



# Special Needs Policy

## Rationale

At Saint John the Apostle we Recognise the need to modify the curriculum in order to meet the needs of all students. We support the inclusion of all students in our school community.

Our Special Needs policy is based on the understanding that:

- Christ said "Whatever you do to these, the least of my children, you do to Me".
- A child's education is a collaborative effort between students, parents, the school and society in general.
- All members of our school community share responsibility for the care and education of children at the school.
- Children with Additional Needs are valued by the school and all share in the responsibility for their care.

## Aims

The St John the Apostle Special Needs Policy aims to:

- meet the needs of all students, giving them many/regular/sustained opportunities to reach their full potential
- allocate resources based on student's needs to access the curriculum and to participate in the school community
- Resources could include people or physical resources depending on student need

## Agreed Practice

### *Identification*

If a parent considers that a child has additional educational needs, they should discuss their concerns with the classroom teacher in the first instance. If they are still concerned then they may wish to discuss the matter with the Learning Support Teacher. The classroom teacher will usually discuss with the Learning Support Teacher any child about whom they have concerns. In such a discussion, the Learning Support Teacher and the classroom teacher will usually consider various strategies, assessments and referrals that might be tried to assist the child or to identify the difficulty.

If a child is identified as having additional needs, it will be necessary to consider whether or not the child meets CE criteria to be included as a validated student. If the child meets such criteria then an application for funding assistance will be completed. If the child does not meet the criteria then the classroom teacher, the Learning Support Teacher (and if appropriate, the parents) will discuss the most appropriate assistance that can be provided for the child.

Students currently receiving adjustments have been assessed using a variety of diagnostic tools as recommended in the Archdiocesan Special Needs Resource Packages and Handbook and using information gained from relevant reports.

For students to be assessed by the Learning Support Teacher, classroom teachers or parents complete a Special Needs referral form (see appendix 1) that outlines teacher or parent perceptions of the student. Included in the referral are checklists that may highlight the presence of:

- Visual or auditory discrimination problems.
- Expressive and/or receptive language delays.
- Gross and/or fine motor delays.
- Behavioural difficulties.

If school based assessments suggest the presence of an intellectual disability, there needs to be 10 weeks of intervention in Literacy and Numeracy then students may be referred to the CE for psychometric (IQ) assessments. In exceptional circumstances other students may be considered for psychometric assessments. Learning Support and Classroom Teacher complete referral forms ().

When identifying students with Additional Needs Principals and school staff will:

- Seek parent permission to access relevant medical/educational documents, during the enrolment process and as appropriate thereafter.
- Consider student needs against NCCDSSD and participate in ascertainment processes (eg Student Appraisal of Needs) and IP meetings to determine these needs.
- Contact a CE to seek clarification where student documentation is unclear about the student's needs and/or eligibility status.

Prior to an offer of enrolment, the Principal will conduct an enrolment process as per the Enrolment Policy for Systemic Schools, Schedule A – Enrolling Students with Disabilities.

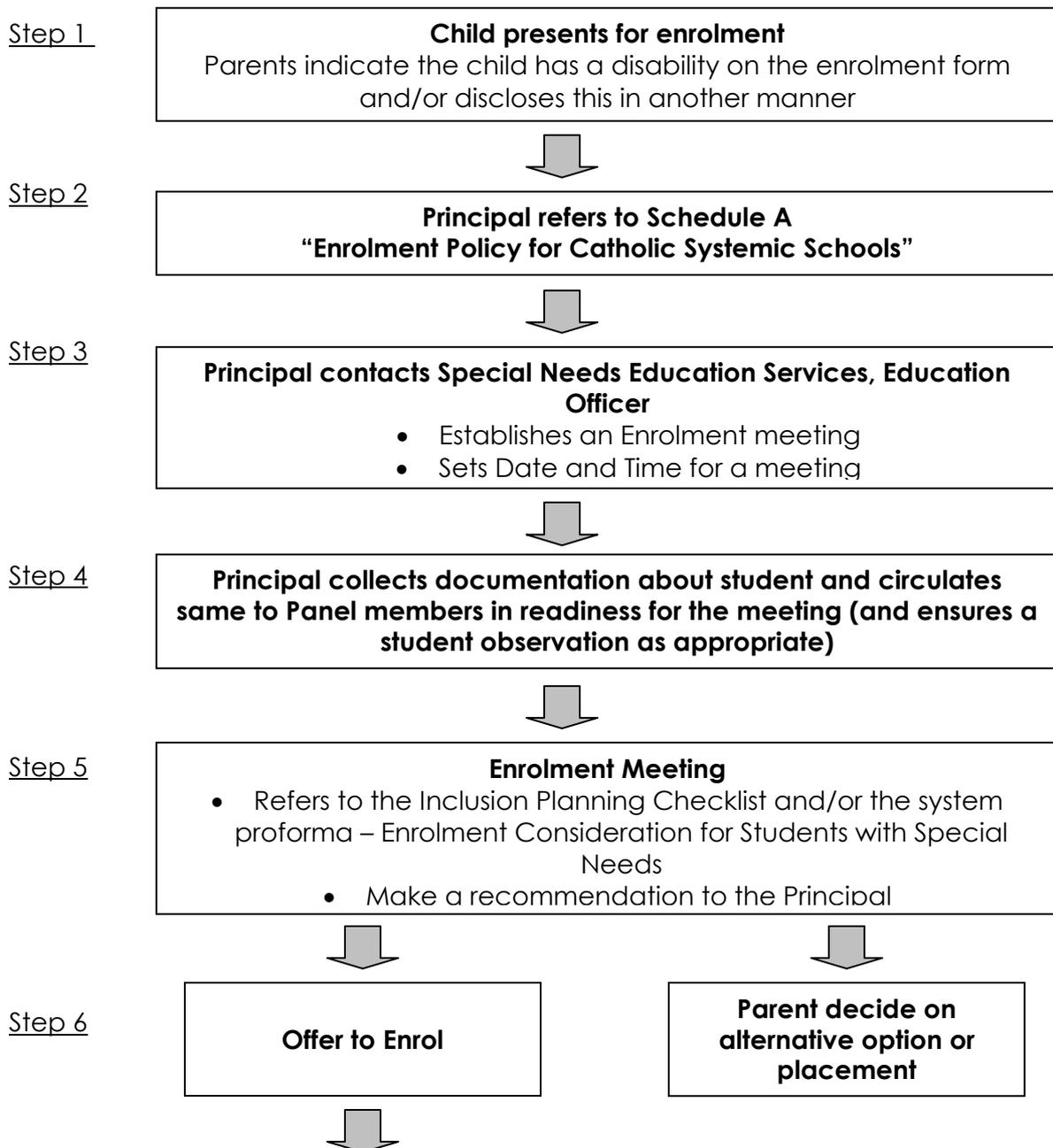
Consider the two following broad categories:

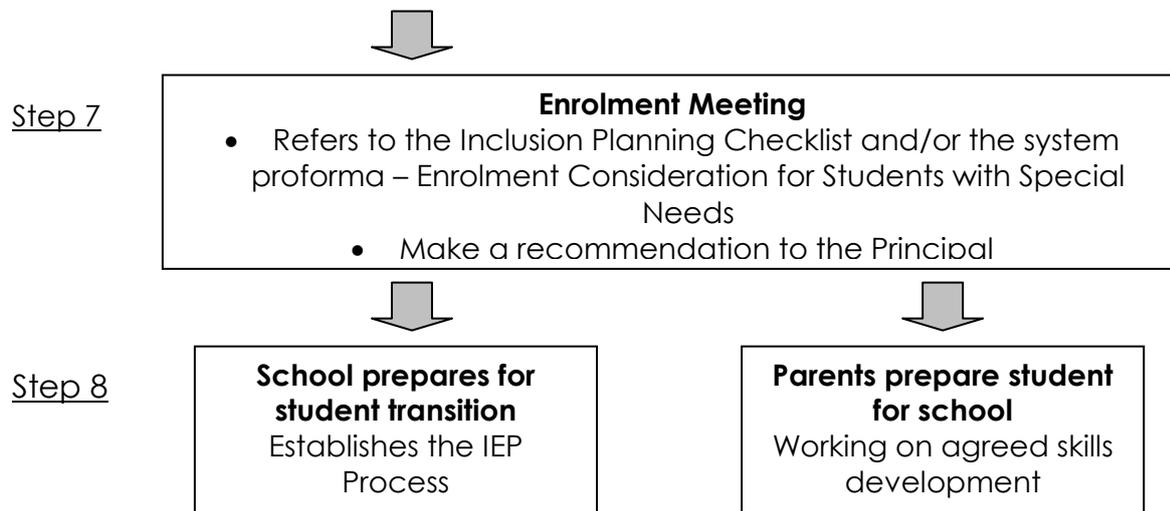
1. *Validated Students*: The CE provides education funding support for students who meet very specific criteria. Students with:
  - Sensory Impairment

- Cognitive Delay
- Speech and language
- Chronic Medical Condition
- Physical Disability
- Mental Health Disorder
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder

2. Students who are not validated but for whom adjustments are made are included on the NCCDSSD Assistance for these students must usually be provided from within the school's general resources:

### Enrolling a Student With Additional Needs





### *Caring for Students with additional needs*

At St John's, we all share responsibility for the care and education of all children at our school. Some members of our community, however, have specific responsibilities. For example, in caring for children with additional needs, the Parents, the Principal, the Classroom Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher and other members of the Learning Support Team work together in providing assistance, each making a particular contribution.

### Parents

Parents of children with additional needs are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children at St John's. They should be invited to discuss progress, goals and teaching strategies with staff at the school, especially the classroom teacher and/or the Learning Support Teacher.

### Classroom Teacher

The Classroom Teacher has primary responsibility for the education of children in her/his class, including children with additional needs. In working with children with additional needs, the Classroom Teacher should liaise closely with others involved in the child's education such as Parents and the Learning Support Teacher. Such liaison should be as needed and should involve both informal, as well as formal, communication. Formal communication could include:

- To chart student progress through recording results of school literacy and numeracy assessment.
- To use the school based referral procedure when referring students for an assessment.
- To provide work samples, progress reports and other relevant information to the Learning Support Teacher if required.
- To maintain ongoing communications with regard to student progress and/or program implementation.
- To be involved in IP planning.

### School Counsellor

The school's counsellor may work with students with additional needs for additional support if requested.

## Principal

As with most areas of the school, the Principal's role in Special Needs Education covers both the general and the specific. The Principal should provide support and leadership to additional Needs Education within the school, seeing it as a crucial component in the Mission of the School. More specifically, the Principal should work with the Learning Support Teacher and other professionals in coordinating the work of the Integration Support Panel. The Principal should also work closely with the Learning Support Teacher and with specific Classroom Teachers in ensuring that the resources of the school are used in the best possible way. This particularly applies to the Learning Support Resources of the school.

## Learning Support Teacher

The Learning Support Teacher is a vital contributor to the work of a school such as St John's. As the title implies, the primary role of the Learning Support Teacher is to provide a supplementary point of reference (a resource) for teachers at the school. The Learning Support Teacher ideally should have specialised tertiary training as well as substantial classroom teaching experience. Teachers seek advice and assistance from the Learning Support Teacher in resolving teaching difficulties.

The Learning Support Teacher also provides some limited assistance for children with Special Education Needs, both generally by coordinating the Special Needs Education Program and specifically by working with individual children, teachers and parents. Such work may include some of the following:

- Assess the needs of individual students and provide precise information as to the level at which they are currently functioning.
- Formulate specific programs and oversee their implementation. Each student with a disability is required to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The school's Learning Support teacher and Classroom teacher will plan the IEP collaboratively in consultation with parents, students and others as appropriate. IEP Summaries are required by the CEO on an annual basis (forwarded in Term 4 to a CEO Learning Support Officer).
- Provide assistance and appropriate resources to enable effective program delivery.
- Determine a budget in accordance with the needs of Special Needs students and provide budgetary information.
- Inform staff of current developments in Special Needs Education.
- Maintain relevant assessment data.
- Liaise with school and non-school personnel with regard to the most appropriate intervention for Special Needs students.
- Provide, or assist in providing, parent tutoring programs or staff development programs.
- To access the services of the Child Health and Development Service (CHADS), Child and Adolescent Service (CAS), the University of Canberra Schools and Community Program and CEO Learning Support Officers.

- To refer individual students for psychometric assessments.

### Other Members of the Resource Team

Other Members of the Resource Team work with the Learning Support Teacher in providing assistance to teachers and students at the school. Depending upon any particular funding requirements for individual members of the Resource Team, they may be required to work exclusively with a particular individual student or group of students.

### **Resources**

*Archdiocesan Special Needs Resources Packages 1 (1995) and 2 (2002) and the 2004 Special Needs Learning Support Handbook*  
 CEO Students with Special Needs Policy:  
[http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au/policies/spec\\_needs.htm](http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au/policies/spec_needs.htm)

### **Related Policies / Agreed Practices**

Enrolment Policy  
 Pastoral Care and Student Welfare Policy  
 Teaching and Learning Core Document

### **Review**

The St John the Special Needs Policy is reviewed at least once each five years in line with current Registration practices. It may also be reviewed more often according to the need and educational trends.

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Philippa Brearley and Angela McDonald
<b>Revision date:</b>	7/5/2015
<b>Approved by:</b>	School Executive
<b>Implementation date:</b>	2015