

INCLUSION POLICY 2024

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

Policy Statement

As an independent special school, Giant Steps Tasmania has a great deal to offer students on the Autism Spectrum 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 on the Autism Spectrum might not be able to flourish and fulfil their potential except at a specialised school, 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:

- explains the concept of equity which underpins the work of Giant Steps Tasmania
- details 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

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 from an appropriate medical professional. 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 regulation and other challenges associated with ASD. (see: *Curriculum & Assessment Policy*)

Dual Enrolment

Giant Steps Tasmania supports 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

The aim of inclusive education is to improve student participation, student achievement and post-school options for all students. Quality inclusive pedagogy is therefore closely related to teachers' craft knowledge: what, why and how they do what they do. Teachers are supported by the school's Management and Board to continuously build on their skills in reflection, instruction, management, and the delivering of 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 utilising a Concept-based Curriculum. (see *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*)

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 at Giant Steps Tasmania and therapists select the most appropriate technology to meet the individual needs of the student.

5. Individualised 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 or technology-facilitated 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*)

6. Avoiding exclusions

The Principal and Board of Giant Steps Tasmania recognise the profound effect that suspension and expulsion can have on a student and his/ her family and try to avoid imposing them. The school does this by:

- identifying problems quickly
- having a variety of strategies available to help students modify any inappropriate behaviour
- working closely, honestly and respectfully with the student and her/ his family

When it is necessary to suspend a student in order to safeguard other students or staff, a rigorous and transparent procedure is in place which includes a parent/ carer’s right to appeal the decision. (see *Positive Behaviour Support Policy*)

Authorised by:	Paul Bowman
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Date accepted:	
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