



The Coast Christian School
a ministry of Coast Community Church

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Special Needs Support Policy

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Contact:	Alison Graeve
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Special Needs Support

Policy

The Coast Christian School seeks to provide adjustments for those students with disabilities or other special needs, learning support needs and/or behaviour support needs. It will put in place procedures to optimise the welfare and educational outcomes of students with disabilities, learning support needs and/or behaviour support needs, in harmony with the welfare and educational outcomes of all other students at TCCS.

What are our responsibilities?

The Australian Government supports the right of children with disability to have the same educational opportunities as other children. This concept is reflected in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA). All state and territory education providers, including government and non-government schools, must comply with the DDA and the relevant disability discrimination legislation of their state or territory. All education providers must also comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

The Disability Standards for Education (the Standards) seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. On the same basis means that a student with disability must have opportunities and choices which are comparable with those offered to students without disability. This applies to:

- ✓ admission or enrolment in an institution
- ✓ participation in courses or programs
- ✓ use of facilities and services.

The Standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers, and the rights of people with disability, under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA). The Standards are subordinate legislation made under the DDA. Under the Standards, education providers have three main types of obligations. They must:

- ✓ consult
- ✓ make reasonable adjustments
- ✓ eliminate harassment and victimisation.

The Standards require that education providers develop and implement strategies to prevent harassment and victimisation of people with disability. Harassment in this case means an action taken in relation to people with disability that is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress the person. Harassment and victimisation of students with disability is unlawful and education providers must take all reasonable steps to prevent this from happening.

The Standards set out a process whereby education providers can meet the obligation to make reasonable adjustments where necessary. 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 achieves this purpose while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

Education providers are required only to make reasonable adjustments. Schools can draw upon a broad range of resources to provide reasonable adjustments – including resources, materials and programs that may be in the form of targeted funding through a disability program, ongoing school

funding or a redirection of general school resources to address the needs of students with disability. Other options include support through student services and allied health staff, specialist and targeted curriculum material and use of expertise within the school or network.

The Standards do not require changes to be made if this would impose unjustifiable hardship on the education provider. All relevant circumstances are to be taken into account when assessing unjustifiable hardship including:

- ✓ benefit or detriment to any persons concerned
- ✓ disability of the person
- ✓ financial circumstances of the education provider.

Exceptions from the legal obligations in the Standards are set out in Part 10 of the Standards. In cases where a provider decides that an exception applies, it is the responsibility of the provider to demonstrate how the exception operates. However, the exception of unjustifiable hardship does not apply to harassment or victimisation.

What reasonable adjustments will TCCS consider?

At TCCS we will consider reasonable adjustments for students with a:

- ✓ Disability
 - Physical
 - Cognitive
 - Social/Emotional or
 - Sensory
- ✓ Learning Support Need
 - Acceleration or
 - Revision
- ✓ Behaviour Support Need

Adjustments are categorised as being:

- ✓ Not required at this time - students have an identified need but do not currently require any adjustments outside of the normal school routine.
- ✓ Tier 1 – Supplementary/Prevention: the learning support staff will assist the class teachers to implement differentiated programs in class. Adjustments can be made to content, process, product or environment.
- ✓ Tier 2 – Substantial: students will access additional assistance in small groups with a teacher's aide or Learning Support Teacher.
- ✓ Tier 3 – Extensive: an IP will outline adjustments and additional 1:1 assistance required based on Individual need

Most Special Needs support students will have an Individual Program (IP) and provisions that meet their particular needs. Some students may have required adjustments for several areas of need. All IP's and Meeting Logs will be in accordance with the National Consistent Collection of Data of students with disabilities (NCCD) process.

What is the consultation process at TCCS?

At TCCS we believe that we must consult with parents and other support personnel in order to understand the impact of a student's disability and to determine whether any adjustments or changes are needed to assist the student. Although the Standards are not prescriptive about the process, consultation could include:

- ✓ talking with the student and their family members or carers, to get ideas about the type of assistance that is needed
- ✓ discussing ways to overcome the barriers and the adjustments that could be made by the education provider and whether these adjustments are reasonable
- ✓ providing any relevant medical and therapist reports that help to explain the disability and the needs and supports that can help
- ✓ providing written advice about the issues discussed during the consultation and the decisions made; including specifying a date for notifying the parent or caregivers about what adjustments will or will not be made
- ✓ meeting regularly to make sure all is going well and change supports if needed and keeping records of these meetings.

The obligation to consult continues for the whole time that the student is enrolled at TCCS.

What is the enrolment process for a student requiring Special Needs Support?

The TCCS Registrar will inform enrolling families of the adjustment process and of their obligation to disclose all information regarding possible disabilities and special needs prior to commencing the enrolment process. This includes students who require Learning Needs and/or Behavioural Needs support.

The Coast Christian School's enrolment application form requests information about the enrolling student in relation to identifying students with disabilities, learning support needs and/or behaviour support needs. This form also requests that parents and caregivers provide access to information regarding a student's disabilities and any special needs that may require adjustments. This includes consultation with the student's current school or Pre-School and any other support personnel that have been involved with the student.

Prior to the enrolment interview, new students who have identified as requiring Special Needs Support will be briefly assessed by the Learning Support Teacher. The purpose of this assessment is to provide an opportunity for the Learning Support Teacher to discuss with the parents or caregivers any disabilities and special needs the enrolling student may have, and for information to be gathered to determine what, if any, adjustments may be required. The Learning Support Teacher will endeavour to clarify the level of adjustment that may be required by the School. The Learning Support Teacher will provide a summary of this relevant information to the Principal.

This step may slow the enrolment process considerably and could result in the School declining the application for enrolment based on the fact that the adjustments needed to accommodate the student's required level of support would impose unjustifiable hardship on the School. Such hardship could include financial hardship (if unable to purchase such things as new equipment, implement new programs, and employ additional staff) or the School's inability to balance the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with disability, the TCCS staff and other students. Parents and caregivers will be advised and consulted throughout this process.

The final step in the enrolment application process is an enrolment interview with the Principal. At this enrolment interview, the TCCS adjustments for their child's enrolment at the School will be clearly explained to the parents and caregivers, who are then able to make a fully informed judgement as to whether they remain interested in pursuing their child's enrolment at TCCS.

How will Special Needs Support be delivered at TCCS?

TCCS has employed a qualified teacher in the role of Learning Support Teacher. Whilst TCCS is a small school, this employment is of a part-time nature. TCCS also provides some resources to implement this policy, commensurate with the school's capacity to fund the total educational budget.

TCCS applies for and accesses government funding available for students with disabilities, learning support needs and/or behaviour support needs.

At TCCS, three significant parties share responsibilities to collaborate and communicate around students with disabilities, learning support needs and/or behaviour support needs: the parents or caregivers, the classroom teacher, and the Learning Support Teacher. The Parent has ultimate responsibility for the child; the Classroom Teacher has overall responsibility for the child's learning in the school context; the Learning Support Teacher is to assist in identifying disability and or other special needs, provide advice to the classroom teacher and parents/caregivers regarding Individual Programs (IP) and designing appropriate adjustments for students with a disability.

The IP will be available:

- ✓ To the parents
- ✓ In the Teacher's program
- ✓ In the Learning Support Teacher's program
- ✓ In the Student's File

I.P.s will be revised each school term

The Learning Support Teacher is responsible to ensure the IP is current and is available as above.

Upon commencement of enrolment at TCCS a transition to School program will be implemented.

This program may include:

- ✓ An appropriate number of visits to TCCS before commencing enrolment at TCCS to familiarise the child with the new school environment. A timetable for these visits will be provided to the parents or caregivers by the Learning Support Teacher.
- ✓ An allocated peer as a buddy will be designated to the new student. This buddy will do such things as: sit next to the new student initially in class; take him/her on a school tour; sit with him/her at morning tea and lunch; introduce him/her to the other children. In the case of a younger child, this support may be given by an older buddy.
- ✓ Attendance at TCCS for part-time or half school days for the first few weeks of attendance as appropriate. This will be determined in collaboration with the parents or caregivers and will be decided by the Learning Support Teacher.

Within the first term of the enrolment:

- ✓ A team meeting will be held involving the Classroom Teacher, the parents or caregivers, Learning Support Teacher and student (if appropriate). The purpose of this meeting is to establish the implementation of the agreed adjustments that are going to be made to the child's educational program. This meeting will be led by the Learning Support Teacher. Details of the meeting will be kept by the classroom teacher on the student's Individual Plan Meeting Log.

- ✓ Using the information gained from this meeting, a Positive Partnerships Planning Matrix will be completed. This will further inform teachers programming, and will be developed as an (Individual Program) IP on the Learner Profile. The Learner Profile will be kept in the Teacher's program, and in the Medical and Access alerts file (enabling ready access by casual teachers). The Learning Support Teacher is responsible for this process.
- ✓ All TCCS teaching staff will be advised of the child's special needs and of the TCCS adjustments that have been implemented in order to support this child within the School. The Learning Support Teacher will make this information available to all staff at the earliest staff meeting opportunity.

At the end of each term of enrolment:

- ✓ Students are monitored throughout the term to determine if the adjustments have been and continue to remain appropriate for the child's learning needs. As part of the NCCD process for identified students, a collaborative planning meeting between the parents, teacher and Learning Support Teacher will be held in order to confirm the adjustments for the following term.

At the end of each year of enrolment:

- ✓ A Learner Profile with recommendations for the following year will be completed.

At the beginning and throughout each new school year

- ✓ The Learner Profile, completed by the previous year's classroom teacher, will be discussed and "handed over" to the next class teacher.
- ✓ A team meeting (Learning Support Teacher, parents or caregivers and classroom teacher) will be held at the beginning of each year. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the proposed adjustments for the New Year and to introduce the new classroom teacher to the parents.
- ✓ The student's Medical and Access alerts file will be updated each year.
- ✓ The Learning Support Teacher will meet with each teacher at least once each term to discuss students requiring adjustments. This will guide the collaborative process required by the National Consistent Collection of Data of students with disabilities (NCCD) for identified students. A record will be printed and put into the student's file each term. This will allow future teachers to gain a clear understanding of the student's needs.

What if a student requires extension or accelerated learning support?

Students who require English and Mathematics extension, will be provided with activities at an accelerated pace and in greater depth within their relevant classroom. All students will be provided with critical thinking skill activities appropriate to their grade. The Learning Support Teacher will assist the classroom teacher to implement these activities.

Additional extension and enrichment opportunities will be available for students to participate in such as Lego Robotics, Murder Under the Microscope, and Chess.