

# HIGHVIEW COLLEGE

## STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

Person Responsible – Learning Enhancement Co-ordinator



### Rationale

The school acknowledges the commitment in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) to 'support all Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens'. There will be some students who will need additional support to realise this goal. These students are those who are at risk of not achieving the major learning outcomes of schooling levels which enable them to achieve their potential. Students in any classroom can have multiple, diverse, and changing needs that are shaped by individual learning histories and abilities as well as cultural, language backgrounds and socio-economic factors. Students at risk may be characterised as students:

- who are at risk of not achieving the outcomes described in the relevant curriculum documents including the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and/or the corresponding Australian Curriculum equivalent
- whose achievement level, rate of progress or behaviour differs noticeably from past performance and/or that of their peers
- who are under-performing
- who are not engaged in their schooling

The school will comply with the requirements of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. This legislation obliges teachers and education providers to make necessary adjustments for students with special educational needs so they can access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination.

Some students identified with special learning needs may meet criteria for additional funding support through the Students with Disabilities program administered through Independent Schools Victoria. However, any student identified as having special learning needs will be provided with an individualised learning program regardless of whether they meet the criteria for Students with Disabilities funding.

### Aims

- For all students with special educational needs to be identified and assisted to become successful learners.
- To provide skills and strategies and a support network to enhance learning, social and emotional outcomes for students with special needs.
- To establish an overall individualised mentoring program framework of support for all students identified with special educational needs.
- To provide teachers with professional support and guidance to implement individualised programs for students identified with special educational needs in their classes.

### Implementation

- The Learning Support Coordinator in conjunction with the Year Level Coordinators will supervise the identification of students with special needs upon advice from classroom teachers and/or parents/caregivers.
- Identification of students with special needs will be dependent upon the shared understanding that all students follow the same developmental progression but not necessarily at the same rate; some students progress differently in different learning areas or demonstrate skills in certain contexts.

- Teachers will reference the VELS, VCE and/or the Australian Curriculum content description and achievement standards and their own assessment information and personal knowledge of the student to determine each student's level of achievement within the learning continuum.
- The ongoing support of students with special learning needs is a shared responsibility between the school, the student and the parents/caregivers.
- Students at Years 10, 11 or 12 who are identified as having special learning needs will be provided the opportunity to participate within the Senior Student Support Program. This program provides focused mentoring through small group based support to aid in organisation, development and maintenance of positive self-esteem and timely work completion in a supported environment instead of an elective (at Year 10 and 11) or VCE subject and/or free study periods in Year 12. Participation in this program may form part of the individualised learning program but not all students involved in this program will require a formal individualised learning plan. Notes will be kept following each session, monitoring student attitude and progress, to aid in communication between mentoring program mentors and classroom teachers, Year Level Coordinator, the Learning Support Coordinator and Principal. All program documentation will be kept in a secure environment. Ongoing feedback will be provided to students to guide them in self-monitoring of their own progress and will form an integral aspect of the program.
- Students at Years 7 and 8 identified as at risk of achieving literacy and/or numeracy standards of two years or more below the expected standard for their level of schooling are withdrawn from Indonesian and complete an Intensive Literacy and/or Numeracy program tailored to their individual needs to assist progression through the standards continuum. The individualised work is set after specialised testing, mediation and reference to past primary successes. Participation in this program may form part of the individualised learning program but not all students involved in this program will require a formal individualised learning plan.
- Students in Year 9 identified as at risk of achieving literacy and/or numeracy standards of two years or more below the expected standard for their level of schooling are offered the option of enrolling in the Intensive program instead of an elective to consolidate their literacy and/or numeracy skills through an individualised program of study. This program is aimed at building on their prior learning while also uncovering and attending to any misconceptions or gaps in their learning that are preventing them from reaching their potential. Participation in this program may form part of the individualised learning program but not all students in this program will require a formal individualised learning plan.

### **Process**

When a student is identified as requiring extra support to become a successful learner, an individualised learning program will be devised in collaboration between the Learning Support Coordinator, the Year Level Coordinator, the student's classroom teachers, their parents/caregivers (and their designated support persons, if required), Learning Support Aides that work with the student, paraprofessionals outside of the school (such as Education Consultants, Psychologists, etc.) as required, the Principal (as required), and the student.

The individualised learning program will include, but not be limited to, identifying the student's current learning level and abilities, their strengths, challenges, and preferred learning style, along with the next steps for the student's learning to help them progress along the learning continuum. These steps will take the form of learning goals within the learning program. The plan will also identify who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and assessment of each goal, and how it will be measured (assessed) as having been achieved. The plan will also include a date for review.

The devised intended learning program for the student will need to be:

- rigorous – being deep rather than broad; and active rather than passive
- relevant – offering an appropriate level and challenge beyond that which they already know, understand and can do
- meaningful – building on the student's prior learning and accommodating their learning preferences and personal interests in a way which engages them, and
- takes into account the needs of the student and adjust the learning activities, assessment strategies and/or the learning environment as appropriate that is,
- in the way learning activities are organised and presented (through differentiation, accommodation and modification)
- in the organisation of the learning environment
- in the assessment process and the ways in which the student is expected to demonstrate the quality of their learning

The student with special educational needs may not require adjustments in every learning area domain, but where there are adjustments in place for a student the assessment strategies must align with the intended learning. This also means that where a student is being taught content from a year level of the VELs and/or Australian Curriculum that is different from their peers, they should be assessed against the relevant achievement standard for the year level at which they are being taught.

The individualised learning program will be used to guide all teaching and learning programs as relevant for the student, and will always be directly referenced when reporting to parents/caregivers on student progress and outcomes. Individual class teachers are responsible for actively implementing the learning program for identified students under the guidance of the Learning Support Coordinator and the Year Level Coordinator.

The individualised learning program is a working document and is (with consultation between key stakeholders) able to be altered and added to as the student achieves goals, and revised if goals are found to be unachievable within the prescribed time frame given.

An individualised learning program is to be maintained throughout a student's enrolment at the school while the student continues to be identified as requiring additional support to achieve to their potential.

All documentation pertaining to assessments, meetings, individualised learning plans and reports etc., will be maintained and stored securely under the guidance of the Learning Support Coordinator, Year Level Coordinators and Principal. The school will maintain confidentiality of all information regarding the stored information in keeping with school confidentiality protocols.