



MOUNT HAWTHORN EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTRE

Adjusting the Curriculum to Meet Individual Student Needs Policy

2021-2023

Overview

At Mount Hawthorn ESC all of our students have special needs. Therefore, we adjust the curriculum for every student. We follow the policies of ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) and Schools Curriculum & Standards Authority (WA) to enable all of our students to access and participate in the Australian Curriculum. We concur with ACARA who state that:

‘All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs. Teachers will use the Australian Curriculum to develop teaching and learning programs that build on students’ interests, strengths, goals and learning needs, and address the cognitive, affective, physical, social and aesthetic needs of all students.’

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) (Melbourne Declaration) includes two goals which we embrace:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

Goal 2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

We believe that:

- each student can learn and that the needs of every student are important
- that each student is entitled to knowledge, understanding and skills that provide a foundation for successful and lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community to the best of the individual’s ability
- that high expectations should be set for each student as teachers account for the current level of learning of individual students, the different rates at which students develop and the ability of the individual
- that the needs and interests of students will vary, and that schools and teachers will
- plan from the curriculum in ways that respond to those needs and interests.

Curriculum

Our teachers will refer to the Western Australian Curriculum learning area content that aligns with their students’ chronological age as the starting point in planning, teaching and learning programs. Teachers take account of the range of their students’ current levels of learning, strengths, goals, interests and abilities and personalise learning through adjustments to the teaching and learning program according to individual learning need by:

- drawing from learning area content at different levels along the Foundation to Year 6 sequence
- using the general capabilities and/or cross-curriculum priorities to adjust the learning
- focus of the age-equivalent learning area content
- aligning individual learning goals with age-equivalent learning area content

At Mount Hawthorn ESC, since our students all have special needs and will be working on more discrete objectives than their mainstream counterparts and on their own timeline, teachers will not assess students' progress through the Western Australian Curriculum in relation to achievement standards. Students' progress will be assessed in relation to their individual learning goals.

Starting with learning area content that aligns with students' chronological age enables teachers to:

- plan dignified teaching and learning programs that are respectful of their students' age
- develop rigorous teaching and learning programs that will challenge and engage all students
- ensure all students progress through the Western Australian Curriculum.

Personalising the teaching and learning program enables teachers to:

- select age-equivalent content that is meaningful and respects students' individual needs, strengths and interests
- use their knowledge of students' learning and support needs to make adjustments in relation to curriculum, instruction and/or environment to enable access to the teaching and learning program.

Curriculum adjustments

These may include:

- drawing from learning area content at different levels along the Foundation to Year 6 sequence to adjust age-equivalent content
- breaking down curriculum learning objectives into individual steps which are small enough to suit the individual student
- drawing from and emphasising specific aspects of the general capabilities to adjust the learning focus in a particular learning area, although integrity of the learning area must be retained
- drawing from and emphasising specific aspects of one or more of the cross-curriculum priorities to adjust the learning focus of a particular learning area
- input from parents/carers for specific learning objectives identified by them to be included for individual students at specified times

Instructional adjustments

These may include:

- using explicit reinforcement schedules appropriate to the level of the student
- scheduling regular, frequent, reinforcing breaks during work time
- factoring in emotional regulation strategies
- providing alternative representations of teaching and learning materials for example using;
 - visual supports
 - multimedia
 - Braille
 - illustrated texts
 - simplified texts
- motivating students through engagement with personal interests, guided play
- modelling and demonstrating skills, knowledge and cognitive strategies
- explicit and systematic instruction
- levels of prompting
- modelling problem solving
- providing opportunities for the student to think aloud (verbalisation)
- scaffolding student learning through guided practice and support
- providing feedback and correction, errorless learning
- identifying key vocabulary for explicit instruction
- organising and connecting knowledge, skills and values to promote generalisation
- using cross-curricular and naturally occurring learning opportunities to enhance individual learning goals
- providing alternative opportunities for students to represent their learning (for example, using technology and augmentative and alternative communication systems)
- frequent cumulative review
- providing opportunities for generalisation and maintenance.

Environmental adjustments

These may include:

- providing physical access to the teaching and learning environment
- use of support personnel
- providing peer assistance (for example, using buddy systems, peer-assisted learning or peer tutoring)
- providing access to alternative equipment and furnishings
- use of technology and augmentative and alternative communication systems
- changes to buildings and classrooms

- small class size
- provision of sensory area
- additional security

Assessment and Reporting

Teachers program for each student using an Individual Education Plan. The Plan is tailored specifically to each student with discrete objectives chosen to suit the individual student. Parent/carer input, as well as private therapist input, will be welcomed so that objectives identified by parents/carers can be included. All objectives will be placed in relevant curriculum areas.

Day to day student progress will be recorded by teachers, in a variety of ways, on an individual basis. This might include academic, social, behavioural, personal health objectives all of which will be embedded in the curriculum areas.

Reporting will be provided in Semester Reports by updating IEPs with completion state for each objective and relevant comments for each learning area. In addition, we will provide parents with photographic records of student activities at school via the ClassDojo smartphone app as well as daily reports in student diaries, by phone, email or personal contact.

We have developed our own in-house assessment tools, the Numeracy and Literacy Checklist and the Independence Checklist. We have assessed students with these tools for three years and have been able to show progress for any level of student across three years.