

# McDOWALL STATE SCHOOL



## SPECIAL NEEDS

Education Queensland provides a range of specialist programmes and services to support students with educational support needs, including students with learning difficulties, students who require behaviour support, students who are refugees, students who have English as a Second Language (ESL) and students with a diagnosis in one or more of the low incidence categories of physical disability (PD), intellectual disability (ID), hearing disability (HD), speech language disability (SLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

The McDowall State School strives for the provision of equitable educational opportunities to ensure that all students have access to, participate in and gain positive learning outcomes from schooling. Such opportunities, which form the foundation of a quality lifestyle, can be achieved through the use of inclusive curriculum practices. The McDowall State School includes and values students through the provision of; and access to; a range of flexible curriculum options that promote enhanced educational learning outcomes.

At McDowall State School, there is a school-wide focus on promoting a culture of *personal best* whereby all students are encouraged to be resilient and improve on previous personal achievement.



This is exemplified within our three school rules:

1. **Respect for yourself.** (*Being the best that one can be*)
2. **Respect for others.** (*We live, work and play in a social context*)
3. **Take responsibility for your own actions.** (*We are accountable for our decisions*)

Staff scaffold the learning experiences of special needs students by providing programmes, strategies, personnel and resources (as appropriate) to support them in their achievements.

### CHILD NEEDS COMMITTEE

The *McDowall State School Child Needs Committee* has the responsibility of co-ordinating specialist intervention and services within the school delivering effective (best possible) intervention in better meeting the individual needs of all students, including

- (a) the gifted and talented
- (b) those with learning disabilities / difficulties; and
- (c) those experiencing low incidence disabilities (physical, visual, hearing and intellectual impairments).

The Child Needs Committee comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal (P-2), Deputy Principal (3-6), Guidance Officer, Learning Support Teacher (STLD), Special Education Programme Teacher (SEPT), the Class Teacher; and as appropriate, Advisory Visiting Teacher / External Agencies.

Parents are invited to attend Planning Meetings in an extension of the partnership that exists between home and school. These plans determine the nature of support / intervention provided. (a) Individual Education Plan (b) Learning Support Plan (c) Individual Behaviour Plan (d) Early Years Intervention, (e) Education Adjustment Planning; and (f) Teacher-Aide Intervention.

### **CHILD NEEDS COMMITTEE**

The responsibilities of the Child Needs Committee are:

- 1) To implement Case Conferences and Meetings / Appoint Case Manager/s
- 2) To identify the range of child needs within the McDowall State School.
- 3) To advocate for adequate resources and professional development experiences.
- 4) To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- 5) To acknowledge class teachers' responsibility for providing appropriately for students with needs.
- 6) To provide procedures for the early and continuing identification of students with needs.
- 7) To develop priorities and procedures for access to support teaching.
- 8) To specify the relationship between class teachers and support personnel.
- 9) To monitor the effectiveness of policy and procedures / Maintain records.
- 10) To develop and monitor programmes with/for teachers and parents.



#### **The Case Manager (usually the Class Teacher) will:**

- a) Co-ordinate the development and implementation of the Support Programme for that child.
- b) Monitor the on-going action plan, report on progress and programme development; and facilitate regular review by the Child Needs Committee.

**Specialist Intervention and Support Personnel will** provide a support function throughout the McDowall State School which facilitates effective programming and service delivery for children with special needs, enhances appropriate skills in teachers / parents; and in assisting in the provision of appropriate resources.

## **STUDENT REFERRAL TO CHILD NEEDS COMMITTEE**

### **Step 1 Identification and Data Gathering**

When a class teacher believes that a student has learning needs which may require specialist staff intervention and support, the class teacher gathers assessment, anecdotal and other recorded information, then discusses the issue with the parent.

### **Step 2 Completion of Referral Form**

Class teacher completes a Child Needs Committee Student Referral Form and attaches assessment information. The class teacher discusses the case with the Deputy Principal and/or Learning Support and/or Special Education Programme Teacher. The class teacher organizes a date and time for case presentation at Child Needs Committee.

### **Step 3 Presenting Case at Child Needs Committee Meeting**

Class teacher outlines professional concern for the student in terms of (a) Child need (b) Educational achievement and progress (c) Data and records (d) Existing and previous intervention and support (e) Parent involvement and partnership; and (f) Age and Year Level. Ten minutes is the allocated time (on average).

**Step 4 Determining Level of Intervention and/or Support**

Child Needs Committee discusses and considers the available information and determines the level of child need (within the context of school resource levels and existing case load priorities) and subsequent action/s. eg Case Manager appointment, External Agency referrals, etc.

**Step 5 Implementation of Intervention and/or Support Programme**

The Child Needs Committee assigns a Case Manager to each student accepted as requiring intervention and/or support at a level beyond that which the class teacher can reasonably provide for the student. A range of Intervention and/or Support Programmes are implemented across the school. The Case Manager monitors and documents student progress within the programme and provides feedback to the Child Needs Committee, the parent and the class teacher, if the class teacher is not the Case Manager.

**SCHOOL INTERVENTION**



Students identified as experiencing special needs impacting on their learning, particularly in literacy, numeracy and in the skills of learning, receive specialist intervention and assistance. In its broadest sense, intervention and support occurs each time a class teacher makes an adjustment within the class teaching programme to accommodate an individual student’s learning needs. Strategies are designed to remove barriers that may limit a child’s access to and participation in the school curriculum. Intervention and support for students with learning difficulties or learning disabilities may also include specialist teacher intervention (Learning Support Teacher), specialist teacher-aide intervention and collaborative support options.

**SUPPORT OPTIONS**

In-class support	Tutorial support (individual)	Tutorial support (group)
Teacher Aide support	Individual management plan	Vertical timetabling
Class organization	Years 6-7 transition activity	Social skilling development
Computers & technology	Support (Reader, Writer, Number)	Gifted & Talented Programme
Peer tutoring	Modified curriculum	Volunteer tutors
Team teaching	Partial withdrawal	Alternate programmes
Guidance referral	Specialist teacher referral	Alternate site
Parent involvement	Home programme	Outside agencies

- **Classroom intervention** – provided by class teacher, teacher-aides and volunteers.
- **Learning support** – provided by Learning Support Teacher (STLD), teacher-aides and volunteers.
- **Special education support** – provided by Special Education Programme Teacher (SEPT), teacher-aides, Guidance Officer (GO), Advisory Visiting Teachers (AVT) and volunteers.
- **Speech language communication support** – provided by the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), teacher-aides and Advisory Visiting Teachers (AVT).
- **English as a second language (ESL) support** – provided by a designated school-based teacher.
- **Refugee students** supported through teacher-aide intervention programmes managed by the Learning Support Teacher (STLD).
- **Defence Services students** supported by the Defence Services Teacher-Aide (DSTA) Programme funded by the Defence Department.
- **Early Years Intervention Programme** – implemented by engaged skilled teachers and teacher-aides in support of identified students needing support through short-term State funded intervention.
- **National Assessment Programme** – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) across Years 3 & 5 with identified students receiving intervention and support through short-term State funded intervention.
- **‘Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students’** implemented by all staff.

- **Gifted and Talented Education Programme** – ‘Framework for Gifted Education’ implemented by all teachers.
- **Support-a-Reader, Support-a-Writer and Support-a-Maths Programme** – Training is provided to parent volunteers by Learning Support Teacher (STLD) to implement these programmes. Programme implementation is dependent upon the availability of parent volunteers.

### **ASSESSMENT & REPORTING OPTIONS**

Criteria based	Outcomes based	Assessment modification
Special considerations	Modified assessment presentations	Alternate programme

### **CURRICULUM OPTIONS**

Programme modifications	Individual education plans	Individual learning plans
Individual management plans	Key Learning Areas	Life skills
Literacy programmes	Numeracy programmes	Specific purpose activity

### **EFFECTIVE LEARNING & TEACHING**

Individual programming	Co-operative learning	Real life / life-like experience
Collaborative planning	Collaborative teaching	Appraisalment
Ascertainment	Applied technology	Needs identification
Appropriate teaching strategy	Flexible delivery	Professional / personal support

### **SPECIALIST STAFF INTERVENTION & SUPPORT LEVELS**

Level 1 **Direct intervention** with Individual Child or Group usually on short/predetermined time frame basis in the Classroom, Withdrawal Space or Learning Support Room.

- ◇ To assess / gather information about the child’s current level of performance.
- ◇ To initiate appropriate programming in the classroom.
- ◇ To refine and guide class teaching strategies and instructional practices (as necessary) eg. demonstrations / peer tutoring / self-reflection.
- ◇ To develop a child’s skills to a functional level in the classroom.
- ◇ To support a child requiring a modified programme in the classroom.
- ◇ To provide full-time / part-time alternative programming. eg. Special needs /extension.

Level 2 **Support Provision** for a Student or Group as part of Child Needs Committee Programming and Processes.

- ◇ Liaison between teacher, support personnel and parent (where necessary).
- ◇ Organisation and preparation of resources for classroom teacher and teacher-aides.
- ◇ Co-operative planning with classroom teacher for identified children.
- ◇ Training / skilling of parents and staff to work effectively with identified children.
- ◇ Monitoring of classroom programming for children and providing appropriate intervention (where necessary).

*The major purpose of this activity is .....*

- \* To increase the child’s level of performance while in a regular classroom setting.
- \* To enhance the skills of parents, teachers and teacher-aides who are responsible for the child’s educational well-being and programming.
- \* To ensure appropriate resources are available to the identified child.
- \* To ensure appropriate programming for identified children in the classroom.



Level 3 **Provision and Facilitating Activity** which Contributes toward and Enhances the Educational Climate within the School .....Role as Positive Change-Agent.

- ◇ In-service for classroom teachers.
- ◇ Parent education and training for voluntary helpers within the school.
- ◇ Organisation of resources for a specific strategy. eg. Number fact mastery, Life skills, etc.
- ◇ Whole school screening for identification of Children at Risk.
- ◇ Consultation with classroom teacher and Principal regarding identified school priority programmes.
- ◇ Compilation, maintenance and evaluation of Individual Student Profiles (School Records). eg. Copies of Guidance Files, correspondence, standardised tests, anecdotes, etc.
- ◇ Support and assist classroom teachers in appraisalment / educational adjustment process.
- ◇ Encouraging staff to become involved in new programmes / strategy implementation.
- ◇ Involvement in co-ordinating external agencies to ensure contemporary and co-ordinated service delivery.

*The purpose of this activity is .....*

- \* To implement a whole school, co-ordinated, focused approach in delivering child-centred services.
- \* To recognise and respond to areas of need perceived by school personnel.
- \* To introduce and support new professional ideas and concepts.
- \* To promote team-work and collegiality.
- \* To assist teachers and parents in the enhancing of present skilling levels.
- \* To advocate for Support Services and Resourcing.



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

The term 'programme' is used to refer to the additional staff and resources based at the school to support students with *diagnosed* disabilities. A Special Education Programme Teacher (SEPT) is located at the McDowall State School to respond to the 'educational adjustment' that a student may require across P-6. Students with a diagnosis in one or more of the low incidence categories of physical disability (PD), intellectual disability (ID), hearing disability (HD), speech language disability (SLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) may be supported by the Special Education Programme Teacher and Advisory Visiting Teachers (AVTs). Two critical elements underpin the Special Education Programme, namely the Education Adjustment Programme (EAP) and the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **EDUCATION ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME (EAP)**

The Education Adjustment Programme (EAP) is a process for identifying and responding to the educational needs of students with *diagnosed* disabilities. The EAP process includes:

- **Data gathering** at school to determine whether a particular impairment may be adversely affecting a child's learning or proving to be a barrier to learning, so appropriate adjustments can be made;
- **Identification** based on information collated and documentation;
- **Registration** on a state-wide system called AIMS/OnsSchool;
- **Verification** – a Verification Officer confirms that the information gathered meets Education Queensland criteria for that disability category;
- **Profile** documentation – the EAP Programme is a document used to record how often the school is currently making adjustments to assist child learning. The Beginning School Profile (BSP) is used for students in the Preparatory Year and the Education Adjustment Profile (EAP) is used for students across Years 1-12.
- **Validation** – Profiles are submitted to Regional Education Office and scrutinised through the EAP Validation Process to ensure a match between the evidence gathered and the education adjustments identified in the submitted profiles.

## **INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)**



The Individual Education Plan (IEP) process involves the Special Education Programme Teacher or the relevant Advisory Visiting Teacher working collaboratively with the class teacher and parents to consider the student's current level of achievement and rate of progress; and to determine learning priorities for the next 3-6 months. The education adjustments required for the student to best access the general class curriculum programme are then documented in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). A progress review occurs at a predetermined date.

## **SPECIALIST STAFF ROLES**

### **LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER (STLD)**

The Learning Support Teacher assists class teachers to build support for students through classroom work units and within the class environment. The role of the Learning Support Teacher includes:

- Identifying and responding to the learning needs of students with learning difficulties and learning disabilities.
- Management of allocated school staff and resources to deliver Child Needs Committee programmes.
- Determining the level of modification required to teaching strategies, resources and class environment.
- Working collaboratively with the class teacher to develop a Learning Support Plan which incorporates the modification of the class programme designed to assist the student to better access the school curriculum.
- Collaborating with parents and teachers, to promote improved learning outcomes for students.

### **GUIDANCE OFFICER (GO)**

Guidance Officers are teachers with specialist professional training in counselling and psycho-educational assessment. A student may be referred to the school Guidance Officer by School Administration or the Child Needs Committee, should a student issue require specialist intervention and support. In some instances, parents consult private agencies independent of the school and provide relevant information to the school. The role of the Guidance Officer includes:

- Liaising with other agencies and making appropriate referrals.
- Assisting with the identification, diagnosis and enrolment of children with low incidence special needs.
- Working collaboratively with teachers and other specialist staff within the Education Adjustment Profile (EAP) process.
- Collaborating with students, their parents, teachers, specialist staff and community agencies to promote improved learning outcomes for students.
- Identification of factors that can be barriers to learning and development; and planning / assisting with planning interventions and/or support programmes to assist students achieve improved learning outcomes.
- Assessment of a student's developmental levels and abilities.
- Assessment of a student's learning programme and specialist support needs.
- Provision of counselling in relation to school adjustment issues.



### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME TEACHER (SEPT)**

The Special Education Programme Teacher supported by Special Education Teacher-Aides, supports students who have a *diagnosed* disability in the areas of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disability (ID), and speech language disability (SLD). Programme support for students with hearing disability (HD), physical disability (PD) and visual disability (VD) is provided by specialist trained teachers called Advisory Visiting Teachers (AVTs).

Special Education Programme support may be provided through one or more of the following areas:

- Curriculum support in literacy and numeracy, adjustments to class units, provision of resources and modified assessment tasks and strategies for classroom use.
- Emotional and social support either in a small group or as an individual. Eg social skills, developing relationships, coping with change.
- Life skills training. Eg organization of personal belongings, independence and community-based learning.
- Parent support through collaborative planning, regular communication and/or providing information regarding external agency support.
- Gathering and using data to effectively implement and monitor the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Assisting class teachers and parents develop, implement and review the Education Adjustment Plan (EAP).
- Managing teacher-aide support within the classroom.
- Networking within the school and wider community.
- Maintaining school-based student records and the AIMS/OneSchool Database.



## **OTHER PROFESSIONAL PRACTITIONERS**

Other professional practitioners involved with students who experience special needs use assessment devices that relate to their specific area of investigation and expertise. For example:

- **Advisory Visiting Teacher (AVT):**  
Services are provided by specialist staff with experience and/or qualifications in particular categories of disability such as (a) Hearing Disability (b) Physical Disability; and (c) Visual Disability.
- **Speech-Language Pathologist:**  
Services relating to areas of cognitive processing related to receptive and expressive language.
- **Paediatrician:**  
Services relating to a range of physical (including neurological) and psychological conditions which may impact on cognitive functioning.
- **Occupational Therapist:**  
Services relating to the relationship between motor strengths and weaknesses and a student's ability to operate in a learning context.
- **Ophthalmologist:**  
Optometrists and Audiologists provide information about the student's vision and hearing.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Education Adjustment Programme (EAP)**

The Education Adjustment Programme is a process for identifying and responding to the educational needs of students with diagnosed disabilities.

### **Individual Education Plan**

The Individual Education Plan process involves the Special Education Programme Teacher or the relevant Advisory Visiting Teacher working collaboratively with the classroom teacher and parents in consideration of the student's current level of achievement and progress, in planning learning priorities for the next 3-6 months. The education adjustments are then documented in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with a set review date.

### **Gifted**

Students who are gifted, excel or are capable of excelling, in one or more areas such as general intelligence, specific academic studies, visual and performing arts, physical ability, creative thinking, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Giftedness in a student is commonly characterized by an advanced pace of learning, quality of thinking or capability for remarkably high standards of performance compared to students of the same age.

## Learning Difficulties

Students with learning difficulties experience short-term or persistent difficulties in literacy, numeracy and/or acquiring skills to learn.

## Learning Disabilities

Due to the neurological basis of their difficulties, these students have persistent long-term difficulty and may require higher levels of support.

## Low Incidence Categories

Students in this group, have specific physical impairment, intellectual language impairment and autistic used to reflect the relatively small impairments.



diagnosis in one or more of the categories of impairment, hearing impairment, speech-spectrum disorder. The term 'low incidence' is number of students diagnosed with the above

## CHECKLIST for SPEECH LANGUAGE REFERRAL

### Language Comprehension / Understanding Language

- Difficulty following / completing verbal instructions / directions
- Difficulty maintaining attention and listening effectively
- Difficulty answering verbal questions appropriately
- Takes longer to respond
- Frequently asks for clarification
- Difficulty extracting relevant information from oral discussions
- Difficulty understanding prepositions and concepts eg behind, big/little
- Difficulty with maths problem-solving
- Difficulty with reading comprehension



### Expressive Language

- Difficulty conversing with others
- Difficulty expressing ideas and getting meaning across
- Difficulty carrying a verbal message
- Difficulty telling about recent events
- Limited oral vocabulary or difficulty finding words
- Difficulty using appropriate grammar eg pronouns, past tense, plurals
- Leaves words out or jumbles word order when talking
- Difficulty using prepositions or concepts eg behind, big/little
- Needs an alternative method of communication eg signing, communication board, electronic communication device

### Phonological / Sound Awareness

- Unable to recognize or produce rhyming words
- Difficulty understanding the concepts of sound, letter, word
- Difficulty segmenting or blending sounds
- Poor sound awareness for reading

### Speech

- Conversational speech that is difficult to understand (production of speech sounds)
- Substitution of sounds eg 't' for 's', 'tun' for 'sun'
- Omission of sounds eg 'ish' for 'fish', 'bow' for 'boat'
- Distortion of sounds eg slushy 's' sounds

Note: The 'r' and 'th' sounds are often not acquired until about 8 years of age.





## Stuttering / Fluency

Abnormal repetitions, prolongations or blocking of sounds, syllables or phrases  
Associated signs of severe tension in face, eyes or breathing

## Voice

A harsh, hoarse, croaky voice which persists longer than 2-3 weeks and is not associated with a cold  
Regular occurrence of voice loss

## Social Communication

Difficulty verbally interacting with peers and others  
Difficulty beginning or ending a conversation appropriately  
Difficulty maintaining or changing a topic of conversation  
Inappropriate response to questions or comments  
Not talking or refusing to talk

## GOOD VISION?

Good vision is essential for a child to reach their full potential. More than 80% of the information children receive about the world comes through their eyes. Vision problems severely impact on a child's educational, physical and social development. 25% of Australian children have some form of vision problem that requires either immediate attention or ongoing assessment. For 66% of these children, their vision problems go undetected.



### Children's vision needs are special.

Many adults think that they have perfect vision until they have their eyes tested. They then discover just how much that they have been missing out on. Children have an even more difficult time assessing their own vision. They lack the benefit of experience and assume that they see things the same as everyone else. If the whiteboard or page seems to be a blur, they think that everyone sees it that way.

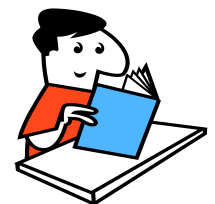
### Most common vision problems in children.

The most common problems with children's vision are those affecting their ability to see clearly and sharply.

- ❑ **Myopia** (short sightedness) causes difficulties seeing distant objects clearly.
- ❑ **Hyperopia** (long sightedness) makes it difficult for a person to focus on close objects.
- ❑ **Astigmatism** causes objects to appear distorted and not sharply in focus.

Another group of vision problems among children (particularly younger) involve what is known as visual performance. These often escape detection during school screenings.

1. **Poor co-ordination of the eyes:** Both eyes must work as a team. In severe cases, double vision occurs and the brain eventually shuts off the message it receives from one eye (Lazy eye)
2. **Turned eye:** For normal vision, both eyes need to look at the same object at the same time. When they point in different directions the brain takes less notice of one eye. Vision doesn't develop properly in one eye.
3. **Eye movement defects:** To see normally, children need to have efficient eye movements. If slow, clumsy or unsteady, children will find reading more difficult. They will miss words or lose their place on the page.
4. **Poor hand-eye co-ordination:** Hand-eye co-ordination is necessary for easy handling of objects within arm's reach. Crooked writing, poor spacing between the letters and words, difficulty in staying on the lines may indicate a child's eyes and hands are not working together.
5. **Difficulties of focusing control:** Some children have difficulties focusing. Objects change from being clear to blurry. The child must use considerable effort to keep them in focus. Some children have difficulty in moving focus from distance to near. This will pose a problem in copying from the blackboard.



## Detecting vision difficulties.

Blinking, rubbing the eyes, holding a book very close to read, closing one eye to look at things are just some ways to be aware of a child's vision difficulty. There is no substitute for a thorough professional eye examination.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ One eye turns in or out while the other points straight ahead.</li><li>▪ Eyes blinking frequently.</li><li>▪ Eyes frequently red.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Eyes water.</li><li>▪ Eyes very sensitive to light.</li><li>▪ Eyes screwed up while the child is watching television.</li></ul> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Holds a book very close while reading.</li><li>▪ Loses place while reading.</li><li>▪ Cannot concentrate for very long.</li><li>▪ Positions head strangely while reading.</li><li>▪ Rubs eyes frequently.</li><li>▪ Sits very close to the TV</li><li>▪ Writes crookedly with poor spacing.</li><li>▪ Complains of seeing double.</li><li>▪ Complains of eyes burning or itching.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Leaves out or confuses words when reading.</li><li>▪ Tilts head noticeably when looking at things.</li><li>▪ Covers or closes one eye when reading.</li><li>▪ Does not recognise familiar people in the distance.</li><li>▪ Complains of headaches.</li><li>▪ Complains of blurred vision.</li></ul> |
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### When to have eyes checked?

Eyes need to be examined on a regular basis. Ideally, all children should be examined before they are 3 years of age and again before starting school. During the school years, a child's vision may change rapidly. Check with your local optometrist.