
Good Shepherd Lutheran School

Learning Support Policy

Introduction

Each person is a unique creation, loved by God and reflecting His characteristics. Good Shepherd Lutheran School is committed to encouraging and supporting students, informed and sustained by the Word of God, to develop their God given talents so that they may shape and enrich their world. (Developed from Lutheran Education Australia: 'A Framework For Lutheran Schools') The school seeks to offer a mainstream education programme that will engage every student through quality care and teaching. 'All students should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal best.' (Special Education Needs in IB Programmes). Learning Support at Good Shepherd Lutheran School has as its primary focus the support of students in their access of the mainstream classroom curriculum. Good Shepherd Lutheran School is inclusive of all students. All applications for enrolment, regardless of nationality, gender, religion or disability, are welcome and will be considered according to the school's enrolment policy and 'Students With Disabilities Enrolment Guidelines for Independent Schools', 2006 Association of Independent School's South Australia

Purpose

This policy outlines the responsibilities of Good Shepherd Lutheran School to provide an appropriate curriculum and to ensure an effective delivery of services and support to students with disabilities. The school will, in consultation with all stakeholders, endeavour to make reasonable adjustments and accommodations when working with students with disabilities to support their learning. Parents/caregivers, teachers, service providers and other agencies are encouraged to work in partnership to build on the strengths of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties enabling them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Scope

This policy applies to the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community: staff, students and parents/caregivers.

Definitions

Students with disabilities and special needs are defined on page 51 of 'Students With Disabilities Enrolment Guidelines for Independent Schools', 2006 Association of Independent School's South Australia. These include:

- Intellectual
- Global development delay
- Physical
- Hearing
- Vision
- Speech and language
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Social/emotional

Enrolment

Good Shepherd Lutheran School:

- Does not discriminate on the basis of nationality, gender, religion or disability.
- May need to use the criteria for prioritising applications for enrolment should class sizes reach capacity.
- Acknowledges the diversity of students with disabilities.

The process of identifying needs and seeking resources can be lengthy; therefore parents are encouraged to make early application for enrolment. As part of the enrolment process parents of students with special needs are requested to provide information including:

- Reports and assessments relating to a school setting.
- Any special requirements such as health and personal care and/or emergency health care procedures.
- Agency support, past and present.
- Any other relevant information.

As in the case of all enrolments, if false or misleading statements are made during the enrolment process, or if relevant information was not disclosed at the time of the enrolment, the Principal may suspend the student while the enrolment is renegotiated, taking all relevant information into account. The Principal may then reinstate the student, or terminate the enrolment where there is reasonable justification for doing so. After gathering relevant information the Principal and Learning Support Coordinator will discuss with the parents/caregivers the program that the school can offer, including the availability of support.

Eligibility for Additional Support

Students receive additional support depending upon the availability of staff and the level of need as determined by the Learning Support Coordinator.

Priority will be given to the following areas for support:

- Those children who are identified as eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as having a permanent and significant disability.
- Students who have been identified as 'at risk' and requiring early intervention in the Junior Primary.
- Those children identified through standardised school and/or NAPLAN testing as benefiting from additional support.
- Specialist assessments i.e speech/language pathologist, educational psychologist.
- Specialist referral i.e Down Syndrome Association, Cora Barclay Centre
- English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

Curriculum Differentiation and Delivery

It is the responsibility of all teachers at Good Shepherd Lutheran School to deliver a differentiated curriculum in order to support the needs of each learner and effectively meet learning goals. In addition, it is the responsibility of all teachers to allow for differentiated assessment practices which are relevant to the learner. Good Shepherd Lutheran School recognises:

- The appropriate education of students with disabilities is based on the curriculum needs of individual students rather than the description of disability.
- Disability alone does not necessarily determine special educational provision.

- A commitment to negotiating and documenting an appropriate curriculum for students with disabilities through the Negotiated Education Plan or other documentation that supports the student.
- It is the responsibility of all school personnel to provide an appropriate curriculum and to ensure an effective delivery of services to students with disabilities.
- The International Baccalaureate Organisation supports and provides for the curriculum entitlement for all learners. Including students with disabilities.

Organisation

Good Shepherd Lutheran School endeavours to offer learning support which is tailored to the needs of individual students. In determining the most appropriate form of learning support the following is taken into account:

- Location: where the support will take place: home, classroom, library, learning support room, community.
- Management: who will provide the program, who will manage the program, who will assess and report on the effectiveness of the program.
- Program content: materials to be used, hands on experiences, bookwork, computerised instruction, commercial programs.
- Size: will focus be on a class, small group, individuals.
- Student level: will programs cross year levels.
- Time: length of program, time across the week, priorities: needs of other students across the school.
- Funding: is the support funded is funding used equitably.
- How will support be staffed: Class Teacher, Volunteers, Learning Support Officers, Learning Support Coordinator, Peers, Others

Targeted Areas for Support

Health and Safety

- Health and mobility concerns.
- Camps and excursions.

Access to the Curriculum

- Particular emphasis on students with disabilities.

Early Intervention

- Transition support from preschool to school.
- Identification of students experiencing language, literacy difficulties.
- Identification of students with fine/gross motor difficulties.

Remediation

- Accommodations to the student's classroom program.
- In-class support for students.
- Individual support for specific skill development including literacy, numeracy, organisational skills, behaviour education, social skills development.
- Withdrawal programs for groups of students.

Participation and Student Support Services

Good Shepherd Lutheran School is committed to parents/caregivers, teachers, service providers and other agencies to:

- Work in partnership to build on the strengths of students with disabilities and to give them the opportunity in achieving to the best of their ability.

- Ensuring that students with disabilities have access to community resources and that they can participate in their local learning environment.
- Building organisational capacity by ensuring professional learning activities are targeted to support staff that work with the students and their families/caregivers and advocates.
- Working with local and outside agencies both private and public to assist in the coordinated delivery of services to support students with disabilities and their families/caregivers

Negotiated Educational Plans

The Learning Support Coordinator will support teachers in the development, implementation, review and monitoring of Negotiated Educational Plans and providing a supportive school environment for students with disabilities by:

- Discussing and planning for the enrolments of students with disabilities.
- Facilitating access to professional learning programs for teachers and Learning Support Officers to ensure that the curriculum and the assessment and reporting procedures within the school are responsive to the needs of students with disabilities.
- Supporting parents/caregivers in the negotiation process by providing information and encouraging parent/caregiver and advocate participation.

Classroom teachers, with assistance from the Learning Support Coordinator, are responsible for the educational program of all their students, including those with disabilities. Teachers will: participate in negotiating, documenting, implementing and evaluating the Negotiated Education Plan and providing a supportive learning environment for students with disabilities. The Negotiated Education Plan records and monitors the student's ongoing needs and provides documentation of long and short term goals. Good communication and regular reviews involving parents/caregivers and other support personnel are an integral part of the Negotiated Education Plan. Parents/caregivers are encouraged and have the right to choose to participate in the planning of their child's Negotiated Education Plan. Parents/caregivers also have the right to choose to be supported by an advocate in this negotiation process.

Role of the Learning Support Coordinator

The Learning Support Coordinator will support the Principal in administrative concerns and decisions affecting the educational provisions for students with additional needs. This is done by:

- Managing, with the Principal, the enrolment of new students who have a disability or learning needs. This includes assisting in the enrolment process, pre visits, gathering information, liaising with other professionals and supporting the transition process.
- Informing the Principal of resources and staffing that may be needed.
- Applying for funding grants.
- Completing grant educational accountability documents.
- Highlighting to teachers issues that impact on student learning.
- Preparing contracts for Learning Support Officers.
- Preparing timetables for Learning Support Officers and assisting with coordination of their programs.

The Learning Support Coordinator will support classroom teachers in the identification of students with special needs and will provide assistance and resources to meet those needs. This is done by:

- Assessment of the educational attainments of students, either individually or in a class/group, using formal or informal tests, checklists or other appropriate materials.
- Whole school testing, class testing or individual testing as required using standardised Reading, Spelling and Maths tests, recording and analysing the results, tracking students using these results and monitoring NAPLAN test results to assist in the development of profiles of individual students.
- Classroom observations of students.
- Negotiating with teachers the type of support required, development of individual programs or adapted curriculum where appropriate.
- Assisting teachers in the provision of equipment to support curriculum accommodations.
- Helping teachers to appropriately differentiate curriculum content, curriculum delivery and assessment tasks.

The Learning Support Coordinator will support parents/caregivers by assisting them with their concerns for the educational needs for their children, responding to these needs, helping them to access other agencies as necessary, providing relevant resources, and encouraging their effectiveness and participation in the learning activities of their children. This is done by:

- Meeting with parents/caregivers, advocating, arranging screening checks, support with assessments, reading specialist reports.
- Providing information about child development, disabilities, access to services, relevant professionals, agencies and support groups.

The Learning Support Coordinator will support individual students in their academic, social, emotional and physical development by:

- Identifying and responding to needs that require curriculum modification or specialised programs in addition to, or in place of, those offered in the classroom.
- Working in partnership with the class teacher in implementing programs, devising school support programs.
- Referring a student to other agencies when such a referral will further contribute to the assessment of the student's special needs.
- Promoting the understanding of an inclusive school and differentiated instruction and inservicing staff regarding the education of students with disabilities and students who experience barriers to their learning.
- Supporting students experiencing difficulties at school and advocating for their needs.

The Learning Support Coordinator will liaise with agencies and personnel outside of the school who have an involvement with the student and where this information has direct relevance to the education of the student by:

- Arranging and facilitating meetings as required.
- Providing reports at request.
- Liaising with agencies/personnel outside of the school in conjunction with other staff regarding the educational programming and provisions for students.

- Ensuring that students with physical and or sensory impairments have access to school facilities and resources on an equitable basis, pursuing the provision of modified facilities or resources as necessary within the limits of finances available.

The Learning Support Coordinator will promote current educational pedagogy by:

- Being aware of contemporary thinking and research in learning, particularly as it applies to students with disabilities and contributing to professional learning. This is supported by activities such as attendance at conferences and professional development activities, regular attendance at AISSA Key Teacher days, professional reading and liaising with other professionals and support agencies.
- Alerting teachers to resources that facilitate inclusivity and differentiated curriculum/instruction.
- Trialling programs.
- Modelling and mentoring.

The Role of Learning Support Officers

Learning Support Officers work under the direction of classroom teachers and/or the Learning Support Coordinator. They are accountable to the Principal and Learning Support Coordinator.

It is the responsibility of all Learning Support Officers to maintain confidentiality and respect for privacy in all matters involving students and their families. It is also their responsibility to ensure that any issues involving the safety and welfare of students is conveyed to the classroom teacher, Learning Support Coordinator or the Principal. Learning Support Officers are expected to provide feedback to the classroom teacher and/or Learning Support Coordinator.

The duties of the Learning Support Officer may include:

- Working with individual students who may require support in order to access a broad curriculum.
- Working with small groups of students under the direction of the classroom teacher.
- Providing assistance to teachers particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy.
- Assisting with management of students with special needs particularly those who need frequent intervention and monitoring in order to complete work.
- Providing support to students with significant disabilities and/or complex needs.
- Assisting teachers to develop resources to better cater for students requiring additional support.

Specific programs/activities that Learning Support Officers may engage in after receiving appropriate training include:

- Hearing individual reading and changing readers.
- Maintaining home reading programs.
- Checking sight words/word families.
- Setting up reading boxes for individual students.
- Handwriting group, checking formation of letters.
- Testing students for PM reading levels using running records.

- Small maths groups.
- Individual group work supporting the classroom Literacy Block.
- Supporting groups in maths and literacy lessons.
- Administering and scoring reading and spelling tests with individuals or small groups.
- Supporting health needs of students.
- Supporting organisational needs of students.
- Working with students who need support to finish projects and other tasks.
- Computer work with individual students.
- Assisting students with special needs on excursions.
- Small group/individual social skills training.
- Supporting individuals and small groups with programs such as Rainbow Reading, Reading Doctor, Toe by Toe and the Listening Program.

All Learning Support Officers are expected to:

- Support the Christian ethos of the school in word and action.
- Have exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to build productive relationships with students and staff.
- Demonstrate an understanding of disabilities and the various barriers that impact upon student learning.
- Be self-motivated, able to work independently and as part of a team.
- Demonstrate the ability to work effectively under pressure.
- Act as an advocate for students if necessary.
- Be flexible, reliable and credible with staff and students.
- Have a functional awareness of Occupational, Health and Safety issues for students and themselves.
- Have sound literacy and numeracy skills.
- Be a competent user of Word (including reasonable typing skills), the internet and email.
- Have a current police check, undergo Valuing Safe Communities training and hold, or be prepared to obtain Mandatory Notification and Basic First Aid certificates.

References/Related Policies

Immanuel Primary School Learning Support Policy

Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate Programmes: Special Education Needs Within the International Baccalaureate Programmes

Lutheran Education Australia: A Framework for Lutheran Schools

Our Saviour Lutheran School Learning Support Policy

Students with Disabilities Enrolment Guidelines for Independent Schools', 2006

Association of Independent School's South Australia

This policy was last ratified by GSLS school council August 2015