

Special Needs Support Policy

2019

Document No:	20191205
Publication Date:	May 2019
Replaces Document & No:	Special Needs: Adjustments and Support 20160202
Contact:	Alison Graeve
Review Date:	3 year cycle: May 2022
Status:	Active

Special Needs Support Policy

Policy

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 COAST.

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 as part of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) process.

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 COAST consider?

At COAST we will consider reasonable adjustments for Students With a Disability (SWD). This disability could include:

Physical
Intellectual
Social/Emotional
Sensory
Learning Support Need (Acceleration or Revision)
Behaviour Support Need

Adjustments are categorised as being:

- ✓ **QDTP** - students have been considered for some level of active support because their identified needs have a functional impact on their schooling and would be subject to close monitoring and review. However, the school team, in consultation with the student and their parent or carer, has agreed that the student's needs as a result of the disability are being met through quality differentiated teaching practice, without drawing on additional resources and by meeting proficient-level Teaching Standards (AITSL).
- ✓ **Supplementary** – adjustments are provided when there is an assessed need at specific times to complement the strategies and resources already available for all students within the school. These adjustments are designed to address the nature and impact of the student's disability and any associated barriers to their learning, physical, communication or participatory needs. 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.

- ✓ **Substantial** – adjustments are provided to address the specific nature and significant impact of the student’s disability. These adjustments are designed to address the more significant barriers to their engagement, learning, participation and achievement. Therefore, more substantial support needs are provided with essential adjustments and considerable adult assistance.
- ✓ **Extensive** – students with disability and very high support needs are provided with extensive targeted measures and sustained levels of intensive support. These adjustments are highly individualized, comprehensive and ongoing.

Individual planning (IP) and the associated documentation for each student receiving the adjustments as listed above continues throughout the period of the student’s enrolment at COAST, or until the student no longer requires adjustments beyond normal differentiated classroom practice.

An individual plan (IP) should be reviewed as regularly as required according to the needs of the student but a minimum would be annually.

All areas of school life should be considered as part of the individual planning (IP) process. Examples may include social and academic engagement, self-care, independence, access to the environment, attendance, communication skills.

What is the consultation process at COAST?

At COAST we will consult with parents and other support personnel in order to understand the impact of a student's disability and to determine whether any adjustments are needed to assist the student to access the curriculum. 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 COAST.

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

The COAST 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.

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 COAST 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 recommended COAST 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 COAST.

How will Special Needs Support be delivered at COAST?

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

COAST applies for and accesses government funding, within the funding guidelines, available for students with disabilities, learning support needs and/or behaviour support needs.

At COAST, 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 or other special needs, provide advice to the classroom teacher and parents/caregivers regarding Individual Plans (IP) and supporting the design of appropriate adjustments.

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

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

Upon commencement of enrolment at COAST a transition to School program will be implemented. This program may include:

- ✓ An appropriate number of visits to COAST before commencing enrolment at COAST 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 COAST 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 Education Plan (IEP) 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 COAST teaching staff will be advised of the child's special needs and of the COAST 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.