



Business Plan 2021-2023

MOUNT HAWTHORN
Education Support Centre
Reaching for independence





Our Objectives

- Maximise independence for all students
- Ensure all students learn to the best of their ability
- Offer exposure to a variety of experiences in school and within the community to maximise learning opportunities
- Provide practical support and strategies to students, staff and families to overcome challenges to learning
- Deliver a variety of learning experiences in recognition that students have differing needs and learning styles



Our Vision Statement

MHESC provides an alternative learning environment for students with special needs. The school aims to promote and develop student's educational, physical and social skills while increasing independence and knowledge in preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their future.

About Us



Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre (MHESC) is an Independent Public School in Mount Hawthorn, Perth, Western Australia and located on Whadjuk country. The school recognizes the differing needs of each individual and caters for students with a range of disabilities and complex needs, mainly diagnosed intellectual disability and severe Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Years K-6.

We also offer an Early Intensive Intervention Program (EIIP) for Kindergarten and Pre-primary students with high functioning ASD, in preparation for entry into full time mainstream primary schooling in Year 1.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of Whadjak country and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to elders both past, present and emerging, and to their stories that have sustained them over many thousands of years.



Infrastructure

Classes are typically small with a high staff to student ratio to ensure maximum engagement and support for each student. Overall, the classroom configurations have flexibility. All rooms are equipped with interactive technology and contain zones and equipment for sensory input and regulation.

The kitchen is in the middle of the ESC building and hosts cooking and science projects, as well as social activities.

Our ESC enclosed outdoor sensory area has an engaging mural that was custom designed for the space. The students have access to lunch tables, outside trampolines, safe sandpits and an engaging sensory play zone.

MHESC shares a campus with Mount Hawthorn Primary School (MHPS), which enables the schools to offer integration opportunities for students in both directions. The ESC students have access to the MHPS play spaces, such as various playgrounds as well as the new outdoor classroom and playscape, where the aim is to promote collaborative and imaginative play, support buddy classes, and music between students of the two schools. There is also the school oval for Physical Education and sports carnivals which all students participate in.

Integration

Fostering relationships and participating alongside their mainstream peers is a focus priority. MHESC students have the opportunity to participate in mainstream classes and have access points for integration at the MHPS. Depending on the suitability of the curriculum and each student's stage of development, integration opportunities include joining in with mainstream classes, music, art, sports carnivals, Edudance and shared assemblies. The shared play spaces, such as the playgrounds and outdoor classroom, support spontaneous and authentic integration and social opportunities. Students are equipped with skills so that they can learn independently, care for themselves and interact safely and competently in the community.

Our MHPS Year 5/6 buddy class students integrate with our students in the ESC once a week, participating in one to one and small group activities with an allocated peer. Each room prepares an activity for the class and their buddies, fostering a reciprocal relationship beneficial for all stakeholders.

(Due to Covid-19, integration opportunities may be limited following Department of Education directives)



Independence

The program across our centre aims to increase independence by significantly improving all life skills as well as skills in curriculum areas, in preparation for high school;

- highly trained and experienced staff continue to implement effective behavioural techniques
- emphasis is put on students learning to recognise and regulate their own emotions and behaviour
- students continue to access intensive programs and expertise needed to improve academically as well as life skills and move towards independence

Tailored Programs to Maximise Learning

The ESC delivers a modified version of the WA Curriculum, with special emphasis on Life Skills, Behaviour, Social Skills and Communication. We use specific, evidence-based techniques which have been shown to maximize learning and be of particular benefit to students with additional needs.

TEACCH

Our staff are now trained to use TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children), a whole life approach that promotes the use of structured learning environments to develop independence in individuals with developmental disabilities. TEACCH has the following characteristics:

- class and individual schedules always used
- physical layout of the classroom is arranged to avoid distractions
- materials are clearly marked and arranged
- classroom layout and lessons take into consideration individual needs
- prompts and reinforcements are used in an organized, systematic manner to build success
- directions are tailored to individual students and given both verbally and with alternative forms such as written, PECS (Picture Exchange System), or gestures
- the focus of teaching is strengths-based

Communication

Each student's needs, methods of communication and ability level will be used to determine individual goals.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Approach

The Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) approach is used with students of all ages. Staff are trained and experienced in the theories and practice of ABA and functional behaviour analysis. It is an approach to understanding and changing behaviour and is a highly effective means to teach new skills and reduce challenging behaviour.

Emotional Regulation

Understanding and managing one's emotions is an important skill for all students. This is especially true for students with communication and intellectual challenges. Each student's physical and sensory needs are catered for and supported in order to maximise the engagement and learning that takes place. This can be refined to suit the child, for example, increased sensory engagement or increased physical activity may be provided. Staff are highly tuned to the unique signals of the children they teach and are able to recognise the pre-cursors to dysregulation. They can then tailor the environment to maximize engagement and motivation in learning.

Professional Learning

Professional Learning (PL) is encouraged with all stakeholders who work within the school.

Types of PL will include, but are not limited to

- STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics)
- Protective Behaviours
- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children)
- ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis)
- Team Teach
- Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework and Culturally Responsive Classrooms
- Mandatory Online Professional Learning courses

Following PL, current best practice will be embedded into classrooms.

Use of the AustralianTeacherAide.com.au website (school registration) provides a wide variety of PL for education assistants. Additional time is given to education assistants to access online PL.

The school will continue the collaboration with the North Metropolitan Education Support Principals Network, which provides PL and support to all staff across the network. MHESC will continue its close collaboration with MHPS and the two schools work together to achieve common goals at the extremely effective and mutually beneficial levels of collaboration. Benefits will improve teaching and learning for both schools, with the aim to foster an open, collegiate and respectful relationship with the needs of all students a top priority.

Relationship with Parents/Carers

All staff have a continuing commitment to communicate regularly at every level with parents/carers, providing understanding, information and help whenever needed. The ESC staff have a range of avenues that they use to keep communication open with parents/carers. It is an open door policy and all staff are happy to talk about students or any concerns.

Methods of Communication
Email
Phone
Hard copy information
Communication app, currently ClassDojo
Children's individual communication diaries
Face to face meetings
IEP meetings

Recording and Analysis of Classroom Data

Teachers record a wide variety of student data in the classroom, including academic, behavioural and health based. Classroom data is regularly recorded and a focus is to increase analysis of collected data and use these analyses to inform practice.

School Priorities

Our School Priorities are aligned with the 6 Improvement Drivers in the Department of Education's Strategic Direction for Public Schools 2020-2024 - "Every student, Every classroom, Every day"

MHESC School Priorities 2021-2023

Overarching Priority - Increase Independence	
Priority 1	Adherence to Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework with Culturally Responsive Classrooms
Priority 2	Increased use of STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics) Integrated into Classroom Practice
Priority 3	Health and Well-Being
Priority 4	Numeracy and Literacy
Priority 5	Assessment



Targets and Strategies

	Targets	Strategies	Measuring success
<p>PRIORITY 1 Adherence to Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework with Culturally Responsive Classrooms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the school reconciliation plan Embed and improve awareness of Aboriginal content in classroom practice Obtain Partnership Acceptance Learning Sharing (PALS) funding Participate in two Aboriginal themed activities/incursions/excursions per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Narragunnawali website to enable a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to be constructed by school staff Improve culturally responsive environment Increase frequency of Aboriginal culture and stories in lesson content PALS funding obtained Increase Aboriginal-themed incursions/excursions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of classroom records of Aboriginal themed lessons and activities Acquittal of PALS funding Record evidence of community connection
<p>PRIORITY 2 Increased Use of STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics) Integrated into Classroom Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop understanding and knowledge of STEAM Embed and improve awareness of STEAM tasks in our classroom practice Build the capacity of all staff to teach STEAM Set a minimum of 2 STEAM-based projects each semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an incremental progress checklist in digital technology - computer, iPad and electronic whiteboard Opportunities to problem-solve Promote Professional Learning for all staff Use of Information Communication Technology Build on STEAM resources Improve use of STEAM resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the incremental progress checklist in Digital Technology to track all students Report at an individual level Celebrate and share student's successes
<p>PRIORITY 3 Health and Well-being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a whole school approach to Protective Behaviours Use of Protective Behaviours embedded in classroom practice Improve Independence in Life Skills Increase Independence in Toileting and Eating Skills Incremental development in Social Skills Promote Emotional Regulation throughout the Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of ABA techniques, appropriate reinforcement and pedagogy such as timely breaks Professional Learning in Protective Behaviour Develop Circle Concept strategies Use of the Independence Checklist Teach self-regulation Provide support for communication e.g. visuals, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and other prompts Community Access Focus on Daily Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> toileting hand washing independence play skills cooking Work with therapists Improve and maintain relationship with parents, therapists and colleagues All staff regularly trained in emotional regulation strategies such as TEAM TEACH, Mindfulness and Resilience Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed by use of MHESC Independence Checklist Classroom records and reports Parent Surveys/Feedback

Targets and Strategies

	Targets	Strategies	Measuring success
<p>PRIORITY 4 Numeracy and Literacy (continuing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Numeracy and Literacy Checklists Improve strategies for the development of Communication Skills Build the capacity of all staff to teach Numeracy Skills effectively Link generalisation of Numeracy Skills to real life applications Maintain or increase score improvement on Numeracy and Literacy Checklists, at least 10 points per year for Main Program, at least 25 points per year for EIIP Develop a whole school approach to Literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Learning in Numeracy and Literacy Promotion of individual communication skills: speaking, writing, Key Word Sign, Compic and PECS Use of electronic whiteboards to interact with others Promotion of Pre-Writing Skills Development of Writing Skills for students who are ready Use blank level questions to improve Comprehension Skills Reading - improvement in understanding and interpreting written word and/or visual supports Establish links with Numeracy Skills and real life e.g. shopping, budgeting, ordering lunch, calendars Plan teacher meetings to update Numeracy and Literacy Checklists Baseline testing determines where to start with each student Follow School Curriculum and Standards Authority's Western Australian Curriculum Use Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia Use Special Education Needs Assessment Tool Collaboration with external agencies such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, speech therapists, student goals embedded in IEPs Parent/Carer questionnaire/reinforcement inventory Use of more concrete materials to promote Numeracy and Literacy Skills Use of ICT to generalise Numeracy and Literacy Skills Address Numeracy and Literacy goals across all learning areas Using TEACCH to provide targeted, individualised programs Introduce a consistent synthetic phonics program across the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse data from the MHESC Numeracy and Literacy Checklist to determine individual goals Reporting to parents on a regular basis Use of a communication app such as ClassDojo to celebrate achievements Parent/carer/therapist meetings as requested Formal reports developed from IEPs twice a year Compare Baseline Testing to end of year results Teacher-made assessment tools to compare results and show student progress
<p>PRIORITY 5 Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOCUS - Increase analysis and reflection of collected classroom data by teachers Maintain or increase scores on school developed Numeracy and Literacy Assessment Checklist - at least 10 points per year average Maintain or increase scores on school developed Independence Checklist - at least 10 points per year average Targeting specific students for whom lesson attendance needs improvement, strategic planning and following up regularly with parents/carers Use evidence to drive decision making when creating programs for individual students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording, Analysis and Reflection of classroom data by teachers to inform progress: Behaviour/emotional regulation Independence Recording, analysing and reflecting on the frequency of use of Team Teach techniques Functional behaviour analysis Excursions Checklist ICT Checklist Numeracy and Literacy Checklist Independence Checklist Assessing ongoing professional development of staff Analyse and reflect on rate of successful integration into Primary Schools for EIIP students Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC) Autism Severity Checklist (Early Intervention) taken at the beginning of Kindy Year and end of Pre-primary Year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house developed MHESC Independence Checklist to measure progress in individual students Parent/Carer Survey Teacher meetings to discuss classroom data analysis to inform future planning

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