

SPECIAL NEEDS

Policy No. 021

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS:

We recognise children have different learning styles and ability levels. We also recognise that individual children may have talents, disabilities and impairments, behavioural, emotional or social issues that require addressing.

We recognise a child's self esteem, individual strengths and interests should also be addressed.

Further, we recognise the right for all children to have these special needs addressed and the responsibility for the home-school partnership to create structures that ensure these needs are catered for. The responsibility for addressing children's special needs rests with the school staff, their parents and carers.

We also recognise the need to constantly review children's needs to ensure they are placed in structures that ensure they can succeed, particularly when children have behavioural problems or are not achieving to expectations. This policy, and the Discipline and Behaviour Management Policies must reflect these needs and ensure children are living and working in structures that maximise their chances of success and minimise their chances of failure.

We believe that all involved in the care and education of our children need to work together, with maximum utilization of all available skills and resources, to achieve the best possible outcomes.

GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFICATION AND ADDRESSING OF SPECIAL NEEDS

The information leading to the identification of a child with special needs may come from a range of areas, especially from the following sources:

- Guidance officers
- Teachers and professional staff
- Parents and carers
- Visiting Teachers
- Paediatricians
- Health Care Nurse and Health Professionals

Special needs children will have their needs addressed and monitored by a Special Needs Support Group (SNSG). An SNSG will be made up of:

- The child's parent/carers
- Class teacher
- Appropriate Special Needs Officers
- Any other parties, SNSGC (Special Needs Support Group Coordinator), principal, GO's (Guidance Officers), Visiting teachers, etc, the parents/carers or class teacher would like to include in the SNSG for one or more meetings

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The Principal and the Special Needs team will have overall responsibility for coordinating and resourcing SNSG's. The coordinators will ensure that:

- SNSG's are set up and function in the best interests of the child
- the initial meeting is held and that SNSG's meet at least once a term. This will only be varied with the full agreement of all SNSG members including the Coordinator
- SNSG's are supported with Professional Development as appropriate
- Learning plans are passed on and implemented with the child when going to other classes, other years and / or other schools as required, and new SNSG's are established as appropriate

The SNSG's will:

- Meet at least once a term. This will only be varied with the full agreement of all SNSG members
- Develop Individual Learning Plans as appropriate and ensure the plans are implemented and evaluated at each SNSG meeting
- Ensure evaluation is appropriate to the special needs and is accurate
- Liaise with the SNSG Coordinator and principal to ensure they have the resources and information required to fulfil their responsibilities
- Provide a written assessment of the progress of the child in the Individual Learning Plan Evaluation Form to all members of the SNSG, the SNSGC at the EOY or end of program as appropriate
- Ensure all SNSG members complete and sign the ILP at the end of each SNSG meeting and arrange date of next meeting

Roll Responsibilities – Special Needs Officer and Teachers

We recognise that teachers will have solid understanding of academic areas, whereas, to varying degrees, Special Needs Officers (SNO's), may not have been fully trained in these areas. Similarly, the SNO's may well have a much higher level of expertise in the area they are focussing on, especially in areas such as Autism and other specified conditions.

It is the responsibility of each of us to ensure we are as well informed as possible in all our responsibility areas. All professional staff, SNO's, Teachers and Principal/s and Support Officers from outside the school will ensure they:

- utilise the experience and knowledge of other professional staff to ensure they have the maximum information and expertise in their area of responsibility
- manage and resource the time required to talk with their colleagues to receive this 'professional development' and collegiate guidance and support.

Special Needs Protocol

The following are the requirements for all SNSG's. Each member of the SNSG is to be given a copy of this Protocol and ensure they understand and are comfortable with the requirements.

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All parties must ensure confidentiality of all information in the Special Needs process. Any breach of confidentiality must be immediately communicated to the principal

1. Identify special needs child
2. Give notification of Special Needs child to the Coordinator
3. Arrange for any preliminary evaluation as necessary from SSSO's, paediatricians, etc. (this is done with parental consent after preliminary discussion)
4. Arrange an SNSG meeting and notify Special Needs Coordinator of the date of this meeting by stating it on the resultant ILP
5. Complete the initial Individual Learning Plan (ILP) at the SNSG meeting and present it at all following meetings to be reviewed and modified if necessary
6. Special information and requests to go to coordinator for action.
7. All ILP's are to be sequentially numbered, including year (eg '02 – 1. Give copies of the ILP, as accepted by the SNSG, to the parents/carers, and coordinator. The class teacher will also put a copy in the child's file and the coordinator to put a copy into the central Special Needs file.
8. Coordinator to ensure meetings have taken place and all reports presented and filed as required
9. SNSG Coordinator to arrange any pre-meeting support and information requested by SNSG's and this is to be stated on the ILP.
10. All ILP's must have the date of the next meeting recorded
11. The SNSG coordinator will ensure all meetings are conducted on the agreed date. If this is not done the Coordinator is required to ensure completion if the meeting at the earliest possible time, and arrange resourcing, including time release if necessary.

Guidelines for SNSG ILP's, including ILP's for D&I children

1. ILP development, particularly in setting Goals and Implementation Strategies, will incorporate the following specialist advice from Student Support Officers as appropriate
2. **Long term Goals** (D&I), must be as specific as possible without limiting achievement targets
3. **Annual Goals** (SNSG overall goals), must be specific and measurable
4. **Short Term Goals** must be specific and measurable and be directly reflected in all Implementation Strategies

Implementation Strategies will specifically detail 'accommodation and modification' to programs and classroom practice for D&I children, and other SN children if appropriate.

NB – When Goals and Implementation Strategies relate to mainstream curriculum they will be measured utilizing normal evaluation tools, eg Kidmap etc.

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Appendix 1

Individual Learning Plan and D&I Plan Forms

Appendix 2

-Parent/Carer letter for all identified Special Needs Children

*(To be supplied to all SNSG members with Special Needs Policy attached)

Appendix 3

Casual