PARENT INFORMATION

A BRIEF HISTORY

St. Patrick’s Special School opened in 1944 near St. Patrick’s Church, Grote Street, Adelaide to provide education for children with special learning needs. Two Dominican Sisters undertook a specialised course for the teaching of intellectually disabled children. The accommodation was modest and occupied one room, especially built on to the clubrooms next to St. Patrick’s Church.

After another move to West Terrace in 1951, the school moved to the Parish school buildings in Warwick Avenue, Dulwich (formerly St. Peter Claver’s Primary School) in 1969. The new facility consisted of three classrooms, hall, kitchen and spacious play area.

At this time the school catered for 15 pupils. By 1970 this had increased to 32, and in 1971 the school had an enrolment of 39 pupils. From the outset, although under the Catholic Education auspice, enrolments have always been interdenominational.


In 1982 a new complex was blessed and opened by Archbishop Gleeson and three years later, further renovations and extensions have enabled additional services to be offered at St. Patrick’s Special School.

Between 2007 - 2009 St Patrick’s has undergone major refurbishment. The school now offers modern and up to date facilities which contribute greatly to the quality of our education program.

ORIENTATION TO LEARNING

St. Patrick’s caters for students with intellectual disabilities aged 5-20 years. We offer an integrated, developmentally appropriate curriculum that encompasses the learning outcomes in Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and The Australian Curriculum. Many students in the Senior class (16-20yrs) enrol in a number of SACE: Modified subjects. Working in partnership with families, students and external agencies, teachers draw on their professional knowledge and in-depth knowledge of each student to develop individual education plans (IEP). The plan is structured around the learning areas of communication, social development, sensory integration, motor planning, work education, music and art.

In the Senior years (16-20 years), a key focus for student learning is making a successful transition into an appropriate post school setting.

Student learning is also informed by a range of other educational plans including:

- Moving and Handling Plans
- Behaviour Education Plans
- Oral Eating and Drinking Plans.
- Health care Plans

These are developed in consultation with parents and relevant external agencies on the basis of individual need.
Student learning is planned, programmed, assessed and reported by the class teacher in consultation with Allied Health staff. In addition, a number of Education Support Officers support teachers and Allied Health staff in the implementation of a quality learning environment for students.

Assessment & reporting is ongoing and directed toward enhancing student learning. It is individualised, goal focused, descriptive of the development of specific skills and competencies, and strives to foster the involvement of students in understanding their own learning. Parents receive written reports about their son or daughter's learning achievements in relation to the IEP at the end of each semester.

On graduation, students transition into either a Day Options program or a Business Enterprise Centre and are supported to do this successfully in their final years of schooling.

ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

St. Patrick’s employs both an Occupational Therapist and Speech Pathologist on a full-time basis. Both therapists work across all levels of the school to provide an integrated multi-disciplinary service to all students. Therapy is conducted in small group and classroom settings to meet the specific needs of each student. Both therapists also collaborate with teaching staff to develop Individual learning plans In consultation with other staff, Allied Health staff are responsible for Moving and Handling Plans, & Oral, Eating and Drinking Plans.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is based on the guiding principles of maintaining and increasing skills, and adapting environments to meet the unique needs of St Patrick’s students so they can become as independent and functionally, emotionally, physically and developmentally capable as possible. Occupational Therapy uses student-centered, sensory integration, collaborative approaches within the classroom setting to ensure students have the best learning environments available for their educational needs.

Sensory Room

Our sensory room is a therapeutic environment which uses sensory integration principles to enhance student participation in the curriculum. Sensory integration is a normal, neurological, developmental process which begins in the womb and continues throughout one’s life. The Sensory Room at St Patrick’s focuses on exploration and play through the primary senses (touch, movement, proprioception, hearing, taste, and smell). This is achieved through specialised equipment, assessment and programming. The Sensory room provides a unique learning environment and most importantly addresses student’s individual sensory needs. All students at St Patrick’s benefit from a sensory room as sensory integration underpins the skills needed for learning such as social interaction, motor skill development, focusing and attending.

Speech Pathology

Speech Pathologists manage delay/ disorders in the fields of:

- Speech (articulation- the mechanics of sound, word, phrase, sentence production and alternatives to voice output)
- Language (understanding and producing language, attention, memory and problem solving, psycho-social aspects)
- Fluency (speech rhythm, prolongations, blocks, stuttering)
- Voice (pitch, vocal quality)
- Swallowing (Congenital, developmental or acquired dysfunction)
Because effective communication is essential to learning, working and enjoying relationships this is given very strong emphasis at St. Patrick’s. Our intention is to enable students to have the capacity to communicate utilising a raft of strategies. Whilst verbal communication is a priority, many of our students are pre-intentional communicators. Hence our Speech Pathologist collaborates with staff and families to facilitate communication and choice making through augmentative and alternative communication such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), signing, communication boards and high tech. devices. The Speech Pathologist is also involved in oral eating and drinking care.

**BEHAVIOUR EDUCATION**

Our approach to behaviour education is informed by:

- the characteristics of our students who typically exhibit a wide variety of cognitive and communicative patterns, significant impairments in communication and socialization, restricted and repetitive patterns of interest and activity, delayed or absent speech and language and unique, complex and challenging behaviours and

- our understanding that human behaviour is a very important form of communication. This is particularly important when working with children and young people who have communication impairments or experience stress, anxiety or have specific sensory or emotional needs.

We work proactively to support students to understand their behaviour and communicate their needs in effective and socially appropriate ways. We are committed to working closely with parents and carers to nurture and support students in their ongoing development of positive relationships with others.

**BUS TRANSPORT**

**Before and after school:**
Our school provides the service of three buses to transport students to and from school each day. The route for these buses is restricted to a certain geographical area to ensure students are not on buses for too long. Where possible we drop students at their homes. We are also able to pick up and drop off at designated places along the bus routes.

Fees are calculated according to the number of runs your son or daughter accesses each week

**During school hours:**
Three school buses are used throughout the day to transport students to and from the various settings used to implement their curriculum.

**DENTAL & IMMUNISATION**

- Free dental care is available from the Linden Park Dental Clinic Ph. 83798707
- The Eastern Health Authority (EHA) on behalf of the Local Council provides a School Immunisation Program at St Patrick’s Special School.

**PARENTS & FRIENDS**

We are very conscious of the importance of our parents forming relationships with one another and supporting each other in raising and educating their children. The P&F provides a very important vehicle to help this to occur. Periodic meetings are held after hours throughout the year (dates advertised in the school newsletter). Other events such as Mothers & Fathers’ Dinners, Bottle & Plate evenings, & family barbeques are held at different times throughout the year.
PUPIL FREE DAYS
Unless otherwise specified, pupil free days occur on the following days for the purpose of staff professional learning.
Term 1: last day of term
Term 2: first & last day of term
Term 3: first & last day of term
Term 4: first day of term

SCHOOL FEES
The fees are determined annually by the School Board and are subject to CPI. The fee schedule per year for 2015 is:
- Tuition fees $1,635
- Bus fees (transport to and from school) $1,284
- Bus excursion fees $261
- Resource fee $270
- ICT levy $75
- Consumables $60
- General excursion fees $75
- Enrichment day $45
- Voluntary donation for bus replacement (tax deductible) $225
- Additional costs swimming, horseriding & cooking (where applicable)

SCHOOL HOURS
School Office: 8:30 – 3:30 Monday – Friday.
Students are supervised from 8:30-3:10.
Class time is from 9:00 – 3:00

SCHOOL LUNCHES
Students may order their lunch once a week on a Friday. Lunches are organised with a local deli.

SCHOOL UNIFORM
The school uniform is as follows:
- Boy’s summer: Navy shorts, embroidered school polo shirt and navy hat
- Boy’s winter: Navy track pants, embroidered school polo shirt, navy or white skivvy and embroidered school rugby top
- Girl’s summer: Navy skort or shorts, embroidered school polo shirt and navy hat
- Girl’s winter: Navy track pants, embroidered school polo shirt, navy or white skivvy and embroidered school rugby top
- Footwear & bag: As best suited for the individual student.

Embroidered school polo tops and rugby tops are available from the school office.