PARENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2014: Response to comments and questions

One person indicated that s/he doesn’t know what to if s/he has an educational issue at school.

- On the school website you will find a copy of our Parent Grievance Procedure for your information. If further clarification is required please come to see me to discuss your understandings.

Question: Are we providing adequate speech therapy to children who are non-verbal—maybe we need two therapists?

- I invite the person to talk with me about the reason for the question. It is difficult to make an accurate response without knowing the situation but very broadly we’ve made some specific choices about how we approach Speech Pathology at St. Patrick’s.

Verbal communication is a priority. However, for many of our students, speaking is never going to be their preferred mode. We therefore teach a range of communication strategies and processes: PECs (Picture Exchange Communication System), PODD books, signing, communication boards and high tech. devices. Many of our students, particularly those who are pre-intentional communicators, also communicate with staff through intensive interaction and other approaches such as Mater Meo and DIR Floortime. Many of our staff are trained in these approaches.

It is important to note that Speech Pathology at St. Patrick’s is not a clinical service as such. The Speech Pathologist’s primary role is to work alongside staff and parents to support students to access the curriculum. Crucial to this is ensuring we utilize effective communication strategies appropriate to individual students. For the Speech Pathologist, this means working closely closely with staff and parents to identify and respond to a student’s communication needs and ensuring these are being met. This may mean:
  - staff and parent training
  - extending or adapting what is already happening for the student
  - using alternative strategies with different resources or equipment
  - undertaking interventions for individuals and small groups ‘withdrawn’ from class for specific purposes

Question: Is Matt the Music Therapist being replaced?

- The short answer is yes, music will continue. Matt is technically on leave without pay for the year. I hoped (in vain I suspect) that on returning home he might see the folly of his ways and return to Australia. But I am very doubtful this will happen. In the meantime we are trialling some different things eg Lolly Jar Circus and the photography workshop. We are also looking at utilizing Friday afternoons as a time to for students to undertake an elective type program. We will look at how we proceed for 2015 later this year.

Comment: Would really like to see some extra curricula activities offered eg sports team playing after school or on a Saturday in a modified competition (if one exists).

- A number of the Middle and Senior students participate in ‘in-school’ sporting activities periodically through the year eg Special Olympics, City Bay Fun Run, Bushwalking and a skills development program with St Ignatius Senior students. I know that in the past there have been Saturday morning sporting competitions for young people with intellectual disability. Indeed many years ago students from St. Pat’s participated in Saturday morning soccer. This ceased through difficulties in regularly fielding a team. I am unaware of out-of-school competitions that may currently exist and at this stage we have no plans to field a team should such a competition exist.