

# GOOD TEACHING

Inclusive Teaching  
for Students with Disability



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# CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Knowing Your Students	12
Supportive Learning Environments	16
Teaching and Learning	22
Communication	28
Individual Education Planning	36
Assessment and Reporting on Achievement	44
Supporting Students in a Respectful School Culture	50





# INTRODUCTION

The first goal of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* is that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence. This means that all Australian governments and all school sectors must provide all students with access to high quality schooling that is free from discrimination based on gender, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy, culture, ethnicity, religion, health or disability, socioeconomic background or geographic location. [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)

As reflected in the Department of Education's (DoE) *Learners First Strategy 2014–17*, equity is a value we hold highly; we all have the right to challenging and engaging learning opportunities in appropriate settings. The *Respectful Schools and Workplaces* framework outlines the priorities and strategies we are implementing that will contribute to safe and inclusive learning and working environments throughout our department.

*“Teaching inclusively means creating a learning environment where students, irrespective of their background can maximise the potential for their own learning and the learning of others”.\**

Inclusive education means that all students are able to attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood school in age-appropriate, regular classrooms and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school life. Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms and activities so that all students learn and participate together.

Inclusive schools demonstrate respect and support for student diversity through the school's inclusive actions and structures, this includes enabling all students with disability to access appropriate teaching and learning programmes within the *Australian Curriculum*.



If you are teaching students with disability or would like to know more about supportive teaching and learning practices then this resource is for you. The purpose is to give teachers more confidence when planning for and teaching students with disability particularly teachers who have little or no experience in this area. It is also to support teachers in meeting their obligations under the *Disability Standards for Education (DSE) 2005* to ensure that reasonable adjustments are provided for students so that they can participate and succeed in learning experiences on the same basis as their peers.

The Classroom Teacher has responsibility for supporting all students including those with disability within a team approach. Sometimes it will involve a number of specialist support staff contributing to the student's learning programme, in consultation with the student and their family. For example, the school Social Worker may be working closely with the student and their family, alongside the Speech and Language Pathologist, Support Teacher and Classroom Teacher. In other instances expertise may be drawn from an Autism Consultant or School Psychologist. Staff, together with the student and those who know the student well, can pool their expertise and work collaboratively to put in place supports and educational adjustments that promote quality learning programmes.

When considering the information presented throughout this resource, keep in mind the importance of accessing and planning with specialist staff. By doing so, teaching and learning

programmes are more considered and have a strong foundation in evidence-based strategies that enhance your teaching repertoire.

Although the information in this resource is aimed at supporting teachers of students with disability in the mainstream, it also ties in to the work of other programmes such as those conducted through the Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) centres, the special schools across the state and the pilot autism specific class in the south of the state. These programmes are highly specialised to suit students with extensive or particular needs from birth onwards. For more information in relation to these programmes go to this link. [http://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents\\_carers/schools-colleges/Programs-Initiatives/Pages/Students-with-Disabilities.aspx](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents_carers/schools-colleges/Programs-Initiatives/Pages/Students-with-Disabilities.aspx)

Accompanying this resource are several videos that expand on key ideas and give concrete examples of teachers and school leaders putting inclusive practice into action.

For Department of Education staff there is an accompanying online portal in *Frontier* where content for each chapter is further supported with tools, templates, articles and practical examples. If you would like to find out about gaining access to the portal or have an enquiry in relation to teaching and learning programmes for students with disability please email: [disabilityresources@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityresources@education.tas.gov.au)

\* The University of Sydney - <http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/projects/inclusiveteaching>



# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

## Legislative Frameworks and Requirements

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) promotes inclusive education policies, programmes and practices to ensure equal education opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education (DSE) 2005* outline the rights of an individual with disability in the area of education and the obligations education providers must meet in order to provide students with disability access to the same educational opportunities as their peers without disability by making reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning practices. <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013C00022/Download>

The Standards do this by providing clarity and specificity for education and training providers for students with disability. <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767/Download>

The first goal of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* is that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence. This means that all Australian governments and all school sectors must provide all students with access to high-quality schooling that is free from discrimination based on gender, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy, culture, ethnicity, religion, health or disability, socioeconomic background or geographic location. [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)

## Supporting Professional Learning

Our *Learners First Strategy* aims to develop successful, skilled and innovative Tasmanians. Its values include learning and excellence so that Tasmanians are engaged in positive, productive and supported learning experiences, and have high expectations and a strong commitment to the pursuit of excellence. Through *Learners First*, the department is committed to building inclusive school communities with a focus on supporting student need.

This publication has been developed for teachers who have not worked with students with disability. It is a practical support resource to give them more confidence in this area. It also outlines the different areas of support available to them across the school and the department in working with students with disability and their families. It forms part of a Good Teaching suite of resources that also includes:



### Good Teaching: A Guide for Staff Discussion

The purpose of this guide is to raise the debate across schools to gain a common understanding of what makes a good teacher. It is the foundation of the Good Teaching series.

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Good-Teaching-Guide.pdf>



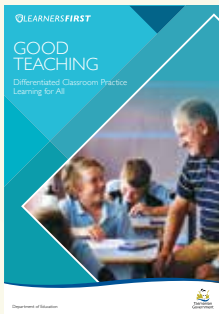
### Good Teaching: Inclusive Schools – Disability Focus

This resource addresses key strategies in inclusive education through:

- improved teaching quality and support
- a robust national curriculum
- better support for students
- improved parent and community information and participation.

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Good-Teaching-Inclusive-Schools-Disability-Focus.pdf>





### Good Teaching: Differentiated Classroom Practice – *Learning for All*

It is recognised that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programmes if they are to be optimally engaged and challenged. The process of making those adjustments is known as the differentiation of classroom learning. Differentiation is what's expected of good teachers. The focus of this resource is to describe what is meant by differentiation and to provide practical strategies and tools that can be used to create meaningful and engaging learning experiences for all students.

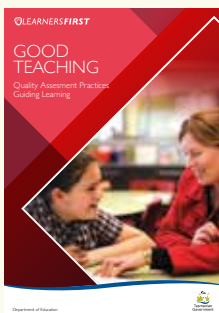
<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Good-Teaching-Differentiated-Classroom-Practice-Learning-for-All.pdf>



### Good Teaching: Curriculum Mapping and Planning – *Planning for Learning*

Curriculum mapping and planning is a way of developing a systematic overview of what students need to learn. It provides an opportunity to evaluate current practice and fosters communication among teachers at all levels and across a range of subjects. This resource describes processes that schools and individual teachers can use to move from curriculum frameworks to classroom action. It provides guidance for planning directly from curriculum documents. Specific examples are provided for *Australian Curriculum: English and Mathematics*.

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Good-Teaching-Curriculum-Mapping-and-Planning.pdf>



### Good Teaching: Quality Assessment Practices – *Guiding Learning*

This resource supports schools in their school improvement agenda by describing processes that will guide leaders and teachers in the use of quality assessment practices. It supports schools in the choice of evidence-based strategies to meet the learning needs of students. When used in conjunction with differentiated classroom practice, it supports teachers to adjust strategies to meet individual needs.

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Good-Teaching-Quality-Assessment-Practices-Guiding-Learning.pdf>

#### Practical examples are provided using the following identifiers:



Inclusive Leaders



Inclusive Teachers



Good Practice



Video



Tool



Resources



Conversation Starters



(example only)

Quick Response (QR) codes have been included, giving easy access to the digital content. Interacting with the digital content via the QR codes requires a QR code scanner app on your smartphone or tablet. Simply scan the code to go to the digital content. Web addresses for each of the online resources are also provided.

### **Making the most of the resource**

This resource provides information that can be complex and multilayered. It is designed for the reader to access content over time depending on their needs and the context in which they are working. Revisiting sections or exploring new aspects as the year progresses is a way of gradually building knowledge.

Others may find an initial perusal provides an overview of fostering inclusive learning environments and supports for students with disability.

It may also be helpful to think of this booklet and the digital material as a set of resources to dip into, depending on what information is most needed at the time.

### **How the content is organised**

The booklet is divided into seven chapters and each area should be given consideration to ensure inclusive teaching and learning. Each chapter begins with key messages and pointers for classroom practice, then actions of inclusive leaders and teachers, followed by conversation starters to initiate rich discussion in staff meetings. Practical examples at the close of each chapter reinforce some of the key messages from the chapter. Chapters are colour coded with tabs on each page to make selecting information as easy as possible.

The accompanying digital material provides concrete examples of inclusive pedagogies and approaches in action from Tasmanian schools. References and recommended resources for a more thorough appreciation of the key messages are in the back of the booklet.

*“Inclusive education is concerned, in particular, with meeting the learning needs of students with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. It enables students to engage meaningfully with the curriculum and facilitates the best educational outcomes for all students.”* (UNESCO, 1994, cited in Aniftos & McLuskie, 2003, p1)

### **This resource should also be used in conjunction with:**

*Supporting Literacy and Numeracy Success* which provides teachers with strategies for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes as they plan using curriculum documents.

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Supporting-Literacy-and-Numeracy-Success.pdf>

*Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour* which highlights the importance of providing safe and supportive environments as a vital part of quality teaching and learning.

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Respectful-Schools-Respectful-Behaviour.pdf>



# GLOSSARY

**Curriculum** – In this booklet the term refers to the mandated curriculum for the student's year of schooling. For students attending Kindergarten that is the *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework* while for students from Prep to Year 12 the core curriculum framework is the *Australian Curriculum* ([www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)). Teachers of students in Years 11 and 12 implement Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification and VET accredited courses. All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programmes drawn from a challenging curriculum that address their individual learning needs.

**Disability** – As described in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* is:

- a. total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception or reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour

**Disability Standards for Education (DSE) 2005**

– The standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. The standards were formulated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and came into effect in August 2005.<sup>1</sup>



**Disability Standards for Education (DSE) 2005 eLearning**

– To participate in online learning modules on the *Disability Standards for Education* visit <http://dse.theeducationinstitute.edu.au/> and log in with the registration key **tas-det**.

**Educational/learning adjustments**

– Adjustments are the supports, accommodations and resources provided to minimise barriers and maximise wellbeing and learning outcomes for students with disability. Students without an identified disability may also require adjustments.

**Inclusive education** – Inclusive education is about the full participation and achievement of all learners. In fully inclusive schools, children and young people of all abilities are engaged and achieving through being present, participating and learning.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP)** – The Individual Education Plan is both a process and a product. It encapsulates important information and priority learning goals for students with disability. It also describes adjustments suited to optimise learning and how the student can best demonstrate their understanding. An IEP is a working document that is framed in collaboration with key stakeholders including the student wherever possible. The plan informs everyone who has responsibilities for the student about where the student is at in their learning, what goals are being targeted and where the goals are grounded in the curriculum.

**Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)** – A Personalised Learning Plan is the overarching description given to individual student learning plans and utilises the *Australian Curriculum*. Personalised learning planning is an important process undertaken for students with specific needs. It is a requirement for certain students. Some students may require a personalised learning plan across a number of categories. For example, they may be under Care and Protection Orders, be gifted and also have a disability. In instances such as this, only one learning plan is required.

**Student Assessment Reporting and Information System (SARIS)** – Is the electronic school reporting system which enables staff to report on both the *Australian Curriculum* and the *Tasmanian Curriculum*.

**Sensory profile** – Refers to the student's capacity for coping with environmental stimulation such as lighting, smells, colours, noise and touch. Some students may be hyper-sensitive and others may be hypo-sensitive. This is important information for planning accommodations and supports for learning environments in particular.

**Student** – In this booklet, the term student implies a student with disability.

**Students with disability** – Refers to disability in a general way and includes many different disabilities under the umbrella term; physical, emotional, intellectual, behavioural and developmental disabilities.

**Student Support System (SSS)** – The Student Support System is an electronic database where student information is recorded. This includes information such as attendance, contacts with parents and guardians, observations, professional reports and personalised learning plans. This database is very important for managing information on students with disability as it is the central repository for all their information.

1. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-1>

# GLOSSARY

(continued)

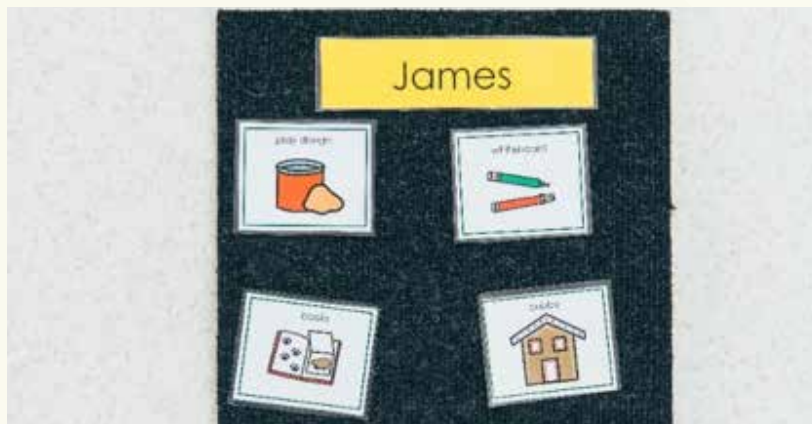
**Visuals** – Visual supports can play a very important role in teaching and learning programmes for students with disability. Visuals can include real objects, remnants of an object (e.g. an empty packet), photographs, pictures and any kind of symbol (including Boardmaker™ and other programmes). Examples of visual supports for communication and learning are listed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Examples of visual supports for communication and learning**

**A chatboard/aided language** helps a non-verbal student initiate communication by pointing to pictures.



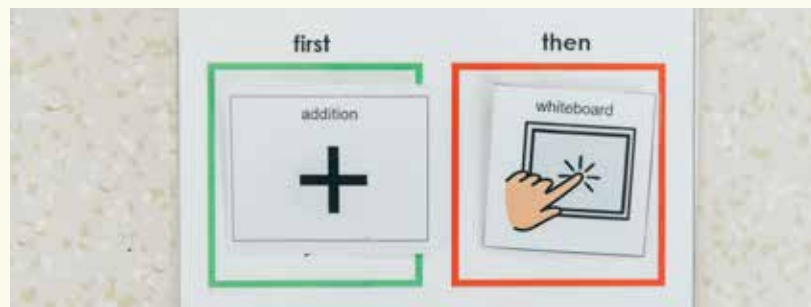
**A choice board** shows the student the activities they may choose from.



**A visual schedule** shows an individual student what they need to do, in order. It is established by the teacher in the same way as teacher instructions.



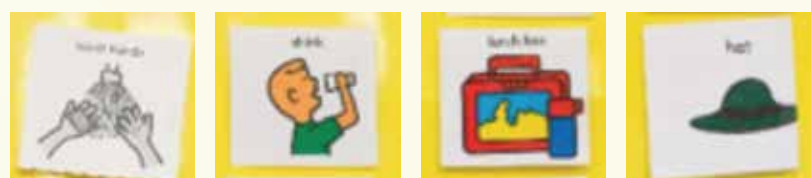
**A visual sequence** shows the steps to follow in a process.



**A whole class visual timetable** shows the daily timetable or schedule in both words and pictures which caters for all students.



**Boardmaker™** visuals are computer generated symbols that can be used in many different ways for both expressive and receptive communication. The programme is adaptable with different images to represent a word or concept and can be customised.



**Not symbol** (usually an overlay) can show:

- Unavoidable last minute changes to staffing or timetable/schedule.
- An activity is no longer available.
- Unacceptable behaviours.

Put a picture of the replacement activity/person/behaviour next to the symbol covered by 'not'.



**Real objects**, remnants of an object (e.g. an empty packet), photographs, pictures and any kind of symbol (including Boardmaker™ and other programmes).





# KNOWING YOUR STUDENTS

## Learners First Strategy 2014–17

### Relationships

We achieve growth and strength through partnerships and connections with our learners, their communities and the world.

### Key messages

Good teachers develop productive relationships with their students; they get to know them and take a particular interest in their overall development and progress. They treat their students with respect and expect the same in return.

The strength of the teacher-student relationship is critical to learning success for all students. The starting point for teaching a student with disability is getting to know the student.

Establish positive connections with students and families right from the start. Parents know their children well and can offer valuable insights into how to support their learning and what strategies work. Students themselves have a 'voice' that should be consulted as much as possible. It is important to keep in mind that many families put a lot of time and effort into supporting the educational outcomes for their child and may become frustrated when they feel insufficiently consulted or their values are not well considered in the school context. Working in family-centred ways enables schools to understand better the needs of the student and the family and provide access to experiences and support that are well balanced.

Collaborative partnerships must be built with the family and the team supporting a student with disability to maximise opportunities and learning outcomes for the student.

Effective consultation and respect allow each team member and professional to use their particular skills and expertise for maximum benefit.

*The Disability Standards for Education (DSE) 2005* requires consultation to take place regularly, as deemed suitable by the key stakeholders and when changes to learning adjustments are needed.

*"Good teachers build on the individual strengths of each student and recognise that all students have something valuable to contribute to the classroom community."* (Giangreco & Doyle 2000)

### Classroom practice

It is important to develop respectful relations with students and their families to foster an appreciative view of the student's strengths, needs and interests and promote an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Students have differing social and emotional strengths, rates and styles of learning, talents and capacities. Rather than focusing on just their disability, consider what are the qualities that make the student with disability an individual person. The student's family will have a wealth of knowledge about the child and the disability. They can often direct you to good sources of information. Some families are using the Knowme app to create profiles of their child's needs and interests to readily share with teachers and other professionals.

Find out about the disability of your student. But remember that even students within a similar category of disability can differ greatly. Understanding and responding to what an individual student can actually do is more important than understanding the disability itself.

Find out the extent to which a student's abilities allow opportunities to access curriculum, participate in learning and achieve success.

Remember that every student brings strengths and interests to the classroom and their learning.

### Try to:

- Focus on what each student can do, not just on what they can't do. Think about their abilities, not just their disability.
- Use students' strengths and interests to increase motivation.
- Foster the concept that every learner has something positive to offer their learning community.
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with anybody who has significant knowledge and understanding of the student, including the student wherever possible.
- Use the documentation provided through the IEP, file notes and reports especially those in the Student Support System (SSS). Find out who can be consulted in building your knowledge of the student. Consult with colleagues who already know the student well.
- Keep accurate records of discussions identifying barriers to learning, services needed and consent for suitable adjustments (e.g. keep minutes of meetings and notes in the IEP).
- Ensure information is up-to-date and that there is enough depth to inform provision of optimal support for the student. This is particularly important at times of significant transition such as from year to year or school to school and into post-school options.



## Inclusive leaders

- Ensure that obligations to the DSE and departmental procedures and guidelines are met.
- Demonstrate through whole school approaches that every student is equally valued.
- Appreciate and understand the abilities students and staff bring to the learning community.
- Encourage families to share their knowledge and experiences in relation to the student.
- Recognise parents and families as integral partners in their children's education.
- Make certain that important information regarding new enrolments is recorded and shared with relevant staff.
- Ensure that responsibility for each student is shared by all, not just the Classroom or Support Teacher.
- Build supportive, respectful relationships with members of the school and wider communities.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for staff to develop understanding and skills related to working collaboratively.
- Support staff in understanding equitable access to resources as a way of fostering learning success.
- Establish well organised team approaches for students with complex needs.
- Ensure processes are in place to support ongoing collaboration and communication between key stakeholders and the student.
- Lead the development of purposeful IEPs and support their ongoing implementation and updating.
- Make sure that IEPs are instrumental in developing an holistic understanding of the student.
- Ensure that IEPs are linked to the *Australian Curriculum* or the curriculum mandated for the student's year of school.
- Follow recommended practices as outlined in the Good Teaching resources.<sup>2</sup>



## Inclusive teachers

- Build positive relationships and have high expectations for all students.
- Establish and maintain effective lines of communication between the school, the student and the student's family.
- Work collaboratively with other professionals involved in the student's care (e.g. Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists).
- Make clear to the student that getting to know them as a person and as a student, is important.
- Focus on extending students' strengths not just addressing their needs.
- Convey to the student that they are appreciated as a person with strengths and abilities.
- Respond to the student's interests and needs as they change.
- Maintain ongoing consultation to identify learning needs and supports.
- Welcome and value the abilities of all students.
- Expect respectful behaviour from students when they relate to each other.
- Promote the concept that everyone is different; bringing a range of abilities that complement each other in a team environment.
- Build a supportive classroom community of learners.
- Use inclusive and respectful language at all times (refer to the DoE Guidelines for Inclusive Language).<sup>3</sup>
- Follow recommended practices as outlined in the Good Teaching resources.<sup>4</sup>



2. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-2>

3. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-3>

4. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-4>

## Practical examples



### Getting to know a Kindergarten student<sup>5</sup>

A student started Kindergarten with limited oral language. In order to get to know him and to develop a sound relationship, his teacher decided to establish a communication box. The teacher chose a special shiny green box and placed his photo on it. Each morning when he arrives at Kindergarten, he places an object of high interest in the box and takes it to his teacher. She takes out the object with wonder and surprise and chats to the student about it. Sometimes he shows the object to the class during sharing time.



### Confirming student interests in Year 8

A Year 8 student with Cerebral Palsy and moderate intellectual disability spends dedicated time with her subject teachers one to one at the beginning of each term. The Support Teacher provides a copy of her IEP from the Student Support System (SSS) to each subject teacher. The Support Teacher assists subject teachers to meet briefly with the student. During this time teachers quickly review with the student the student's goals, interests and needs in order to include them when developing units of work and designing tasks.



### Inviting student and parent voice in Year 9

A student with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Year 9 outlines what they view as their strengths and the things important to them. Using a one page proforma with headings like:

- What people like and admire about me.
- What's important to me.
- How can I be best supported?

The parents and the student together make dot points under each heading and discuss with the Support Teacher. This positive and constructive document gives practical advice to her teachers enabling, the focus to shift to the student's qualities rather than just their needs.



### Bringing student interests into the classroom

A student with a moderate intellectual disability is highly interested in fishing. The student usually fishes with his dad each weekend and is always very proud of his catch. On a recent visit to Queensland, he won a major fishing competition. His oral and written skills do not allow him to adequately convey the immensity of this experience. To support the student, photographs of his catch are captured on his iPad and shared with his class via the Interactive White Board. His classmates and teachers are highly interested and admiring of his skill in fishing which otherwise would not be reflected in his oral or written recounts.

5. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-5>



### TO DO...

- Consult with students, their families and the Support Teacher
- Review notes and files on the Student Support System (SSS)
- Know where students are in their learning
- Model and teach for respectful relationships



### CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR SCHOOLS...

- How are our students and parents involved in decisions about student learning goals?
- How do staff communicate regularly with families e.g. home-school communication books, email, text, planned face to face meetings? What are the blockers and enablers to this process? What can we do to improve consultation opportunities?
- How does our planning and the supports we provide reflect information conveyed or gleaned from students and their families?
- How does our school make student support meetings operate effectively?
- How do we capitalise on the experience of previous teachers to add to our data on student interests, goals and needs and maximise students' potential?
- What schoolwide activities or events are planned with a focus on developing staff-student relationships?



# SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

## *Learners First Strategy 2014–17*

### **Equity**

We all have the right to challenging and engaging learning opportunities in appropriate settings.

### Key messages

Effective schools are inclusive and capitalise on the richness that diversity brings. In these schools staff work thoughtfully and proactively, frequently drawing on the knowledge and expertise of families, other professionals and the school community to enable all students to reach their potential.

These schools understand that it is the responsibility of the school, not the student, to make reasonable adjustments that remove barriers and enhance learning outcomes.

Adjustments are often required to give every student access to learning and the curriculum. Students without an identified disability may also benefit from adjustments. Some students may have more than one disability requiring a range of adjustments.

A supportive learning environment upholds the notion that everybody is different and has different needs. Some students may need more support in order to access learning programmes and reach their goals than others. There are many aspects of supportive learning environments that facilitate connecting, sharing and learning for students. These include physical, social, aesthetic and organisational elements. Effective teachers give consideration to each of these aspects as they contribute to inclusive learning settings.

Effective teachers work from an evidence-based approach that draws on the expertise of staff such as the Physical Impairment Coordinator, Support Teacher, Autism Consultant and Speech and Language Pathologists to ensure learning environments are supportive and positively influence student achievement. Specific physical or technological requirements for students with disability will be well documented in either their IEP or a physical access plan.

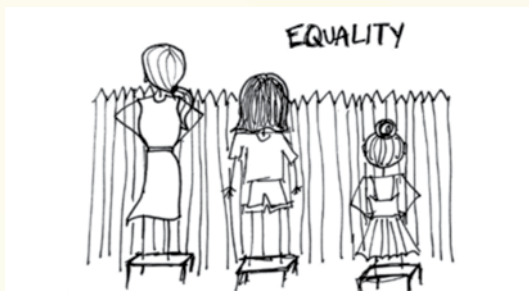
A range of resources are provided in our schools to support all learners guided by our *Learners First Strategy 2014–17*. These include:

- Support Teachers are based in every school to build capacity of all staff; they are skilled teachers who support your school and classroom teachers to improve learning outcomes for students with disability and/or additional needs.
- Respectful Schools Support Teams provide a focus on developing and embedding schoolwide positive behaviour approaches and building staff capacity. Each team has a School Psychologist, a Behavioural Learning Leader and a Teacher Learning Leader.
- Support specialists are available to build capacity of all school staff. They include: School Psychologists, Speech Pathologists, Social Workers, Autism Consultants, Physical Impairment Coordinators, Vision and Deaf Support Teachers.
- Assistive technologies.
- Professional learning and online resources and materials.
- Supplementary special education funding.
- Building and facility modifications.

Organise the physical environment to allow improved access to resources and materials, and learning spaces such as quiet areas to work independently with few distractions. Remove unnecessary clutter or extra stimulation and use wall spaces thoughtfully for posting student work, reminding students of key ideas (like school values) and providing visual supports for learning and routines or daily messages.

Well organised learning spaces with clearly defined areas make it easier for many students to become independent in following routines and being ready for learning. Providing spaces for 'down-time' is particularly important for some students who need a space to regulate their emotions and feel secure.

Effective teachers help students develop pro-social skills and maintain positive social interactions. Some students with disability require explicit teaching of behaviours in different learning settings, immediate feedback when they are on track, and/or the teaching of replacement behaviours to develop their skill level. There is a chapter titled, Supporting Students in a Respectful School Culture later in this booklet that provides more information on this topic.



Picture supplied by Mary Quandt<sup>6</sup>

Equity and equality are different concepts. Equity means that people need differing shares of resources to have an equal chance of success. Providing exactly the same conditions or equipment for everyone equally is likely to result in inequity. The first goal of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* is that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence. The *Australian Curriculum* reflects this notion. It is fair to treat some students differently to avoid discrimination. For more information refer to the *Australian Curriculum* advice on student diversity.<sup>7</sup>



## Classroom practice

Establish a learning environment that is respectful, welcoming and supportive to all. Develop an environment where students feel connected and safe to take risks with their learning.

For some students, learning environment considerations are made by teachers with a range of professionals providing 'at the shoulder' support. Follow their advice and if further information or equipment is needed seek it through your principal.

When many people are involved supporting one student, a case manager and case conference model is an effective way to make the best use of the available resources. Make sure you have leadership support for the model you adopt.

Get to know the Support Teacher in your school and how your school timetables planning meetings with a range of student support professionals. Collaborate with other in-school staff such as Literacy and Numeracy Specialists, School Psychologists, and Social Workers. Access specialist support available through the Learning Services by way of Autism Consultants, Physical Impairment Coordinators, teachers from Vision and Deaf and Hearing Impaired Services as well as the Respectful Schools Support Team. Access these resources through senior staff in your school.

Many students – not just those with a disability – will at times require adjustments when working towards their learning goals.

Adjustments are the changes made to accommodate individual student differences to support their learning and wellbeing. They can be made to any aspect of the environment or learning climate to enable or promote access. Some disabilities may require particular aspects of the physical environment to be adjusted:

- Students with physical impairments may require level access, particular toileting or meal management arrangements.
- Students with intellectual disability may need specific playground areas and extra supervision for safety.
- Students with hearing impairment may need particular technology or an interpreter.

6. <http://offsheregoes2013.blogspot.com.au/2014/06/equity-vs-equality.html>

7. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-7>



- Students with vision impairment may need particular lighting, specialised technology or adapted materials.
- Some students may require regular active breaks and physical provisions for sensory regulation.

Adjustments must be considered on an individual basis. Students with the same disability may require different adjustments to their learning environment. Adjustments for some students may also benefit other students. Many students without disability may also need tailored adjustments from time to time. Be prepared to differentiate as part of good teaching practice. Refer to the guide *Good Teaching: Differentiated Classroom Practice, Learning for All* for more information on making adjustments.<sup>8</sup>



The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles involve purposeful planning for multiple representations of content, different means of action (teaching strategies and tasks) or expression (options to show evidence of learning) and multiple means of engaging and motivating students in the content and learning processes. All students have different learning styles and will respond differently to visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learning experiences. Offer something for all learning styles by providing a balance of teaching tasks and activities that cater for all. The UDL framework supports this practice with guiding principles that address the varied needs of students. Visual supports benefit many learners, especially those with low literacy levels, Autism Spectrum Disorder, hearing impairment and/or intellectual disabilities. Challenge yourself to provide visual supports of some kind for everything you do, for example gestures, pictures, timetables, physical examples.<sup>9</sup>

All students benefit from structure, routine, predictability and high expectations in becoming independent learners. Establish routines that are consistent and clear to give students an understanding of how school life works.

Arrange clearly defined physical resources and materials to make it easier for students to be organised for learning and to build their independence and self-management. Provide colour coded notebooks and curriculum materials to make learning areas distinctive and readily identified by the student.

Give consideration to optimal classroom furniture, such as stools, matching desk heights and chairs, beanbags, having materials in or out of reach with consideration for safety and physical access demands. Think about peer seating arrangements, group sizes, peer or adult support ratios and the use of alternate work spaces.

Know the sensory profile of students and adapt the learning environments or provide equipment to minimise sensory overload. Organise classrooms to provide a quiet break out area for students to access as needed. All students should have the opportunity to move in and out of the main group. Students with disability will rarely need to be seated apart from their peers.

Have personalised timetables on an iPad, iPod, desk or locker that are colour coded and cross referenced to learning area material.

There is a range of assistive technology to support a broad range of needs. Regular classroom technology such as interactive white boards and iPads can be extremely helpful for students with disability. Carefully consider their use so that the student is not working alone too often, they don't become overly reliant on or preoccupied with the iPad, and other students have equitable access to the equipment. Effective teachers will also ensure that students with disability continue to practice a range of skills in a variety of contexts that aren't technology based.



8. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-8>

9. See the Communication chapter later in this booklet for more detail



## Inclusive leaders

- Welcome all students to their school and ensure each student can access and participate in the school life and learning programmes on the same basis as students without disability.
- Lead a whole school approach to inclusivity across all areas of school life.
- Encourage learning programmes that embrace diversity and all the richness it brings.
- Make use of teams of experts to inform evidence-based teaching and wellbeing programmes that build capacity.
- Support and develop the practices and capabilities of school staff.
- Actively engage with the school community to promote high quality learning and teaching.
- Provide effective planning, resource allocation and support for teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Develop and link effective school improvement strategies to professional learning that work towards improved student outcomes.
- Hold collegial discussions that promote the sharing of ideas to improve classroom learning, climate and environment.
- Encourage most specialist intervention to take place in the classroom rather than withdrawing students from the classroom.
- Ensure meetings are well planned and involve key staff such as the School Psychologist or Speech and Language Pathologist (as determined by the needs of the student) to pool expertise and plan effectively.
- Consider access needs for all students.
- Support staff to differentiate learning.



## Inclusive teachers

- Know the content of each IEP and make adjustments relating to the physical environment and all aspects of the teaching and learning programmes.
- Plan thoroughly – and in advance – to accommodate students who have difficulty with transitioning from one activity to another.
- Plan collaboratively with specialist support staff wherever possible.
- Use visual supports, whenever possible, for all students.
- Use a whole class visual timetable to represent schedules and programmes.
- Use individual visual timetables for students who need them.
- Develop classroom structures, routines and expectations so that all students can reasonably know what to expect and how to cooperate.
- Create well defined learning spaces considering physical access and the sensory needs of all students.
- Consider planned seating areas defined by clear boundaries such as 'where the carpet stops'.
- Provide break out, calming and individual work spaces for students to use.
- Label and organise resources and materials to increase time on task and student independence.
- Optimise use of technology to enable greater access to learning content.
- Visit other classrooms and share ideas that make the physical environment work more successfully.
- Participate fully in collegial teams to share ideas.
- Provide scaffolds to support all learners.
- Minimise distractions and interruptions within the classroom.

## Practical examples



### In readiness for learning – setting up a primary classroom

A primary school teacher sets up the classroom thinking about how best to arrange materials, resources and supports to reduce time and movement when students get organised for learning. Classroom seating is thoughtfully located to facilitate structured collaborative learning. A space is also set aside for quiet work for students who need time in a low sensory environment.



### Creating inclusive school communities

The Principal of a primary school explains the importance of establishing whole school approaches to students' learning and wellbeing. She actively plans with staff to create a strong focus on overarching values, key goals, commitments and practices to support the needs of the school community. These include a focus on effective learning, planned and supported play during recess and lunch, and explicit teaching and modelling of school values.<sup>10</sup>



### Adjusting levels of challenge in Food Studies

Students are working on a Food Studies unit. The teacher guides his students through a revision lesson on Tasmanian produce. In order to meet the broad range of learning needs in the class, the teacher provides alternative representations of teaching and learning materials such as samples of produce and key word labels. The teacher provides a scaffolded task of matching food with labels for a student requiring additional support and creates opportunities for peer assistance through the production of a shared class meal.



### Social and emotional learning

As part of the *Australian Curriculum*, a teacher in Year 3 plans a unit of work on recognising and identifying emotions targeting the needs of one student in particular while acknowledging that all students can benefit from this focus at different levels. The student with Autism Spectrum Disorder is learning to recognise the emotions of happiness, sadness, anger and fear in themselves whilst other students are extended to understand complex and subtle feelings such as perplexed, disgruntled, ecstatic and despair.



10. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-10>



### TO DO...

- ☑ Set up a collaborative learning environment with a variety of work spaces and technology options
- ☑ Provide strong visual messages and supports
- ☑ Have consistent predictable routines
- ☑ Take account of furniture, lighting, noise levels, and easy access to resources and materials



### Conversation starters

- How do we know that our school environment is inclusive?
- What structures and routines provide a sense of safety and promote engagement in learning in our school?
- How do we make the most of visual displays and the organisation of learning resources to support students in becoming independent learners?
- What are some areas that we could improve on and how might we take action to make our learning environments more inclusive?
- How does technology act as an enabler in our school and deepen the quality of the learning?
- In what ways are students supported to lead and manage class and schoolwide activities and functions?



# TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Learners First Strategy 2014–17

### Learning

Tasmanians are engaged in positive, productive and supportive learning experiences, and encouraged towards lifelong learning.

### Key messages

Inclusive teaching relates to all students as classes are made up of students with diverse needs, not only students with disability. With varying needs, no one size fits all approach can meet all the learning needs of the class. A differentiated teaching approach is central to supporting all learners' needs and celebrating diversity.

*Good Teaching: Differentiated Classroom Practice Learning for All* provides an in depth explanation of this way of teaching.<sup>11</sup>



Interactions at all levels of school life are focused on learning and developing competent independent learners. For some students that will require a range of resources, teaching strategies, scaffolds and supports. Students with disability may have more diverse needs than their peers and may require highly personalised adjustments. They may also have needs which can change depending on learning area contexts.

All students are to be appropriately challenged with their efforts and learning successes monitored and celebrated. Optimal use should be made of cooperative learning opportunities to provide occasions for students to learn together and support each other.

Effective teachers build students' skills to work cooperatively and with greater responsibility and independence for their own learning. They create learning tasks that are grounded in year level curriculum and activate or scaffold for background experiences in ways that are engaging and support growth. They appreciate learner variability and meet the needs of learners from the outset. A good teaching approach draws from the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles which complement and overlap differentiated classroom practice. Using these approaches, teachers plan for responsive teaching by offering different ways for students to acquire knowledge and skills, varied alternatives for students to demonstrate their learning, and multiple ways to tap into interests that engage students and increase their motivation with learning.

*“One never learns to teach once and for all. It is a continuous constantly deepening process”*  
(Shulman, 2004)

When planning from the *Australian Curriculum* and considering adjustments, be mindful that:

- Many students with disability are able to achieve educational outcomes commensurate with their peers.
- Not all students with disability will require adjustments to the curriculum content, teaching strategies or the learning environment.
- Adjustments are made to the *Australian Curriculum* and teaching strategies to enable all students to access, participate and succeed in their learning.
- Adaptations and adjustments are made to the curriculum not the learner.
- Not all students requiring adjustments to classroom practice have a diagnosed disability.
- Students requiring adjustments in one learning area may not require the same adjustments in another.
- Some students may also be gifted and/or have English as an additional language or dialect.
- Some students may have more than one disability.

The student's IEP describes the overarching goals, short term goals, key teaching strategies and adjustments for the student. It also reflects where the short term goals are within the *Australian Curriculum*. Students with disability will be assessed against their learning goals that are embedded in the curriculum. In the context of the *Australian Curriculum*, the student's goals may be linked to learning area content or General Capabilities.

11. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-11>

## Classroom practice

Use the student's IEP to note where the student is at in their learning, to profile their levels of readiness in relation to learning area content, strengths and interests, and to identify key teaching strategies to be used.

Think about:

- How the student's personal interests and preferences can be used to enhance learning experiences.
- Stimuli and materials that will meet the student's preferred mode of learning and stage of development.
- What the student responds to most successfully.
- How real connections can be made between the student's learning and their daily life.
- High expectations so students can go beyond preconceived notions of their capabilities.

Eliminate unnecessary barriers and plan for access by adjusting aspects of the core curriculum content (such as the *Australian Curriculum*) and differentiating resources. Some students will have their learning goals linked to the General Capabilities rather than learning area content. It is important to make a best fit link between the IEP learning goals and curriculum content. Become familiar with the progressions of the *Australian Curriculum* General Capabilities<sup>12</sup> and how they support the development of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions.



Establish classroom routines and expectations that can be teacher-driven, independent, or collaborative depending on the teaching and learning focus. Provide multiple levels of novelty, risk and choice for students to increase motivation, ownership and suitable levels of challenge. Draw heavily from evidence-based teaching and learning strategies that improve learning outcomes for all students, such as differentiated classroom practice and Universal Design for Learning.

Use teaching and learning strategies that are known to assist students with specific disabilities. Check with your Support Teacher for advice and information on effective strategies. The following universal strategies are a great place to start:

- Drawing on prior learning and extending or supplying background knowledge.
- Developing language with new vocabulary.
- Supporting learning with the provision of multiple modalities of information.
- Finding different ways to engage and take action with their learning, and different ways to express their understanding or skill.
- Providing organisational support (e.g. colour coded materials or a graphic organiser to help students arrange information).
- Providing opportunities to practice the new skill or knowledge.
- Checking and testing for understanding and adapting learning processes in light of assessment data.
- Including visual and/or alternative cues in the environment and teach all students to use these.
- Providing clear routines, structured and predictable learning experiences.
- Providing technology options that facilitate access and participation.

Strategies that may assist students with an intellectual disability are:

- Providing one-step instructions (or however many steps they can best understand).
- Using clear and simple words and sentences, emphasising the key words.
- Using visual prompts including body language (pointing, gesture, facial expression), objects, pictures.
- Knowing the number of tasks the student can usually complete without a change.
- Breaking tasks into achievable parts or chunks.
- Knowing and allowing the time needed to process routine and new instructions or information.
- Knowing preferred or motivating tasks.
- Supporting transitioning through tasks or rotations.
- Using predictable sequences.

12. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-12>



Strategies that may assist students with Autism Spectrum Disorder are:

- Providing clearly organised learning spaces with boundaries for specific activities.
- Trying to reduce the impact of extra sights, sounds, smells.
- Planning for change and warning the student of what's coming up next.
- Using a timer to indicate how long to go before the next activity.



School Psychologists, Literacy and Numeracy Specialists, Teachers of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, Teachers of the Vision Impaired and Autism Consultants will be able to advise you of strategies for individual students.

Varying forms of support may be needed to assist students with disability to learn. The IEP will indicate the support required and how it is best provided. Any support should allow the student the most independence they can manage. Some supports may always be needed, but others may be gradually reduced. Remember that support may occur at all times or be offered at different levels for different activities.

Support may include:

- Physical aids: modified grips, hand splints, wheelchairs and modified equipment.
- Hand over hand or physical assistance.
- Prompting: verbal, visual and/or gestural prompts.
- Explicit targeted teaching strategies.
- Individual teaching or follow up tutoring.
- Adjustments to timing for processing and/or completing tasks.
- Specialist assistance from another professional.
- Assistive technologies like an augmentative communication device.

#### TO DO...

- ☑ **Start with the learning area content for the age level you teach**
- ☑ **Differentiate tasks to cater for all levels**
- ☑ **Use a variety of teaching and learning activities to cater for all learning styles**
- ☑ **Work collaboratively with your team and support staff taking advantage of each other's strengths**







## Inclusive leaders

- Provide high quality schooling by putting into action the Department of Education's *Learners First* values, and the core principles of good teaching as outlined in the *Good Teaching* suite of resources.
- Apply knowledge and understanding of current legislation and Department of Education guidelines in relation to students with disability to improve educational outcomes.
- Are well versed in the latest research and developments in pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and reporting for students with disability.
- Put considerable effort into understanding students' needs and how these can be addressed.
- Consult with students and their families to develop strong and purposeful partnerships.
- Set high expectations for teaching and learning.
- Lead and model the schoolwide expectation that differentiation is effective classroom practice.
- Say 'yes' to something different which actively engages staff and students to improve outcomes.
- Encourage careful collaborative planning, monitoring and reviewing of the effectiveness of teaching.
- Use school data to inform school improvement planning and include differentiation for all students.
- Inform all staff of the focus of the school improvement plan to ensure that there is strong alignment between the plan and teaching and learning.
- Establish structures for collaborative curriculum mapping and planning.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for support staff.



## Inclusive teachers

- Know their students well.
- Work collaboratively with families and specialist support staff.
- Provide quality curriculum through the *Australian Curriculum*.
- Develop a working knowledge of the *Australian Curriculum General Capabilities*.
- Provide flexible and responsive teaching strategies and opportunities for:
  - explicit teaching
  - collaborative learning
  - guided practice
  - authentic learning experiences
  - student choice and voice in some aspects of the learning
  - expressing learning in different ways.
- Know that the same student could learn differently in different contexts.
- Eliminate barriers to learning and maximise engagement
- Have appropriately high individual expectations for all students.
- Use modelling and concrete examples.
- Make scaffolds, multiple entry points and optional pathways available for all students.
- Provide a rich visual learning environment so that students can seek extra information independently through the use of:
  - schedules
  - lists
  - word walls
  - timers.
- Guide information processing with checklists, graphic organisers and clear steps.
- Link new ideas to familiar contexts.
- Reinforce new learning over time with frequent opportunities to make stronger connections and consolidate learning.
- Develop the culture of a community of learners made up of a range of diverse skills, abilities and backgrounds.

## Practical examples



### Acknowledging strengths and supporting needs

A student with Autism Spectrum Disorder excels in Mathematics and Science. He has a vivid imagination, good spatial awareness, excellent factual recall and an advanced understanding of concepts in these learning areas. However, he needs adult support to work as a team member in collaborative enquiry projects. He uses social scripts to learn new interaction skills.



### Differentiating content

A teacher reflects on the make-up of her class and plans for a student with an intellectual disability. She refers to the scope and sequence for Mathematics in Year 5 and begins backwards planning from the achievement standards. She refers to the student's IEP and notes the SMART goals in numeracy. With these goals in mind, she designs learning tasks that engage and challenge the student in content similar to what the class is working with.<sup>13</sup>



### Supporting confidence in learning

A student with severe anxiety requires constant reassurance and modified tasks. The tasks are broken down in complexity then allocated timeframes which the student manages with a timer. For written tasks, the student is provided with samples of how the work could look. The teacher recognises the real need for constant reassurance and builds in regular feedback mechanisms. This includes seating the student with a group of supportive peers, the teacher giving the 'thumbs up' through the lesson, timely eye contact and a smile.



### Using data to inform teaching practice

A primary school uses the NAPLAN toolkit for numeracy results to identify gaps in student understanding. Teachers aim to achieve improvement through targeted teaching. For example, Year 3 results show a weakness in mental computation so students in Year 2 are given a common assessment task to determine their skill and understanding in mental computation. This informs teaching groups for short term blocks on this topic.

Teachers and senior staff come together to plan and discuss proposed content and teaching strategies. Broad and short term goals are established and recorded. The team then meets bi-weekly to share and reflect on student learning as indicated by the formative data collected after the latest teaching and learning. The strategies that worked well are highlighted and promoted amongst the teaching team.



### CONVERSATION STARTERS





- How do we work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding of the *Australian Curriculum* including the General Capabilities and the importance of these for students with disability within learning area content?
- In what ways do we adjust the curriculum content to suit the needs of students with disability, ensuring they have access to age-appropriate, rich and varied learning experiences?
- What are our most effective strategies in selecting, creating and sharing resources that align with curriculum and support learners' needs, goals, strengths and interests?
- How do we share and invite best practice into our teaching to improve learning outcomes?
- How can we get the most from our collective expertise when working with a range of support staff and specialists?

13. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footer-note-13>



The table below is an example of a task organiser that provides an organisational scaffold for a student. The main task is broken down into subtasks with time allocations. The student can check that the subtasks are all done and take a break when they finish. It is important to know what works as reinforcement for the student. A 'likes' and 'dislikes' list as part of a learner profile can assist in knowing what would suit the student as a reward for completing tasks.

**My Work**

Number	Task	Time (mins)	Tick when done
1	 Look at the picture and read the words.	3	
2	 Tell your buddy about your picture.	3	
3	 Copy the new words from the list.	5	
4	 Create one sentence using the words, a capital letter and a full stop.	3	
<b>5</b>	<b>Take a break</b>	<b>3</b>	



The 'working towards' schedule shown below is another visual tool to assist students in completing tasks. In this example, an icon representing the student's preferred activity or object is placed at the top of the schedule and ticks or tokens are placed under the activities that lead up to the reinforcer. Some students may not be motivated by common reinforcers. They might prefer time alone, music, sensory play or time to engage with a desired object. Check the student's learner profile or IEP to get a good idea of what would work as a reinforcer.

**I am working towards...**



✓	✓	✓	
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# COMMUNICATION

## Learners First Strategy 2014–17

### Respect

Positive and effective interactions, with each other and with our environment, are conducted on the basis of responsibility, integrity and accountability.

### Key messages

Communication is a two-way exchange of information. Communication starts when a message is sent by one person and is received, understood and responded to (but not necessarily immediately) by another person. Communicated messages are often expressed through spoken language, however they can also be expressed through gesture, sign, picture symbols, object symbols, speech generating devices, Braille, writing, drawing, audio-visual media or a combination of these. Students learn language at different rates. This is not always related to cognitive ability.

Expressive language is the message being communicated by a person. Receptive language is what a person understands from a message. Language acquisition varies from learner to learner. A person's abilities in expressive and receptive language are not necessarily the same.

Some students with disability may have a communication impairment. Some students may still be learning expressive and receptive language. Refer to your Speech and Language Pathologist for guidance on the appropriate level of language to use with individual students. Some students will be able to understand more than they can convey, others may seem to understand more than they actually do. Many students with disability who do not use recognisable words or do not yet have an effective form of communication are still intentional communicators. Their lack of speech doesn't mean that they cannot or do not want to communicate.

Speech and Language Pathologists are key to planning for the effective development of a student's communication skills. Vision Services or Deaf and Hearing Impaired Services will also provide valuable assistance for students with sight or hearing disabilities and their specific communication requirements.

Many universal teaching strategies are used to assist communication with students with disability, such as visual supports and pre-teaching specific vocabulary, will be useful for meeting the needs of a range of diverse learners.

### Classroom practice

Many teachers and students will have support and/or advice directly from a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) detailed in the IEP. Familiarise yourself with the information and talk to the SLP or Support Teacher for clarification. Form an effective team relationship with the SLP and consult with them on a regular basis. If in doubt regarding any aspect of the student's communication needs, including technology (e.g. iPad communication apps), contact the SLP. The Support Teacher will invite the SLP to IEP meetings. If they are unable to attend, ask them to provide some written information that can be included in the IEP.

Some students may receive service from more than one SLP. They will consult and collaborate with each other to minimise overlap. One SLP will take the role of primary therapist in the school setting, to act as your main liaison person (this will generally be the SLP employed by the Department of Education) and provide input into the student's IEP. Students who have a significant physical impairment and complex communication or feeding needs may have a primary therapist from an external service provider. Check with your principal if you are unsure about the operations within your school.

The student's preferred mode of communication and their expressive and receptive abilities will be detailed in their IEP.

Receptive language is what the student understands from someone else's communication to them. Find out from the student's IEP or meetings with the SLP:

- How much spoken English does the student understand?
- Does the student need extra time to process information?
- Does the student need supplementary information in order to understand, such as visuals (for example object symbols, a visual timetable, signs or Picture Communication Symbols)?



- Does the student need to receive information through a form of communication unfamiliar to you such as Auslan (Australian Sign Language)?

Expressive language is what the student communicates to others. Find out from the student's IEP or meetings with the SLP:

- Does the student use verbal communication?
- Does the student use an Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) system to supplement speech such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), chat boards (aided language displays) or core vocabulary (e.g. LAMP) or a speech generating device? Refer to page 31 for more information on AAC.
- Does the student use an expressive form of communication unfamiliar to you?
- If the student does not have an established communication system, work as a team with the family, teacher, Teacher Assistant and SLP to trial and find the most appropriate system for the individual.

Some severely disabled students will be pre-intentional communicators; students who have not realised that they can affect others and that they can deliberately do things that will cause others to behave in predictable ways. They may indicate their needs through behaviours such as smile and laugh when happy, cry or grizzle when upset, show they are tired by sucking their thumb, show they are thirsty by smacking their lips, etc.

If the student does not yet have an established form of communication, it is important that you notice and respond to behaviours or actions that could be communicative so that these students are more likely to become intentional communicators. Examples of behaviours or actions that convey needs and wants include the student showing:

- they want help opening food packaging by handing it to you.
- they want an app on the iPad by giving you the iPad.
- they want a toy by taking you to the cupboard it is in.

To encourage effective communication:

- Read the IEP communication section thoroughly and note individual needs and abilities.

- Communicate at an appropriate level that meets the student's needs.
- Speak directly to the student, looking at them and preferably at their eye level. (Never talk through another person who may be facilitating communication, treating the student as the third person e.g. "tell him...")
- Wait silently after you have spoken and give the student the time they need to give a response (processing time will be noted in the IEP).
- Be observant; the student's response may be subtle and non-verbal.
- Use phrases or instructions consistent with how many words the student can understand at a time (this will be noted in the IEP).
- Use and model correct English for all ages and abilities. It is useful to use short, simple sentences and emphasise key words for students with severe communication impairments.
- Back up your verbal communication with visuals and gestures.
- Provide visual supports and cues in your classroom and curriculum. This will benefit all students who are visual learners, alongside students with disability. Including visual strategies is particularly important when working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Check for understanding and avoid closed questions that can result in a yes/no answer such as "Do you understand?"
- Repeat or rephrase after a suitable wait time. Individual students may respond better to one than the other.
- Use prompting if appropriate.
- Use consistent language. Wherever possible establish a common set of terms and expressions across learning areas.
- If the student uses a form of communication unfamiliar to you, consider how you will form a personal relationship with them and ask for help to familiarise yourself with the system.

- Learn how to use the student's preferred method of communication. For example, even if a Deaf student has an interpreter, you could learn some sign to exchange personal greetings before the lesson. If the student uses some kind of Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) system such as PECS, aided language displays (chat boards) or Language Acquisition Motor Planning (LAMP) you need to have a basic understanding of how they work to sometimes encourage/guide students in their use.
- Provide communication opportunities. For instance, keep desired items out of reach so that the student must ask for them, wear a funny hat that might elicit a comment or don't give all materials required to complete a task. Students need a reason and motivation to communicate!
- Communicate with students using their system. Students learn best through observation and repeated modelling of their system. Showing them explicitly helps them learn. Using a student's system shows them that you value it.
- Allow other students to learn the communication techniques utilised by the student, allowing them to engage with and support the student as part of supportive learning environments.

Some examples of visual schedules are pictured here.





## Inclusive leaders

- Model clear communication with staff, parents and students.
- Put the DoE *Guidelines for Inclusive Language* into action.<sup>14</sup>



- Model respect for the use of different languages and ways of communicating within the school community.
- Encourage whole school systems of accessible communication (plain English and visuals) to benefit all students and their parents, not just those with a disability.
- Encourage all staff and students to be familiar with and practise alternative forms of communication used in the school.
- Identify professional learning needs and link staff to appropriate skill development programmes.
- Support teaching staff with time to meet with the Speech and Language Pathologist and other support professionals.
- Create opportunities for teaching staff to learn and practice unfamiliar communication systems.
- Use planning days to share and develop understanding and expertise across all staff.
- Build in time for staff to develop any necessary visuals supports and accompanying resources.



## Inclusive teachers

- Liaise closely with your school's Speech and Language Pathologist.
- Communicate with students with disability in the same manner, with the same tone and with the same consideration given to all students.
- Speak directly to the person and not with or through someone who is assisting them.
- Support other students in using the communication system/s used by students with disability.
- Are effective communicators who:
  - make eye contact
  - use a moderate volume and unambiguous voice tone
  - use short, clear sentences
  - avoid sarcasm
  - actively teach emotions including facial expressions
  - translate social and emotional reactions and interactions if necessary
  - provide appropriate communication systems and opportunities across all settings
  - use the student's communication system
  - assist the student to access their communication system
  - provide the response time required by individual students
  - use routines to promote communication
  - use visuals whenever possible
  - check for understanding
  - think about other ways they could present or add to the same message if not understood e.g. pointing, drawing
  - provide communication opportunities for the student throughout the school day.

<sup>14</sup>. <http://OR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-14>

## Practical examples



### Prep student with few spoken words using Language Acquisition Motor Planning (LAMP)

A Prep student can combine two words and uses his communication device to interact with peers. He loves to play chasings and is able to communicate the same message in several different ways: "Run more, Go run, Play run". In class he can request specific activities such as "Play, Play dough" in response to the question "What would you like to do now?"



### A non-verbal student with intellectual disability uses TouchChat

A Year 10 student uses TouchChat to communicate her understanding of the levelled texts she reads. Her speech is unintelligible but her responses using TouchChat show a good understanding of the stories portrayed in the texts. Following her reading tasks, she is easily able to indicate her free choice of activity without speech using TouchChat. Through TouchChat, teaching staff and her peers are able to gain insight into her ability to comprehend the levelled texts, and express her wants which otherwise would have been difficult to decipher.<sup>15</sup>



### Building rapport in another language

A teacher of a Year 12 student using Auslan has learnt some key signs so that he can have some communication directly with his Deaf student. The student has an interpreter but the teacher can ask simple questions himself such as "Are you finished?", "Did you have a good weekend?" and build a rapport with the student.



### Whole school visual supports

A primary school uses a common visual timetable which provides consistency of message, common language and a safety net for students moving between classes and rooms. Every classroom uses the same format (consistent pictures, fonts and colours) for reflecting their timetable. This gives students the security of knowing where and how to find out what will happen in terms of their learning programmes, no matter which class they are in.



### TO DO...

- Read the Communication Section of the IEP and note individual student's communication needs
- Provide a whole class visual timetable and visuals for individuals as needed
- Speak normally and point out 'key' words
- Support understanding with visuals and gestures

15. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footer-note-15>





**Table 2: Augmentative and Assistive Communication Systems and Supports**

**Auslan** is the official language of the Australian Deaf community. Although there are specific mouth shapes, there is no speaking when signing. Auslan has its own distinctive structure, grammar and vocabulary. There are a range of free apps that support the use of key signs.



A **communication board** allows the student to point to or touch the picture to show what they want to communicate.



**Gestural prompts** are easily understood hand gestures.



**Key word signing** uses key Auslan signs to supplement verbal English messages. Unlike Auslan, you speak in complete sentences and sign key words at the same time.



**Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP)** uses a computer generated voice to speak the icons the student touches. The organisation of the symbols incorporates neurological and motor learning principles.



**Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**

is a specific programme that teaches children to communicate independently with others by exchanging pictures, symbols, photographs or real objects. Students may use a PECS strip to present what they want to communicate. Teachers reply by speaking.

**Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD)**

is a way of organising whole word and symbol vocabulary in a communication book, iPad or speech generating device to provide immersion and modelling for learning. PODDs can have different formats, depending on the individual physical, sensory and communication needs of the student who will use it.



A **switch** is used by students to activate another device e.g. a wheelchair, a toy, a computer.



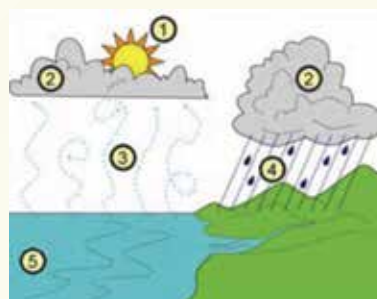
**TouchChat and Proloquo2Go** are computer programmes that 'speak' by tapping buttons with words or phrases.



**Verbal prompts** activate prior knowledge to give the student a cue.



**Visual prompts** are objects (or parts of objects), symbols, drawings and images that give the student a cue.





### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- How do we as a school community respect the various modes of communication available and used by our members?
- Does all our home-school communication respect varying language needs?
- How can we improve our communication of key messages to students and staff in relation to schoolwide values and expectations, safety messages and daily announcements so that they are easily understood by all?
- How do we enable staff and students to communicate their knowledge, skills and understanding, and celebrate the different perspectives they bring to learning and relating?
- What are our ongoing professional learning needs related to communication?
- How do we access and embed the advice of specialists, e.g. from the Speech and Language Pathologist, into students' programmes?



# INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANNING

## Learners First Strategy 2014–17

### Successful learners

Establish balanced, flexible and responsive learning and training pathways for students to encourage lifelong learning.

### Key messages

The *Australian Curriculum* framework is inclusive of all students, including students with disability. This curriculum framework provides quality learning opportunities and a context for linking individual learning goals.

Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) are used in Tasmanian Government schools as a written plan to describe, document, monitor, review and report on each student's learning programme, educational adjustments and learning outcomes. PLPs are often used for students who are gifted, Aboriginal, have English as an additional language or are under Care and Protection Orders. Students may identify with one or more of these categories and also have a disability. Only one learning plan is required to describe their learning programme. For more information and associated DoE guidelines, scan here.



*Mandatory Reporting Procedure*<sup>16</sup>



*Acceleration of Gifted Students*<sup>17</sup>



*Assessment and Reporting Procedures*<sup>18</sup>



*Guidelines for Individual Education Planning – Students with Disability*<sup>19</sup>

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) refers to the process of developing a plan and the written plan itself, for students with disability. The aim of

the plan is to promote access, participation and successful attainment of identified learning goals unique to the student. It does not detail every learning experience for the student, however it does describe collaboratively formed priorities, key teaching strategies, resources and supports for a set period of time.

The IEP is a working document to inform practice. It is not a final product, but a work in progress that is annotated and refined on a regular basis. It must be continually responsive to the priority learning goals and supports unique to the student. The key outcomes forming the foundation of the plan may be academic, social/emotional, physical or behavioural and are commonly a combination of these.<sup>20</sup>



It is important that the key outcomes are formed in collaboration with **the student (wherever possible) and their parents**. This is to ensure that the plan is best tailored to suit the aspirations and needs of the student. It is also a requirement of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* that the student or their associates have opportunities to be consulted and provide feedback regarding the educational adjustments discussed. Planning in this shared way strengthens partnerships and assists in developing common understandings to support effective learning for the student.

Broad key outcomes and knowledge of student's strengths and interests form the basis for the development of specific short term goals, referred to as SMART goals. SMART goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound. These goals are embedded in the relevant curriculum which for students from Prep to Year 10 is the *Australian Curriculum*. Goals are linked to either learning area content descriptors or General Capabilities, depending on which suits the goal best.

16. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-16>

17. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-17>

18. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-18>

19. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-19>

20. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-20>



The purpose of aligning key outcomes with SMART goals then embedding goals in required curriculum is to:

- Prioritise the skills and understandings that will lead to the achievement of the key outcomes.
- Make explicit the connection between individual learning goals and the curriculum.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, students have multiple and varied opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum throughout the school day.

Ongoing review and updating of the IEP is key to ensuring it reflects the student's needs and learning goals. Reviews are also important when describing student progress at reporting times. Reviews are opportunities to reflect on the overall effectiveness of the plan and discuss possible future actions and strategies.

This is particularly important at times of transition from one class to another or one school to another. Throughout schooling, an up-to-date IEP is an integral part of planned progressions. Successful transition planning at Year 12 also involves extending connections to appropriate service providers and specialist agencies. These include post-secondary educational providers, the National Disability Insurance Agency, community agencies and/or the workplace, as appropriate.

## Classroom practice

All key stakeholders, including the student wherever possible and their family, should work together to establish as well as review the IEP. Creating genuine partnerships with students and their families is the basis for developing knowledge and gaining insights into the student as a learner. These relationships can have a significant impact on how the student engages and succeeds in their learning.

The team working on the IEP should have dedicated consultative meetings at predetermined times of the year to establish and discuss goals and strategies. Consultative meetings can assist reaching an agreement on decisions and actions. Making use of meeting conventions such as meeting agendas, notification emails or letters in advance of the meeting, keeping notes of meeting outcomes

and actions, or writing changes directly into the IEP can make consultations more efficient and productive. Creating opportunities for informal communication in between meetings can also support shared understandings and lead to stronger ongoing collaboration.

Effective communication, both planned and informal, is key to identifying and planning coordinated adjustments for students with disability. For communication to be effective, everybody needs to support each other in identifying and affirming what is being communicated through a shared commitment to the process of the IEP. Be flexible and open-minded to different communication strategies as different situations may require different solutions for catching up either formally or informally.

The IEP document (or extracts such as the goals and evidence sheets) needs to be placed in the classroom or be readily accessible to the teacher and all adults working with the student in a respectful/confidential way. This makes it available to:

- Use with unit and lesson planning.
- Ensure that the student's learning goals are included in as many learning experiences as possible.
- Note on-the-spot progress and evidence against the learning goals.

The central Student Support System (SSS) is the portal to input or upload IEPs and other supporting documentation. There is an online learning plan directly accessible within SSS, however the same information can be recorded on a Microsoft Word™ DoE template. Either format is equally acceptable. It is important to be mindful of the *Personal Information Protection Act* legislation.

The structure of the IEP includes:

- jointly formed key outcomes for the student's learning
- important information about the student
- short term SMART goals
- educational adjustments including broad and classroom level supports.



## Overview of the IEP process





## Inclusive leaders

- Know which students require an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and ensure these are registered and updated in the Student Support System (SSS).
- Know that IEPs are instrumental in developing an holistic understanding of the student in readiness for developing personalised learning programmes.
- Lead the development of purposeful IEPs using DoE guidelines and support resources.
- Make deliberate and strategic use of student, family and staff relationships and expertise to develop teams with significant knowledge of the student.
- Make certain that resources are allocated to support staff in developing, implementing and reviewing IEPs.
- Ensure processes are in place to support ongoing collaboration and communication of learning goals and needs detailed in the student's IEP.
- Assist all staff, including specialist teachers, in developing a working knowledge of the IEPs of the students they teach.
- Ensure that a well documented IEP forms the foundation for successful transitions from year to year and school to school and into post school options.
- Lead successful transitions by maintaining strong connections between schools.
- Actively support the development of strong inter-school relationships with a focus on sharing student goals, strengths and needs, and the range of learning pathways.



## Inclusive teachers

- Plan for students with disability by getting to know each student's background, learning strengths, goals and needs.
- Develop IEPs in collaboration with all key stakeholders, including other support staff.
- Effectively collaborate with the student and their family as integral partners in the student's education.
- Include the valued life outcomes and goals expressed by the student and/or their family, framed as key outcomes.
- Identify opportunities to personalise learning using the student's strengths and interests.
- Maintain ongoing conversations and consultation with the student, parents and support staff in relation to providing relevant and rigorous learning experiences.
- Use the IEP as a working document, keeping it at hand, referring to it regularly and changing it to match new information.
- Ensure that record keeping is up-to-date and comprehensive, e.g. keep self-adhesive notes on hand to jot a date and comment on observed progress.
- Share the IEP with all staff working with the student and help them to use it to guide their practice and student progress.
- Maintain achievement data in relation to the student's progress against their learning goals.
- Report progress against goals using the IEP Framework in SARIS.



### The IEP as a working document

A primary school teacher has four students with IEPs in the class. To make the collection of evidence workable, the teacher keeps a supply of adhesive notes on hand to quickly note student's progress on the run. These constructive notes are then collected at the end of the each week and given to the Support Teacher for entry into the IEPs when she is next updating student progress. All the evidence is then reviewed and included in reporting to parents using the IEP framework in SARIS. Parents report that they appreciate and enjoy all the examples of positive learning noted by staff.



### Updating and sharing an IEP

A student with intellectual disability is transitioning from primary to high school. The process has been planned and commences at the start of Term 3. The Support Teacher invites the student's parents and student to meet with key staff at the receiving school. The number and nature of staff participating in the meeting is well planned with respect to the highest priorities of the transition and in recognition that too many staff in any one planning meeting may be overwhelming for families.

A mutually agreeable time is decided on and the family is sent a copy of the student's latest IEP to reflect on prior to the meeting. At the meeting, the family is invited to discuss where the student is at in terms of their learning and what they see as valued outcomes and adjustments for the student while in Year 7. The meeting notes and actions are discussed with staff and the IEP shaped accordingly. The family are emailed the revised IEP and invited to give their formal consent for the changes noted. The final copy of the IEP is stored in the Student Support System (SSS), making it readily accessible to the receiving school staff.



### Putting the IEP into action

Year group teachers meet each week to discuss planning and student needs. The Support Teacher makes a time with the team to discuss the IEP of one student each week, reviewing goals and adjustments. Teachers report on how the student is participating and achieving identified goals and if there are any changes to adjustments. These are noted in the student's IEP which is then updated in SSS.



### The power of collaboration

A student with complex needs and intellectual disability is attending his local high school. The student has a number of support plans that are linked to his IEP such as meal management and manual handling strategies. In developing the student's IEP goals, his family, together with a number of specialist staff and home group teacher, identified priority goals and the kinds of supports, equipment and resources required. The school scheduled team meetings with a range of support staff and the family also joined the meetings. In Term 1 meetings were regular, occurring every two weeks, in order to ensure the details were accurate and the plans were working effectively across the school day. Refinements were made and communicated to the family for consideration and consent. In this way, expertise was shared in a respectful and problem solving approach. The family appreciated the pooling of expertise and how the staff worked together to action, monitor and refine their child's learning programme.

#### TO DO...

- Collaborate with all stakeholders
- Know the IEP and use it to guide your practice
- Collect evidence of progress towards the SMART goals
- Ask for help with writing or time to write and update IEPs if needed





The following table shows example content from an IEP with SMART goals embedded in the *Australian Curriculum* alongside teaching strategies and adjustments that suit the student and the context.

### Key Outcome 2: To increase his functional numeracy.

What we currently see	SMART Goals (Link to Australian Curriculum)	Strategies and Adjustments Specific to particular subject
<p>Number:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angus can rote count 1-20 by 1s.</li> <li>• Angus can count with 1:1 to 20.</li> <li>• Angus can recognise the numbers 1-11, 13, 15. He confuses 'teen' numbers with 'ty' numbers (40 for 14).</li> <li>• Angus can consistently write the numbers from 1 to 13 in the correct sequence.</li> <li>• Usually reverses the numerals 2, 3, 7, 9.</li> <li>• Angus is able to identify 'more' from 2 amounts but not able to identify less.</li> <li>• Independently uses concrete materials to solve basic addition problems to 10 using the count all strategy.</li> <li>• Requires assistance and concrete materials to solve basic subtraction problems to 10.</li> </ul>	<p>By the end of Term 1 Angus will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count by rote, naming numbers in sequence, to and from 20, moving from any starting point. (ACMNA001)</li> <li>• Compare, order and make correspondences between collections, initially to 20, and explain reasoning. (ACMNA289)</li> <li>• Write the numeral 2 using correct formation.</li> <li>• Use the count on strategy to solve simple addition problems to 10. (working toward ACMNA015)</li> <li>• Independently use concrete materials to represent and solve simple subtraction on problems to 10. (working toward ACMNA015)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide 1:1 support to facilitate new learning.</li> <li>• Provide demonstration, modelling and think alouds - eg of how to count on from any starting point, how to use concrete materials to represent and solve subtraction problems.</li> <li>• Use concrete materials or visual displays (eg number charts, blocks, counters, etc).</li> <li>• Provide repetition, in a variety of ways, to consolidate learning.</li> <li>• Provide templates, hand-over-hand instruction, verbal prompts and visual aids (number chart on table top) to practice and remind correct numeral formations.</li> <li>• Provide sensory motor experience - sand, sandpaper, paint bags, etc.</li> </ul>



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- In what ways do staff collaborate with students and their families to develop IEPs?
- What processes and structures are in place to achieve effective IEP implementation within varying year level contexts?
- How does our home-school communication work to create stronger beneficial links between school and students' families?
- In what other ways are families encouraged or supported to be actively involved in improving learning outcomes for students?
- How do we address learning needs to promote student progress, regardless of student starting points and levels of attainment?
- Good teaching involves assessment that tracks progress and identifies learning needs. Monitoring progress towards IEP learning goals is best managed in our school setting in the following ways...
- How do we ensure that the students' IEPs are well communicated and understood at points of transition from year to year and school to school?



### Informing Teaching and Shaping Learning

Collecting evidence of student learning, against their learning goals, provides opportunities to further uncover students' strengths and needs and informs next steps in planning and teaching. Busy classrooms offer so much information for assessment that focusing on the student's learning goals creates a helpful focus. To further help in collecting and interpreting evidence of learning, many teachers use charts, adhesive notes, checklists or photographs. The information can then be added to the student's IEP at a later time.

#### Evidence of Learning/Notes and Observations Observation, work samples, IEP goals, photos...

##### Example 1:

19/07/15

- Can count forward by 1s to 20 from any starting point and backward by 1s from 10.
- Can identify 'more' and 'less' and make the 'same'.
- Can write the numbers to 19 correctly but reverses 2, 7, 9. Writes 02 for 20.
- Is able to independently use concrete materials to solve simple addition sums, using 'count all'.
- Can't identify the – sign, called it =. When independently solving subtraction sums, makes two collections then takes away randomly from either and gets incorrect answer.
- Sequences some days correctly – Tu, W, Th, F, W, Sa, Su. Can't correctly identify today, tomorrow, yesterday.
- Can read o'clock times apart from 12 o'clock. Cannot read ½ past times.

##### Example 2:



- 14.4.15 Joel was able to retell what he did before, during and after school.
- 6.5.15 Joel can draw vertical lines accurately.
- 7.5.15 Following mazes with motivating pictures.
- 9.5.15 Completed Humpty Dumpty sequence and put pictures in the right order.
- 13.5.15 Able to match the alphabet (lower case). Needs assistance with n u l y q d v g l e.
- 14.5.15 Able to answer yes/no questions about a picture. Still using four fingers on pencil.
- 19.5.15 Using notes to give a message to the teacher "I am going to ..." Can trace, read to the teacher and read back later.
- 20.5.15 Wrote his name independently and legibly. Can also recognise his name amongst others.
- 23.5.15 Joel recognised colour words - blue, purple, red, green, yellow.
- 27.5.15 Read a book with Teacher Assistant, Sunflowers (level 2), read book back to Teacher Assistant.

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN TEAM

## Developing a Student's Individual Education Plan

### Principal

*Ensures that:*

- Students and parents/carers are consulted regarding educational adjustments and in the preparation of the Individual Education Plan.
- The Support Teacher has the capacity and resources to build strong partnerships and collaborative relations with a range of people.
- Individual Education Planning meetings and communications with the student, their family and appropriate professionals are conducted on a regular basis.
- Relevant stakeholders from other agencies are engaged when required.

### Support Teacher

*Ensures that:*

- Information about the student's capabilities, interests, goals, and needs is easily accessible, stored in SSS and understood by all staff supporting the student.
- Communication between all members of the support team is timely, keeping pace with the student's needs.
- Advice and support is provided to the school leadership team and teachers in relation to supporting the student across learning environments, curriculum content, teaching and assessment strategies.
- Ongoing assistance is provided to the classroom teacher regarding differentiated teaching and learning programmes.

### Parent/Guardian/Carer(s)

*Ensures that:*

- Advice and information is provided to the team on all matters related to the student from an holistic perspective.
- Concerns, interests and strategies that work for the student are shared.
- Valued life outcomes are conveyed to set the direction for learning.

### Student

*Ensures that:*

- Wherever possible, advice about their goals and views on their needs and supports, especially those that have worked in the past, is shared with the team.

### Classroom Teacher

*Ensures that:*

- Contributions are made to set the direction for teaching and learning goals and programming to support the student
- Adjustments are put into practice and opportunities established for the achievement of learning goals in learning programmes
- Advice is provided to the Support Teacher in relation to how the student is progressing with their learning.

### Consultant or Specialist

*Ensures that:*

- Advice is provided in relation to the student's needs, possible impacts on the student's time at school, and the implications for teaching and learning programmes.

### Interpreter

*Ensures that:*

- Communication is clear and understood.

### Advocate/Mediator

*Ensures that:*

- Assistance is provided to the school and family in unpacking key concerns.

### TO DO...

- Have the student and their parents/carers been involved in developing the IEP?**
- Is the information gathered complete?**
- Is there evidence of where the student is up to in their learning?**
- Is there information about the student's strengths, aspirations and interests?**
- Are professional reports current?**
- Are there school structures and routines to support effective planning meetings?**
- Are there any special considerations?**

# ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Learners First Strategy 2014–17

### Excellence

We have high expectations for our learners and a strong commitment to the pursuit of excellence and innovation in our people, in our programmes and in our resources.

### Key messages

Assessment is an integral and ongoing part of teaching and learning, occurring through all stages. The *Good Teaching* resource, *Quality Assessment Practices – Guiding Learning* is an essential guide in unpacking assessment principles and approaches.<sup>21</sup> Further detail about assessment and reporting procedures can be found here.<sup>22</sup>



The overall purpose of assessment is the same for all students, including those with disability. That is to improve learning outcomes as teachers and students both take action in response to the learning outcomes.

Assessment begins by helping to determine where students are at in their learning, through pre-assessment which then informs the next steps to move the learner forward in skills, knowledge and understanding towards the learning goal. In this way, assessment is a process of learning for learning.

Formative assessment tells you how successful the teaching and learning has been and what might need to be repeated, broken down into smaller steps, covered in a different way or deferred. It must be planned, focused and ongoing. Summative assessment periodically reports on progress to parents and other stakeholders.

To be effective, assessment processes need to be aligned with learning goals that are embedded in curriculum with clear learning intentions. Keeping a systematic record of how students are performing against their learning goals allows data to be the key driver in shaping teaching and learning. The NAPLAN Toolkit is a useful resource to help identify students' literacy and numeracy current skill level and areas of need. Assessment options for students should be inclusive and enable them to produce evidence

of learning that accommodates their needs. Differentiated assessment is a key strategy as it offers opportunities for students to demonstrate their skill, knowledge and understanding in ways that are accessible and meaningful.

The IEP guides summative assessments communicated to parents twice yearly at mid and end of year reporting periods. It will identify if students are assessed against the *Australian Curriculum* learning area achievement standards and/or against the learning goals of the IEP. Students with disability who are working towards learning goals rather than achievement standards have their summative assessments reported in an IEP framework within SARIS. This framework allows progress to be recorded using a five point scale in addition to descriptive comments. It is important to develop SMART goals aligned to the Key Outcomes within the IEP that can be communicated in a meaningful way in student reports. As for all students, there is a general comments section where more specific and constructive information about progress and actions to support future learning can be described.

### Classroom practice

Use pre-assessment tools to gauge what prerequisite skills, background knowledge and understanding students bring to the learning. This helps you to firmly establish where students are in their learning. This information is key to designing learning activities that engage and appropriately challenge them.

Have clear and explicitly stated:

- learning objectives and ways students are informed of the learning intentions
- assessment procedures: what evidence will be collected, when and how learning will be assessed
- timelines, including when assessment expectations are outlined.

21. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-21>

22. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-22>



- guides to outline how work will be rated (if appropriate) e.g. assessment rubrics and exemplars
- feedback on what was done well and what needs improvement.

A focus on quality assessment practices can improve student ownership for learning and their learning outcomes. Give students a say in how they can represent or demonstrate their understanding.

Assessment is not all about finding weaknesses; focus on the positive and celebrate the effort the student gave their work. Give careful, timely and specific feedback about student work and the level of persistence to achieve the outcome. Feedback can occur at any time in learning and task involvement.

When giving feedback, avoid vague comments or comments not related to the task that could damage the student's self-esteem. Effective feedback is clear messages about what qualities, related to the task, are expected or are key to learning intentions. Take into consideration ways the student learns best and offer feedback in several ways to further reinforce key messages. It may be that feedback is given verbally with visual supports or physical gesturing or modelling. At other times, a concrete model or a good sample of work can assist students in having a clear idea of expectations. Again, value the contributions the student has made to the task, emphasising effort and persistence with the learning.

Feedback is only useful when students have taken action, in light of the feedback. Allow students time to process the information, ask questions to clarify their understanding and apply the feedback to their work. For some students with severe intellectual disability, immediacy of feedback in the form of praise and highly motivating objects or tasks can be key to reinforcing their learning. For other students, verbal praise like "Good or great work!" may not be motivating enough to encourage reflection and aiming for better performance. Encourage students to unpack their thinking, the strategies and evidence they used in arriving at their answers.

Formative assessment is critical to building an understanding of how the student is progressing with their learning and how effective teaching strategies have been. Plan and establish

processes to capture evidence of learning to suit the identified learning goals and context for learning. In some instances, taking the learning goals from the IEP and setting them against a checklist to take into class with the student works well. In others it may be a photo or video or audio capture, or student response to stimulus e.g. vocabulary the student uses in relation to an image, observation notes, or parts of a product such as an eBook.

Consider assessment adjustments that may be helpful. These may include options such as:

- a variety of opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, accommodating different abilities and styles of learning (such as verbal, written, digital, dramatised or visual representations)
- reducing the number of questions or providing alternative formats for questions (such as diagrams, flowcharts or timelines)
- additional time to complete or take leave from the task/s
- fewer/smaller assessment tasks
- different tasks/aspects of a task assessed
- tasks broken down into smaller components and possibly aggregated over time.

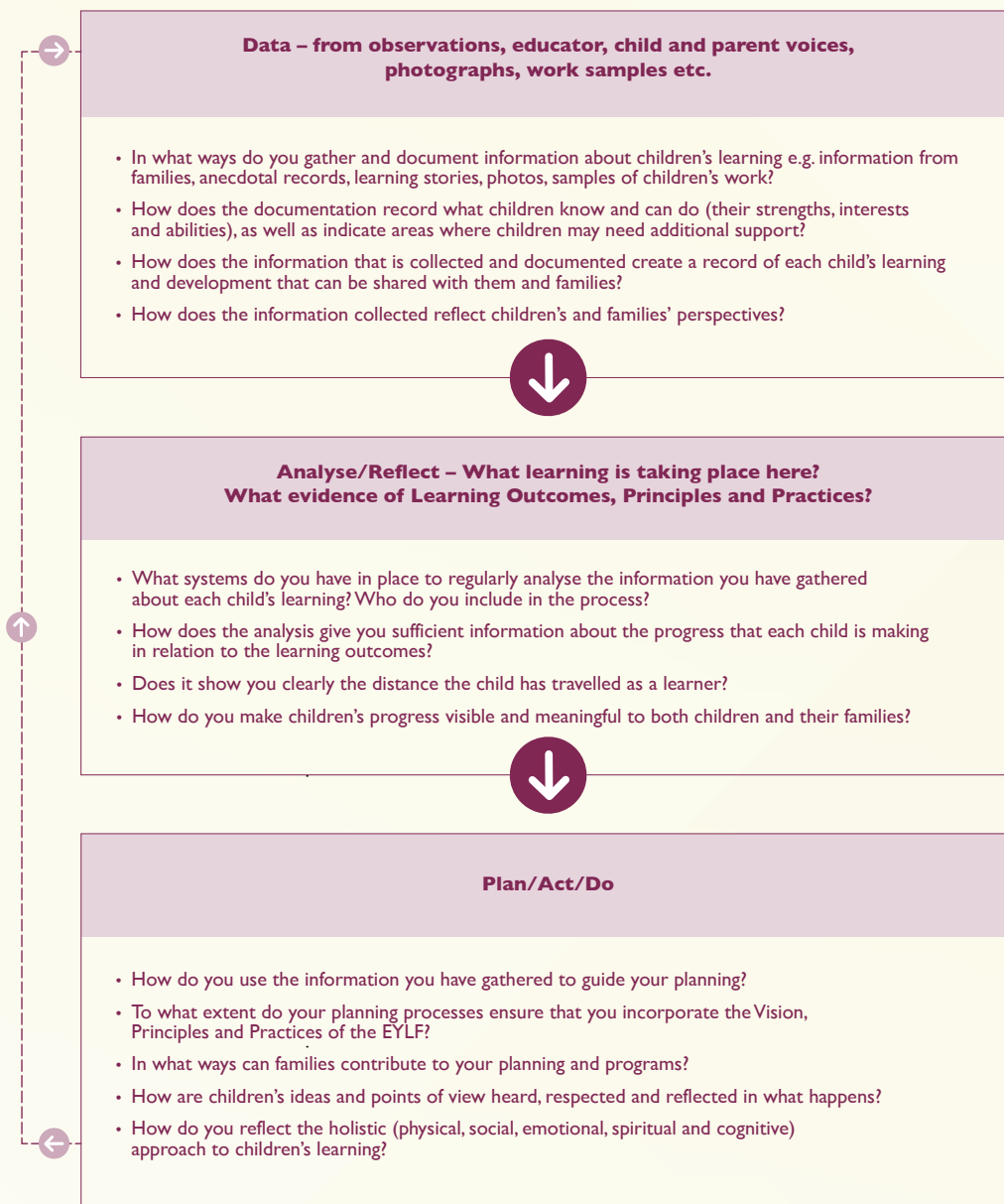
How the student is to be assessed can be noted in the IEP. This helps to inform classroom planning for adjusting 'products of learning' to suit student needs.

*"As every teacher knows, what students learn as a result of any particular sequence of instruction is hard to predict – what students learn is not necessarily what we teach. This is why assessment is perhaps the central feature of effective practice – assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning. It is only by assessing that we can find out whether the instructional activities in which students have engaged have resulted in the intended learning."*  
(William, D 2013)



The planning cycle used with *The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)*, (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009)

The following planning cycle underscores the importance of using evidence to help create a record of every child's progress. An analysis of this evidence and reflection on the learning outcomes, principles and pedagogy informs practice.





## Inclusive leaders

- Ensure there is alignment of the *Australian Curriculum* (scope and sequence), assessment, pedagogy and reporting processes throughout the school.
- Ensure that alignment is from students to classes to year levels to the whole school.
- Ensure time is made available for team planning.
- Know that all students can learn and are committed to success for all students.
- Apply rigor to developing quality assessment processes for all students – including students with disability.
- Support a shared understanding of learning expectations that provide a basis for ongoing discussion about student achievement.
- Support teaching staff in delivering effective feedback that is timely, constructive, performance based and promotes greater effort and engagement in learning.
- Use data effectively to highlight patterns or trends for future action.
- Align resources strategically to better support learning needs and improve learning outcomes.
- Facilitate staff sharing strategies and processes for collecting evidence of student progress and how it informs feedback to students.
- Promote reflective practice around assessment data that informs planning and teaching.
- Develop school cultures that celebrate the effort and persistence students apply to their learning.



## Inclusive teachers

- Know that students will be at different points of readiness in relation to learning goals.
- Persistently work at understanding where students are up to in their learning, including their current knowledge, skills and overall learner profile.
- Tap into specialist support staff knowledge to refine assessment strategies where needed.
- Use the *Australian Curriculum* achievement standards or General Capabilities progressions to help identify what the student is expected to know, understand and be able to do.
- Begin with the end in mind when planning for learning.
- Identify and remove any barriers to assessment for students with disability e.g. offer a range of product options for students to demonstrate evidence of their learning.
- Use data sets and observations then team with colleagues to inform refinement of task design and delivery.
- Have clearly defined learning targets that are shared with students. For example, have ready good work samples, evaluation rubrics or learning scaffolds.
- Develop effective and efficient ways to collect evidence of student learning progress towards goals.
- Give timely constructive feedback related to effort and persistence in attaining learning goals.
- Build in opportunities for students to take action with the feedback.
- Keep an up-to-date record of student learning outcomes in each student's IEP.
- Refer to the evidence of learning records when reporting to parents.

## Practical examples



### Using evidence to inform practice

A student in Year 3 is working on developing his reading and writing skills and has several SMART goals with a literacy focus. The teacher scaffolds his writing tasks by breaking them down into manageable chunks. The teacher offers verbal feedback on the effort the student is giving his writing and points out what is working well and what he could do differently. As the teacher moves around the room he records the student's progress in a tracking table and notes key observations. The teacher makes a mental note to talk with the Support Teacher to see if they have further suggestions to scaffold the student's written responses.



### From handwriting to typing

A student has great difficulty with handwriting due to poor fine motor control. She is encouraged to practise and develop her handwriting skills at specific times. However, when the focus is on her understanding, knowledge or creativity she types or uses speech to text technology for her responses. This allows free-flow of all of her thoughts and understanding to be shared, without being impacted by her motor capability.



### Providing alternatives for evidence of learning

Students in Year 8 Science are studying cells as the basic units of life (ACSSU149). Students are required to examine a variety of cells and identify structures within cells, noting the differences between animal and plant cells. Several students in the class have learning difficulties and one student has an intellectual disability. The teacher simplifies the content for these students and focuses their learning on cells as building blocks with a nucleus. All students are required to make a model cell with all organelles. The student with disability is supported to make a cell using boxes and places a small box inside the cell to represent the nucleus only. Students then make a video recording explaining the cells they have created and the function of the organelles represented. A peer assists the student with disability to record the cell and nucleus using video software with a ready-to-use movie trailer feature. The class all enjoy watching the short films they create.



The Year 6 class is undertaking a unit of work based on electricity (ACSSU097). One of the tasks is the creation of an electrical circuit complete with a switch of their own design. In order to capture the understanding of the student with an intellectual disability, the teacher has created a modified report sheet. It has three sentence starters and supportive images of the key circuitry elements and buddied the student with some peers to set up a circuit. The student is then able to report orally on what happened when the switch was activated. Her understanding is captured as a verbal account using an iPad and some key messages noted on the modified report.



### TO DO...

- ☑ Use assessment to give you a starting point
- ☑ Make assessment tasks relevant and suitable for each individual student
- ☑ Use evidence to inform reporting
- ☑ Adjust teaching strategies in light of assessment data



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What formative assessment strategies do I use in my classroom?
- How do I keep track of where the student's progress has been in relation to their IEP goals? What other processes do my colleagues use that I could adopt or adapt?
- How do staff work collaboratively at reporting times to encapsulate and share student progress with the student and parents?
- How do we ensure reports are written clearly and constructively to reflect student progress towards their individual goals?

*“Over time, students move forward in their learning when they can use personal knowledge to construct meaning, have skills of self-monitoring to realise that they don't understand something, and have ways of deciding what to do next.” (Earl, L 2003)*



# SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN A RESPECTFUL SCHOOL CULTURE

## *Learners First Strategy 2014–17*

### **Respect**

Positive and effective interactions, with each other and with our environment, are conducted on the basis of responsibility, integrity and accountability.

### Key messages

A whole school approach to behaviour works to collaboratively build positive learning environments with a culture of respect, responsibility, integrity and accountability. This is demonstrated in whole school, classroom, group and individual contexts and interactions. Every member of the school community has roles and responsibilities in creating safe and supportive learning environments.

School leaders model, build and maintain positive relationships between all members of the school community. They model caring relationships that are reflected in the way staff, students and parents interact. They demonstrate active support for positive whole school approaches to behaviour and coach others in supporting students. In all contexts there are clear and consistent expectations for behaviour that have been jointly established, communicated broadly and incorporated into teaching and learning programmes. Effective leaders understand that collaborating with specialist staff is integral to supporting students with high and complex needs. They engage specialist support staff such as: Autism Consultants, School Psychologists and staff from the Respectful Schools Support Team.

Leadership teams collect data on behavioural incidents in the Student Support System (SSS) and use reporting functions in SSS and Education Information (edi) to identify patterns that inform whole school decision making on reducing incidents and supporting students in their interactions. They interrogate this information in consultation with specialist support staff to plan and implement safe and collaborative learning environments. They understand that students engage in behaviours as a way of communicating their needs, which may mask underlying messages. Effective leaders access resources and engage processes such as Functional Behaviour Assessments to develop a clearer understanding of the purpose of behaviours. They use this information to create preventative strategies and direct teaching opportunities of replacement behaviours and pro-social skills.

To delve deeper into respectful school cultures, you can investigate the *Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour* resources.<sup>23</sup>



### Classroom practice

As stated in the introduction to the Personal and Social capability in the *Australian Curriculum*, 'The development of personal and social capability is a foundation for learning and for citizenship.' This capability assists students in understanding themselves, their emotions, relationships, how to make responsible decisions and in handling challenging situations constructively.

For many students, including students with disability, the teaching and learning of pro-social behaviours in all contexts is as important as the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. Attending to the social and emotional needs of all students through the teaching of knowledge, skills and dispositions is an important aspect of practice. As part of the whole school approach to respectful schools, keep in mind a tiered support approach. That is, providing universal supports for all students, secondary supports and resources for some students and intensive support for others.

Aim to provide a safe, supportive and predictable learning environment for both collaborative and independent learning. Create confidence in students that their interactions, questions and answers will be received in a supportive environment. See behaviours as a form of communication and listen to the message behind the behaviour.

At all times model the skills, behaviours and dispositions that you are teaching and promoting.

23. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-23>

For some students entering unstructured environments such as playgrounds, canteen line-ups, and locker areas are a real challenge. Effective teachers plan for these students by identifying 'safe' areas to play in, developing visual social scripts that help teach the often hidden rules, and providing peer support.

Understand student learning processes and use task design to give access to well structured peer and social interaction opportunities in which students are likely to experience success and feel a sense of belonging.

Use your knowledge of learning area content and the nature of student learning processes in curriculum areas. Some students may feel uncomfortable in some learning areas and show their frustration through inappropriate behaviour. Be prepared to act in a planned and responsive manner in differentiating learning and helping students develop appropriate behaviours.

Help students feel confident in their ability to work independently as much as possible. This may involve shifting supports (e.g. Teacher Assistant and/or peers) into a variety of roles throughout the class or across the daily timetable.

Facilitate planned and supported collaboration by explicitly teaching and supporting students for effective team work.

Visual reminders of expectations, values and routines give students clear direction on appropriate behaviour. Having positive expectations posted in all public and classroom areas provides frequent reminders and reinforces these messages. This is particularly important for students with intellectual disability as it transfers learning across a variety of contexts. To take this further with individual students, their own drawn visuals can serve as a more personal reminder. For some students, thumbnail size portable images allow them to keep these reminders on-hand for class and play areas at break times.



For identified students, developing personalised behaviour support plans (in alignment with the whole school behaviour support plan) is an important step. To create a plan, consult with senior staff to form a care team. The team will take into account the behavioural observations and incidents and refer to the *Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour* resources.<sup>24</sup>



Find opportunities for students to take on valued roles and responsibilities to give them a sense of being valued, trusted and capable. This also encourages a positive self-concept. Demonstrate to students that behavioural incidents do not preclude students from having valued membership in the class.

Build rewarding activities into daily tasks to improve the student's quality of life; activities that they enjoy, find calming, feel confident doing. These activities should not be used just as rewards.

Think carefully about consequences. Remember that removing therapeutic, calming or favoured activities as a consequence is likely to escalate behaviour.

Support students in being self-directed when regulating emotions by using 'take a break' or calming strategies. Some students benefit from a calming box where they can identify items that make them feel better regulated and happy. Have ready pressure aids or a range of heavy work activities for students with sensory-motor needs. Pressure aids might include weighted cushions while a heavy work activity may involve the student carrying some books to the library or taking some materials to the front office.

24. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-24>



## Inclusive leaders

- Make public a commitment to developing inclusive, safe and supportive schools.
- Build strong connections between the school and its community, parents, families, local businesses and community services.
- Develop the skills and competencies of staff through ongoing professional learning.
- Form schoolwide systems and meeting structures that promote teamwork and supportive practice.
- Lead and support staff teams in prioritising wellbeing and behavioural goals.
- Define and make clear staff roles and responsibilities in relation to team and whole school approaches.
- Cultivate shared student ownership of positive behaviour, making it a celebrated part of school life.
- Implement evidence-based whole school behaviour support systems and processes.
- Align resources and supports to ensure the effectiveness of whole school strategies.
- Provide evidence-based early intervention and targeted support to meet specific student needs.
- Maintain data sets that inform decision making and targeted approaches to better support students.
- Build collegial environments that increase the likelihood for teachers to share and develop best practice, and students to engage in learning and respectful relationships.
- Focus on outcomes and improving student learning and wellbeing data.



## Inclusive teachers

- Believe that all students are capable of learning new behaviours.
- Have high respect for students.
- Consult the Support Teacher and specialist support staff to ensure learning environments are optimal in relation to students' needs.
- Use collaborative pedagogies to create opportunities for students to work with and learn from each other.
- Take collective responsibility for all students' learning and wellbeing.
- Know students and if they have behavioural triggers that require adjustments.
- Are proactive and have a plan that will maintain the student in a calm and alert state.
- Identify opportunities for students to perform valued roles in the classroom.
- Explicitly teach, model and promote behaviours that are valued and expected.
- Use a range of teaching strategies, interactions, supports and/or technologies to enhance learning.
- Provide access to preferred activities and breaks during sessions.
- Design learning tasks that develop pro-social behaviours and capitalise or strengthen students' personal and social capabilities.
- Provide positive and meaningful feedback in recognition of student success with social skills (e.g. thanks for using respectful language, thanks for helping another student collect his workbooks in readiness for the lesson).
- Ensure that the language used matches the student's understanding.
- Where possible praise students for following school values and expectations.
- Maintain effective communication and relationships with families and specialist staff.
- Acknowledge effort and achievement through specific, timely feedback.
- Use reinforcement strategies.
- Seek to understand the message behind the behaviour.
- Focus on ways to prevent the problem from recurring by teaching socially appropriate replacement behaviour (which meet the same need) and reinforce the new replacement behaviour they are teaching.



## Practical examples



### Supporting students to self-regulate

The Prep teacher creates an identified classroom 'safe space' and instructions on how to access it, in agreement with the student and their parent. When agitated, the student begins to pace backwards and forwards. As soon as the teacher recognises the student has become agitated, he gives the student the break card. At the same time the teacher names up that the student is unsettled and offers the agreed strategy. Over time, the student is given the break card to use without the teacher's prompts. By the end of Term 1, he begins to recognise his own emotional need, handing the break card to the teacher and moving to the 'safe space'.



### Challenging behaviour

A student in Year 7 with severe anxiety, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and poor interpersonal skills requires a highly personalised approach to enable him to engage with learning without resorting to very inappropriate behaviour.

The student is encouraged to use the 5 Point scale<sup>25</sup> to self-monitor his emotions, then follow with an effective calming action.

The student finds using the scale difficult as his emotions escalate very quickly. A great deal of positive verbal reinforcement, highly predictable routines, visual supports and trust building messages are used by the teacher to keep the student calm.

Each lesson the teacher devises several 'Working Towards' tasks and rewards, focusing the student's attention on tasks in manageable blocks with timely reinforcements.

A reactive management plan is co-constructed involving all stakeholders, to further support the student and others at times of crisis.

The universal schoolwide expectations and values, together with the tailored approaches, enables the student to better self-manage his reactions, seeing him increasingly participate in learning programmes with success.



### Working collaboratively

Students are involved in a collaborative social change project. Students are asked to think about their interests and values as a class group, as these will form the key drivers for their change projects. The class generated values are clarified and refined by the teacher. Several students in the class have identified disabilities and sometimes find it difficult to work collaboratively alongside many students. The teacher supports all students by providing strategies for working in teams, then thoughtfully creates teams with nominated buddies and additional adult support where needed.

The students come together in their teams around the change projects they decide to put into action. In each team, the buddy guides the student with disability and their contributions to the project. Each team makes the most of their collective strengths and achieves outcomes that inspire others.



### From data to 'Planned Play' for recess and lunchtime

A primary school identified significant increases in behavioural incidents across the school during recess and lunchtime breaks. Teaching staff devised 'planned play' opportunities to assist students with their interactions, through teaching and actively supervising pro-social skills. Each day, just before recess and lunch, students were invited to choose preferred play activities from the list generated for the day. Options offered ranged from quiet indoor pursuits to team sports such as football or less rigorous outdoor activities like sandpit play. Students elected to take a couple of buddies with them, ensuring that everyone was included in socialising and enjoying their preferred playtime activity. Since the introduction of 'planned play', the level of incidents observed during break times reduced markedly.<sup>26</sup>

25. <http://www.5pointscale.com/>

26. <http://QR2.info/disability-services/qr/footnote-26>



Support students in developing an understanding of emotions by using visuals of facial expressions. Some students may start with only happy and sad expressions.



### TO DO...

- Create a culture of support, trust and purposeful learning
- Mobilise resources to target need
- Encourage strong connections with students and their families with a focus on learning
- Co-create school values and expectations and share broadly



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What is the 'tone' of our school culture in relation to learning?
- What are the behavioural problems, non-attendance and/or disengagement issues in our context that we need to attend to?
- How can we better promote a culture of successful learning and support for each other as lifelong learners?
- What does our behaviour data tell us about the effectiveness of our behaviour support plans? Has there been a change in incident frequency/incident severity/duration?
- What positive aspects of our school culture have progressed over time and what can we take from that progress to continue moving forward?

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