

## THE PATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Inclusion

#### Rationale:

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Students with disabilities have a right to attend a mainstream government school, and to have their individual needs addressed.

*Exclusion* occurs when students are directly or indirectly prevented from or denied access to education in any form.

*Segregation* occurs when the education of students with disabilities is provided in separate environments designed or used to respond to a particular or various impairments, in isolation from students without disabilities.

*Integration* is a process of placing persons with disabilities in existing mainstream educational institutions, as long as the former can adjust to the standardized requirements of such institutions

*Inclusion* involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences.

An inclusive school is one where there is effective communication and collaboration between home and school, where there are high expectations for all learners and where diversity is valued and embraced.

A student with a 'disability' means a student impaired to an extent that this student's educational, social and emotional progress necessitates the support of special educational provisions and/or related services.

An education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with disability. 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. (Disability Standards for Education 2005).

Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion.

#### Aims:

- All curriculum programs will be inclusive of all students.
- Communication with relevant consultants and support agencies will be undertaken on a needs basis.
- Professional development relating to relevant disabilities, as well as disabilities funding processes, will be made available to all appropriate staff as required.

### **Implementation:**

- The welfare and safety of all students, teachers and inclusion aides will be a high priority at all times.
- Equality of access and participation in regular educational and social programs, which cater for students' individual needs, regardless of disability.
- Student learning through a curriculum that is accessible to all students, in a safe and supportive whole school community.
- Students who attract Disabilities funding have programs tailored to meet their special requirements.
- Those with the most knowledge of, and responsibility for the student, work together to establish goals for the student's educational future.
- Every student has access to the full range of programs offered.
- Celebrate diversity found among all learners.

### **Implementation (of PSD funding):**

- All students who are funded under the Disabilities Program are welcome at our school.
- A staff member will be assigned responsibility to coordinate the Disabilities Program at our school, including the coordination of applications for funding, the coordination of Student Support Groups, the development and implementation of program budgets, coordination of staff professional development and all other issues related to students with disabilities and their respective program needs.
- The appraisal process for applications will occur at the earliest opportunity to provide the maximum potential for applications to be successful, and to ensure a smooth transition for new students into our school setting.
- The Student Support Group process will be fully explained to all parties.
- Student Support Groups will be established for all eligible students to facilitate curriculum planning and resource provision.
- Student Support Groups will be invited to meet at least once per term, and will make recommendations to the principal regarding the development and implementation of individual student programs including student achievement goals, timelines and methods of evaluation, the use of support staff and external consultants, and the use of any additional resources required. All meetings will be documented and available to all members.
- The Principal, in conjunction with Inclusion Co-ordinator will make the decisions about placement of integrated students in Term 4 of each year. Decisions will be made to best meet the needs of all children concerned.
- Social groups will be implemented for children where appropriate and when funding allows.
- An informal transition/familiarisation process will be implemented towards the end of the year to prepare integrated children for the year ahead.
- Social stories will be put together at the end of each year where appropriate and relevant to prepare children for the year ahead.
- Inclusion aides will liaise with parents on day to day issues such as socialization, behaviour, coping skills etc but will refer parents to the classroom teacher for discussions relating to curriculum issues and learning concerns.
- All students/parents shall be informed of the allocation of classroom teachers at the same time – prior information regarding the allocation of classroom teachers will not be provided.
- Parents will be informed of their child's student support officer for the following year, as soon as practicable after placements have been finalised.

- During their time at The Patch, funded children will have opportunities to work with different Inclusion aides so that they do not become too dependent or familiar with just one person or one approach.
- There will be a “Handing Over” day between Inclusion aides at the beginning of each year where key information on students is passed on to all staff.
- Where time allows, experienced Inclusion staff will provide some modelling and guidance for less experienced staff. This will enable a succession plan for the future with a strong core of experienced inclusion staff. A percentage of all funding allocated for the student with disability will be used to cover extra administrative support, Inclusion aides replacements due to illness, long service leave, superannuation costs and professional development of Inclusion aides, resources such as books and equipment and replacement of Inclusion aides and teachers on days when Student Support Group meetings are held.
- Funding allocations, wherever possible, will take into account supervision within the classroom for academic needs as well as safety and effective socialising skills outside in the playground.
- Liaison with feeder kindergartens will take place during the year to enable familiarity with the needs of children planning to come to The Patch (who funding will need to be applied for). This will assist with applications for funding.
- Where possible, visits to the kindergarten will be made to observe future students in the kindergarten or Early Intervention environment.
- A ‘nutshell’ profile of each student will be available for replacement teachers and Inclusion aides so that there is a clear understanding of each child and the most effective ways of handling them when replacement teachers/student support officer are in the classroom.
- When the need arises, appropriate professional development will be offered to classroom teachers if this can be supported by the school’s P.D. budget.
- When employing Inclusion aides, suitability, training and experience will be considered.
- Regular meetings of the co-ordinator/s and Inclusion aides will be held throughout the year to discuss the program, share strategies, brainstorm ideas and plan ahead. These meetings will also monitor/discuss individual children and brainstorm and share strategies and ideas.

#### **Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s five year review cycle.
- Letters of praise, recognition and thanks relating to the Inclusion program will be kept on file, as will those expressing any concerns.
- Practices will be reviewed, as necessary, in meetings with Inclusion aides and co-ordinator/s and in SSG meetings if required.
- Minutes of meetings will be taken.

This policy was originally formed, and will be reviewed in consultation with all members of the wider community (all staff, parents, students, and interested members of the community) as part of the school’s five - year review cycle.

#### **References:**

United Nations CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 4 (2016) Article 24: Right to inclusive education. 2<sup>nd</sup> Septemeber 2016.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/Pages/default.aspx>

Principal



School Council President

