

DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSIVE ACCESS POLICY

PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of the policy is to provide a framework by which Firbank Grammar School adheres to the Commonwealth Education Standards for Disability Standards (2005), formulated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. These standards clarify the obligation for education settings to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education without discrimination. The Standards clarify the obligations of an education provider to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education and training on the same basis as those without disability.

Firbank Grammar School recognises that education is a human right for all people regardless of race, gender or ability and that students learn in different ways and achieve at different rates. We believe that all young people, including those with additional needs, should have access to the broadest possible educational and social opportunities within the mainstream setting. We value all students as individuals and recognise the diversity of our pupils. Firbank Grammar School communities have a shared responsibility to implement effective, equitable and inclusive identification processes and appropriate educational programs.

Firbank Grammar School is committed to the education of supporting students with diverse learning needs in an inclusive setting. Such students are a diverse group who are found across all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.

We seek to develop collaborative learning and support structures that nurture and develop the academic, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of students learning. This is facilitated by curriculum design and teaching approaches that are inclusive to all.

In addition to our obligations to children with diverse needs, Firbank Grammar School is committed to ensuring that we fulfil our legal obligations relating to discrimination and disability standards. Refer to our Disability Discrimination Policy.

Under this Policy, the school adheres to the requirements of the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2010), Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). Special arrangements mandated by those authorities are implemented to facilitate opportunities for all students.

The work of Firbank's Department of Student Services is underpinned by the values of inclusivity and a celebration of individual difference. The Department of Student Services promotes personalised learning in order to develop the diverse capabilities of each student. Every student can and should have access to various opportunities to make progress whatever their challenges.

School structures are built upon inclusiveness, collaboration and social justice for those who often

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sit at the margins within schools. All areas of the curriculum and the school's physical environment are accessible to ALL students. (Outlined within the Disability and Discrimination Act). All students with diverse needs are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is differentiated, carefully planned and sensitively implemented. It is teachers themselves and their attitudes towards inclusion, disability and achievement who set the foundation for the development of an inclusive school setting.

The values and practices underpinning the Department of Student Services correlate closely with the foundations of Firbank Grammar School and also with the foundations of an equitable schooling system that removes barriers and increases participation for all students. Staff accept responsibility for providing all students with a broad-based and differentiated curriculum that sets as its base, high expectations for all students. Full inclusion results from a sense of welcome and mutual respect.

Firbank Grammar School sets excellence as its standard when planning and evaluating its academic programs and outcomes. Emphasis is placed on personal bests, tolerance, understanding, restorative practices and patience.

In the publication *Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes* (2010), the IB states, "Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. This can only be successfully achieved in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving. Inclusion is the learner profile in action, an outcome of dynamic learning communities."

Firbank Grammar School embraces the IB Pillars of Good Practice in dealing with diverse needs:

- Affirming identity and building self-esteem
- Valuing prior knowledge
- Scaffolding
- Extending learning.

SCOPE: This policy outlines

Students are at the centre of this Policy. Inclusion practices relate to all measures put in place to support gifted and talented students and students with learning challenges and/or disabilities. This is the responsibility of all staff from Early Childhood, through Junior School and Senior School levels via collaboration with the Department of Student Services. Stake-holders are the Class/subject teachers, Case Managers, Parents, Students, Heads of Campus, Director of Learning, Counsellors, Heads of Department, Wellbeing Leaders and Mentors.

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RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
The Disability Discrimination Amendment (Education Standards) Act 2005
The Disability Standards for Education 2005
Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2010)
VCAA Special Provision Policy

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Definitions:

Individual Learning Needs is defined as:

- students with learning difficulties, a behavioural disorder and/or a disability.

Students may present with **individual learning needs** due to **disability, Specific Learning Disorder/Difficulty (SLD)** and/or **giftedness and talent**.

Disability is defined as:

- students with intellectual disability, physical disability, social emotional disorders or medical conditions

Disability may include:

- Intellectual Disability
- Severe Language Disorder (eg. verbal dyspraxia)
- Severe Emotional Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Physical Disability / Chronic Health Impairment
- Vision Impairment
- Hearing Impairment

Disability can be identified through assessment done by the following:

- psychologists/psychiatrists
- medical specialists

Specific Learning Disorder/Difficulty (SLD) is defined as:

Students with a SLD may have a discrepancy in their learning profiles which can inhibit their ability to achieve at their potential. Other students have conditions which may impact on their social and/or emotional development and can affect behaviours. These difficulties may vary in cause, nature, intensity and duration.

SLDs may include difficulties with:

- visual-spatial skills
- literacy and/or numeracy skills
- cognition (processing speed, memory and executive functioning)
- language development
- motor skills - fine and gross

SLDs can be identified through assessment done by the following:

- special education/learning intervention teachers
- educational psychologists
- occupational therapists

- audiologists
- speech and language therapists
- medical specialists

High potential learner is defined as:

A student whose outstanding natural abilities or aptitudes, are located in one or more domains: intellectual, creative, social, perceptual or physical.

Talent refers to the outstanding performance or competency in one or more fields of human activity.

High potential learners can be identified through formal assessment done by the following:

- class/subject teachers
- special education/learning intervention teachers
- educational psychologists

Inclusion is defined as:

- an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.
- an organisational paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire.
- facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Campus:

- ensure that NCCD students are being supported and that staff are carrying out appropriate duties
- liaise with Student Services staff about departmental needs
- advocate for NCCD students in response to the recommendations of Student Services.

Director of Learning:

- oversees development, communication and implementation of Firbank's Diverse Learning Needs and Inclusive Access Policy
- oversees Firbank's Student Achievement Pillar through the development and delivery of appropriate learning and curriculum programs that meets the needs of all students at the school.
- leads professional learning opportunities that promote Firbank's inclusive education principles and practices

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Director of Student Services:

- oversees the department and reports to the Director of Learning.
- ensures that the NCCD census is accurate and information is given to the CCO and the Principal.

Learning Strategies Specialists:

- identify and assess students with disability/diverse needs.
- assist with the planning and implementation of reasonable adjustments.
- support staff to comply with the requirements of the NCCD.
- implement Tier 2 and 3 evidence-based interventions, organise SSG meetings and facilitate ILPs.
- record NCCD documentation on school management system/s.

Educational Psychologists:

- assess students and diagnose where appropriate;
- write reports and attend SSG meetings and help write ILPs.
- record ILPs on school management system.
- liaise and consult with staff to plan and implement reasonable adjustments.

Learning Support Assistants:

- support students on the NCCD under the supervision of classroom teachers and/or Learning Strategies Specialists.

Wellbeing Leaders:

- attend SSG meetings and ensure that staff are aware of the learning needs of the students;
- communicate with and support subject teachers.

Class/Subject Teachers:

- implement recommendations from Psychologists reports, ILPs and strategies from Learning Strategies Specialists
- ensure the recommended adjustments are implemented, monitored and documented.
- collaborate on ILPs and ensure they are shared with all stakeholders.

Students and Families:

- Complete enrolment forms correctly
- Provide all relevant documentation
- Attend Student Support Group Meetings

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Inclusive Education Protocols and Procedures
Wellbeing Policy

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COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRIES

[Include brief statement/s identifying actions/responsibilities and the position/s responsible]

The school community may provide feedback on this document by emailing:

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Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	2 July 2021
Amendment Authority and Date	Updated 8 April 2022
Notes	

APPENDIX

FGS Inclusive Education Protocols and Procedures

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

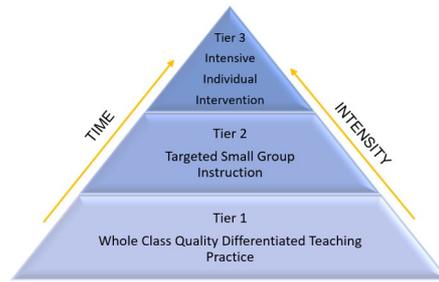
At Firbank, we use a "multi-tiered systems of support" (MTSS) framework through which we monitor students' progress and prioritise support according to the category of need.

We use the levels of:

- Whole class quality differentiated teaching practice (QDTP) (Tier 1)
- Targeted Small Group Instruction (Tier 2)
- Intensive individual intervention (Tier 3)

These Tiers are flexible and allow the Department to categorise and monitor the progress and complexity of student needs.

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Delivery of the MTSS process:

- Learning Strategies Specialists are available for consultation in deciding tiers of support.
- Class/Subject Teachers are responsible for initiating the MTSS process and for the delivery of Tier 1 using quality differentiated teaching practice.
- Learning Strategies Specialists and Learning Support Assistants (LSA) may be involved in the delivery of Tiers 2 and 3. If a student is to be included in Tier 2 or 3 instruction, parents will be invited for consultation via an SSG.
- Intervention is to be documented by Class/Subject Teachers and Learning Strategies Specialists.
- If students have not responded to MTSS after intensive and targeted intervention (**over the course of approximately six months**) and concerns are ongoing, a formal referral can be made to Student Services for further assessment. At the discretion of Student Services staff, referral may be fast-tracked based on need.