



# Stella Maris

## Catholic Primary School

113 OAK STREET, BEAUMARIS 3193 TELEPHONE 9589 2641 WWW.SMBEAUMARIS.CATHOLIC.EDU.AU

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### Learning Diversity Policy

*This policy relates to Child Safe Standard 2, 3 & 6*

***At Stella Maris School we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children at Stella Maris School will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.***

#### **Rationale:**

Stella Maris School endeavours to provide opportunities that enable all students to develop physically, intellectually, morally, socially, emotionally and spiritually in a safe and secure environment. All students with diverse learning needs have a right to access a full and engaging education on the same basis as their peers. Catholic schools seek to empower learners by celebrating difference and providing educational opportunities aimed at eliminating discrimination and focused on growth and progress for all.

At Stella Maris School it is our commitment to provide advancing high-impact strategies as best practice provision for all students who present with varying abilities, including students with disability (diagnosed or imputed) and gifted and talented students. We recognise that sometimes a student's academic, physical or social and emotional learning needs can be very different from those of their peers and these differences may relate to:

- cultural background
- socio-economic status
- learning needs
- exceptional ability
- physical, cognitive, social and emotional or sensory disability

A student's learning needs may be deemed to be very different from their peers if they are performing 12 -18 months or more below or above the expected level in accordance with the current state curriculum standards or if their individual needs fall under the definition of disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and there is a functional impact on the student's education.

#### **Aims:**

To advance high-impact strategies as best-practice provision for students who present with varying abilities, including students with a disability and gifted and talented students.



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### **Implementation:**

Learning Diversity practices will be implemented in the following ways:

- Clearly defined processes in place to identify at risk students
- Intervention procedures for at risk students
- Intervention team meet regularly to review and monitor student progress
- Development of Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for student with a disability or other specific learning need
- Development of Behaviour Support Plans (BSP) for students with challenging behaviours

Development of Student Support Plans for students with social emotional wellbeing challenges

- Program Support Group (PSG) meetings to be held three times per year or as required
- NCCD annual data collection and funding
- Adherence to key legislative and educational initiatives.

### **Identification and Intervention of Students at Risk:**

At Stella Maris School we are constantly seeking effective ways to meet the needs of all learners, so that every student can experience success. When students learn differently or have particular talents, teachers identify their learning needs and intervene. There is a clearly defined process for identifying students who may require additional support at Stella Maris School. This support may be academic, physical, sensory related and/or social and emotional. The Learning Diversity Leader oversees this process with the support of the Intervention team and in liaison with the classroom teacher and parents/carers.

The process is as follows:

- Concern raised by teacher or parent
- Teacher to gather assessment data, observations and prior information about the student
- Teacher to raise the concerns with an appropriate member of the intervention team for further consideration and, with support, to:
  - Set up some initial strategies within the classroom program to assist the student
  - Keep a record of actions and progress
  - Raise concerns with parents and keep them informed about what is happening
- Intervention team to determine appropriate course of action for the student.

Possible steps include:

Further testing to be conducted by expert teachers or staff and results reported to the group

Learning Diversity Leader to coordinate school-based intervention for student



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Curriculum Leader to suggest strategies arising from the meeting to be trialled. Follow up meeting scheduled to discuss outcome  
Learning Diversity Leader to refer student to outside agency, eg. MACS, School Counsellor, community agencies. Referral forms to be completed. Two way feedback to monitor progress  
Student Wellbeing Leader to liaise with Catholic Care services and parents where appropriate

Parental support is a key component of intervention and parents/carers will be notified and involved in the decision making process if intervention is to be provided on a regular basis. Intervention may be in the form of short term explicit, targeted teaching, or it may be over a longer, more sustained period. Members of the Intervention team work collaboratively with classroom teachers and parents/carers to design intervention that is based on relevant student assessments, is research-based and up to date and targets the specific need of the student. This intervention may occur in the classroom or outside of the classroom, either in a small group or 1:1 environment. It may be facilitated either by the classroom teacher, a Learning Support Office (LSO) or other qualified staff member. The students' progress will be monitored and assessed and the needs of the student will be responded to as required.

### **Personal Learning Plan (PLP)**

In the event that a student's learning needs are determined to be significantly different from their peers as a result of a diagnosed disability or other specific learning need, it may be appropriate to write and implement a Personal Learning Plan (PLP). A student may be considered to have additional learning needs without a specific diagnosis of a disability. The aim of the PLP is to articulate effective practices for the identification, targeted assessment, learning and teaching, and evaluation of student learning needs.

A PLP is only used for as long as it is deemed appropriate and can last for a period of weeks, or up to years depending on the nature of the student's need, the level of adjustment required to meet their needs and other factors.

Most PLPs are written and reviewed once per term. A PLP is a collaborative, working document and feedback and input is actively sought from all stakeholders, including classroom teachers and school staff to parents/carers, external providers and, if applicable, students. (Program development should comply with relevant legislative guidelines such as the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), Disability Standards for Education (2005), Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2011), Ministerial Order No. 870 (Child Safe Standards) and CECV policies.)

A PLP can be used as evidence for inclusion in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability (NCCD-SWD). Schools are accountable for the



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use of funds and must provide evidence of the nature of the disability and the level of adjustment being made in the event they are audited (see below for more information on the NCCD).

### **Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)**

Supporting individuals with challenging behaviours is focused on the teaching of skills and desired behaviours. Support provided to students is in line with the goals and targets set out in their PLP and/or Behaviour Support Plan (BSP). In the context of students presenting with complex and challenging behaviour, a Behaviour Support Plan may take the place of a PLP, or be developed in addition to a PLP.

BSPs should be developed through a collaborative problem-solving process involving all significant people in the student's life, including parents/ carers, classroom teachers, special educators and support staff. Plans will only be effective if they are implemented on a consistent basis and with fidelity. In order to develop successful interventions, BSPs must be based on an understanding that all behaviour has a communicative function and on knowledge of the strengths and needs of the individual student. These plans are devised as part of a PSG meeting and where possible involve all the key stakeholders and representatives of the student.

### **Program Support Group (PSG) Meeting**

The PSG meeting will be held three times per school year or as required and will involve key stakeholders, including parents/carers, classroom teacher, Learning Diversity Leader or Principal nominee, key staff members, LSO (if appropriate) and any parent advocates or external professionals as required. It will:

- collaboratively establish shared goals for the student's social, emotional and educational development
- ensure that SMART goals are measurable and achievable, ongoing and future focused
- plan reasonable adjustments to enable the student to access and participate as outlined in their Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) and/or Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)
- provide the opportunity for the student and student's parents to work collaboratively with school personnel and allied health professionals in goal setting and planning
- monitor student progress formally at least once per term and adapt goals and adjust accordingly.

### **PSG meeting minutes**

Minutes of the meeting will be taken by the Learning Diversity Leader or appointed staff member and will be disseminated to all stakeholders. Minutes will include:

- Student name



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- Date of birth
- Student year level
- Date of PSG meeting
- Attendees/Apologies
- Agenda items and key comments/ discussion
- Action arising from PSG meeting / person responsible

At Stella Maris School we value a collaborative approach to student learning and the opportunity that a PSG affords all key stakeholders to contribute their relevant knowledge to make plans which best target a student's point of need. As such, PSGs are generally scheduled during school hours as this is the time when most key staff (principal (or nominee), classroom teacher, support officers (as appropriate), learning diversity leader and other attendees) are available. It is expected that parents make reasonable effort to attend these meetings as key dates are provided in advance.

### **Students with Disability and the National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)**

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability (NCCD) is an annual data collection that counts the number of students with disability and the level of reasonable educational adjustments with which they are provided. The NCCD has been progressively implemented since 2013, with all schools completing the data count in 2015. All Australian schools must participate on an annual basis. From 2018, the Australian Government and the CECV will use the data collection to inform funding.

Schools are required to collect evidence annually across the following four areas:

1. Identified Need: The student's needs for adjustment have been identified and arise from a disability (as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992), and
2. Educational Adjustments: Adjustments are being provided to address the student's individual educational needs, based on their disability in order to provide school education to the student (minimum 10 weeks), and
3. Evaluation of student progress: Adjustments provided to the student are being monitored and reviewed, (e.g. evaluated Personalised Learning Plans, signed and dated LSO notes, dated work program notes re student achievement)
4. Signed and dated evidence of consultation with parents; Consultation and collaboration with the student and/or parents and carers or associates has occurred (e.g. signed and dated PSG minutes, signed and dated Personalised Learning Plans).



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The NCCD process is administered in accord with the NCCD Guidelines published annually by the Australian Department of Education and Training. The guidelines stipulate the responsibility of the principal to meet the evidentiary requirements for NCCD.

A student is eligible to be counted in the national data collection where they are a citizen of Australia and there is evidence at a school that the student is being provided with an educational adjustment to meet ongoing, long-term specific needs associated with disability and that decisions have been made in consultation with the student and/or their parents. The definition of 'long-term' for this purpose is over 10 weeks (total not consecutive) of school education (excluding school holiday periods), in the 12 months preceding the national data collection.

The school is required by the Federal Australian Education Regulation (2013) and Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) to collect and disclose certain information under the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) on students with a disability. The school provides the required information at an individual student level to the Catholic Education Offices and the CECV, as an approved authority. Approved authorities must comply with reporting, recordkeeping and data quality assurance obligations under the NCCD. Student information provided to the federal government for the purpose of the NCCD does not explicitly identify any student.

### **NCCD Funding**

NCCD funding is allocated to schools in one 'global' amount according to the number of students who meet the criteria for NCCD funding in any given funding year and also taking into account the level of adjustment required for each student. NCCD funding must be used to meet the needs of students with a disability which may include provision of:

- differentiated curriculum/targeted teaching
- modified or tailored programs/specific intervention programs
- additional support or supervision (e.g. for toileting, health needs, mobility, safety)
- specialist teacher support (e.g. teacher with special education qualifications, autism specialist) and classroom support with a Learning Support Officer
- specialist health/allied health support (e.g. speech pathologist, psychologist, nurse)

### **Key Legislative and Educational Initiatives that underpin our commitment to Learning Diversity and Inclusive Practices**

The following key legislative and educational initiatives underpin our commitment to support equal access to education for students with disabilities

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA) and the associated Disability Standards for Education (2005) (Cth) define the legislative requirements, as they



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specifically apply to education providers, to provide reasonable adjustments for students where required.

- A further context to the work of the Learning Diversity team at Stella Maris School is the Special Needs Plan of the Victorian Government (2015), which calls for inclusive practices to be promoted in all Victorian schools. The Government maintains that every child deserves a quality education to reach their full potential, including those with disabilities and all students requiring adjustments.
- These key policies and initiatives, along with those from the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) support our overall policy making.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the MACS cyclical review process