



How it Works: Special Needs Support at Macquarie

At Macquarie, we believe that no two learners are the same and that each child brings particular needs to their learning. These needs are identified and accommodated by skilled teachers, parents and Learning Support Assistants through differentiated and personalised programs within the classroom setting.

Individual Learning Plans

Individual Learning Plans with explicit SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely) goals are developed for all students who are identified as having specific learning needs including

- students who access the *Inclusion Support Program* and the *Learning Support Unit*
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students who have not yet attained the achievement standard for their year level in Literacy or Numeracy
- potentially/high performing and gifted and talented students
- students in care

These plans are developed by the student's class teacher in collaboration with families and carers, Executive teachers, Macquarie's Universal Design for Learning Specialist, the Literacy or Numeracy Coordinator and the EALD Coordinator as appropriate.

Building Partnerships with Families

School entry/ pre enrolment interviews are conducted to provide an introduction to the school and as an opportunity to learn about each child's needs. Birth history and early milestones are explored with families, along with aspirations for their child.

Parent/Teacher interviews at the beginning of each school year provide a further opportunity for families to share perspectives and information about their child's development. This may result in identification of additional needs or strengths.

Individual Learning Plans are shared and refined with families. Achievements are monitored, shared and adapted as goals are achieved during the plan's implementation.

Inclusion Support

Through appraising student needs and assessing eligibility criteria the Directorate provides resources to support learning for identified students through its *Inclusion Support Program*. This includes students with mental health needs, chronic medical conditions and language disorders. Students in Macquarie's *Learning Support Unit* also attract additional resources because of their appraised level of need.

Students with hearing loss and vision impairment and their teachers are supported through specialist Itinerant teachers and Learning Support Assistants.

Macquarie's Learning Support Assistants support teachers in implementing programs and accommodations to support these identified students.

The Special Needs Team

From time to time, some children will experience learning challenges that require additional support. These challenges may be physical, emotional, social and/or cognitive. The Special Needs Team meets weekly and provides a forum through which individual student learning challenges can be clarified, interventions planned, and support initiated.

The Special Needs Team is comprised of Macquarie's

- Principal, as Special Needs Coordinator
- School Counsellor
- Deputy Principal and executive teachers
- Literacy and Numeracy Support Team Lead Teacher
- Disability Education Coordinator
- Universal Design for Learning Specialist
- EALD Specialist

Classroom teachers and Learning Support Assistants attend Special Needs Team meetings to participate in discussion and planning around identified students. Through its cooperative and collaborative approach, the Special Needs team plays an important part in building staff capacity towards leading practice in disability education, inclusion support and Universal Design for learning.

Universal Design for Learning Meetings

A designated time is available each week for teachers to meet with the Universal Design for Learning Specialist to discuss and develop targeted interventions and personal goals for a specific student's needs. The Universal Design for Learning Specialist additionally supports the implementation of interventions, through working with teachers and the students in classrooms.