

Disability Policy



PREAMBLE:

Although it is generally acknowledged that all children are more alike than different, their unique differences must be identified and conscientiously considered when programs are planned. Contributions educators can make to special needs children is recognised, and in caring for these children staff are provided with the opportunity to further their professional skills and knowledge. All children including those with special needs are treated as individuals with rights.

Montessori, particularly because of its origin, offers the child with special needs an environment most suited for providing optimal learning situations. The age range in each community allows children to become a part of that community without prejudice or comparison.

The DDA provides protection against discrimination based on disability. The DDA seeks to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people with disability in a range of areas, including education. The DDA makes it against the law for an education authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability.

Education and Care Schools National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Schools) National Law NSW	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
157	Access for parents

AIM:

To have a School that encourages children with disabilities and special needs to play an active role in their own care. To create an opportunity to teach respect to all children and their uniqueness, and to develop a sensitivity to the needs of others.

The Farmhouse Montessori School aims to provide a range of educational services and settings for students from aged two (2) up to Primary Level to accommodate the diversity of curriculum, resource, environmental and support needs of students with a disability. This will include special provisions permitted under the Disability Standards for Education 2005, such as special schools and support units/classes, where parents/carers and professionals agree such placements are in the best interests of the students.

The School will:

- allocate additional resources to mainstream schools through the Student Centred Appraisal of Need process, based on individual student need, in an equitable, transparent and consistent manner, to those students who meet the ACT Student Disability Criteria and who require additional support allocate resources to special schools through the Student Centred Appraisal of Need process, based on individual student need, in an equitable, transparent and consistent manner.
- allocate resources to mainstream schools to support special classes (Learning Support Centres and Units, Support Class Language, Hearing Support Unit)
- work in partnership with parents/carers, other government service providers and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support services to meet the student's learning needs and aspirations post school
- provide information to support the active participation of parents/carers in the education process
- provide specialist educational advice, professional development and support to schools and staff delivering services to students with a disability.

DEFINITIONS

Disability: A disability results in a loss or reduction in ability to function on day to day basis caused by one or a combination of impairments including intellectual disability, physical disability, vision impairment, hearing impairment, language disorder, mental health condition and autism.

Inclusivity: In education this means including every student in the educational programs offered by the school. It involves personalising the learning program for each student by valuing their uniqueness - their interests, experiences, abilities, prior learning, insights, needs, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and learning styles.

Reasonable adjustment: A measure or action (or a group of measures or actions) taken by an education provider that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability:

- in relation to an admission or enrolment

- in relation to a course or programs
- in relation to facilities or services
- on the same basis as a student without a disability, and includes an aid, facility,
- or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability.

Individual Learning Plan (ILP): The ILP identifies the student's individual needs, pathway, goals and priorities for learning. An ILP is designed by teachers in collaboration with parents/carers, relevant professionals and the student where appropriate, to inform the planning, delivery and evaluation of the student's personalised learning program. ILPs are regularly monitored and evaluated.

School: Indicates the Farmhouse Montessori School

STAFF/PARENT EDUCATION:

- Opportunities are available for staff to attend inservice courses or workshops on disabilities.
- Child specialists, therapists and psychologists will be invited from time to time to talk on their speciality to parents and staff.
- Information is regularly acquired and provided for the
 - o staff in the staff reference library,
 - o parents to borrow or take in leaflet form
 - o to ensure up to date information is available.
- Parent or others with disabilities are encouraged and invited to talk to the children, parent or staff.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The environment is open to each child according to his/her needs and abilities.

The environment provides adequate access for children with disabilities by having:

- a ramp for easy access for wheelchairs
- play area is accessible beside the building
- building itself is single storey

Activities provided should be designed to provide the greatest success to the child.

A list of recommended specialists and their contact numbers and addresses is maintained to assist the parents with access to suitable help for their child's needs.

Communication between parents of children with special needs would need to be maintained more regularly than usual to ensure two way information to assist the development and learning of the child and providing support for the parents.

Action plans may need to be implemented with the specialists and intervention services involved, in addition to the Montessori program, depending on the needs of the child. These would be recorded in addition to the normal record keeping ensuring as many avenues of support for the child are provided.

ACCESS:

While every effort is made to accommodate children and parents with disabilities, the School may be unable to care for a child if:

- taking the necessary steps to accommodate a child's special needs with added equipment or services imposes an undue burden on the School, or would fundamentally alter the nature of the program facility, and there are no alternative steps can be taken.
- accommodating the child's needs require architectural changes that are not readily achievable
- a particular child's condition poses a direct threat to the health or safety of any of the children or staff in the program and there is no reasonable way of eliminating the threat through changes in policies, practices, procedures, equipment or services.
- integrating the child into the program requires changes in policies, practices, or procedures that would fundamentally alter the nature of the program and there are no reasonable alternatives.

*See Reasonable Adjustments Policy-Appendix

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TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL:

A transition team will be organised with members of staff from the pre-primary and the primary classes to ensure the transition to primary is made as smoothly as possible.

NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability provides Australian schools, parents, education authorities and the community with information about the number of students with disability in schools, where they are located and the adjustments they receive.

The national data collection on students with disability reinforces the existing obligations that schools have towards students under the Commonwealth [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) and the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#). It counts the number of students who are supported under these obligations based on the professional judgement of teachers and their understanding and knowledge of their students.

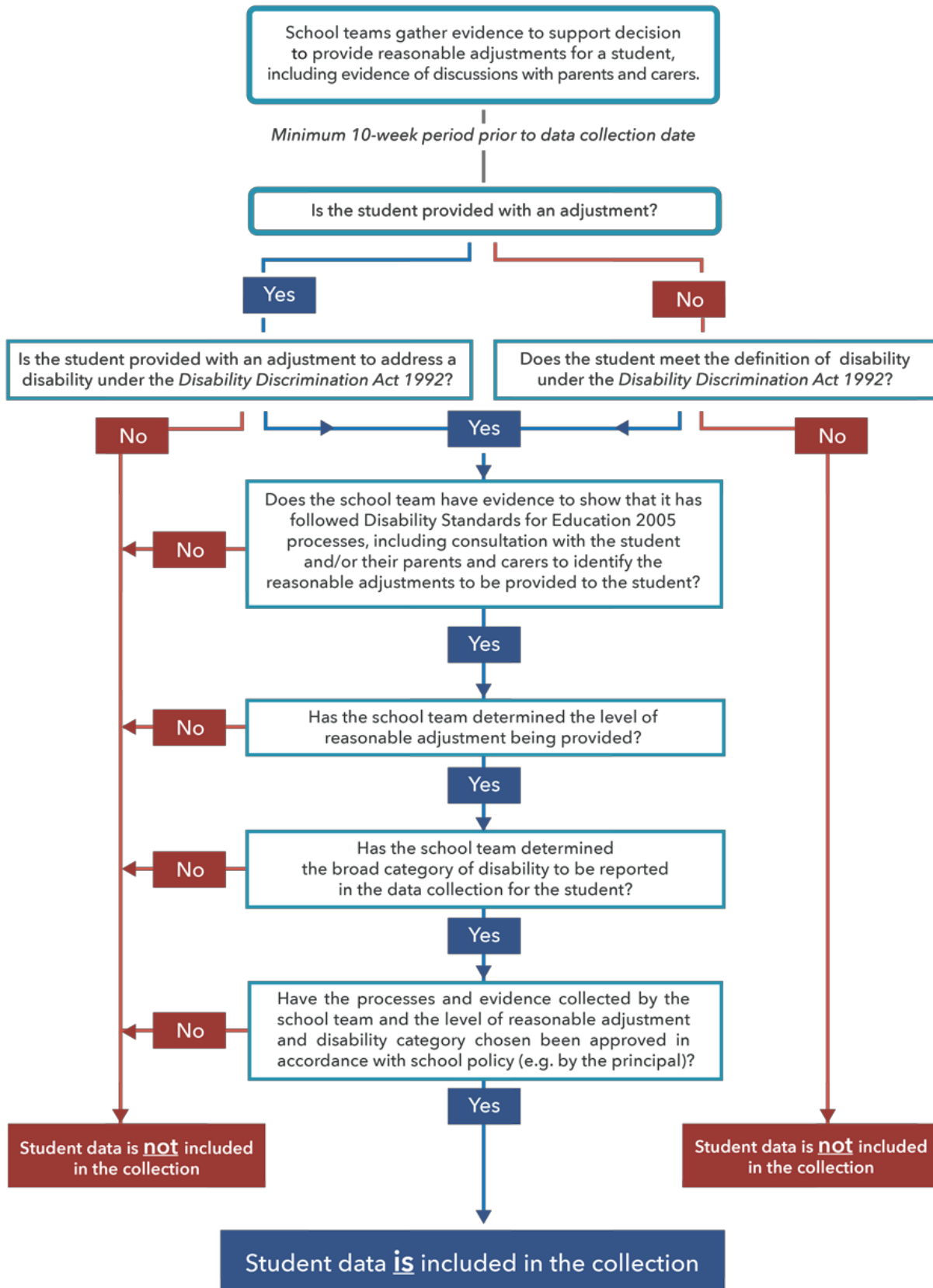
For background information about the national data collection on students with disability, please visit the [Australian Government Department of Education website](#) - <http://education.gov.au/nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability>

An Information Notice for Schools and School Principals has been developed to provide information for principals, teachers and other school staff who may be participating in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability for the first time in 2014. This notice provides background information, key activity dates and how to prepare for the data collection <http://education.gov.au/notices>.

A Privacy Notice has been developed to provide students, parents and carers with important privacy information in relation to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. <http://education.gov.au/notices>

LEGISLATIVE LINKS	SOURCES	LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10 <u>Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011</u> <u>Explosives Act 2003</u> Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 Disability Standards for Education 2005 The Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) Educational and Care Services National Regulations 2011 - 168 (2)(h) Disability Standards for Education, 2005	<u>http://www.csu.edu.au/adminman/stu/procedure-reasonable-adjustment-students.pdf</u> <u>http://www.schooldisabilitydatapl.edu.au/</u> <u>http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/34370/StudentsWithADisability.pdf</u>	Additional Needs Workplace Health and Safety Maintenance Policy Concerns & Grievance policy Reasonable Adjustment Policy

Policy Review Date	Modification	Reviewed Date
September 2013	Approved	2014
Reviewed: March 2014	N/A	2016
Feb 2018	New Logo	2018



Appendix 1

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT



PURPOSE

This Policy describes how the Farmhouse Montessori, will approach enrolment of students and employment of staff with a disability. This in turn demonstrates a commitment to providing equitable opportunities for people with disabilities. This creates infrastructure, in terms of services, policies and general awareness that is necessary to enable people with disabilities to have equal access to and full participation to the Farmhouse Montessori School.

The purpose of this policy is, as far as possible, to eliminate disability discrimination from the processes of supporting students and the recruitment, retention and support of staff at Farmhouse Montessori.

AIMS

To provide and maintain a safe and accessible environment for all staff, children, their families and visitors to the centre and thereby reducing the risk of injury or illness in accordance with WH&S Act 2000.

To provide continued access to the study environment for enrolled or prospective students who have temporary or permanent disabilities.

DEFINITIONS

Disability - for the purposes of this procedure, the definition of disability is that used by relevant anti-discrimination legislation. The full definitions are in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

Disability is very broadly defined in the legislation and covers physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric, neurological and learning disabilities. It also covers physical disfigurement as well as serious illnesses. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired.

Reasonable adjustment - refers to the administrative, environmental or procedural alterations that are required to enable a person with a disability to study effectively and on the same basis as other student peers without a disability.

On the same basis - A person with a disability is treated *on the same basis* as a student peer without a disability if the person has opportunities and choices in admission, enrolment and participation that are comparable with those offered to other students without disabilities. The provider makes any decisions (e.g. concerning admission) on the basis that reasonable adjustments could be provided.

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students. (Disability Standards for Education 2005).

THE APPLICATION OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Reasonable adjustments are changes introduced into the reasonable process to ensure programs are accessible to students who have a disability. Reasonable adjustments may be required in situations where a student has:

- an injury or illness of a temporary or permanent nature or;
- an acquired condition or disability, whether temporary or permanent or;
- an established condition or disability.

The procedures described in this document apply to the management of reasonable adjustments for all these categories.

The requirement to provide adjustment for people with a disability applies to all areas and phases of study, including:

- admission and enrolment,
- access to learning materials,
- attendance at classes,
- assessment including examinations,

- professional placements.

The School will endeavour to meet the needs of students through inclusive and flexible teaching practices; however examples of the types of adjustments that may need to be provided include:

- providing information in accessible formats,
- reasonable adjustment to curriculum content,
- reasonable adjustment to mode of delivery,
- reasonable adjustment to assessment procedures,
- modifications to equipment, the loan of specialised equipment or software,
- modifications to property.

Any adjustments will be provided in a timely and sensitive manner, protecting the privacy and the dignity of the student at all times.

Adjustments may be permanent or temporary depending on the nature of the disability and the needs of the individual. The level and nature of the adjustment may also change over time. However, it may not be necessary for a student to repeat the processes of seeking the same adjustments for an ongoing condition, e.g. to examination conditions or format of learning materials.

At all times the staff responsible for administering the adjustment will respect the privacy of the student. Information about the student's disability will only be sought insofar as it relates to the request for adjustment.

Information about the disability will only be disclosed to relevant Farmhouse staff to enable reasonable adjustments to accommodate a student's disability. Information will not be supplied to any person or organisation outside the School except where it may be legally required to do so.

ASSESSMENT NEEDS

In assessing the student's need for reasonable adjustment the Principal and Premises officer or relevant staff member will consult with the student on the following matters:

- the nature, severity and duration of the disability, injury or illness;
- the functional limitations placed on the student by the disability or condition;
- whether the disability or condition is likely to change over time and reasonable adjustments may require review;
- what specific adjustments, if any, have been suggested by the student;
- information provided by or on behalf of the student about how the disability affects the student's ability to participate; and
- whether further specialist evaluation is required to identify and implement appropriate adjustments.

The adjustment will be determined using the following factors:

- the student's disability;
- the views of the student or the student's associate,
- the effect of the adjustment on the student, including the effect on the student's:
 - ability to achieve learning outcomes; and
 - ability to participate in courses or programs; and
 - independence;
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including the School, staff and other students and;
- the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

COSTS

- The costs of implementing reasonable adjustments will be funded as follows:
 - Adjustments to enable access to buildings, grounds or facilities, i.e. to fixed capital items, will be funded by Premises Provisions.
 - Costs related to materials will be funded by the class materials funds.
 - Costs related to staff will be funded by staffing funds or disability provisions.
- The School will **not** generally fund the cost of:

- Professional assessments of disability;
 - personal aids that are also required by the student outside the university;
 - general use furniture;
 - computers;
 - workstations within the home environment;
 - personal care or;
 - treatment for a temporary or permanent condition or disability.
- Recording of costs and submission to DEEWR for reimbursement:
 - Under the Additional Support for Students with Disabilities (ASSD) scheme, educational support costs over \$500 per calendar year for any one student can be claimed from DEEWR and an amount up to 100% will be reimbursed. Equipment costs may also be reimbursed. The administrative assistant will prepare the submission to DEEWR at the appropriate time each year or as required.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring of adjustments and further adjustments will be determined according to the needs of the individual child.

A study access plan will be reviewed annually or as required.

APPEALS

Where a concern is raised about the reasonableness of an adjustment, the matter can be referred informally to the Principal.

Formal complaints may be made to the Principal and will be dealt with in accordance with our Concerns and Grievance policy

LEGISLATIVE LINKS

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10
 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
[Explosives Act 2003](#)
 Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
 Disability Standards for Education 2005
 The Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010
 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
 Educational and Care Services National Regulations 2011 - 168 (2)(h)
Disability Standards for Education, 2005
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/disability_standards_for_education.htm

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Additional Needs
 Workplace Health and Safety
 Maintenance Policy
 Concerns & Grievance policy

SOURCES	Modification	REVIEW DATES
http://www.csu.edu.au/adminman/stu/procedure-reasonable-adjustment-students.pdf		<i>Approved : September 2013 Reviewed: March 2014</i>
	New Logo & Format	<i>Sept 2018</i>



Additional Needs Procedure

Children with additional needs require support by using specialised strategies catering for their specific needs or circumstances. When planning for children with additional needs Educators are required to focus on their abilities and interests. It is essential that the program is flexible and allows children to engage in ways that are meaningful for them. Our school wants children to develop to the best of their personal ability. We aim to promote and encourage this by:

- Gathering information provided by families and other professionals who are working with the child, including psychologists, early intervention specialists, social workers and speech or occupational therapists.
- Meeting with families to gain information about the strategies that support their child's learning in the home environment.
- Conducting specific observations on the individual child, which outlines their interests, strengths and needs
- Acquainting Educators with, and share knowledge about, the specific communication needs of each child. This will include verbal and non-verbal communication skills and cues. This may include a communication book, verbal daily information exchange, formal and informal meetings etc. Where applicable, this may include things such as sign language and or learning key words in the child's home language.
- Developing an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) with families and support agencies, which is a live document and continuously evaluated by all parties involved.
- Accessing external professional support schools for children with additional needs.
- Networking with the Nominated Supervisor to ensure the needs of each child are met throughout their education and care at the school.
- Attending professional development workshops to enhance their understanding about the additional needs and how to meet the child's needs.
- Encouraging families to update the school with information throughout the year, promoting the continuity of learning for each child.
- Working with local schools to help children with additional needs transition. We are open to sharing information about the additional needs of children to promote continuity of learning.
- Remaining positive, unbiased and authentic at all times.