

## Inclusion Policy

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### Rationale

St Mary of the Cross Catholic Primary School (“The School”) will support mainstream inclusion programs for students with disabilities and/or additional needs when a need is identified.

The School will support Special or Alternative Schools in which St Mary of the Cross students are dual enrolled.

The School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students and members of our school community.

### Aims

- i. To embrace inclusion and commit to creating a school community where each student accesses the most appropriate educational program based on their needs
- ii. To provide students with the opportunity to participate in educational programs within a mainstream and Special or Alternative school
- iii. To acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs of each student and strive to create a positive inclusive educational experience for the student
  - iv. To ensure that educational programs are implemented with provisions that include reasonable adjustments and reasonable accommodations to support the full participation of the student in all school activities (such as excursions, incursions, camps etc) on the same basis as their peers
  - v. To ensure the best educational and wellbeing outcomes for each student so they can participate, achieve personal success and thrive at school
  - vi. To ensure each student is treated with respect and dignity regardless of their disability, ability and/or additional need
  - vii. To encourage empathy, respect and fairness towards others

### Definition of ‘students with disabilities and additional needs’

The School adopts the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) definition of disability. The term ‘disability’ refers to physical, intellectual, mental and medical impairments, including disorders that result in a person learning differently.

The School acknowledges that some children have intersecting identities or additional needs that schools may need to take into consideration. These identities may relate to:

- Having a disability or additional learning needs such as, but not limited to, learning difficulties and/or gifted and talented
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
- Race
- Cultural identity
- Speaking a language other than English
- Social factors
- Economic factors
- Experience of abuse, neglect or family violence

### **Implementation Strategies**

- i. When parents/carers would like to proceed with an inclusion program for their child who is:
  - a. currently enrolled at St Mary of the Cross, the parents/carers must inform the Principal and/or the Learning Diversity Leader of their intentions, and then directly contact their chosen Special or Alternative School.
  - b. a prospective enrolment candidate at St Mary of the Cross, the parents/carers must inform the child's Special or Alternative school of their intentions, and then directly contact St Mary of the Cross.
- ii. A tour of the school should be organised by the parent/carer.
- iii. Should the parents/carers wish to proceed with an application of dual enrolment, they must adhere to each of the schools' policies of enrolment and provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding the child's disability or additional need. These include, but not limited to, reports from previous schools, NAPLAN results, court orders or parenting arrangements, allied health and medical professional reports and diagnostic assessments reports.

Enrolment may be refused or withdrawn/cancelled at St Mary of the Cross where a parent/carer has refused to provide information about their child's disability or additional need, or knowingly withheld information from the School, which has an impact on the child's functional needs, and in turn significantly affecting the School's resources and support provisions.

- iv. The School will review the transition reports, and other information available to it which provides information about the student's strengths, challenges, abilities and skills. This information must be provided by the child's current Special or Alternative School setting.
- v. Support from Special or Alternative School setting:

The School will approach teachers/personnel from the Special or Alternative School setting and request to attend Program Support Group ("PSG") meetings,

sometimes referred to as Student Support Group (SSG), at a venue, date and time that is suitable to all attendees (refer to the Program Support Group Policy).

At the PSG meetings the following issues must be discussed:

- a. The student's Personalised Learning Plan, sometimes referred to as Individualised Learning Plan, and any other support plans, if appropriate. These include, but not limited to, Behaviour Support Plan, Student Safety Plan and Medical Management Plan.
  - b. The goals and aims of the inclusion program / experience
  - c. The names, organisations and roles of the student's care team members such as allied health professionals and medical professionals, both currently active and those in the past
  - d. A suggested time fraction at each school
  - e. A suggested transition plans
  - f. A suggested commencement dates
  - g. Any other relevant information pertinent to the smooth transition of the student
- vi. All members of the PSG should have input into the decision making in the inclusion experience of dual enrolment
- vii. If the student is:
- a. seeking enrolment at St Mary of the Cross, staff members from the School will visit the Special or Alternative School setting to observe the student in class while participating in their normal day-to-day educational programs, to view special programs (if any), classroom behaviours and relevant teaching and support strategies.
  - b. seeking enrolment at a Special or Alternative school, staff members from the nominated school can organise to visit the student in class at St Mary of the Cross.
- viii. The School will consult with relevant members of the School to determine if the inclusion program is viable based on, but not limited to, the School's resources, staff expertise, professional learning needed, enrolment vacancies and enrolment policy.
- ix. If the dual enrolment is viable, a PSG meeting will occur to discuss enrolment agreements and the transition plan.
- x. It is important that an atmosphere of cooperation and trust be fostered with staff from the Special or Alternative School setting in the commitment to jointly contribute to the student's positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes.
- xi. The student's inclusion experience is reviewed at each PSG meeting at the School. At least one member from the Special or Alternative School setting will be invited to attend the PSG meeting and is encouraged to contribute to the discussion.

### **Important Information**

Parents/carers are responsible for transporting their child to and from their mainstream School (or Special or Alternative School) for their inclusion visits.

Inclusion experiences may or may not lead to full time transition to mainstream school (or Special or Alternative School).

If an inclusion program is unsuccessful or if issues arise:

- parents/carers will need to inform both School settings immediately and make appropriate arrangements
- the School will inform the Special or Alternative School as soon as possible, and vice versa

If the inclusion program leads to full time enrolment at the School, students must formally exit from their Special or Alternative School setting.

The process of inclusion to fulltime in a mainstream (or Special / Alternative School) setting should occur within 12 – 18 months. After 18 months if dual enrolment still exists, a decision needs to be made around the viability of the inclusion.

As funding for Learning Diversity provision for students with disabilities or additional needs is a critical element in all schools' funding and budget arrangements, all care and consideration should be given to ensure "the School" nor the Special or Alternative School setting is disadvantaged by decisions made on behalf of the student.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.