THE PATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Integration

Rationale:
‘Treating people equally does not mean treating people the same, but differently, to ensure equality of access’. (1)

An effective school is an inclusive school with a strong moral purpose. An inclusive school is one where there is effective communication and collaboration between home and school, where there are high expectations for all learners and where diversity is valued and embraced. It is imperative that all staff, students, parents/carers and members of the whole-school community exhibit positive relationships and value difference, as this supports both a positive school environment and effective classroom learning. Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

An education provider must make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to accommodate a student with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student’s learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students. (Disability Standards for Education 2005).

Aims:
◊ To encourage student learning through a curriculum that is accessible to all students, in a safe and supportive whole school community.
◊ To ensure every student has access to the full range of programs offered.
◊ To celebrate diversity found among all learners.

Implementation:
◊ The welfare and safety of all students, teachers and aides will be a high priority at all times.

◊ Goals and progress of each student will be reviewed at Student Support Group meetings held each term between parent/s, Assistant Principal or his/her representative, classroom teacher/s and aide.

◊ The Principal, in conjunction with Integration co-ordinator/s will make the decisions about placement of integrated students in Term 4 of each year. Decisions will be made to best meet the needs of all children concerned.

◊ Social groups will be implemented for children where appropriate and when funding allows.

◊ An informal transition/familiarisation process will be implemented towards the end of the year to prepare integrated children for the year ahead.

◊ Social stories will be put together at the end of each year where appropriate and relevant to prepare children for the year ahead.
◊ Communication Books will be set up for each student. These will involve two-way communication between home and school on day to day issues relating to each student and his/her progress. Communication Books will not be used to impart information of a whole-school nature as this will be contained in the school’s weekly newsletter and will be the responsibility of parents.

◊ Teacher aides will liaise with parents on day to day issues such as socialization, behaviour, coping skills etc but will refer parents to the classroom teacher for discussions relating to curriculum issues and learning concerns.

◊ Parents will be informed of their child’s aide for the following year, as soon as practicable after placements have been finalised.

◊ All students/parents shall be informed of the allocation of classroom teachers at the same time – prior information regarding the allocation of classroom teachers will not be provided.

◊ During their time at The Patch, funded children will have opportunities to work with different teacher aides so that they do not become too dependent or familiar with just one person or one approach.

◊ There will be a “Handing Over” day between teacher aides at the beginning of each year where key information on students is passed on to all support staff.

◊ Where time allows, experienced integration staff will provide some modelling and guidance for less experienced staff. This will enable a succession plan for the future with a strong core of experienced integration staff.

◊ Applications for funding will be made as required through the set DEECD procedures. The co-ordinator/s will liaise with parents, kindergarten staff and other professionals where necessary.

◊ A percentage of all funding allocated for integration will be used to cover extra administrative support, aide replacements due to illness, long service leave, superannuation costs and professional development of aides, resources such as books and equipment and replacement of aides and teachers on days when Student Support Group meetings are held.

◊ Funding allocations, wherever possible, will take into account supervision within the classroom for academic needs as well as safety and effective socialising skills outside in the playground.

◊ Liaison with feeder kindergartens will take place during the year to enable familiarity with the needs of children planning to come to The Patch (who funding will need to be applied for). This will assist with applications for funding.

◊ A ‘nutshell’ profile of each student will be available for replacement teachers and aides so that there is a clear understanding of each child and the most effective ways of handling them when replacement teachers/aides are in the classroom.

◊ Where possible, visits to the kindergarten will be made to observe future students in the kindergarten or Early Intervention environment.

◊ When the need arises, appropriate professional development will be offered to classroom teachers if this can be supported by the school’s P.D. budget.
◊ When employing integration staff, suitability, training and experience will be considered.

◊ Regular meetings of the co-ordinator/s and teacher aides will be held throughout the year to discuss the program, share strategies, brainstorm ideas and plan ahead. These meetings will also monitor/discuss individual children and brainstorm and share strategies and ideas.

**Evaluation:**
◊ This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s five year review cycle.
◊ Letters of praise, recognition and thanks relating to the Integration program will be kept on file, as will those expressing any concerns.
◊ Practices will be reviewed, as necessary, in meetings with aides and co-ordinator/s and in SSG meetings if required.
◊ Minutes of meetings will be taken.

**Quote (1) – Dr Rita Jordan, Australian National Conference on ASD, March 2007**