1.0 Mission Statement: An Inclusive School

The fundamental Principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education for all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of needs encountered in every school. (The Salamanca Statement Framework for Action, UNESCO 1994)

Waldorf education is designed to be a health-giving education, nurturing and balancing the human faculties of thinking, feeling and will. The prime purpose of Waldorf Education is to support and educate students such that their own innate and unique human qualities may come to greater fulfillment. This is the task of the educator in each Waldorf school. Waldorf education encompasses a deep knowledge approach, using balanced and integrated learning strategies. Strong emphasis is placed on teaching through the arts therefore painting, modelling, sculpture, speech, poetry, music, drama, movement, eurythmy and the artistic process itself, enlivens all subjects.

At Mt Barker Waldorf School we are committed to inclusivity. Our curriculum is comprehensive and designed to meet the ever changing needs of students as they grow and develop. The Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework has been endorsed by ACARA as being equivalent to the Australian National Curriculum in relation to English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography. The breadth and depth of the curriculum provides opportunities for all students to discover strengths and interests, and to acknowledge and share their own and other students’ gifts and challenges.

At Mt Barker Waldorf School the Learning Support team works closely with parents/ caregivers, teachers and students so that reasonable adjustments to and differentiation of curriculum, teaching style, assessment tasks and reporting protocols can be developed and implemented.
2.0 Context

This policy reflects the school’s commitment to being an inclusive school, and meeting our obligations in relation to the 1992 Disability Discrimination Act and the 2005 Disability Standards for Education. Our teachers base their work on their own observations, advice from parents and the indications of Rudolf Steiner. They maintain an active interest in evidence-based strategies and programs developed in non-Waldorf settings. They meet the same National Professional Standards as their colleagues in all other Australian schools. This is one of two key policies relating to Student Support, the other being the Student Wellbeing Policy.

3.0 Vision: Supporting Learning

Learning in a Waldorf School is broad and serves the development of many aspects of the human being. Supporting Learning means:

- Aiming to develop balance and confidence in all students. Individuals have unique strengths and we wish to acknowledge and develop them, whilst also increasing their capacities in all areas of learning.
- Assisting students and their families to recognise each student’s individual learning journey and to support them to discover and work towards their life purpose.
- Achieving a high standard of literacy, numeracy and organisational skills in accordance with the student’s individual development and highest potential.
- Developing awareness and social understanding of diversity, in the whole school community

Supporting learning is a collaborative effort involving partnerships between parents and caregivers, teachers, students, learning support staff and ancillary staff.

4.0 Scope

This policy describes the roles, responsibilities and procedures relating to the provision of Learning Support at our school: an integrated whole-school approach.

5.0 Responsibilities

The Principal carries overall responsibility for the quality of teaching, assessment, reporting, professional development, collection of data and the implementation of reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for ensuring that all staff members are aware of the school’s legal obligations arising from the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Standards for Education. Regular Professional Development for all staff is integral to meeting this responsibility.

Teachers are responsible to know their students and how they learn. Teachers observe students closely and carry out ongoing assessments - formative and summative, formal and informal - to inform their teaching. Teachers share questions and concerns with colleagues and consult with
Learning Support staff as required, implementing negotiated support in the classroom. Teachers are required to meet the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

**Teachers are responsible** for working with the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework and the school’s internal benchmarks to guide curriculum planning. Teachers differentiate curriculum content, teaching style, learning activities and assessment requirements to seek to meet the needs of all students. For some students this happens in the shape of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a Student Support Plan (SSP). Teachers keep clear and thorough records of adjustments made and outcomes achieved. Teachers provide written reports at mid-year and end-of-year indicating the developments that have been facilitated by Learning Support. Teachers also communicate with parents through informal conversations, emails, diary / communication book entries and scheduled interviews.

**Learning Support co-ordinators are responsible** for liaising with administration staff during the enrolment process, for undertaking ongoing observations and assessments, supporting parents/ caregivers and teachers with the development and implementation of IEP’s and SSP’s, communicating with external professionals, managing data collection relating to students with a disability and accessing and allocating resources to support these students. The process of implementing IEP’s/ SSP’s may include provision of support directly to students, by the co-ordinators themselves or by assistants.

**Parents and caregivers are responsible** for their child’s learning at home. They are experts on their own child, and it is their responsibility to be advocates for their child. They are responsible for communicating observations or circumstances pertinent to their child’s learning to appropriate school staff. Parents participate in the process of developing IEP’s/ SSP’s and support any agreements made. In choosing a Waldorf education, parents are also responsible for supporting the school’s philosophy and ethos.

### 6.0 Strengthening Collaboration

**Learning Support services will be most effective if parents/ caregivers, teachers, Learning Support staff and the student him/ herself collaboratively build an understanding of the student’s needs.**

In order to achieve this, we strive to ensure that:

- **There is clear, thorough and ongoing communication** between school staff - teachers, Learning Support co-ordinators, assistants and administration staff - and parents/ caregivers.

- **Parents/ caregivers and students where appropriate, participate** in the devising and reviewing of Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) and Student Support Plans (SSP’s).

- **Before implementing a Learning Support strategy that involves withdrawal** from the classroom setting or individual support within the classroom, parents are consulted, provided with an offer and asked for approval.

- **Student development that is facilitated by Learning Support is reported on** via mid-year and end of year reports

- **Learning Support co-ordinators take advice** as appropriate from external professionals and agencies. Teachers and Learning Support staff strive to adapt and make specific strategies compatible with Waldorf philosophy.
7.0 Learning Support Co-ordinators

There are two learning support co-ordinator roles which together cover the whole school from Kindergarten to class 12. The co-ordinators work collaboratively with teachers, parents/ caregivers and external agencies in meeting students’ support needs.

7.1 Enrolment/ Transition Support

Learning Support co-ordinators are involved with information gathering when a student with additional learning needs or disability seeks enrolment. This may include speaking to teachers or support staff at the student's current school, reviewing recent reports from the school and outside professionals and/ or undertaking individual assessments. Learning Support co-ordinators will be involved in all enrolment interviews relating to students with identified additional needs or disabilities, to enable a thorough assessment to be made, of the adjustments required for the child to participate in the school curriculum.

Once an agreement to enrol has been made, Learning Support co-ordinators may be involved in developing and implementing a Transition Plan. Before the student commences, a temporary IEP/ SSP will be developed in consultation with parents/ caregivers and the class teacher/ guardian. This plan will be implemented for a specified time while the school and the student become familiar with each other. The IEP/ SSP will be reviewed at an agreed time, and modified as required.

7.2 Assessment

Learning support co-ordinators undertake classroom and playground observation on request of the school. They carry out individual academic and developmental assessments, within their areas of expertise (eg Extra Lesson), as well as group / class testing as required. The children who will be in the following year’s class 1 are assessed in pairs to confirm their need for any specific support in meeting the new teaching style they will encounter in the primary school. This assessment also contributes to building a rich developmental picture which provides a foundation for the work of the teachers throughout the Primary years. Whole class internal benchmark testing is undertaken by class teachers from class 2-7 and standardised testing in all year levels as required.

When a need for a specialist assessment is indicated, Learning Support co-ordinators refer and/ or liaise with external agencies and professionals - eg psychologists, occupational therapists and speech pathologists - to facilitate testing. This is generally undertaken at parents'/ caregivers’ expense, however some financial support may be available through the school.

7.3 Student Support

As part of their IEP/ SSP, students may receive direct support in a variety of forms, e.g. -
• Individual support - in class, in the playground, during transitions, on excursions/ camps
• Extra Lesson program - 1:1 sessions with follow up exercises to be undertaken at home
• Individual, group or in-class support in specific lessons - eg language/ maths practice lessons
• Organisational support
• Additional Work Experience

7.4 Teacher Support

Learning Support co-ordinators support class and specialist teachers in a variety of ways, eg-
• Support with differentiating curriculum content, teaching style, learning activities and assessment requirements to meet the needs of their students.
• Co-ordination of the development and implementation of IEP’s and SSP’s
• Analysis of assessment data relevant to the whole class and individual students
• Attendance at parent interviews/meetings and parent-teacher nights (at class teacher/guardian request)
• Organisation of Professional Development opportunities - both in-school and by external agencies
• Leading professional learning of teachers and assistants
• Co-teaching on request
• Providing whole class sessions on disability awareness (at class teacher/guardian request)
• Creation and/or provision of resources from the Learning Support library
• Sharing information about students in a clear and timely manner

7.5 Parent/Caregiver Support

Learning Support co-ordinators will generally establish a relationship with the parents/caregivers of students with particular learning needs or disabilities though the enrolment process and/or through the process of establishing their IEP/SSP. The co-ordinators will then maintain contact with the parents/caregivers, complementing the relationship with the class teacher/guardian and ensuring that a shared understanding of the students’ needs is carried by all those involved in their education.

Learning Support co-ordinators may provide support through:
• phone or email conversations
• attendance at parent teacher interviews or meetings (at class teacher/guardian request)
• recommending and providing resources for home use
• preparation and debrief for camps and excursions
• recommendation of external assessment and support agencies

7.6 Class Assistants

All assistants who are employed to support particular classes and/or to enable IEP’s/SSP’s to be implemented are directed by the teachers and supported in their work by the Learning Support Co-ordinators.

8.0 Reasonable Adjustments and Individual Support Plans

8.1 Identifying and Responding to Specific Needs

Each student’s individual support needs may be different.

A collaborative approach is the key to effectively meeting each student’s needs. Class teachers/guardians, learning support staff and parents work as a team, around and with the student to identify and respond to the student’s needs. Any member of the team can ask for the group to convene to share observations and questions which may prompt intervention: eg parents might approach the class teacher/guardian or a Learning Support co-ordinator with concerns about their child, or a teacher might approach a parent to instigate a meeting.

For students with disabilities or learning needs that require adjustments to be made to curriculum content, teaching style, learning activities or assessment requirements, learning support staff and teachers will work together to create an IEP or SSP, with input from parents/caregivers. In the Primary school, this process will be managed by the Class Teacher, and in the High School by the Learning Support Co-ordinator. New IEP’s/SSP’s must be completed and signed by all parties, by the beginning of week 6 (term 1).
Those involved will take into account their own observations as well as assessment results obtained from standardised, benchmark or other classroom testing and diagnoses by other professionals. The specific adjustments needed to enable the student to fully participate in the education provided by the school will be identified, implemented and reviewed as necessary.

Where a particular therapy – e.g. curative eurythmy, art therapy – is indicated and is available through the school, all requests for access to the service must be addressed to the Learning Support Team. The approach to providing access to the particular therapy will be clear, transparent and non-discriminatory, as stipulated in the guidelines.

8.2 Maintaining Timely and Accurate Records

Some students with a diagnosed and documented disability may not require any personalised adjustments beyond the resources and services available for all students at the school. If this is the case, it will be noted in the student’s IEP/ SSP. Other students may receive focussed support from an assistant in specific lessons - e.g. language or mathematics lessons, while still others may require considerable individual support that entails alternative activities away from the class or even away from the school.

All adjustments that are made in recognition of a student’s disability or special learning needs will be noted in their IEP/ SSP. These adjustments will vary according to the specific need that has been identified, and may for example be required only at specific times or in specific lessons. Parents/ Caregivers of all students with IEP’s/ SSP’s will be invited to meet with the Learning Support co-ordinator and the class teacher/ guardian at least once per semester to review the implementation of the IEP/ SSP.

8.3 Additional Support Services

The school is required to make adjustments which are reasonable given the needs of all students. Where outside agencies are involved in working with students at school, Learning Support staff will liaise with them according to the protocols attached to this policy. Where students receive additional support services at school or outside school, we will strive to work towards a unified approach to maximize the students’ learning development.

8.0 Related School Policies

Enrolment/ Admissions policy

Behaviour support/ management policy

Assessment and Reporting Policy

Protocol for external agencies working at school

Language withdrawal policy