They have inherent natural abilities that, over time, emerge or have the potential to emerge, as special talents. Students may be gifted across all areas of the curriculum; academic, the arts, leadership and sport. They may be gifted in one, or some, of these areas. These students' educational needs may be met in the classroom using the strategies suggested below, but others may have special needs, requiring additional professional input.

IDENTIFICATION

To ensure students are properly identified, the measurement of high level performance as well as the monitoring of curriculum experiences which may develop talent needs to be an ongoing process. A range of indicators will be used. Identification procedures may include teacher referral, behaviour checklists, parent nominations, self-nomination, standardised testing and assessments completed by outside agencies. Identification and monitoring will be ongoing.

IMPLEMENTATION

A range of educational programs will be provided across all the domains of learning to nurture these students. The core curriculum will allow for differentiated learning experiences to be offered once students have been identified as having attained competency in curriculum areas. Programs catered for within classes include:

- Enrichment (a deeper study of a particular topic).
- Extension (a broader study of a particular topic).
- Enabling skills development (teaching students skills such as researching that will allow them to broaden and deepen their own learning boundaries).
- Thinking Curriculum strategies ie multiple intelligences, Habits of Mind.
- Individualised education programs (individual learning plans).
- Grouping with like-minded students for specific program delivery.
- Acceleration (going to a higher grade for tuition). It may be part subject, subject or whole curriculum. These strategies also apply to non-academic areas. * Refer to Protocol for Acceleration (see Appendix).

Programs for gifted and talented students will be integrated into the whole school curriculum in a way that enhances the whole school learning environment. An inclusive approach seeks to cater for gifted students in the classroom using proved programs based on enrichment and extension. The core curriculum may be modified for gifted and talented students, within a facilitative environment that enhances the development of these students.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment and evaluation for individual students will follow school assessment and reporting policy. Comprehensive records will be maintained for any student involved in acceleration or individualised education programs, or any departure from the class program.

An annual evaluation of the policy implementation will include:

- Staff awareness of the needs of gifted and talented students.
- Effectiveness of the identification of gifted and talented students.
- Measuring the improvement in learning outcomes through records of student reports and the Annual Report.
- The adequacy of staff resources and program resources.

Information regarding program content, program delivery and student outcomes should be discussed with the relevant class teacher(s) and/or coordinator.

REVIEW: 2012