MARYMOUNT COLLEGE
LEARNING LINKS POLICY

Principal

College Board Chair

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1. VISION STATEMENT

To live out our Catholic tradition through the charism of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict, in a spirit of compassion, hospitality and stewardship. Each student is challenged to respond radically to the Gospel to critique and transform the world.

2. INTRODUCTION

“We create an educational environment which matters to students and their families and which resonates culturally and deeply for them. In each learning area, across the whole life of the school, and in partnership with families, each of us discovers the love of God which is revealed in Christ, proclaimed by the Church and lived by all people of good will.” (Vision Statement in the CESA Strategic Plan 2010)

Marymount College is a place where all students are educated in our Catholic tradition through the charism of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict, as described in our Core Purpose:

“Marymount College is a place of belonging committed to developing young women of hope who will continue to nurture their hearts and minds in the Catholic tradition and will be agents of justice grounded in stewardship, hospitality, compassion and reconciliation.”

At Marymount College we are committed to enhancing the learning outcomes of all students by believing in and practising the inclusion of all students through the provision of student centred pedagogy based on contemporary thinking. We believe students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs. Staff differentiate teaching and learning for students, with teachers accommodating student differences in readiness levels, interests and learning profiles.

We acknowledge some students require additional support in order to successfully achieve appropriate educational outcomes. Marymount College provides the Learning Links program within a community of care to facilitate the inclusion of these students.

Diverse and effective approaches to learning and learners, and agreed procedures that assist with the process of identification, planning, resourcing and implementation of appropriate educational adjustments are critical to achieving successful outcomes for our students.

We recognise that the skills and expertise of teachers, and their ability to motivate students within each learning area is integral to the success of an intervention program.

The Learning Links program works collaboratively with teachers; parents/carers and students to provide teaching and learning opportunities that enable access and participation of those students with learning difficulties and disabilities. It supports teachers to provide specialist and responsive learning techniques, to these students so they can be successfully engaged in their learning and provided with equal educational opportunities.

In the spirit of inclusion, support is primarily provided within the classroom but may also include a combination of small group, or one-to-one tuition within a withdrawal situation. Specialised programs are linked as closely as possible to the class curriculum.
3. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

3.1 **Hospitality**
In practice a commitment to hospitality in our Learning Links Policy means that:

3.1.1 Marymount College welcomes, recognises and celebrates the diversity amongst its students.

3.1.2 We build a sense of connectedness and belonging for all students within their community.

3.1.3 The responsibility for the wellbeing and successful outcomes for all students is shared by all members of the school community.

3.2 **Stewardship**
In practice a commitment to stewardship in our Learning Links Policy means that:

3.2.1 The development of the whole person is nurtured

3.2.2 Educational practices recognise the unique identity of each student and learning and teaching programs are designed to maximise educational outcomes.

3.2.3 A recognition of the entitlement of every student to knowledge, understanding and skills that will provide a foundation for successful and lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community.

3.2.4 Families/carers, school staff and other professionals work in partnership to create opportunities for each student to engage actively in their learning now and for the future.

3.3 **Compassion**
In practice a commitment to compassion in our Learning Links Policy means that:

3.3.1 Decision-making regarding resourcing is based on student need and principles of inclusion, access and participation.

3.3.2 We listen to and learn from our students, recognising their gifts and valuing diverse ways of learning.

3.3.3 As a school community we have an understanding of the impact a disability/learning difficulty may have on a student’s achievement and any adjustments implemented are appropriate and responsive to the student’s needs.

3.4 **Reconciliation**
In practice a commitment to reconciliation in our Learning Links Policy means that:

3.4.1 In a spirit of transparency, accountability and collaboration, students, parents/carers are involved in discussions regarding adjustments that may occur to support a student with their learning program.
4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Policy Underpinnings

4.1.1 The Learning Links Program is underpinned by the Catholic Education South Australia Mission, Values and Vision Statement, the Continuous Improvement Framework for Catholic Schools and the Marymount College Strategic Intent, as well as Legislative and policy frameworks: Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1992), Disability Standards for Education (2005) and Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) Students with Disabilities Policy (2010).

4.1.2 The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) commits ‘to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens’, and to promoting equity and excellence in education.

4.1.3 Guided by the Melbourne Declaration, the Australian Curriculum (2009) will ‘equip all young Australians with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in a globalised world and information rich workplaces of the current century.’ The Australian Curriculum will be accessible to all young Australians, regardless of their social or economic background or the school they attend.

4.1.4 In keeping with Marymount’s core purpose and Good Samaritan values, current legislation and the Melbourne Declaration, Marymount College has a strong commitment that all students are provided with opportunities to access and participate in a broad, balanced and relevant education. We acknowledge and recognise that a percentage of Marymount students may have additional learning needs related to their academic progress, intellectual, social/emotional difficulties, sensory impairments or physical difficulties.

4.2 Aims

Our aim is to ensure that:

4.2.1 Every student is encouraged, valued and accepted equally, regardless of ability

4.2.2 Every student with additional learning needs will have access to the curriculum to which they are entitled

4.2.3 We identify at the earliest opportunity those students with additional learning needs

4.2.4 We provide an Individual Learning Plan (I.L.P.) as appropriate, for students identified under the CESA policy, Students With Disabilities (2010) and those with more complex profiles

4.2.5 We encourage a collaborative process with parents/carers/agencies etc. for meeting student needs

4.2.6 Student voice is encouraged by the student attending and contributing to any meetings held in relation to the student
5. A GUIDE TO RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Responsibilities of College Staff

5.1.1 Marymount College staff have a legal responsibility to work within the Legislative and Policy frameworks. Leadership will provide opportunities for staff to become familiar with, understand and address their obligations under this policy and legislation.

5.1.2 Staff will work collaboratively with parents/carers in the documentation and collection of data to meet national data collection requirements.

5.1.3 Staff will liaise and work collaboratively with parents/carers and agencies in the planning of support for students with additional needs and focus on building a collaborative home and school partnership.

5.1.4 Staff will be provided with professional learning as required to meet the additional needs of individual students.

5.1.5 We will ensure learning approaches recognise and build on student strengths and provide a curriculum that the student/s can access and participate successfully in.

5.1.6 Staff will utilise strategies to support full participation of students with disability (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers).

5.1.7 We will provide case management for students at risk.

5.1.8 Teachers will, in collaboration with the Learning Links Coordinator and ESO’s assist in monitoring the educational progress of students with additional needs. The Coordinator will assist in the identification and coordinate the mechanisms required to meet students’ educational, pastoral care, safety and health needs and in negotiation with teachers coordinate the planning and review process.

5.1.9 ESO’s will assist the learning of the students and apply personal knowledge and initiatives to suggest adjustments to meet the learning needs of specific students, subject to the approval of the teacher.

5.2 Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

5.2.1 Inform the school of any significant changes in their daughter’s life, e.g. health, relevant family issues/changes, that may impact on their daughter’s wellbeing and/or learning.

5.2.2 Share updated professional reports relevant to their daughter’s education.

5.2.3 Share observations and insights into their daughter’s strengths, interests, learning and daily living skills within a range of contexts.

5.2.4 Participate in any planning or review meetings and the development of, or progress toward the goals or objectives.

5.2.5 Raise concerns with their daughter’s Base Group teacher in the first instance, for example, homework, social interaction, learning areas.

(NB Parents/Carers have the right to choose to be supported by a friend or advocate in the process)

5.3 Responsibilities of Student

5.3.1 As appropriate participate in the planning and review of their learning goals.

5.3.2 Share relevant information in relation to their educational program, e.g. success, areas of concern, including support received through the Learning Links program.

5.3.3 Participate in a respectful and responsible manner in the Learning Links program.
6. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Learning Links

6.1.1 The Learning Links team consists of a Coordinator and also Learning Links ESO’s. This may change depending on student and school needs. Support may be provided by:
- In class support
- Numeracy and Literacy Booster groups
- Homework Club
- Small group / 1:1 periods for Language exempt students
- Volunteer reading program

6.2 Identification of Students

6.2.1 Identification of students within the Marymount College Learning Links policy. Students may be identified by:
- The CESA policy, Students With Disabilities (2010) verified as eligible by current professional reports and indicating an educational need exists
- Teachers, substantiated by assessments, professional reports and/or work samples that demonstrate the student is achieving significantly below the expectation for their chronological age.
- Parents, substantiated by assessments, professional reports that demonstrate the student is achieving significantly below the expectation for their chronological age.
- Information obtained through the transition process and contact with schools prior to the student commencing at Marymount College that indicates a significant educational need exists.
- Information obtained from families during enrolment interviews with the leadership team.

6.2.2 Applications for students for inclusion in the Learning Links program will be made through the Learning Links Coordinator after discussion with the Base Group teacher and Deputy Principal. This process enables the team to determine the student needs and appropriate course of action or intervention to support the student’s access and participation in the educational program. Parents and teachers will be advised in writing of the outcome.

6.2.3 Adjustments to student support, that is to the type or frequency of support is determined through the review process involving teachers, parents and student.

6.3 Language Exemption

6.3.1 “The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages contributes to the general education of all students. It operates from the fundamental principle that for all students, learning to communicate in two or more languages is a rich, challenging experience of engaging with and participating in the linguistic and cultural diversity of our interconnected world” (www.acara.edu.au).

6.3.2 The Australian Curriculum: Languages is designed to enable all students in Australian schools to engage in learning a language in addition to English. We do recognize though that there may be a few instances where a student may be exempt from this.

6.3.3 A completed application for exemption for Language is required to go before a committee that includes the Learning Links Coordinator, College Leadership personnel and Base Group teacher.
6.3.4 Students may be approved to be language exempt if they meet at least two of the following criteria:

- They have a recent assessment from a professional e.g. psychologist, speech pathologist, that indicates that the student has a learning difficulty/disability. Assessments must be within 3 years current.
- School based assessments indicate that the student is achieving at least 18 months behind their chronological age in one or more of the following areas; reading, spelling, numeracy.
- The student requires adjustments in at least two learning areas, including languages.
- NAPLAN and PAT data (Reading and Mathematics), indicate that the student is achieving significantly below what is expected for their age/year level.

6.3.5 There will be times when a student may have a medical or social emotional consideration that indicates they would benefit from being language exempt. A letter from an outside professional must support the request:

- Approved exemptions are to be signed off by the parent/carers that indicates they have agreed with the decision and have been fully informed of the implications of this decision eg the student may not be able to resume languages study at a later date within the College or another educational institution.
- Any decision needs to be made in the best interest of the student and implications of the DDA Standards for Education (2005) need to be taken into consideration.

6.3.6 During the language lessons, those students who are exempt, will attend lessons in the Learning Links room. They will work with the Learning Links staff (ESO’s and teacher). The Learning Links Coordinator will oversee the supervision of these lessons, which are designed to provide skill building activities and completion of learning area tasks.

6.4 Homework Club

6.4.1 The ‘Homework Club’ has been established to assist students who currently participate in the Learning Links program. The students may be assisted in any aspect of their homework they identify and need assistance with. This may be clarification of the topic, layout, subject specific assistance or organisation. The Homework Club is not intended to replace private tutoring a student may receive.

6.4.2 The ‘Homework Club’ is voluntary. It is on a needs basis and students are invited to attend by the Learning Links Coordinator. Parents must provide written permission. This may be by email. The students are required to sign in and out of the Learning Links room. It will be noted in their diary that they have attended the ‘Homework Club’.

6.5 Booster Groups

6.5.1 Students involved in these groups must be currently participating in the Learning Links program. They can be requested to participate by teachers or parents/carers when they may require additional support and skill building in numeracy or literacy. Students are invited to attend by the Learning Links Coordinator.

6.6 Volunteer Reading program

6.6.1 The number of volunteers available limits participation in this program. It is generally restricted to Year 6 and 7 students. Students selected to read to volunteers are nominated by teachers and coordinated by the year level leader on a week-by-week basis. The schedule is emailed to the Learning Links Coordinator at least one day prior to the designated time of the volunteer.
6.7 Private Tutoring

6.7.1 At times parents/carers may make arrangements for their daughter to receive private tutoring from outside professionals. Marymount College staff will liaise with the tutor if required in order to allow consistency of learning for students. Any arrangement that families make to undertake tutoring for their daughter must occur outside of school hours.

6.8 Grievance Procedure

6.8.1 Any grievances regarding the Learning Links program need to be addressed in the first instance to the Learning Links Coordinator. The Coordinator may follow this up with the Base Group teacher for further discussion. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they may take the issue to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
7. GLOSSARY

7.1 Adjustments
An ‘adjustment’ is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. Examples of adjustments include:

7.1.1 Supplementary adjustments: Supplementary adjustments are provided when there is an assessed need at specific times to complement the strategies and resources already available (for all students) within the school. These adjustments are designed to address the nature and impact of the student’s disability and any associated barriers to their learning, physical, communication or participatory needs.

7.1.2 Substantial adjustments: Substantial adjustments are provided to address the specific nature and significant impact of the student’s disability. These adjustments are designed to address the more significant barriers to engagement, learning, participation and achievement.

7.1.3 Extensive adjustments: Extensive adjustments are provided when essential specific measures are required at all times to address the individual nature and acute impact of the student’s disability and the associated barriers to their learning and participation. These adjustments are highly individualised, comprehensive and ongoing.

7.2 On the Same Basis
7.2.1 On ‘the same basis’ means that a student with disability should have access to the same opportunities and choices in their education that are available to a student without disability.

7.2.2 On ‘the same basis’ means that students with disability are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning opportunities drawn from the Australian Curriculum and set in age-equivalent learning contexts. On ‘the same basis’ means that while all students will access age-equivalent content, the way in which they access it and the focus of their learning may vary according to their individual learning needs, strengths, goals and interests.

7.3 Differentiation
7.3.1 The idea of differentiating instruction is an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for and attention to student differences in classrooms, in the context of high quality curriculums.

7.4 Individual Learning Plan
7.4.1 An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) refers to both the ongoing process and the associated documentation that informs the education of a student with disability and learning difficulty. It is a written plan used to describe, document, monitor, review and report on the student’s education program, educational adjustments and learning outcomes. The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) provides a process for sharing relevant information and supporting a student to achieve their potential. The task of the IEP support group is to facilitate communication between young people, their caseworkers, carers, school and interagency staff and counsellors/therapists, in person or via ICT, to ensure that decisions are made and actions taken to enable young people to succeed in achieving a good education.
8. FURTHER READING AND GUIDELINES

8.1 Catholic Education SA Strategic Plan (2010)

8.2 Continuous Improvement Framework Catholic Education SA (2014)

8.3 Marymount College Strategic Intent (2014)

8.4 Catholic Education SA Students with Disabilities Policy (2010)

8.5 The Melbourne Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century (2009)
    www.mceecdya.edu.au/.../national_declaration_on_the_educational_goal..

8.6 Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

8.7 Disability Standards for Education (2005)
    www.ddaeeducations.info

8.8 Australian Curriculum - Student Diversity
    www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/StudentDiversity/Pdf/StudentDiversity

8.9 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

9. APPENDIXES

9.1 Notification of Inclusion in Learning Links Program

9.2 Language Exemption Application

9.3 Notification of ILP meeting

9.4 Teacher referral form of student to Learning Links Program