



STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY POLICY

Rationale

St Joseph's is committed to providing a safe and educationally supportive environment that values and encourages participation by all students and employees, including those with disabilities.

It is our policy that:

- Students with disabilities participate in education and training without discrimination;
- Students with disabilities have opportunities to access the school curriculum and achieve educational outcomes, in the same manner as students without disabilities;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary, to ensure students with disabilities are able to participate in all activities available to students without disabilities;
- Individualised programs will be developed for students with disabilities in consultation with parents/carers and relevant experts;
- All processes are accessible and transparent; and
- Disability discrimination prevention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

Reasonable Adjustments

St Joseph's will provide reasonable adjustments upon consultation with the prospective student with a disability and their parents/carers to assist the student undertake education offered.

Whether an adjustment is reasonable will depend on balancing the student's learning needs with the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with a disability, the school, staff and other students.

Depending on the needs of the student, adjustments may include modifications to school facilities, procedures and resources.

Modifications to enable student access to school facilities and participate in everyday school life include adjustments to toilets, ramps, safety railings, the gymnasium, computer rooms and laboratories to ensure students with disabilities can access these facilities safely.

St Joseph's is not required to provide adjustments where doing so would cause unjustifiable hardship to the school.

All processes for adjustments within the school, including review and grievance procedures, will be transparent. All decisions will be made in a timely way that optimises the student's participation in education and training.

Unjustifiable hardship is determined via an individual assessment of the prospective student's needs balanced with the costs associated with additional staffing, the provision of special resources or modifications and health and safety and duty of care requirements.

See Appendix 2 for more information

Aims

To ensure that students with disabilities have programs tailored to meet their needs.

Implementation

- The collection of data underpins the process for identifying students needing support. St Joseph's Assessment Schedule ensures Literacy and Numeracy data informs staff of students whose learning is most at risk. St Joseph's staff follow the School Referral Process in flagging students for screening.
- A Learning Adjustment Leader is assigned, whose responsibility is to oversee and coordinate learning adjustments for students with the assistance of the Principal, DOSCEL (Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited) and Program Support Group.
- Funding from the Australian Government for students with disability is based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) through the student with disability loading. This is determined by explicit criteria set down by the Federal Government. Students are counted in the NCCD if they receive ongoing adjustments at school due to disability.
- The Learning Adjustment Leader may assist in coordinating referrals to other agencies as appropriate and liaising with them to enhance the learning of the student. Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Psychology and Paediatric providers frequently guide the modifications required to the student program or strategies to support vulnerable students.
- Program Support Groups (PSG) are established to meet in Week 5/6 of Term 1, and Week 3 of Terms 2-4, to review needs of the student and facilitate curriculum planning.
- The aim of the PSG meeting is to: ensure that those with the most knowledge of, and responsibility for the student,
 - work together to establish shared goals for the student's educational future,
 - plan reasonable adjustments for the student to access the curriculum,
 - provide educational planning that is ongoing throughout the student's life and
 - monitor the progress of the student.
- Personalised Learning Plans are formulated and implemented for students who receive extensive or substantial adjustments to access the curriculum or who have particular additional or specific needs.
- The Personalised Learning Plans are completed by teachers and include educational goals based on the Victorian Curriculum.
- Communication with relevant consultants and support agencies will be undertaken on a needs basis.
- Transition discussions are undertaken between kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.
- Adjustments are implemented with the assistance of Educational Support Officers working with classroom teachers. Assistance is subject to the amount of funding. The classroom teacher is responsible for the work given to the officer.
- An Educational Support Officer's timetable is flexible depending on other structures operating in the school at the time.
- Parent concerns are to be addressed to the classroom teacher who is responsible for curriculum delivery. The classroom teacher may seek advice from the Learning Adjustment Leader.

RELATED POLICIES

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Student Welfare Policy
- Assessment and Reporting Policy

REVIEW

Ratified: November 2017

Reviewed: June 2025

This policy will be reviewed as part of the School Improvement Plan.

Appendix 1.

Program Support Group Meetings INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

WHAT IS A PSG?

The PSG (Program Support Group) is a meeting between the school and parents to plan for and support the child's learning. This learning is recorded in the PLP (Personalised Learning Plan).

PSG meetings occur each term at St Joseph's school.

The school is responsible for ensuring that the PSG process is conducted for identified students.

A coordinator from the school will contact you to arrange appointment times.

PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:

- Classroom teacher
- Learning Adjustment Leader
- Parents/guardians

Others, as required may include:

Principal, Counsellor, support teachers, advocate, interpreter, therapist, other specialist representatives

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE PSG MEETING?

The purpose of the PSG meeting is to:

- Establish and prioritise short and/or long term goals and learning outcomes for each term
- Identify interventions, strategies and resources
- Briefly review background information
- Progress towards identified goals is monitored and reviewed regularly
- Discuss new information which may impact on the goals.
- Record participants present, minutes and set next date

PARENTS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUP (PSG) TEAM

HOW CAN PARENTS PREPARE FOR THE PSG MEETING?

It is important for parents to contribute to the development of their child's Personal Learning Plan.

Prior to the meeting you could consider:

- Your child's strengths and challenges
- What your child enjoys doing
- Your long term goals for your child
- Your main hopes for your child this year
- Other services supporting your child
- What help has your child received in the past—what has worked well
- Any other considerations

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Following the meeting, participants will receive a copy of the PSG notes and the PLP.

The interventions, strategies and supports outlined in the PLP are put into place.

Progress towards identified goals is monitored and reviewed regularly.

PSG meetings will occur in Week 5 of Term 1 and Week 3 of Terms 2-4.

Parents who attend PSG meetings do not need to attend Parent Teacher Interviews.

WHO NEEDS A PLP?

Students who receive extensive or substantial adjustments to access the curriculum or who have particular additional or specific needs.

WHEN ARE PLPs DEVELOPED?

- As soon as possible and practical after a student has been identified as having specific needs.

WHAT IS A PERSONAL LEARNING PLAN?

A Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) is a working document designed by teachers in collaboration with stakeholders that informs the ongoing planning, delivery and evaluation of a student's educational program.

The PLP

- Identifies the student's individual needs and priorities for learning
- Outlines short and long term educational goals for a student and the actions, strategies, modifications and adjustments that will be used
- Is a flexible living document that is reviewed and modified over time
- Assigns responsibility and accountability for implementing and evaluating the plan
- Provides an ongoing record to ensure continuity of learning

Appendix 2

More information about adjustments.

It Is Never Appropriate to Use Another Student as an Adjustment

As part of our commitment to equity, safety, and inclusion, it is essential to recognize that:

It is never appropriate to use another student as an "adjustment" for the behaviour, regulation, or support of a peer.

Why This Matters:

- Every student has the right to feel **safe, respected, and supported** at school.
- Using one student to manage or regulate another places an **unfair emotional and social burden** on that child.
- This approach can lead to issues such as **anxiety, confusion about boundaries, social conflict**, and potential trauma for the student being used as a "buffer" or support.
- **Adjustments must be adult-led**, designed to support individual student needs without compromising the wellbeing or rights of others.

Appropriate Alternatives:

- Use **adult support**, such as an Education Support Officer or teacher, to assist students with regulation or conflict resolution.
- Implement **individualized strategies**, such as quiet spaces, sensory tools, or behaviour support plans.
- Foster **peer inclusion** through structured and voluntary social programs (e.g., buddy systems), not as a behavioral management tool.

Key Principle:

All students deserve to be supported for who they are, not used to support someone else's needs. Adjustments should always be carefully planned, respectful, and grounded in professional responsibility.