

Inclusive Education

Thursday, 19 July 2007

Ministry policy aims to achieve an education system that identifies and includes students with special learning needs, implements appropriate programs and monitors their progress within a culture of understanding. The policy applies to all students who are at risk of not developing to their full educational potential or at risk of not achieving the major objectives of the curriculum. It recognizes and provides support for students with disabilities, specific learning and behavioural difficulties as well as those who are gifted and talented. Laisiasa Merumeru

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{mospagebreak title=Teachers}Teachers

Teachers are responsible for ensuring students with special needs are included in their classroom within a culture of acceptance and understanding. This includes:

- Producing and implementing educational plans with the input of parents and caregivers which meet individual student needs (IEPs). Please contact the Inclusive Education Adviser if you would like assistance with this.
- Maintaining confidential records of identification procedures, assessments and results. Reporting this information to the principal, MoE, parents/cargivers and the students themselves.
- Regularly monitoring in terms of outcomes, the effectiveness of programmes for students with special needs.
- Ensuring that students learn in an environment where they are safe, valued, respected, encouraged, free from verbal and physical threat and where they experience success.
- Reporting to the principal where special conditions or resources are necessary.

{mospagebreak title=Principal}Principal

Principals are responsible for implementing the Special Needs Education Policy within their schools.

This means:

- Enrolling all students - Students may not be denied access to your school because of their ability or disability.
 - Ensuring students with special learning needs are not discriminated against by assessment and teaching procedures - This may mean that assessment or teaching procedures need to be modified in order to meet the needs of or accurately assess the progress of students with special needs. Please contact the Inclusive Education Adviser if you need help to do this.
 - Informing the community and Ministry of Education about programmes in place and the achievement of students with special needs - This includes maintaining a special needs register which identifies students who may have special needs and lists strategies taken to address these needs.
 - Referring cases to the Inclusive Education Adviser, and/or health and education professionals where necessary - Send your Special Needs Register to the Inclusive Education Adviser annually and she/he will arrange to meet with you to determine what support should be provided. You can contact the adviser any time you feel you need extra assistance. Also, if you have concerns about a student's hearing or vision and you are on Rarotonga, please refer them to the health clinic in Tupapa. If you are on an outer island, please refer them to the local doctor and to visiting health professionals.
 - Ensuring truancy is monitored and the requirements of the Education Act in terms of truancy are implemented.
 - Schools must implement their truancy policies.
 - Irregular school attendance and frequent absences are the most common causes of students falling significantly behind their peers. This causes problems not only for the student but also for the teacher and other students in their class.
 - Monitor attendance closely and if a student is absent regularly, whether due to truancy or explained absences, you should meet with the student and their parents to discuss the implications of regular absences and formulate plans for improving attendance and/or providing extra support to assist the student.
 - Promoting students with special needs through the education system with their peers - Students have a right to be in a class with students of a similar age. Students should not be held back or accelerated through their school years without careful consideration and discussion with the Inclusive Education Adviser.
- {mospagebreak title=Parents and Students}Parents

Your child has the right to attend the government school of your choice regardless of any abilities or disabilities they may have. Private schools may have specific entry requirements but these should not include ability. If you have problems enrolling your child in the school of your choice, please contact the Inclusive Education Adviser.

If you feel your child has special needs which are not being catered for, please discuss this with their teacher and/or principal. If after that you still have concerns, please contact the Inclusive Education Adviser. Students You have the right to attend school and a responsibility to do so.

If it is hard for you to go to school for any reason (for example: other students tease you, the work is too hard, or your teacher is mean to you) please talk to your parents, a teacher, or the Principal about this. If you can't talk to any of these people or if you do and they don't help you, please contact the Inclusive Education Advisor at the Ministry of Education.