

Thornton School - Special Needs Policy

It is the right of every child to be fully included in their local school and receive instruction that will enable them to access the curriculum and have successful outcomes.

We are an inclusive school and all individual students will receive equitable opportunities for success under the guidelines of the NZ curriculum. This may involve adaptations to class programmes, extra support, or changes to the school environment to enable every child to fully participate in school life.

Guidelines

1. The position of a Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) lies with the principal
2. The SENCO/principal will be responsible for the of programmes and individual needs in with the support of the teacher
3. All support referrals will be made through the SENCO/Principal
4. For students who enter school with a special needs team, the SENCO/Principal will meet with the early childhood team and develop a transition to school plan. This may involve some adaptations to the environment or classroom.
5. School based identification of special needs will be based on data collected from observations and assessments and parent information.
6. Parents are involved as partners. They will be kept informed of special programmes their child is involved in and invited to participate in meetings with specialists and at Individual Education Plan meetings.
7. Where possible, teachers will meet the learning needs of all pupils within the classroom environment by planning a differentiated programme and working closely with identified target students. However special programmes or support will be employed where relevant to provide extra support to identified students and school budgets/ staffing allow.
8. All adults who work with students must be police vetted and work within sight of staff.
9. A register of special needs students will be kept and information about individual students will be recorded on the assessment system.
10. Any Health and safety issues will be discussed with parents and emergency teacher aide time assigned through the co-ordinator where necessary.

The role of the SENCO/Principal

1. The SENCO/principal will liaise with staff and outside agencies to refer students for assessment, discuss progress, actions and ongoing monitoring needs of pupils. Specialist staff, teacher aides, parents, and external experts are consulted for advice, access to services and/ or within the programmes.

2. The SENCO/principal has a detailed job description based on the tasks of co-ordinating agencies, parents, and school staff to support learning needs of identified children and communicating with all parties.
3. Hold regular meetings with teacher aides to celebrate successes and deal with arising issues.

High needs students:

Students will be referred to Special Education Services for an assessment. If the student qualifies for the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme, an Individual Education Plan will be drawn up by the SENCO/principal and class teacher in consultation with parents, caregivers and specialists. This will be reviewed regularly and updated and form the basis for any allocation of teacher aide time funded by MOE

Moderate/ mild needs:

1. Students with moderate learning needs will usually have their needs met by focused teaching and will be backed up by specialist teaching support. Such students will often be identified as target student
2. Other moderate needs will be responded to on a case by case basis and may involve a wide spectrum of needs. This may involve Reading Recovery, ESOL, technology assistance, changes to the environment, a hearing aid or sound system, a medical regime, a behavioural chart or some other response. In general, a teacher aide is only assigned where the student needs physical support to access the curriculum or for safety concerns.
3. Usually children will only be involved in one intervention at a time. This is to ensure they are benefitting from the class programme and not being confused by too many different programme

Process for referral

1. Teachers will report needs to the SENCO/principal to discuss and decide next steps. The SENCO/principal will then direct and co-ordinate interventions
2. The SENCO/principal will also review ongoing cases for updates, monitoring or after intervention follow up and collate assessment evidence on the effectiveness of the intervention.