

Enrolment & Support of Students with a Disability Policy

Disability Policy statement

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, mainly 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 part of that community without prejudice or comparison.

The Disability Discrimination Act (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 Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

- Relationships with children;
- Interactions with children; and
- Collaborative partnerships with families and community.

Child safety school statement

Cameragal Montessori School seeks to provide a child-safe environment. Our school actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of our students, and our school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in accordance with their legal and ethical obligations. CMS 's child-safe policies and procedures and our staff code of conduct form part of this commitment.

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.

Cameragal Montessori School aims to provide a range of educational services and settings for students from aged three years up to primary to accommodate the diversity of curriculum, resources, environmental and support needs of students with 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:

- 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 staff delivering services to students with a disability.

Definitions

Disability: A disability results in a loss of 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 of 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.
- Or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability.

Individual Plan (IP): The IP identifies the student's individual needs, pathways, goals and priorities for learning. An IP 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. IPs are regularly monitored and evaluated.

Behaviour Support Plan (BSP): For a small number of students, additional, individualised function-based assessment and targeted intervention may be required if the exhibit serious or sustained behavioural issues. For these students, a Behaviour Support Plan is developed. A Behaviour Support Plan is necessary when problematic and challenging behaviours are persistent and occur in a range of contexts across the school day or when a student's behaviour impedes their learning or that of others. A Behaviour Support Plan is also necessary when a student's behaviour presents a risk to the safety, learning and wellbeing of themselves and others.

Staff and parent education

- Opportunities are available for staff to attend inservice courses and workshops.
- 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:
 - For the staff on the Cameragal Staff Portal SharePoint,
 - Pamphlets and leaflets in the school office for parents,
 - To ensure up to date information is available.
- Parents or others with disabilities are encouraged and invited to talk to the children, parents 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,
- A play area is accessible, and
- Single storey buildings.

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 the 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 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 standard 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:

- a) 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.
- b) Accommodating the child's needs require architectural changes that are not readily achievable.
- c) A particular child's condition poses a direct threat to the health or safety of any 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.
- d) Integrating the child into the program requires changes in policies, practices or procedures that would fundamentally alter the nature of the program, and there is no reasonable alternative.

Transition to Primary school

A transition team, of the pre-primary and primary teachers, are to ensure the transition to primary is made as smoothly as possible.

Nationally Consistent Collection Data for Primary students.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for school students with a 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 numbers of students who are supported under these obligations based on the professional judgement of teachers and their understanding and knowledge of their students.

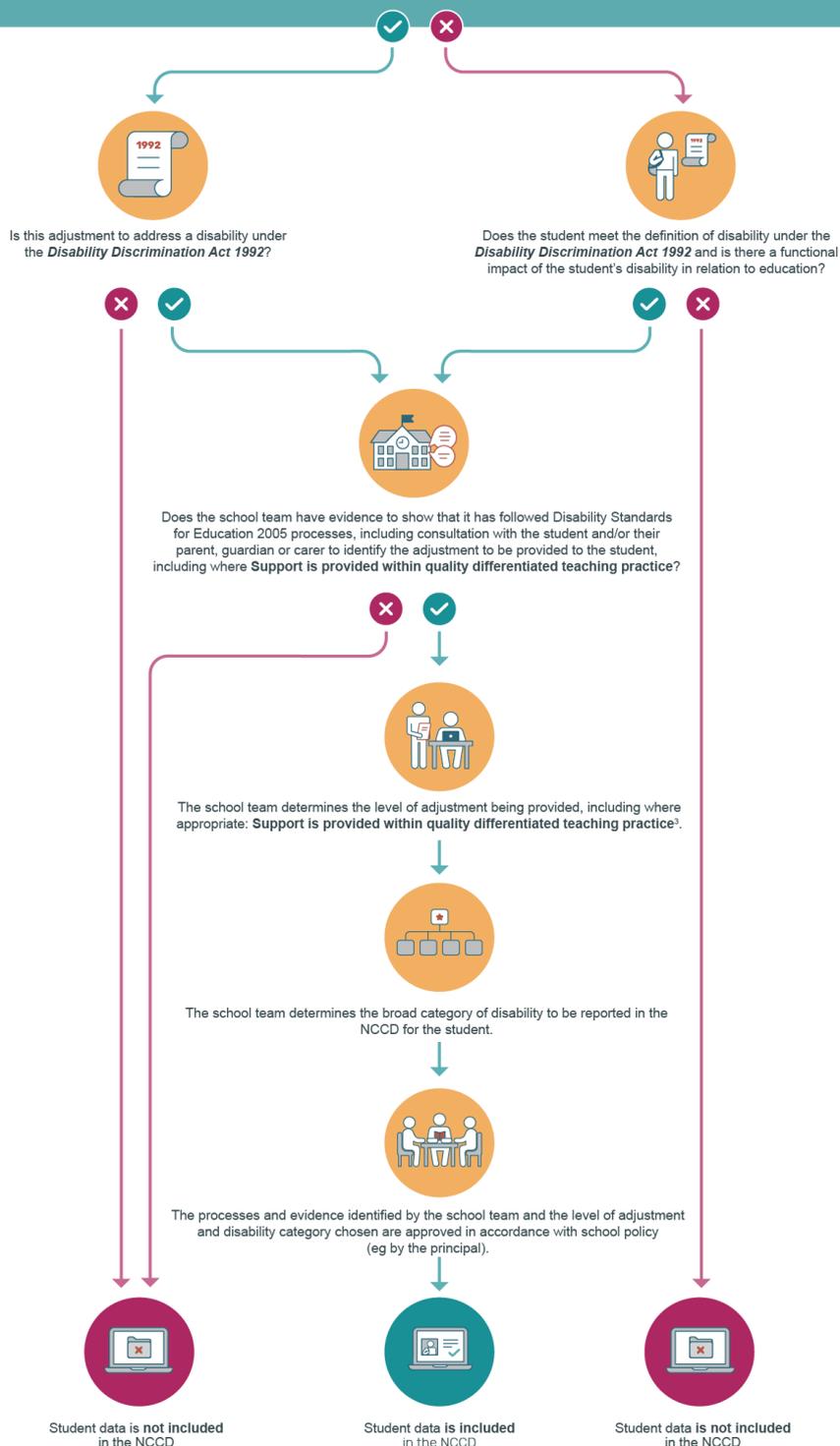
Information about the nationally consistent data collection on students with disability, please visit the Australian Government NCCD website: <https://www.nccd.edu.au/>

The NCCD model diagram

Throughout the school year school teams use evidence, including discussions with parents, guardians and carers, to inform decisions about the adjustments that they make for students with disability.

For the NCCD you should have evidence that shows you have made adjustments¹ or incorporated support within quality differentiated teaching practice for each student. This should cover a minimum period of 10 weeks of school education (excluding school holiday periods) in the 12 months preceding the NCCD.²

Is the student provided with an adjustment?



¹For information about adjustments see the resource Strategies to support decision-making on the NCCD Portal.

²The NCCD Portal has information on the 10-week period.

³For information on the four levels of adjustment see the resource Selecting the level of adjustment on the NCCD Portal.

Reasonable adjustment policy

Purpose

This policy describes how Cameragal Montessori School, will approach the 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 Cameragal Montessori School.

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

Aims

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

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

Definitions

Disability: for the purposes of this policy, 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 disability. It also includes physical disfigurement as well as serious illness. 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 learn 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 considering 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 the student who has the 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 learning and working, including:

- Admission and enrolment,
- Access to learning materials,
- Attendance in class,
- Assessment including examinations,
- Professional placements.

The School will endeavour to meet the needs of students through inclusive and flexible teaching practices; 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, purchasing or loaning 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, for example the format of learning materials or examination conditions.

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 Cameragal 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 class teacher and any other relevant staff members will consult with the parents and student on the following:

- 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 parent or carer;
- 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.

Funding

The Principal is responsible for higher learning funding applications and overseeing the NCCD submission annually.

- Preschool application – Higher Learning Needs Funding, NSW Department of Education, ECCMS
- Primary – annual Census On the Internet NCCD data submission, Australian Government, Schools Hub

Monitoring and review

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

An Individual Plan or Behaviour Support Plan will be reviewed bi-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 *Complaints Policy*.

Additional Needs procedure

Children with additional needs require support by using specialised strategies catering to their specific needs of 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 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 of 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 consist of 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 Individual Education Plan or Behaviour Support Plan with families and support agencies, which are live documents and continuously evaluated by all parties involved.
- Accessing external professional support from organisations such as Life Start and AISNSW.
- The Principal and class teacher work collaboratively to ensure the needs of each child is met throughout their education and care at the School.
- Attending professional development workshops to enhance their understanding of 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 other 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.

Related Legislation

- The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations

Sources

- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- NSW Health www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/healthpromotion/tobacco/legislation.asp
- Centre for Community Child Health – www.rch.org.au/ccch
- The Cancer Council Australia www.cancer.org.au
- The Cancer Council of NSW www.cancercouncil.com.au
- Health & Safety in Children's Centres: Model Policies & Practices (2nd ed.)
- www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/assets/main/documents/childcare_model_policies.pdf
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- The Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Other policies/documents

- Child Protection Policy
- Enrolment & Orientation Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Excursion Policy
- Individual Plan template
- Behaviour Support Plan template
- Workplace Health & Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Pastoral Care Statement
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Behaviour Guidance Policy

Related regulation & standards

- National Quality Standards: 2, 3, 4, 5 & 7
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: 82