

## Disabilities Policy - Student

### Audience: School Community

### Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to set out guiding principles for the support of students with diagnosed disabilities at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School.

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's Mission Statement affirms the goal "to provide the knowledge, character development and sense of community which will enable each child to develop to their full capacity in body, mind and spirit...". Consequently, the School seeks to accommodate the individual needs of its students, academically and pastorally, by identifying and supporting each student to maximise their learning, social and emotional outcomes. Where students are unable to perform and achieve age appropriate standards and expectations, the school offers structures, personnel and processes to assist individual students to participate in the School day and reach their potential, such as is reasonable with the skill set of staff, and resources, in regular school settings.

Under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (drawn from the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*) an education provider, such as St Paul's, like all schools, will make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate students with disabilities. 'An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students'.

St Paul's approach to all students is inclusive wherever possible, taking into account the level of impairment involved and the special needs of the student concerned, balanced with the needs of other students who may be affected. However, significant student deficit in basic literacy, numeracy, self-management, general wellbeing and progress may warrant some program support with specialised support staff. This requirement may necessitate some withdrawal from normal classes to be effective.

### Definition

A Student with Disability (SWD), who is eligible for additional school support compared to their peers, is a student who is in a non-government school and who has been assessed by a person with relevant qualifications as having intellectual, sensory, physical, social/emotional or multiple impairments to a degree that satisfies the criteria for enrolment in special education services or programs provided by the State or Territory in which the school or centre is located.

In Victoria, State Special School qualifying IQ scores are in the range of 50-70. Special Developmental School qualifying IQ scores are <50. The IQ score to attract severe intellectual

disability funding in Victorian Schools is <70 (or 'two standard deviations or more below the mean score on a standardised IQ test').

The following students are not classified as Students with Disabilities (SWD):

- a student whose only impairment is a specific learning difficulty or for whom remedial education or remedial support is appropriate, and
- overseas students.

## Rights and Responsibilities

St Paul's treats all students with disabilities as individuals. Our goal is to:

- Understand the needs of each child.
- Provide an educational program to meet the particular needs of each child, within the parameters of a regular school setting.
- Provide reasonable resources to support the education of each child.
- Meet regularly with parents for mutual sharing of information and insights. These meetings will occur once per term for funded students.
- Educate staff and students on the needs and strengths of students with disabilities.

In pursuing these goals the following parameters will apply:

- The education of other children will not be adversely affected.
- The School has limited resources which are to be applied with due consideration for all students.
- The quality of the School's educational offering is not to be compromised.

Records will be required and kept of each student's assessments and the types of special education services provided.

## Procedure

Under changed Australian Government funding arrangements in 2014, it is up to the individual school to make decisions about how much funding will be allocated to support students with a disability, and how that funding is to be used. No longer does the Government tag funds to particular students in Independent Schools. This allows the School to allocate funds to best meet the needs of the students with disabilities, as no two students (despite a similar diagnosis) are the same, or have identical needs.

Each year, the respective Heads of School and the Head of Individual Education Programs (IEP) will be asked to submit details of the educational support needs for students whose specialist assessments place them in one or more of the seven categories of disability (Intellectual, Severe Language Disorder, Severe Emotional Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Physical

Disability/Chronic Health Impairment, Vision Impairment and Hearing Impairment) to the School Executive. Testing results will be required before additional classroom funding can take place, in order to ensure that the School is best able to meet individual student needs. The type of testing required will be determined by the school, but at this stage, will follow the requirements set out in the *Students with Disabilities Handbook 2014 (ISV)*; copies of which are available from the School. Costs for this testing will be the responsibility of the parents.

The School will provide sufficient resources to meet the student's learning needs, based on the evaluation of the assessment data required, classroom observation (where possible) and class teacher feedback. The level of support determined by the School will be evaluated each semester and will vary, as deemed appropriate, to sufficiently meet the learning needs of the student at different developmental stages. For example, a student who requires 3 days a week aiding in Prep, in order to integrate fully into the class, may only require 2 days per week by Year 1. It is the School's objective, where possible, to enable students with disabilities to eventually fully integrate into their classes without substantial individual support.

If parents would like their child to receive additional support or specialised services that are beyond the 'sufficient resources' determined by the School it is possible for them to pay for these additional services. The respective Head of School is the best person with whom to discuss such requests.

St Paul's utilises a number of mechanisms to assist the education of students with disabilities.

The School employs a number of personnel to provide specialised support of students with diverse, high individual needs, as follows:

- i) A counselor/psychologist
- ii) Learning support staff (IEP staff)
- iii) School chaplains
- iv) Pastoral support structures - involving Mentor Group Teachers, Heads of Year (HOY) & Heads of School (HOS)
- v) A careers officer and external health professionals, on a needs basis.

Students with disabilities are also managed by class teachers who will, with advice from the IEP Department, make some modification to their teaching style, class strategies and assessment tasks to cater for such students.

Modification processes vary in degree and type and may encompass class work, homework and/or examinations (NB: Senior School examination special provisions are determined by VCE protocols for special provision and are determined in consultation with the VCE Co-ordinator). If any course work is modified, a modified report will also be constructed to accurately reflect the work completed and the academic level of the individual student.

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