

POLICY TITLE:

Inclusion and Disability Policy

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:

August 2018

DATE TO BE REVIEWED:

August 2021

1. Introduction

Montessori International College values the diversity of all students including those with special educational needs recognises the right of all students to equitable access to the curriculum and offers education programs reasonable adjusted to the educational needs of students with disabilities.

The school consciously teaches students to accept, respect and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the global community. We regard a mix of backgrounds and abilities as a positive and essential element in our community.

The Montessori Enrolment Process applies to all applicants.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities equally and in a manner that complies with relevant anti-discrimination and Accreditation legislation and takes into account student learning needs while balancing the interests of all parties affected.

3. Scope

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents/carers and students and outlines the procedures for and identification of and enrolment students with disabilities and the process undertaken to provide individual adjustments and develop individual education programs for students so identified.

4. Definitions

4a) Disability

Disability, concerning a person, means:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, the perception of reality, emotions or judgment 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.

5. Responsibility

Principal, Enrolment Committee

Point of Contact

Learning Support Coordinator

6. Legislation

6a)

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Anti - Discrimination Regulation 2005 (Qld)*
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)*

6b)

The Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA)¹ makes discrimination against people on the grounds of disability unlawful in a wide range of areas of public life, including education. Similar provisions also exist in the Queensland *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*. The Queensland *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017* prescribes the school's educational program and student welfare processes' as an accreditation criterion, and makes it mandatory for all schools to provide reasonable adjustments for and have written processes in place to support students with disabilities.

6c)

In particular, schools must have written processes for identifying students with disabilities, and for devising an educational program, 'specific to the educational needs of those students with a disability, that complies with relevant anti-discrimination legislation'.

6d)

The objects of these Standards are:

- To eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the area of education and training;
- to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law in the area of education and training as the rest of the community; and
- to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

¹ (1) It is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability:

- (a) by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student; or
- (b) in the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student.

(2) It is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a student on the ground of the student's disability:

- (a) by denying the student access, or limiting the student's access, to any benefit provided by the educational authority; or
- (b) by expelling the student; or
- (c) by subjecting the student to any other detriment.

(2A) It is unlawful for an education provider to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability:

- (a) by developing curricula or training courses having a content that will either exclude the person from participation or subject the person to any other detriment; or
- (b) by accrediting curricula or training courses having such a content.

(3) This section does not render it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability in respect of admission to an educational institution established wholly or primarily for students who have a particular disability where the person does not have that particular disability

To comply, an education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with a disability. 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 taking into account 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.

A provider is also required to comply with its obligation to put in place strategies and programs to prevent harassment and victimisation. That is, it must ensure that staff and students know not to harass or victimise students with a disability, or students who have associates with a disability, and must take reasonable steps to know what to do if harassment or victimisation occurs.

6e)

Unjustifiable Hardship

Consistent with the DDA, an education provider does not have to comply with a requirement of the Standards to the extent that compliance would cause 'unjustifiable hardship'. The provider may consider all benefits and detriments, both direct and indirect, that are likely to result for the provider, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- costs associated with additional staffing, the provision of special resources or modification of the curriculum;
- stress or disadvantage arising out of the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students, and teachers; and
- benefits deriving from the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider as a result of the student's participation.

In assessing whether an adjustment to the course or program in which the student is enrolled, or proposes to be enrolled, is reasonable, the provider is entitled to maintain the

academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

7. Policy

Montessori International College will assist the full participation of students with disabilities by:

- valuing all students as individuals and identifying and responding to their needs;
- consulting with the student and parents to make well-informed decisions about the education program to be developed for each student with a disability/ies;
- identifying and addressing barriers that limit students' opportunities, participation and benefits from schooling;
- providing an appropriate level of resources within available funds to reasonably accommodate the needs of students with disabilities;
- making reasonable adjustments in modifying, substituting or supplementing curricula, coursework requirements, timetables, teaching methods and materials, and assessment procedures to meet the needs of students with disabilities;
- facilitating options and pathways for students with disabilities;
- providing physical environments that are accessible, stimulating, safe and welcoming;
- devising fair and transparent enrolment procedures for all students, including those with disabilities;
- respecting the rights of people with disabilities to privacy and confidentiality;
- fostering and encouraging among staff and students, positive, informed and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities; and
- supporting and assisting students to make alternative satisfactory educational arrangements when the school is unable to meet their needs.

8. Enrolment

Montessori International College's enrolment process applies to all applications for enrolment.

It is a "stepped process", including:

- Initial Enquiry;

- Enrolment Application – fully completed by parents, with the provision of all professional or additional reports available and as requested;
- School Tour;
- Interview;
- The offer, or no offer;
- Acceptance/or not;
- The signing of the Enrolment Contract.

Parents of all applicants must understand that an application for enrolment is merely that. It is not the first step in a process that will inevitably lead to the offer of a place. (Flow Chart of the process in Appendix 1)

9. Further Information

The Application for Enrolment states that our primary goal in the process is to help each family to seek a match between its values and the values of the school. In the context of Montessori, principles espoused and taught by Dr Maria Montessori. It also states 'In making admission decisions, we will weigh many factors, the most significant emphasis is upon whether the parents have an awareness of and are deeply committed to the Montessori education principles.

Our enrolment process requires disclosure of a broad range of information and includes questions which relate to students who are or may be identified as having needs for adjustments. We require the provision of all professional reports or diagnostic items before the Application can proceed. The enrolment form seeks a consent form, which enables us to collect additional or current information from specialist personnel who may have information to assist in meeting the needs of the child.

It is important to us that the College can meet the educational needs of each child. For this reason, all parents are required to complete the questions within and attached to the College Enrolment Form which facilitates the enrolment process and enables us to determine the resources required to meet each student's needs.

Without the full completion of the requirements of the Application Form, the enrolment process will not proceed and parents will be informed

The collection, use and disclosure of information about a child is protected by the provisions of the College's Privacy Policy in compliance with the Privacy Law. A copy of our Privacy Policy can be obtained from the College office viewed from the College website.

10. Considerations

If the College has a limited number of enrolment places available consideration will be given as follows:

1. Philosophical affiliation of parents to Montessori education or previous neo-humanistic educational experiences
2. Children of past students and to students who have attended other Montessori Colleges.
3. Siblings
4. Students aged to match the available spaces
5. Special consideration at the discretion of the Principal.

11. Steps Following the Provision of a Complete Application Form

The remaining steps of the process continue **the same** for applications. They are:

- The interview with parent/s and child

NB. With special needs students, the interview may include learning support staff. There may be additional meetings with parents as part of this step, to establish an understanding of what adjustments may be needed or possible as part of a Support Plan.

- The making of an Offer/or not (at the discretion of the Principal)
- The Acceptance by parents/or not, by the nominated date
- The signing of the Enrolment Contract by both school and parents.

12. The Support Plan for Students with a Disability

A Support Plan will be drawn up for each child with a disability taking into account what adjustments are needed for the child to access the curriculum equitably, assisted class teachers under the overview and with assistance from learning support. The College seeks to work in partnership with parents in the implementation of the Plan.

The Student Support Plan will be reviewed at the end of each term parents will be requested to meet with the Learning Support or delegated representative to discuss how the Plan has facilitated progress and/or what changes may be needed.

13. Review

This Policy will be reviewed as necessitated by law.

14. FLOW CHART

(Taken from *Students with Disabilities: Enrolment Guidelines for Independent*

Independent Schools Targeted Programs Authority Inc., Adelaide: Hyde Park Press)

