Policy Statement
2013

Adaptive Behaviours
Policy
What are Adaptive Behaviours?

Adaptive Behaviour includes the age-appropriate behaviours necessary for people to live independently and to function safely and appropriately in daily life. Adaptive behaviors include real life skills such as grooming, dressing, safety, safe food handling, school rules, ability to work, money management, cleaning, making friends, social skills, and personal responsibility. Adaptive behavior assessments are used in evaluation of students with intellectual impairment to determine what strengths and weaknesses should be addressed to improve the learner's possibility for success in school, home and community life. It is common that students with intellectual impairment require specially designed instruction to learn adaptive behaviors. Adaptive behavior is usually assessed using questionnaires completed by parents, teachers, social workers, students (when possible and appropriate), or adult learners. Adaptive behavior can also be assessed based on observations of the child's actual performance of a specific skill. (Modified from Anne Logsdon).

What do we know about Intellectual Impairment?

Intellectual impairment is characterised by significantly below average intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas (communication; self-care; home living; social skills; community use; self-direction; health and safety; functional academics; leisure; work skills (Adaptive skills are those everyday coping skills which students need to take care of themselves and to relate to others in daily living). Students with intellectual impairment have difficulties with some or all of the following:

**Attention** refers to one’s capacity to focus on an activity. Students need to be able to maintain focus long enough to gain information. They also need to attend to a task long enough to complete it.

**Perception** is the ability to register information through one or more of the sensory modes (e.g. sight, hearing, taste, smell or touch) and to make meaning of it.

**Thought processing** allows students to organise incoming information, to make connections between pieces of information and to interpret symbolic and abstract concepts. It also allows information to be organised for decision-making, communication and action.

**Memory** can be defined as having two main aspects. These are the retaining of information and the recalling of information.

**Generalisation** of learning occurs when a skill is learned in one situation and then applied in another. This process allows a student to operate effectively across a variety of environments without having to re-learn behaviours each time there is a change. (Education Queensland, 1998)
What do we believe?

We believe in a holistic, outcomes approach to education which focuses on independence, functional communication, social competence, and learning for both present and future environments. We believe that providing a relevant individualised curriculum, and having or accessing appropriate resources and facilities are central to enabling each student to achieve relevant and functional educational outcomes. Generalising appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours from a school into a community based environment is a fundamental component of teaching and learning for students with an intellectual impairment. The implication of this is that Community Based Instruction (C.B.I.) - where skills learned in the classroom are also taught in real life settings in the community - is a crucial part of program delivery at Mitchelton Special School.

We believe that as educators we need to have both a short and long term view of students’ learning goals. We need to keep in mind the students’ future school and post-school options including future school placements, work, leisure and living environments. These longer term goals impact on the identification and prioritisation of current school programming and IEP goals (E.g. appropriate social behaviours, work skills, self-care skills). Due to the nature of our students’ learning, it is necessary from the very beginning to lay the foundation of complex skills needed for adult life.

Teaching should aim to maximise all students’ capacity to function independently, regardless of ability level. Our school motto reflects this philosophy of independence: “Live to Learn, Learn to Live”. As in all aspects of life, considered risks are sometimes required to achieve growth and become an active participant in community life. Management procedures which include risk assessments are put in place to ensure students are in a safe and supportive, yet challenging learning environment conducive to the development of optimum independence.

Examples of this are:

- Independent self-care may target skills such as toilet training, managing money or cooking a simple meal.
- Independent choice-making may target skills such as selecting from two offered objects, choosing a library book or choosing what to buy at an eatery.
- Independent work-skills may target such behaviours as remaining seated at a task, running an errand or doing a work experience session in the community.
**What do we do?**

Once per year in Term 4 Assessment Week all students will have an adaptive behaviour review using the following school developed profile:

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**Adaptive Behaviour Profile**

**Student Name:**

**D.O.B.:**

**Review Dates:**

**Class Teacher(s):**

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### Self-Directed Behaviour

- Can self-advocate for the best learning environment.
- Can use self-regulated learning strategies and tools.
- Can self-monitor their learning and set goals.
- Can self-assess their progress and make adjustments.

### Leisure and Recreation Skills

- Can engage in leisure and recreational activities.
- Can participate in community events.
- Can self-direct leisure and recreational activities.

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### Home and Independent Living

- Can manage home responsibilities.
- Can manage personal hygiene.
- Can manage financial responsibilities.

### Community Use Skills

- Can use public transport independently.
- Can use community facilities independently.
- Can participate in community activities.

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### Safety and Health Skills

- Can follow safety rules and procedures.
- Can manage health needs independently.
- Can participate in health education programs.

### Review Dates and Stakeholder Comments

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The scale below will be used to make judgements about each student’s adaptive behaviour strengths in each of the specific skills listed. This is not an exhaustive list of adaptive behaviours. This profile will provide a significant amount of information about present, current and future adaptive skills.