

INCLUSION POLICY 2020

Forming part of Giant Steps Tasmania's *Curriculum and Learning Experiences Manual*

Policy Statement

As an independent special school, Giant Steps Tasmania believes it has a great deal to offer students with ASD in terms of inclusion.

Giant Steps Tasmania views inclusion as being the opportunity for students to be included in education, recreation and their community in ways that work with and are sensitive to their sensory processing challenges, their interests and their abilities. It also recognises that some students with ASD might not be able to flourish and fulfil their potential except at specialised schools, either in the short-term or longer term.

A copy of this policy is given to parents/ carers at enrolment and is available on the school's website.

Purpose

This policy will:

- explain the concept of equity which underpins the work of Giant Steps Tasmania
- detail the inclusive practices at Giant Steps Tasmania which promote the successful participation of all children at Giant Steps Tasmania in the educational, therapeutic, recreational and community access programs offered

Definition

Giant Steps Tasmania believes, along with the 2013 report on *Inclusive Education for Children with Disability* produced by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), that: "Inclusive education is a contentious term that lacks a tight conceptual focus."

The organisation also shares the view of Berlach and Chambers (2011) in their paper 'Inclusivity imperatives and the Australian National Curriculum', published in *The Educational Forum*, 75 (1) that there is a distinction between inclusion, which refers to the process of incorporating a non-dominant group and *inclusivity* which refers to the participation of that group. Because, as Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2011) point out in their paper, 'Inclusion: by choice or by chance?' published in *The International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Volume 15 (1) "while social policy is dominated by the rhetoric of inclusion, the reality for many remains one of exclusion and the panacea on inclusion masks many sins."

The definition of inclusion which is at the heart of Giant Steps Tasmania's ethos can be found in Miller and Katz's (2002) work *The Inclusion Breakthrough*, where they defined inclusion as: ".. a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best."

Implementation

Admission

Admission to Giant Steps Tasmania is dependent upon a student having a diagnosis of ASD. While Giant Steps specialises in working with students who require substantial or extensive support, no two students have the same needs. It is Giant Steps Tasmania's aim to provide every student with an individualised program which allows her/ him to realise her/ his potential. (see: Admission Policy)

Curriculum & Assessment

The Curriculum at Giant Steps Tasmania aims to develop students' academic learning, their ability to access recreational and community activities as well as to help them manage their sensory regulated and other challenges associated with ASD. (see: Curriculum & Assessment Policy)

Dual Enrolment

Giant Steps Tasmania is pleased to support the Education Act 2016's provision of flexible enrolment to support students' learning outcomes:

- Students can be enrolled part-time at Giant Steps Tasmania as part of their home education program.
- As students with disability can be enrolled part-time at a mainstream school and part-time at a specialist school to support their learning, Giant Steps is pleased to provide this support and to work closely with mainstream schools.

Key Practices at Giant Steps Tasmania supporting the learning of all students

1. Quality Practitioners

Giant Steps Tasmania is committed to employing the best teachers, aides and therapists, aware that quality teaching has been identified as a key component of positive outcomes for students. The skills and qualities that a quality practitioner possesses are.

- a focus on student achievement,
- a responsiveness to learning processes,
- the ability to provide diverse opportunities to learn,
- the ability to align goals and resources (including ICT),
- the use of scaffolding and feedback,
- the promotion of self-regulation and meta-cognitive strategies,
- a willingness to jointly engage in setting and assessing goals with students

To assist staff to acquire these skills, Giant Steps Tasmania provides new staff with a mentored Induction programme and accompanying Workbook and facilitates on-going CPD.

2. Inclusive pedagogy

Quality inclusive pedagogy relates to teachers' craft knowledge: what, why and how they do what they do. Teachers are supported by the school's management and Board to have the

opportunity to enhance their own skills in reflection, instruction, management, and strategies for learning.

3. Adaptive and alternative curricula

Differentiating the Australian National Curriculum to cater for the individual needs and differing behaviours of students requires considerable teacher expertise, planning, and preparation. Teachers at Giant Steps Tasmania plan for students' learning using The Australian Curriculum and National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. As outlined in the Disability Standards for Education 2005, Giant Steps Tasmania makes appropriate adjustments to the curriculum to enable students to *"...participate in the learning experiences (including the assessment and certification requirements) of the course or program, on the same basis as a student without a disability and without experiencing discrimination."* This involves planning for students to access their age-appropriate curriculum with adjusted and differentiated teaching and learning. Should it be necessary for a student to access curriculum at an alternative grade level, assessment is used to determine the most appropriate entry point.

For post Year 10 students, Giant Steps Tasmania offers TASC (Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification) courses from Preliminary level onwards, dependent on the needs of the students, to assist them to make the transition from school-based learning.

4. Assistive and adaptive technologies

Assistive technology allows students with disability to access physical environments, be mobile, communicate effectively, access computers, and enhance functional skills that may be difficult without the technology. Assistive technology comes in low, medium, and high-tech forms and Giant Steps Tasmania's therapists select the most appropriate technology to match the individual needs of the student.

5. Individual planning

Every student at Giant Steps Tasmania has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is determined by the teacher and therapists with input from the student (where possible) and his/ her parent/ carer.

IEP goals are set at the start of the academic year, reported on mid-year and at the end of the year and discussed and reviewed with families regularly during face-to-face consultations.

IEP goals are broken down into more manageable goals for students to focus on and their daily learning is individualised and directed towards the achievement of these goals. (see: **Curriculum & Assessment Policy**)

Authorised by:	Paul Bowman
Position:	Chair of Board
Signature:	

Date accepted:	
Original policy developed by:	Chris Jacobsen
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