



Donald Primary School

Supporting students with additional learning needs

PURPOSE

This policy sets out requirements to support the inclusion of students with a disability and/or additional learning needs at Donald Primary School.

The Department of Education is committed to embedding inclusive education in all school environments for students with a disability and additional learning needs. All Victorians, irrespective of the school they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, should have access to high quality education.

STATEMENT

The Donald Primary School is committed to embedding inclusive education in all school environments for students with disability and additional learning needs.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION BACKGROUND:

An inclusive education system enables all students to be welcomed, accepted and engaged so that they can participate, achieve and thrive in school life.

- ensures that students with disability are not discriminated against and are accommodated to participate in education on the same basis as their peers
- acknowledges and responds to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
- occurs when students with disability and additional needs are treated with respect and are involved in making decisions about their education
- benefits students of all abilities in the classroom and fosters positive cultural change in attitudes and beliefs about disability, in and beyond the school environment
- contributes to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS:

- Donald Primary School must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate students with disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist students to participate in education and training on the same basis as their peers without a disability.
- When planning an adjustment for a student, the school should consult with the parent or carer(s) and the student, through the Student Support Group process. This process should apply to all students with disability or additional needs, not just those who are eligible for support under targeted funding programs.
- Donald Primary School is expected to support a student's learning within regular learning spaces such as classrooms as much as possible.

SENSORY PLAY & GARDEN SPACE:

The purpose of the sensory space and how this space may be used by Donald Primary School to support a student;

- A sensory space is a controlled and intentionally created space that provides multi-sensory resources to support a student's sensory needs to enable them to engage in learning.
- An Occupational Therapist with relevant expertise must be consulted in the design, implementation and evaluation of a sensory space and in devising specific programs for individual students.
- The Sensory space is to be used to promote a student's engagement in their learning and achieve their learning goals in a manner that proactively supports and responds to the student's sensory needs. This will commonly involve making the sensory space available to a student proactively to prevent problem, challenging or maladaptive behaviours, before the problem, challenging or maladaptive behaviour occurs. The Sensory space is not intended to be used in response to problem, challenging or maladaptive behaviours.

- The Sensory space may sometimes be used to reinforce and reward positive behaviour where it will assist the student's overall learning and engagement, but this use should not be its main purpose.
- Students with known additional learning needs that are using the sensory space must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with specific learning goals and outcomes linked to the use of the space, and their progress and achievement, regularly evaluated and documented in their IEP or similarly named plan.
- Donald Primary School has developed a statement which articulates how the sensory space is to be used in the school, consistent with this policy.
- For students with additional learning needs, the Sensory space is to be used with guidance from an Occupational Therapist and, if applicable, the student's treating health practitioner.

STUDENT LEARNING:

- The Sensory space is to be used by Donald Primary School as a resource to support students' needs so they can achieve their learning goals.
- The Sensory space is to be used in a manner that proactively supports and responds to the student's sensory needs not reactively in response to challenging behaviours.
- Staff must keep students engaged in regular education settings, such as classrooms, for most of each school day.
- Every student using a sensory room must have learning goals and outcomes linked to the use of the room. A student's progress and achievement must be evaluated and documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or similarly named plan.
- Students must be actively supervised and engaged in sensory activities by staff when in sensory rooms.
- Supervisory staff must support students' safe use of sensory rooms and to engage in learning according to the student's needs.
- An Occupational Therapist and other appropriately qualified allied health practitioners must be involved in the implementation and evaluation of student supports in sensory rooms.
- Donald Primary School must provide consulting Occupational Therapists with a copy of this policy and ensure compliance with it and the Department's Records Management Policy.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**
A written statement of the educational program designed to meet a student's individual needs.
- **Occupational Therapist (OT)**
A degree-based health professional regulated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Occupational therapists use a whole person perspective to work with individuals, groups and communities to achieve optimal health and wellbeing through participation in the occupations of life, including education.
- **Problem, challenging or maladaptive behaviour**
Behaviour that interferes with the learning of the student or the learning of other students.

Schools must meet their legal obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and also the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disability. These obligations apply to all students with disability, not just those who are eligible for support under targeted funding programs.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, next review is in 2023.

This policy was ratified by School Council on Wednesday 15th September, 2021