



St Maroun's College



Learning Support Policy

K-12



St Maroun's College policies have a commitment to Maronite Catholic ethos and values and should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures and with relevant legislation.

St Maroun's College Anti-Bullying Policy

St Maroun's College Attendance Policy

St Maroun's Bus Travel Policy

St Maroun's College Child Protection Policy

St Maroun's College Code of Conduct

St Maroun's Community Consultation Policy

St Maroun's Complaints and Grievance Policy

St Maroun's Consultation Policy

St Maroun's Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy

St Maroun's Duty of Care Policy

St Maroun's College Excursion Policy

St Maroun's College Facilities Policy

St Maroun's College First Aid and Medication Policy

St Maroun's Homework Policy

St Maroun's College Learning Support Policy

St Maroun's Playground Supervision Policy

St Maroun's Sports Handbook Policy

St Maroun's College Risk Management Policy

St Maroun's Suspension and Expulsion Policy

St Maroun's Student Development Policy

St Maroun's College Work and Safety Policy

POLICY REVIEW

These policies will be reviewed not less frequently than once every three years.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Our policy supports:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations which proclaims that all of the human family without distinction of any kind have equal and inalienable rights of human dignity and freedom to education and training to enable development of their abilities to their fullest potential.

STATEMENT

St Maroun's College is an *inclusive* school and believes that every child is valued within the school community and is appreciated. Each child has the right as a valued member of our community:

- To be educated within a mainstream, inclusive environment.
- To be educated within the regular classroom environment.
- To have their special needs catered for within the regular environment.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Children are encouraged to participate in the religious and cultural life which is particular to this school, and to the individual backgrounds of the children.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND THE CHILD

The parents will be involved in all aspects of planning and decision making in the education of their child and other school activities.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Equality of opportunity will take place in an atmosphere of happiness and acceptance which will encourage self-esteem and confidence.

THE CHILD AND OTHERS

The school fosters the growth of relationships based on courtesy and respect for themselves and others.

RATIONALE

This policy statement is designed to create awareness of the needs of children with learning support needs in our school community and to promote collaborative and consultative approach to Learning Support within St Maroun's College. Through this policy, we as a school community aim to ensure that:

- Students with learning support needs are provided with ample opportunity to reach their fullest potential in all areas; spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and physical.
- Students with learning support needs are able to meet the educational outcomes and are adequately catered for within the school.
- Teachers are aware of their responsibilities through the implementation of the policy.
- Parents are actively and positively involved in the education of their child.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

We as a Catholic School are committed to:

- Demonstrating a special concern for, and understanding of the uniqueness of each person.
- Offering a curriculum which is relevant to individual students and which helps them to find meaning in their own life experiences.
- Quality education, meaning effective teaching and learning.
- Having pastoral practices designed to foster the growth of the whole person – spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and physical.
- Fostering staff/students, staff/staff, staff/parent, and student/student relationships that are life enriching and nurturing.
- Providing a broad curriculum, suitable for all students, which cultivates aesthetic and cultural elements as well as intellectual and physical elements.
- Regard curricula that meet students' needs as being essential elements of pastoral care.

(Catholic Education Office)

STATEMENT REGARDING CHANGE OF NAME FROM "SPECIAL EDUCATION" TO "LEARNING SUPPORT"

St Maroun's College has always been committed to assisting any student requiring support, whether meeting past integration funding guidelines or not. This ethos is now supported by latest Federal government policy changes which require schools to provide data for all students who receive adjustments in order to help them access the curriculum.

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The Disability Discrimination Act of 1992 defines disability as:

- a. total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:
 - presently exists; or
 - previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
 - is imputed to a person.

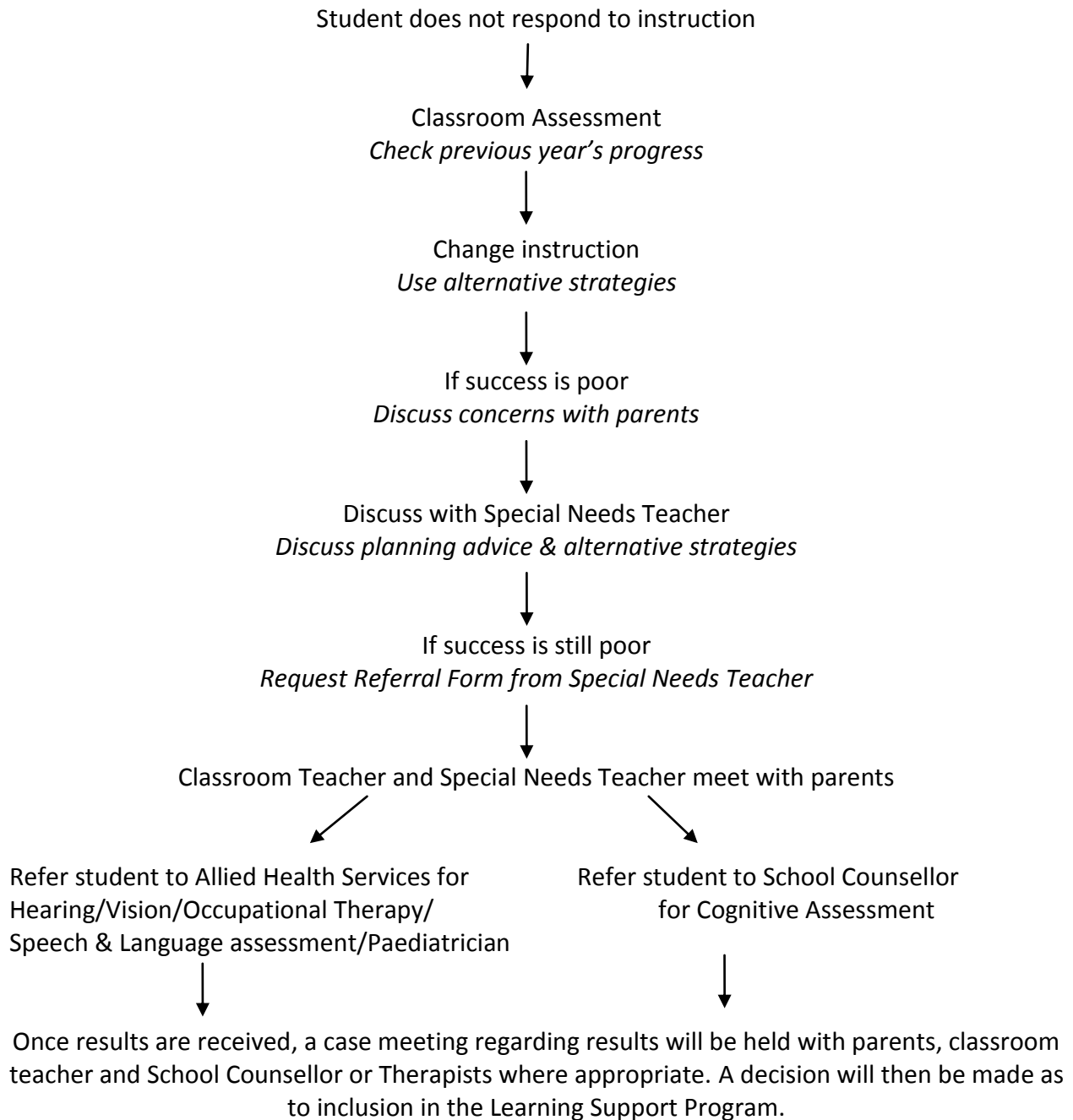
Disabilities may include medical conditions such as:

- Diabetes and Anaphylaxis
- Cognitive including learning disabilities
- Neurological conditions
- Mental health including trauma and behaviour disorders
- Hearing and vision impairment
- Language delay and disorders
- Social emotional disability (OCD;ODD;ASD)
- Learning disabilities such as ADD/ADHD and Dyslexia

Under the DDA and the Disability Standards for Education 2005, all Australian schools have obligations to ensure that students with disability are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability. This includes providing adjustments where needed, in consultation with the student and/or their parent or carer. Adjustments assist the student to participate on the same basis as students without disability in the school's learning programs or courses, and to use or access the school's facilities and services.

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS

The following procedure should be used if teachers are concerned about a student's progress:



NB: Teachers are advised not to diagnose when informing parents of their concerns. Recording anecdotal observations, collecting samples of work and assessment results, as well as completion of the Referral Form are recommended.

ROLE and RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER

At St Maroun's College, the Learning Support Teacher has a number of responsibilities:

- Liaise with parents, Principal and Classroom Teachers in identifying students for support within the program
- Create and maintain files for all learning support students
- Support parents in understanding and assisting with their child's needs
- Facilitate referral and assessment procedures with relevant professionals
- Provide support and consultation to the Classroom Teacher regarding the students requiring learning support in his/her care, as the Classroom Teacher has the primary responsibility for *all* the students in his/her class
- Communicate with Classroom Teachers, Literacy Support Teachers, LOTE Teachers, Librarian and School Counsellor (where appropriate) about the needs of individual students in their care
- Liaise with any other agencies involved with the student e.g. Allied Health Services, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Paediatricians, RIDBC Consultants (Hearing & Vision impaired students)
- Meet with parents, students and Classroom/Subject Teachers or Coordinators where possible, in order to develop an Individual Plan using the Catholic Education Commission's online Planning Tool. It is most important that the child's voice be heard.
- Assess and evaluate student progress using standardised assessment tools such as DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), YARC (York Assessment of Reading and Comprehension)
- Assist teachers to make appropriate differentiation in their teaching programs (including Life Skills when necessary) in order to make the curriculum accessible for the student
- Assist teachers to record adjustments in their teaching programs in order to make the curriculum accessible for the student
- Assist teachers to make appropriate adjustments to assessment tasks
- Assist teachers with selection of appropriate resources for Learning Support students (this may include specialist resources such as low vision aids, sensory aids etc)
- Be responsible for the selection and care of Learning Support resources and materials
- Plan, implement and evaluate specialty programs for students when necessary such as Intensive Language Program for Kindergarten students, MINILIT (K – 2) and MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program (Years, 3 to 10) and keep records of student progress
- Assist teachers in delivering the classroom program to students either as in class support to students, team teaching or in small withdrawal groups as appropriate, annotating on the program any adjustments made
- Participate in Professional Development courses appropriate to the role and communicate information and strategies to the College Executive and Staff
- Contribute to parent education on strategies and support services available to them and their child
- Assist in the preparation and submission of State and Commonwealth funding grants
- Report to the Principal regarding the Learning Support Program and related concerns

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

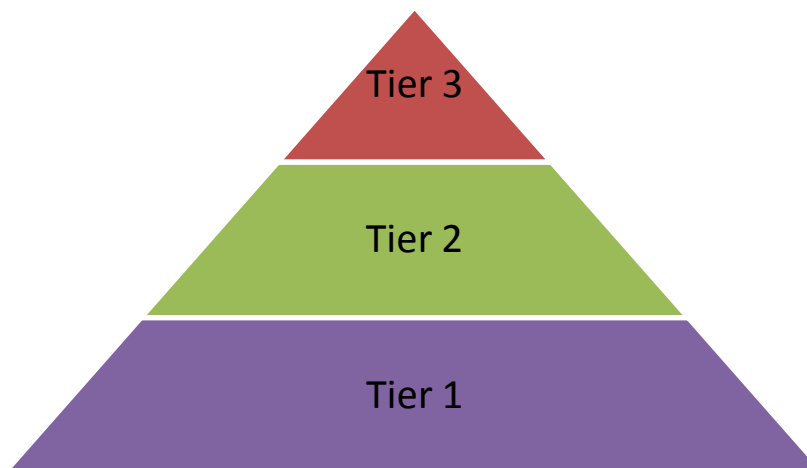
The Classroom Teacher is responsible for all the students in his/her care. Therefore it is his/ her responsibility to:

- identify and refer to the Learning Support Teacher, any student of whom there is concern
- ensure that all Learning Support students are catered for in the classroom
- Seek access to student files from the Learning Support teacher when necessary
- Ensure a level of confidentiality when dealing with information regarding the Learning Support student
- Participate in collaborative planning meetings with parents, students and Learning Support teacher in order to develop an Individual Plan (in the Secondary School, this may be a nominated teacher who works with the student or their Year Coordinator)
- Create differentiated teaching programs which take into account the individual needs of Learning Support students and make suitable adjustments to the teaching program according to the student's needs (referring to the student's Individual Plan)
- make suitable adjustments to assessments (when necessary) appropriate to the student's needs (referring to the student's Individual Plan)
- Ensure that they keep a copy of the student's Individual Plan in their teaching program – this is a practical as well as a legal requirement
- ensure that all Learning Support students have a positive atmosphere in which to work
- promote positive interactions between the Learning Support student and other students
- Ensure that they refer to the student's Individual Plan when planning activities either in or out of school e.g. excursions, sporting events
- Maintain a cooperative level of communication and collaboration with the Learning Support Teachers
- Whether a student is being withdrawn or is being seen in class by the Learning Support teacher, the classroom teacher/subject teacher must make the teaching program available to the Learning Support teacher in order to ensure the Learning Support teacher can make appropriate preparations for the lesson (resources etc) or in the case of withdrawal, ensure that the same work is covered. The Learning Support teacher may also then record any adjustments needed and record anecdotal comments and evaluation of the lesson(s).
- Liaise with other providers regarding the student's needs e.g. specialty gymnastics, dance, swimming teachers
- Liaise with therapists who are working with the student e.g. Paediatrician, Speech or Occupational Therapists
- Participate in Professional Development particular to the needs of the student (e.g. Autism - Positive Partnerships PD)

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL

At St Maroun's College, a Response to Intervention model is applied. In a Response to Intervention model, targeted students receive intervention and ongoing data is collected to monitor how the students respond to the intervention.

Data is drawn from Standardised assessments such as WISC-IV (administered by School Counsellor or external agency), CELF-4 (administered by external Speech Pathologist) and Curriculum Based Measures (CBM) such as DIBELS, YARC (York Assessment of Reading and Comprehension) external assessments such as NAPLAN and internal school-based assessments.



This is a three tiered model. Movement within the tiers should be flexible.

At the first level (Tier 1), classroom teachers administer a universal teaching program which is differentiated to meet the needs of all students in the class. Typically, around 80% of students respond well to instruction at this level.

However, for around 15% to 20% of students, further intervention is necessary and so small group instruction is provided by a Learning Support teacher (Tier 2). This may take the form of small withdrawal groups at the Primary School level or in class support in the Secondary School. The general classroom program is followed and further adjusted for the target group by the Learning Support teacher.

For another 5 % of students, more intensive, individualised instruction is needed. This takes place with a specialist Learning Support teacher. At this tier, an even smaller group or an individual student is seen and a specialised learning program put in place e.g. MultiLit Reading Tutor Program in Years 3 to 10. In the Secondary School, individual students also have access to one-to-one support from the Learning Support Teacher in 'drop-in' sessions for assistance with classroom and assessment tasks.

READING INTERVENTION

At St Maroun's College, strategies are put in place in each tier in order to develop each of the Five Big Ideas in Literacy – Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Reading Accuracy and Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2005).

Vocabulary and Comprehension are addressed in the first tier as part of a Universal Design for Learning in each teacher's program K – 12 for each Key Learning Area.

Within the Response to Intervention Model:

Tier 1:

K – 6 - "Ants in the Apple Spelling Program" targets phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle and vocabulary

K – 6 - Guided Reading Groups – strategies and reading activities provide opportunities to develop all the Big Ideas e.g. Listening Post develops Oral Reading Fluency

K – 6 – CARS and STARS – targets specific reading comprehension skills in classroom groups

Tier 2:

Targeted students receive additional small group support from a Learning Support teacher, either in the classroom or in withdrawal groups for:-

K – 6 - "Ants in the Apple Spelling Program" targets phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle and vocabulary

K – 6 - Guided Reading Groups – activities provide opportunities to develop all the Big Ideas

K – 2 – Small group assistance in developing decoding and reading fluency and accuracy with Learning Support Teacher using appropriate reading apps on iPads

Tier 3:

K – 2 – MiniLit Program provides strategies for developing all 5 of the Big ideas in a small withdrawal group (4 students where possible)

Years 3 – 10 – MultiLit Program provides one-to-one assistance for "At Risk" students with trained teacher or volunteer

Year 1 – 6 - Morning Reading Program develops decoding skills, reading fluency and comprehension with one to one support from Learning Support Teacher, parent volunteer or Year 9/10 student

READING INTERVENTION ASSESSMENTS

Norm referenced reading tests such as DIBELS measures (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy, University of Oregon) are administered to Primary students at the beginning of the school year, although for Kindergarten students, this takes place at the beginning of Term 2.

Students identified as being “At Risk” of not developing literacy are then nominated for further intervention. In Years 1 and 2, the MiniLit Early Literacy Intervention Program addresses the needs of those students “At Risk” of not developing literacy.

In Years 3 to 10, students identified as being “At Risk” are included in the MULTILit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy) Reading Tutor Program.

For Kindergarten students, the first two terms focus on the development of Oral Language skills and phonemic awareness. The second semester targets reading and writing skills and inclusion in the MiniLit program may be appropriate.

Progress is tracked three times a year using the DIBELS Benchmarks. This data provides invaluable information as to how students are responding to the intervention. Data also helps to inform programming and further intervention or re-entry into the class group.

Students in the Secondary School are assessed using the York Assessment of Reading and Comprehension (YARC) which provides data such as reading age, fluency and comprehension.

The Primary Learning Support Teachers and School Counsellor have been trained in administering DIBELS measures. The Learning Support Coordinator then collates and analyses the data and disseminates it to Classroom Teachers. Results and possible interventions are then discussed. Feedback is also provided to those teachers or volunteers providing the intervention, which assists in determining the efficacy of the intervention for the student and then guide future planning.

The Learning Support Coordinator and Secondary Learning Support Teacher, as well as the School Counsellor are trained to administer YARC. Results may be used to track student progress, provide areas for remediation and provide data for external agencies such as the Board of Studies when applying for Special Provisions around NAPLAN, RoSA and HSC.

Primary Learning Support Teachers assess reading progress and progression through the Nelson PM Levelled readers for Kindergarten to Year 4 students using running records. These may also be used for students who require ongoing reading support in Years 5 and 6. Classroom Teachers also refer to PM levels when organising Guided Reading Groups and take home readers.

Results are also used when reporting student progress to parents.

ADJUSTMENTS FOR ASSESSMENTS FOR SECONDARY LEARNING SUPPORT STUDENTS

In St Maroun's College 2014 we will be changing the report writing process for Learning Support students. The changes have been made in consultation with a member of the Board of Studies. There will be two levels of adjustments for Learning Support students. The Secondary Learning Support teacher will be responsible for seeking permission from the parents for which level of assessment will be most beneficial for the student. The Secondary Learning Support Teacher will then inform staff at the beginning of the academic year of which students require adjustments and what type.

- Type 1 Adjustment - Student's assessments will contain mainstream content and they will receive a mark from the same grading as the rest of the class. The adjusted assessments will be referred to in the comment bank.

When necessary the assessments will require some or all of these adjustments:

- Reduced amount of questions
- Single barrel questions
- Less writing on each page
- Worked examples provided
- Less options of multiple choice answers
- Personalised adjustments e.g. larger font

- Type 2 Adjustment - Student's assessments will contain adjusted content and they will receive a different marking scale to the rest of the class (e.g. Class /50 SEN Student 20/30). When their assessment is handed back to them they will receive an adjusted result (eg 20/30). Parents will be aware of this process at the beginning of the academic year and it will be referred to in the IP meetings and with a follow up phone call mid/end of semester. On the school report the students mark out of the full mark will be listed (e.g. 20/50) and the results of the adjusted assessments will be referred to in the comment bank.

When necessary the assessments will require some or all of these adjustments:

- Adjusted content
- Removed higher order tasks e.g. tasks that require analysis, evaluation etc
- Reduced outcomes
 - Reduced amount of questions
 - Single barrel questions
 - Less writing on each page
 - Worked examples provided
 - Less options of multiple choice answers
 - Personalised adjustments e.g. larger font

This process will lead to greater consistency in report writing and clarity over who we should be adjusting for. It will allow students with the opportunity to access the curriculum and experience success.

MORNING READING PROGRAM

The Morning Reading Program was initiated in the College in 2009 and continues to be a popular and worthwhile initiative with students, parents and teachers across both campuses of the College. The Morning Reading Program runs on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:40 to 9:00 am and takes place in the Primary Learning Support room.

In the morning Reading program, Primary School students (two from each class) are nominated by their teacher each term for additional assistance with reading. They also provide their PM Reading level.

The Learning Support Coordinator then collects a range of PM readers for those levels and displays them in the Learning Support room. The Learning Support Teacher then communicates with the Year 9 and 10 coordinators to obtain a list of students to read with the Primary students. A roster matching up tutors with Primary students is then made up.

At the beginning of the term, the Learning Support Coordinator runs a training session for the Year 9/10 tutors. Students are provided with strategies for interacting with and providing reading assistance to their Primary student; these focus mainly on decoding, developing reading fluency and comprehension. Issues such as confidentiality are also discussed.

On Morning Reading days, the Learning Support Teacher and (if available) another teacher or parent volunteer, as well as the High School students are paired up with a Year 9 or 10 Reading tutor. The High School tutors are encouraged to discuss student progress with the Learning Support Coordinator. Each day, the Learning Support Coordinator signs the tutor's diary for a merit for assisting with morning Reading.

This program's benefits are manifold: the Primary and Secondary students both benefit from the social interaction, Primary students practise their reading skills and Secondary students report helping their younger peers very rewarding. Secondary students who participate in the program and themselves require learning support, report a great boost to their self esteem.

STATEMENT REGARDING LOTE

St Maroun's College offers Arabic language instruction from Kindergarten to Year 12 and French language instruction from Years 2 to 12. Parents of students requiring learning support will have the choice to opt out of having their child study a Language Other Than English at the Primary level. This is particularly the case when the child has a Speech and Language Disorder or any other learning difficulty or language delay. These students will instead take part in support classes running concurrently with the LOTE program. If parents do wish their child to study another language, the French and Arabic teachers will be made aware of the student's learning needs and will make the appropriate adjustments to their teaching Programs. In the Secondary level of the College, study of a Language Other Than English is mandatory.

OTHER LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM MODELS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

The Learning Support program, both in the Primary and Secondary sections of the College, aims to provide support across Key Learning Areas. Support focuses mainly on the areas of English and Mathematics; however, an integrated approach may see support provided for other Key Learning Areas as well e.g. vocabulary development around a Science topic.

Within the English curriculum, support is provided for Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing.

In Mathematics, all strands are supported, with an emphasis on skill development, understanding mathematical language and processes and working mathematically.

This support may include in the Primary:

- Team Teaching
- Small Group Withdrawal
- Individualised Support

In the Secondary:

- In class support
- Consultancy – students ‘drop –in’ advice and assistance with classroom tasks and assessments
- Individualised support e.g. Reading intervention such as MultiLit

All these modes of delivery work well within the Response to Intervention Model.

ORGANISATION and ROUTINE

Research has shown that students respond best when they are provided with a predictable routine. This is particularly true for Learning Support students.

In the Primary School, teachers display a visual timetable for the day’s learning and discuss the day’s activities with the students. This strategy is especially helpful for students with Autistic Disorders or on days when there is a change to the regular school routine e.g. photo day, casual teacher.

In the Secondary School, students are trained in the use of the School Diary and planner and may receive additional assistance when prioritising assessment tasks.

The School Diary is also used as an effective communication tool between teacher and parents. In Kindergarten and Year 1, where no diary is used, teachers may create a Communication Book when necessary e.g. when there are behavioural issues.

TRANSITION PROGRAMS

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Where practicable, the Learning Support teacher and Kindergarten classroom teacher will meet with the parents of the Learning Support student as part of the enrolment interview process. The needs of the child and type of support available will be discussed. If the student attends Pre-School, whether at Saint Maroun's Pre-school or other, a visit to the Pre-School may be made (with the parent's consent). This visit may be made by the Learning Support Coordinator and/or the Kindergarten teacher. Opportunities for facilitating transition to school are also provided through Orientation days towards the end of the year.

YEAR SIX TO YEAR 7 TRANSITION PROGRAM

Originally initiated for only "Special Needs" students, the St Maroun's College Year 6 to Year 7 Transition Program has been broadened to include all Year Six students, with additional support where necessary for students requiring learning support. Strategies include discussion of fears and expectations, reading a timetable, organisation and planning, lessons with High School teachers and orienting around the Secondary campus.

A collaborative planning meeting is held in Term 4 with the student, parent, Secondary Learning Support Teacher and Learning Support Coordinator who is based in the Primary section of the College and has personal experience in supporting the student. Where possible, the Year 7 Coordinator will also be present. Strategies and goals are entered into the Individual Plan and a copy is then made available to the parent and Year 7 Coordinator.

A hand-over meeting is also held at the end of the school year with Year Six classroom teachers Secondary Learning Support Teacher and Learning Support Coordinator (Primary) and Year 7 Coordinator. At this meeting, student files are handed over and each student's particular needs discussed.

TRANSITIONING NEW STUDENTS

Where possible, the Learning Support Coordinator will participate in enrolment interviews for students transitioning into the College at any level. Once again, the needs of the child and type of support available will be discussed. Parents will be asked to sign a form consenting to the previous school releasing confidential documentation or any other information about the student and their needs.

TRANSITIONING STUDENTS EXITING THE COLLEGE

Where possible, the Learning Support Coordinator will assist in the transition process for learning support students exiting the College. With parental consent, a visit may be made to the next school in order to meet with Learning Support personnel there. The parent may or may not choose to be present. Parents will sign a form consenting to release of confidential information.

TIME ALLOCATION

Research suggests that most forms of intervention in the Primary school need to take place at least 3 times per week in order to be effective. Learning Support Allocation will be based on the area of need identified by the Curriculum Coordinator, Learning Support Team and the Classroom Teacher.

In the Secondary school, the Learning Support Teacher allocates support on the basis of need, which is generally higher in Years 7 and 8; in class support is provided to these students. Students in Years 9 to 12 are provided support within a consultative model.

There will be times when the Learning Support Teacher(s) will need time to be released from face –to-face teaching. The Learning Support Teacher requires:

- planning time each week for the development of Learning Programs, preparation of resources, marking bookwork etc
- the first week and last week of the school year in which to organise student files, check on transitioning students and complete other administrative tasks
- time to prepare funding submissions and grant proposals
- time to assess students and analyse results
- time to meet with the Curriculum Coordinator to analyse NAPLAN results
- time to meet throughout the year with the entire Learning Support Team in order to discuss the effectiveness of the program(s) and Learning Support allocation
- time to conduct collaborative meetings with parents for the formulation of online Individual Plans
- time to attend Professional Development and CEC Network Meetings in order to keep up to date with current best practice

Policy Review

Last Reviewed: November 2014

Approved By: College Principal

Renewal Date: 2015