

Additional Needs Policy



Including children with additional needs required Educators to extend upon the strategies they already use in providing quality care for children. It is imperative for Educators to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's interests and abilities, and implement a program and environment that is receptive to their needs.

Education and Care Farmhouse Montessori Schools National Regulations

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

PURPOSE

To be responsible for each child irrespective of their additional needs and abilities with a supportive and inclusive environment that sanctions each child to fully participate in their education and care at the Farmhouse Montessori School. Educators will remain encouraging, unprejudiced and authentic, ensuring that all children are treated equally and fairly and have the opportunity to grow and develop to their individual potential.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Farmhouse Montessori School. In accordance with The National Quality Standard, our Farmhouse Montessori School positively responds to and welcomes children with additional needs who -

- Are Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders
- Are recent arrivals in Australia
- Have a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- Live in isolated geographic locations
- Are experiencing difficult family circumstances or stress
- Are at risk of abuse or neglect
- Are experiencing language and communication difficulties
- Have a diagnosed disability—physical, sensory, intellectual or autism spectrum disorder
- Have a medical or health condition
- Demonstrate challenging behaviours and behavioural or psychological disorders
- Have developmental delays
- Have learning difficulties
- Are gifted or have special talents
- Have other extra support needs.

We understand that additional needs may be temporary or permanent and ascend from diverse origins, which require different responses.

IMPLEMENTATION

Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- The indoor and outdoor environment and equipment is designed or adapted to ensure access and participation for all children to support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- The program and curriculum is inclusive and meets the individual needs of children with additional needs.
- The Farmhouse Montessori School works with external professionals and families to certify the educational program and learning environment is most suited to each child with additional needs and children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds. We will keep a copy of any specific plans or instructions provided by external resource providers and professionals for children with additional needs.

- Children's sensory sensitivities to pressure, texture, smell, noise or visual expectation of the environment or colour is considered within the environment.
- Encourage children to feel safe and secure during their education and care at the Farmhouse Montessori School by developing trusting relationships with educators, other children and the community.
- Encourage families to meet with the Educators who will be working with the child to converse and comprehend the child's needs and to certify the suitable resources and support provided to both the family and the child is appropriate
- Support educators through professional development and networking with professional agencies to certify educators are meeting the needs of each child with additional needs.
- Seek assistance, training and where possible, financial funding from inclusive support agencies to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs.
- Ensure confidentiality for children and families is maintained

"Implementation and procedure regarding I.E.P (Individual Education Plan)

PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Upon noticing that a particular child may need assistance in one of the following areas (Cognitive, emotional, social or emotional), the teacher in question will make two observations over a minimum of a 1-hour period. These observations will be held in the child's file and will be **observational only**.
- If the teacher feels that intervention is still required and the observations validate the teacher's concerns the parents will be informed and discussions on patterns of behaviour will take place. (all meetings will be minuted)
- Initially, the School will make internal adjustments to the environment, curriculum, and pedagogy to accommodate for the needs of the child and subsequently, a second meeting will be set up with the family to discuss these procedural changes and their impact
- The school will then seek professional advice and professional development to further the impact of these adjustments. Parents may be requested to seek advice from a trained professional (Educational psychologist) to gain specific insights and recommendations. Following these reports, an IEP or ILP will be written.
- Parents will have a face-to-face meeting with the Additional needs (Teacher) co-ordinator and class teacher (Class Director) three times per year. (At The beginning of the Academic year, and then twice more, prior to parent reports being at reporting time (Additional Needs Teacher attending the meetings with Class Director) being distributed in Term 2 and 4.)
- Specific and concise, targets and goals (Issues and adjustments) will be added to the report internally as the child progresses through the yearly (differentiated) curriculum. Achieved goals will be highlighted as green and new targets will be set by the teachers and Additional needs co-ordinator (Class Director and Additional Needs Teacher will review and document additional issues as they arise. The Curriculum is differentiated as the child's needs are assessed. Documentation will show progress and be kept in the child's file as a record of progress). These will be shared with the parents continuously (These will be shared at scheduled meeting times and when parents request them.).
- Parents will be notified via email if any significant changes take place regarding their child's development and additional meetings will take place if required.
- The Farmhouse Montessori School will keep up to date with modern research and methodology regarding the education of children with additional needs.
- The IEP template and procedure will be reviewed annually (and in consultation with Professional Associations for example AIS and with NESAs guidelines). (See IEP template attached)"

EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Upon noticing that a particular child may need assistance in one of the following areas (Cognitive, emotional, social, physical or emotional) the classroom teacher will make individual specific observational records.
- The classroom teacher will support the child by making adjustments to the environment and the curriculum. Further observations will be made to determine the success of the adjustments.

- The classroom teacher will meet with the coordinator to discuss their concerns, review observation records and results from an adjusted environment and curriculum to determine how to proceed. All meetings will be minuted.
- A meeting will be held with the parents or carer to discuss the child's development and the initial concerns by teachers. During this meeting the teacher will share observations and discuss the adjusted curriculum and environment. The teacher may suggest seeking outside professional advice that is relevant to the concerns i.e.: hearing test, speech assessment, pediatrician, and psychologist. The meeting will be minuted and placed in child's folder.
- The school will ask for a copy of external professional reports. Upon receiving these reports the teachers will ask for a follow-up meeting with the child's parents or carer.
- Using recommendations from the report and in consultation with parent or carer, an ILP, IEP or IFSP will be written. Meetings every term will be held or when required with the child's teacher, parents or carer.
- Staff may request professional development to support the child within the school environment.
- Observational records and documentation will be kept in the child's folder.
- Parents will be notified via email if any significant changes take place regarding their child's development and additional meetings will take place if required.
- The Farmhouse Montessori School will keep up to date with modern research and methodology regarding the education of children with additional needs.
- The IEP template and procedure will be reviewed annually (and in consultation with Professional Associations for example AIS and with NESA guidelines). (See IEP template attached)"

Educators will:

- Treat children equally and fairly and with respect, regardless of dissimilarities
- Create an inclusive program, which is adaptable and supportive of all children
- Advocate for children's rights.
- Conduct specific observations on the individual child, outlining their interests, strengths, and developmental needs to support programming and open-ended learning opportunities. Documented within the 'daily observation' program record.
- Work collaboratively with other educators to observe the individual child and garner a broader picture of the child.
- Meet with families of children with additional needs to familiarise themselves with the specific communication needs of each child. Communication could include verbal and non-verbal communication skills and cues and may necessitate the use of things such as sign language, the use of images, and/or learning key words in the child's home language.
- Establish a means for frequent communication with parents of children with additional needs through a communication book, verbal daily information exchanges, and/or formal and informal meetings.
- Collaborate and work with families to meet children's developmental needs to build strengths and capabilities.
- Document and minute all meetings with families and professionals and ensure any relevant paperwork regarding the child is kept in the child's file.
- Create a flexible environment, which can be adapted to each child's needs within the Farmhouse Montessori School to support the inclusion of children with additional needs.
- Implement programming experiences and activities, encouraging children to explore and participate
- Listen carefully to children's concerns and discussing diverse perspectives on issues of inclusion and exclusion and fair and unfair behaviour.
- Work with other professionals who play a role in supporting the child's development.
- Seek specific professional intervention and professional development training to meet the individual child's needs.
- Develop an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP)(IFSP) for each child that will be kept on file at the Farmhouse Montessori School and shared with families, the child's medical practitioners and/or professional support practitioners.
- Act as role models by displaying appropriate behaviour and language, being consistently aware of and responsive to children who may require additional support, attention or assistance.

- Discuss a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively with the children within a supportive environment.
- Not judge or compare one child's development with another

Educational Program

- The Farmhouse principles of education reflect each child's period of development and capability. The same principles will apply to children with additional needs. Educational accountability will be managed through Individual Educational Plans (IEPs, IFSP's) (created in consultation with classroom educators and families - planning a differentiated curriculum in areas of concern).
- A program of parent and child education will take place to ensure improved awareness and understanding which in turn will assist in successful inclusion.
- Montessori philosophy stresses the importance of the supportive triangle, that is, parents, child and Farmhouse Montessori School working together. As such any concerns that are noted by staff will be discussed privately with the parent / carer. The parents / carers will be fully involved at every stage. Communication between parents would be maintained on a regular basis to ensure two way information and learning of the child and to provide support for parents.
- We see the value of working closely together with other professionals to meet children's specific needs and are committed to developing an integrated approach. Child specialists, therapists, and psychologists will be invited from time to time to talk on their specialty to parents and staff. A list of recommended specialists and their contact numbers and addresses is maintained to assist parents with access to suitable help for their child's needs.
- 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.
- The Farmhouse Montessori School staff are constantly being educated and trained in the requirements of additional needs children and how to recognise those who may have additional educational needs. The teachers are in a position to recommend whether an assessment may be required.

Work Health and Safety

1. Prior to commencement the Farmhouse Montessori School environment will be assessed. Modifications to equipment and facilities will only be considered after seeking advice from appropriately qualified personnel. Specific equipment and resources for the child may be purchased with grants obtained.
2. Currently the environment provides adequate access for children with disabilities by having:
 - access for wheelchairs
 - play area which is accessible beside the building
 - the building itself is single storey.

Confidentiality

- To meet the needs of all our children it may be necessary at times to share information with other members of the Farmhouse Montessori School community in order to support the child's development.
- We may also need to seek help and advice from outside professionals.
- The parent's permission will be sought prior to any discussions taking place outside of the Farmhouse Montessori School.
- Confidentiality is a crucial issue in any discussion and communications about a child with additional needs. Only the parents of the child, the teacher of the child and where needed a special needs consultant should be involved in any discussions and decision-making regarding the child. To meet the needs of the child other staff members may be involved in discussion to provide the best learning environment.

Staff / Parent Education

- Opportunities are available for staff to attend courses or workshops on children with additional needs.
- Child specialists, therapists and psychologists will be invited from time to time to talk on their specialty to parents and staff.
- Information is regularly acquired and provided for the staff and parents in the reference library.
- Parents or others with disabilities are encouraged and invited to talk to the children, parents, or staff.

Access

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

- taking the necessary steps to accommodate a child's additional needs with added equipment or services imposes an undue burden on the Farmhouse Montessori School, or would fundamentally alter the nature of the program facility, and there are no alternative steps that 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.

Transition to Farmhouse Montessori School

Applications will be made up to 12 months prior to the child enrolling in another Farmhouse Montessori School to develop a support team with the new Farmhouse Montessori School to assist the child with his/her transition.

Source

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Guide to the Education and Care Farmhouse Montessori Schools National Law and the Education and Care Farmhouse Montessori Schools National Regulations 2015,
- ECA Code of Ethics.
- <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood/about-mental-health/about-mental-health-and-wellbeing-children-additional-needs>
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Putting Children First, Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Issue 23 September 2007
- Children's Farmhouse Montessori Schools Central – Early Identification of Children with Additional Needs

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 Farmhouse Montessori 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) Individual Education Plan/Program (IEP) which involves planning a differentiated curriculum in areas of concern with families and support agencies, which is then a live

document and continuously evaluated by all parties involved (Evaluated by Educational Team involved with the child/ren minimum each term and with families at each reporting interview).

- Accessing external professional support Farmhouse Montessori 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 Farmhouse Montessori 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 Farmhouse Montessori School with information throughout the year, promoting the continuity of learning for each child.
- Working with local Farmhouse Montessori 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.
- Support Educator defers to Classroom educator when planning differentiated work for the children on IEPs. Support Educator to record on classroom documentation lessons given and evaluation of presentation or follow up- detailing interest, concepts grasped and areas of review needed.
- Support Educator is responsible for recording IEP documentation and ensuring it is filed in the child's file each reporting time. There needs to be copies of email correspondence in the child's file whenever it concerns the IEP documentation.
- Support Educators will engage with agencies who provide online resources in managing communication skills, documentation and differentiated curriculum ideas.
- Working with AIS Education Consultants for Student Services to have access to resources and training offered by AIS.

Resources :

<https://beyou.edu.au/> (used to be Kids Matter)

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/positive-partnerships>

<http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/search?query=gifted%20and%20talented%20kids%20identification>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/search?query=gifted%20and%20talented%20children%20family%20life>

<https://www.cela.org.au/>

<https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/>

Policy Review Date		
Created	Modification	Review Date
April 2017	Minor Changes and additions made	2018
Feb 2018	New Logo	2019
Nov 2019	Appendix 1 added	2020
March 2020	Rearranged the order of points for better flow Points added. Sources/references checked, corrected, updated, and alphabetised.	2022
5 th June 2020	Early Childhood section added Additional points added under Educators will section. Sources updated. Document reformatted	2022

Appendix 1

Individual Plan

Purpose: This Individual Plan (IP) is a Farmhouse Montessori School plan for _____. The aim of this plan is to identify the supports / adjustments needed to ensure _____ can access and participate in the educational opportunities across the whole Farmhouse Montessori School day.

Student Name: _____ **Farmhouse Montessori School:** _____ **Class:** _____ **DOB:** ____ / ____ / _____

Collaborative Planning Team: _____ **External Agencies/ Professionals:** _____

Strengths and interests of student:

Issue	Adjustment	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Follow-up	Review Notes

Issue	Adjustment	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe/ Follow-up	Review Notes

Individual Planning Process

Attendees

Date of Review

Date of initial planning process:

This plan was *developed* in consultation with:

Review date to be scheduled for:

Review date:

This plan was *reviewed* in consultation with:

Review date to be scheduled for:

Review date:

This plan was *reviewed* in consultation with:

Review date to be scheduled for:

For Farmhouse Montessori School use only

Level of Adjustment *(Select one level of adjustment only – refer to NCCD Descriptors to assist)*

Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice

Supplementary Adjustments

Substantial Adjustments

Extensive Adjustments

Category of Disability *(Select one category of disability only)*

Physical

Cognitive

Sensory

Social /Emotional

