SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

The aim of the Special Education program at Marcellin College is to provide a temporal, instructional and socially integrated program for students with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. In compliance with the policy guidelines of the Archdiocese of Sydney regarding students with Special Educational Needs, the following principles have been adhered to in developing the Special Education Policy at Marcellin College:

a) The innate dignity of each human person is central to the message of Jesus Christ. The Catholic Community, therefore endeavours to provide for all students who have a special educational need;

b) The student with Special Educational Needs will be educated within the mainstream classroom. The student’s progress will be reviewed regularly and information provided to parents or caregivers.

Under the National Equity Program for Schools - Special Education Component, Integration Funding is an important aspect in supporting the principle that, where possible, students with disabilities should attend regular schools. In this way appropriate personnel, resources and specialist support can be provided within the Catholic School. The integration of students into mainstream classroom situations, highlights appropriate educational opportunities with procedural safeguards aimed at providing disabled students with access to and integration, with non-disabled students.

The primary need of students with disabilities is paramount to the integration model i.e. social and emotional needs. This does not mean individualized instruction and programs are withdrawn, but are built into the whole program. In this way the educational environment strives to fulfill emotional, social and specific learning needs of students with difficulties and disabilities. The aim is to create an accepting environment, secure and supportive of students who have specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

Safeguards developed, provide a support structure which enables the individual to function in the mainstream environment. A wide base of resources and individualised programs cater for students with special needs and students who have identified learning difficulties. Such disabilities and difficulties identified in students at Marcellin College are:

- Mild intellectual disabilities - cognitive
- Moderate intellectual disabilities
- Language disorders
- Specific learning difficulties
- Severe medical conditions
- Sensory impairment – hearing, visual
- Emotional behavioural disabilities
- Physical e.g. Small Stature
- Multiple disorders.
SPECIAL NEEDS PROCEDURES

In supporting students with special needs in the mainstream classroom, subject teachers have access to appropriate strategies (transcribed from Specialist documentation) and support in the classroom environment i.e. across the curriculum. Subject teachers will have access to current testing and recommendations of students in their care. Students with specific learning difficulties will have appropriately planned intervention programs, resources and support that enable them to participate in mainstream Key Learning Areas – whilst having the opportunity to build skills appropriate to their needs. Therefore Year 7 and 8 have an identified transition class 7.3 and 8.3 with Additional Literacy Courses. Support such as Keyboard Skill lessons, Special Reading groups and Spelling programs are offered to cater for specific and individual needs. The Special Educational Teacher co-ordinates such programs.

When a student with special learning needs is enrolled at Marcellin College, staff are informed in the following ways;

- All teachers of special needs classes have a meeting at the beginning of the school year where all information relevant for teachers regarding student learning difficulties is given to staff in handout form.

- Staff are given learning strategies that are to assist them in the classroom to meet the needs of the students.

- Staff are updated when assessments and reports from outside agencies are considered to have an impact on classroom procedures and strategies for any student with special learning needs.

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