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		GC/SG 2013	SG	Nov 2013	2018
		LF	SC	July 2016	2018

Education Support Policy and Procedure

Policy Rationale and Definition

All children are individuals and learn differently. Our Montessori multi-age classes allow for meaningful differentiation, support, extension and acceleration opportunities for all students.

We aim to put in place practices and procedures which will ensure Margaret River Montessori School provides, within available resources, effective programmes, to address the needs of students who have individualised educational needs.

Parents must agree to provide all known and relevant information at the point of enquiry and before enrolment is accepted, to enable the school to determine our capacity to support each child's needs.

The process of enabling enable students with support (both gifted and talented and those requiring learning support) to benefit as fully as possible from their education, presents teachers and all other professionals and administrators involved, with some of the most challenging and rewarding work that Margaret River Montessori School can offer.

The Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Standards in Education provide the basis for all practices at our school in relation to Education Support.

Policy Objectives

1. Our school will endeavour to provide a structured, enriching educational experience for all children that is inclusive, satisfying their individual educational needs and preparing them for the next phase in their education.
2. The school will provide a rigorous, relevant and personalised education for all enrolled children.
3. The expectation is, that all students will have access to the Montessori Curriculum, at a level which supports their learning needs and ensures sound progress, whilst maintaining effective pace and experiencing challenging tasks.
4. Our school maintains and respects equal opportunities for all its members, irrespective of gender, religion, race or disability.
5. The major components of the strategy for managing students at educational risk are :
 - encouragement of collaboration between school, families, health professionals and other relevant organisations.
 - development of procedures and guidelines for teachers to assist in continuous identification and intervention;

- strengthened accountability processes to demonstrate that the needs of identified students are being met;
- dissemination of good practice and support for the extension of good practice models.

Implementation

Students with additional education needs may be characterised as students:

- who are at risk of not achieving the outcomes described in the National Montessori Curriculum and the Western Australian Curriculum Outline, and the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- whose achievement level, rate of progress or behaviour differs noticeably from past performances and/or that of his/her peers
- who are under-performing
- who are not engaged in their schooling

A student has a learning difficulty if he/she:

- a. has a significantly greater difficulty accessing the curriculum than the majority of children at the same age
- b. has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of the educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age.

The following seven areas are considered essential components for effective planning for students with education support needs.

a) Identification and Assessment. The school has a clearly defined process for the early identification of students with education support needs. This may be through the enrolment process or after the child has begun schooling. See Enrolment and Admissions Policy and related forms, Student Needs Hierarchy Flow Chart and Student Needs Identification Form.

Monitoring individual student progress on a regular basis and continuous identification at all ages is necessary.

Parents will be informed by teachers as soon as a concern arises.

Identification involves the gathering of information about the student and the making of an initial assessment of the student's educational needs

- a. from the school –
 - using the Students Needs Identification Form
 - class records, including any from other classes/schools
 - diagnostic tests
 - NAPLAN test
 - bench-mark tests
 - anecdotal records
 - teacher observations (level of attainment and behaviour)

- Principal (levels of attainment and behaviour)

b. from the parent –

- views of the child's health and development
- perceptions of the child's performance, progress and behaviour at school and at home
- factors contributing to any difficulty
- action the school may take

c. from the student –

- personal perceptions of any difficulties
- how these may be addressed

d. from other sources

- any other information already available to the school from health, social and/or psychological sources

On the basis of the information now available, the Principal, in consultation with the teacher will decide whether:

- to continue the student's current educational arrangements, no additional help being needed,
- to access assistance/ time from Numeracy and Literacy support person
- to seek more advice and support, or
- to give the student extra support by differentiating the curriculum, and monitoring and reviewing the student's progress.
- to document needs and adjustments in a Documented Plan.

The expression of concern, the gathering of information consideration the student's educational needs, may combine to resolve problems. It may be that no further action is needed at this point. The teacher should record such a decision and inform the student's parents and the Principal. Even though the teacher has decided that no special provision is needed, the Principal will consult the student's teacher about the student's progress, regularly, until it is clear that the student's progress is no longer likely to give cause for concern.

b) Curriculum. The school follows the Montessori National Curriculum and the WA Curriculum and Assessment Outline. The delivery of this curriculum is the responsibility of the Principal and the teachers. This must be responsive to the individual needs of students with education support needs. Curriculum, in its broadest sense, refers to all the planned experiences provided by our school to facilitate student learning and development. It includes teaching and learning programmes, with appropriate assessment, recording and reporting.

c) Planning for improvement. The use of performance and diagnostic data and outcomes as key elements of planning for students with education support needs is fundamental. Participation and behaviour are also key elements to consider. Systematic monitoring of student progress must also take place. The School will also ensure the allocation of resources, within available means, for students with education support needs in accordance with the plan for improvement. Documented Plans are to be used when education support needs

have been identified by an outside agency or by the school, and when adjustments are required. See Documented Plan Template.

d) Collaboration. The collaboration with key stakeholders in the development of educational plans for students with education support needs is fundamental. Effective education takes place when all key stakeholders are included; the student, the parents, appropriate outside professionals and the school. At MRMS a partnership is formed between home and school, ensuring that learning is supported in both contexts. The School and families may require the help of outside agencies to provide information and support.

e) The Learning Environment. Our school must continue to provide, to the best of our ability, a learning environment that is responsive to, and supports, the needs of students with differentiated needs.

f) Reporting. The establishment of reporting practices that provide key stakeholders with meaningful information to improve learning/behavioural outcomes is fundamental. Parents should be notified, as soon as there is an indication that a student's achievement level, rate of progress or behaviour differs noticeably from past performances and compared to that expected for his/her age. Effective reporting requires a broad range of formal and informal, oral and written communication strategies.

g) Professional Development. Our school continues to address the professional development requirements of its teachers with regard to providing the best service for students with differentiated educational needs. Appropriate professional development for all staff is considered an important factor in assisting them to support students with education support needs.

Providing Additional Support

Refer to AISWA Students with Disability File. All additional support should be recorded on a Documented Plan. This plan can be developed with the aid of outside specialists, but should usually be implemented within the classroom. Any additional assistance and curriculum adjustment must be recorded on the plan. The plan should set out:

- Type of plan
- action : involvement of other adults and their role, the frequency and timing of that involvement, use of external specialists, including frequency and timing, specific programmes/activities/materials/equipment
- help from parents
- targets to be achieved in a given time
- any medical requirements
- monitoring and assessment arrangements
- review arrangements and date

Targets

Specific targets should be set for all aspects of the education plan. Parents should always be fully informed of the action the school proposes to take. The teacher should set a review date, within a period of a term.

Review

Documented Plans should be reviewed at least at the end of each term or more if required. (Teacher and parent usually, but may need to include the Principal)

At the meeting focus should be on the following:

- progress made by the child
- effectiveness of the education plan
- updated information and advice
- future action

Outcomes

If the child's progress has been at least satisfactory, an amended Documented Plan may be drawn up. This should set new targets in the light of the experience of the first plan. If progress remains satisfactory after two review periods, the teacher, in consultation with the Principal, may decide to gradually increase the period between reviews. This should be recorded and dated. If the child's progress continues to be at least satisfactory, within this framework of planning and review, for at least two review periods, the teacher, consulting with the Principal, may decide that the student no longer needs external specialist intervention and education support provision. This should be recorded and dated. Parents should be included and kept informed at every stage in their child's assessment, monitoring, review and evaluation.

Related Documents and legislation

School Education Act 1999, Part 2, Divisions 3 and 5, Sections 67, 73, 87

School Education Regulations 2000, Part 3, Division 5

Disability Discrimination Act

Disability Standards in Education

Privacy Act

Admission and Enrolment Policy and all related forms

Documented Template

Student Needs Hierarchy Flow Chart

Student Needs Identification Form

Steps for Teachers see also Student Needs Hierarchy Flow Chart below

1. Teacher receives new student into their class with known additional education needs OR Teacher identifies a student with possible additional education needs.
2. Monitor for a few weeks maximum. Keep anecdotal records as needed to check for patterns of behaviour. Consult with past teachers/student file. Parents should be notified of concerns.
3. If concerns prevail, teacher should compile appropriate assessment data to complete "Student Needs Identification Form". Provide form to Principal, will include student on our "Monitoring List".
4. Principal will consult with class Teacher and Education Support Teacher/s.
5. Further assessment may take place by Education Support Teacher/s.
6. Referral to School Psychologist or Community Health may take place. Parent permission will need to be sought.
7. If intervention is deemed appropriate a Documented Plan will be created by the class teacher in consultation with the Education Support Teacher/s.
8. The Documented Plan may detail in class, in school, at home and/or external support and should set clear targets. It should be developed in collaboration with parents and it should be reviewed at least each semester with parents.
9. All confidential reports by outside agencies are to be kept in the Principal's locked office files, not in Student files in classrooms.

