Comet Bay Primary Students at Educational Risk Policy

1.0 Students at Educational Risk

Contact: Inclusive Learning Environments

Students at educational risk are those students who may be at risk of not achieving the major learning outcomes of schooling which enable them to reach their potential.

- ### 1.1 OVERVIEW

The *Making the Difference: Students at Educational Risk* strategy supports schools to identify and assist students:

- who are not achieving appropriate standards as described in the Outcomes and Standards Framework
- whose education outcomes have dramatically differed from past performances
- who are not engaging in their schooling

The *Students at Educational Risk* (SAER) policy establishes school practices that support students at educational risk to develop the understandings, skills, and confidence to achieve their individual potential.

The SAER Coordinator to identify, implement support for and monitor students at risk across areas which include the following:

- attendance and retention
- curriculum
- gifted education
- inclusivity
- Indigenous education
- wellbeing

SAER Coordinators also work closely with a range of other staff including Learning Support Coordinators, Getting it Right specialist teachers and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers.

- o **1.2 BACKGROUND**

The Department's *Making the Difference: Students at Educational Risk* strategy was launched in 1998. The strategy outlines a comprehensive and coordinated approach to providing for students at educational risk in public schools.

The strategy involves a range of support to districts and schools to develop processes for addressing the needs of students at risk. This includes the local appointment in many schools and districts of a coordinator who specialises in this area.

Implementation of this strategy is ongoing through the *Students at Educational Risk policy* and Building Inclusive Classrooms initiative.

- o **1.3 OUTCOMES**

- enable the development and maintainance of inclusive teaching and learning environments through the Building Inclusive Classrooms initiative
- be accountable for the educational progress of individuals and groups of students at educational risk
- establish and implement procedures for the identification of students at educational risk
- develop and implement appropriate educational programs for individuals and groups of students at educational risk

1.4 Resources

- 🌐 DET Students at Educational Risk policy

2.0 LITERACY & NUMERACY INTERVENTION

2.1 GOAL – The goal of the staff at Comet Primary School is to foster the development of literacy and numeracy in the Primary years of schooling (K-7) by supporting intervention strategies for students experiencing difficulty with literacy or numeracy learning.

2.2 OUTCOMES
- ➢ To ensure that the needs of each child experiencing difficulty with literacy or numeracy learning are being met in the context of the mainstream classroom.

- ➢ To provide relevant teaching/learning programs and strategies which relate to both home and school.

- ➢ To promote an integrated approach to intervention which acknowledges all the different factors that impinge on students' literacy or numeracy development.

- ➢ To support flexible school organisation and staffing to maximise benefits for students experiencing difficulty with literacy or numeracy learning.

2.3 BELIEFS
- ➢ There are multiple explanations for literacy and numeracy difficulties and consequently there can be many responses.
- ➢ Literacy and numeracy intervention is effective when provided within the context of the mainstream classroom.
- ➢ The first three years of primary school are crucial in terms of literacy and numeracy development. Early intervention in the mainstream classroom maximises opportunities for students to reach their full learning potential. Since literacy and numeracy learning is developmental, intervention may be necessary at higher levels.
- ➢ Effective teachers reflect on their knowledge and teaching practices and the impact these have on individual student learning outcomes.
- ➢ The partnership between the teacher, parents and child in planning and monitoring the student's literacy or numeracy development, encourages the student to take responsibility for hi/her learning.
- ➢ Students enter our school at various year levels and from a range of socio –economic backgrounds demonstrating individual styles or rates of learning, and often requiring intervention.
- ➢ Parents have an important role in the development of a child's literacy and numeracy learning.
- ➢ All students have the capacity to learn, they need to experience success and develop their confidence.

2.4 APPROACH
- ➢ The school has an integrated approach to intervention, wherein the child, the teaching approach, the school, and the parents all play an important role in helping to design the most suitable instructional program for the student.
- ➢ Intervention plans reflect classroom processes not just teaching strategies.
- ➢ An intervention plan is one product of an ongoing process.
- ➢ Intervention plans are designed to guide student's literacy and numeracy development as a member of a class rather than being used to position the child as a member of a sub or remedial group, a minority cluster, low achiever or failure.

2.5 THE STUDENT-
- Has the opportunity to learn to read by using literacy or numeracy in a meaningful context.
- Is encouraged to take control over his or her learning.
- Is aware of his or her own literacy and numeracy strategies.

2.6 THE TEACHER
- Has clearly identified beliefs about teaching students with literacy and numeracy difficulties.
- Links intervention programs for students who have literacy or numeracy difficulties with the regular literacy or numeracy program.

2.7 THE SCHOOL
- Has a school policy with clearly identified beliefs about students who have literacy and numeracy difficulties.
- Has management information system to monitor students' literacy and numeracy development
- Provides time for collecting data, collaborative planning, parent interviews and reflection.
- Provides teacher support on a needs basis for K-7 classes.
- Provides appropriate literacy and numeracy resources for class and home use.

2.8 THE TEACHING PROGRAM
- Links to the regular literacy teaching & learning program and caters for all children.
- Takes a diagnostic teaching focus
- Encourages 'success'
- Focuses on strategies eg First Steps

2.9 THE PARENT
- Is informed about the student's literacy or numeracy difficulties and successes
- Is provided with ideas/ strategies, resources to assist the student
- Is given opportunities to be involved in literacy and numeracy learning at home and at school.
- Is aware of the school's beliefs about numeracy and literacy learning

2.10 MONITORING
- Reviewing of individual intervention plans
- Analysis of data collected as a part of the school's Management Information System (M.I.S.)
- Evidence including samples of students' literacy or numeracy work, retelling, information and oral reading miscue analysis, First Steps Mathematics Diagnostic Tasks.
- First Steps Developmental Maps
- WALNA test results.
- K-7 Literacy and Numeracy Net screening tools designed to support students at risk. The Literacy and Numeracy Net allows teachers to focus on specific areas of student's literacy and numeracy

development and provide appropriate support and intervention. Checkpoints are linked to WA Achievement Targets, National Benchmarks & First Steps resources.
➤ Teachers collect information to make judgements about student achievement in relation to the Student Outcome Statement Levels

2.11 IMPLEMENTATION
The following pathway for intervention describes a process that will enable teachers to develop an effective individualised program that can be carried out in the context of the regular class program:
1. Collect data
2. Complete Literacy or Numeracy Net to identify students experiencing difficulty with literacy or numeracy learning
3. Analyse the information and identify appropriate strategies.
4. Plan an intervention plan using the Literacy or Numeracy Net material.
5. Arrange for the student to participate in the school program: Support a Reader.
6. Depending on the needs of the student it may be necessary to contact the School Psychologist at this stage. This should be done through the Principal
7. Organise a parent-teacher discussion. Collect anecdotal information from the parent using school based forms. Provide a copy of the Intervention Plan and range of suitable home literacy or numeracy tasks.
8. Implement the plan within mainstream class.
9. Complete the First Steps Map of Development (new edition)
10. Review and assess plan. The school psychologist should be contacted if there are any major concerns

3.0 Supporting Gifted and Talented Students

The Department of Education and Training's focus on providing inclusive learning environments for all students includes those who are gifted and/or have special talents.

Gifted and talented students may become disengaged when their learning needs are not met. The Department provides support for both primary and secondary teachers to incorporate approaches and strategies into their teaching and learning program for gifted and talented students.

○ **3.1 MEETING THE LEARNING NEEDS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

Gifted and talented students should be provided with a curriculum that is differentiated in terms of learning experiences, teaching methods, and teacher expectations. This includes:

- **school-based provision**
  ensures schools and teachers provide a challenging and extended curriculum to enable the gifts and talents of students to emerge, be recognised and developed.
- **supplementary provision**
  enables gifted and talented students to interact with their gifted and talented peers in specific curriculum fields at higher levels than can normally be provided in the regular classroom or school.

Please visit the Department's Gifted and Talented website for further information on the identification, provision, monitoring and assessment of gifted and talented students.

3.2 Related Items

- Gifted Education Research Resource and Information Centre

3.3   Identification
➢ The quality of the school curriculum and classroom programs should enable the outstanding abilities of students to emerge and be recognised
➢ Strategies should identify those students, who for various reasons of disadvantage may not be identified because the curriculum does not allow "giftedness" to engage.

3.4   Principles of Identification
➢ Inclusive
➢ Flexible
➢ Utilise information from a variety of sources
➢ Help the teacher identify a student's intellectual strengths, talents, social and emotional needs.

3.5   Teachers and Parents Roles in Identification
➢ The teacher may suspect a student has super intellectual, creative, artistic or leadership capabilities, noticing he or she learns things very quickly, dislikes repetitive tasks, copes with large volumes of information or solves problems. Any of these things alert a teacher to the need to observe this student carefully.
The teacher then needs to gather information to develop a profile of this student. It should come from a variety of sources including parent feedback. The teacher needs to ensure that the information gathered is correct.

> ➢ The parents are aware of their children's interests and hobbies, as well as their early development and capacity for learning new material. It is important that parent advice about gifted and talented provision be acknowledged because parents normally demonstrate a high degree of reliability in being able to accurately identify their children as gifted or talented.
> ➢ Finally, the information about identified students should be used as a basis for a program development for the identified student.

3.6 Provision

Teachers will provide a challenging and enriched curriculum through school based provision to enable the gifts and talents of students to emerge, be recognised and be developed. District Office coordinated programs, such as PEAC or Comet Bay College programs will enable the most talented students to interact with their peers in specific curriculum fields at higher levels outside the school environment.

Participation in wider community challenges, such as CSIRO Crest Awards online challenges e.g. Web Quests etc.

4.0 Improving Student Attendance and Retention

○ 4.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is one of the most important factors to students achieving their potential.

Schools are responsible for implementing strategies and approaches that encourage and maintain student participation.

District offices provide additional support to schools to improve attendance levels of individual students through the provision of Attendance Officers and Participation Managers and Coordinators.

○ 4.2 RETENTION AND PARTICIPATION

The Department's Retention and Participation (RAP) plan is one of five focus areas of the *Making the Difference: Students at Educational Risk* strategy.

The RAP plan incorporates prevention, early identification and intervention strategies to promote improved educational outcomes specifically targeted at those students at educational risk through issues of alienation from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Funding is provided to each district education office to support the development of an effective, integrated RAP plan.

In 2006, the Department raised the school leaving age to 16 to increase the retention of students in school, training or employment. The school leaving age will be raised again to 17 in 2008.

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The School Education Act 1999 requires compulsory aged students, as defined in the Act, to attend school, or participate in an educational program of a school, on the days on which the school is open for instruction unless an arrangement in writing has been entered into for a student.

Although there is no legal requirement in the School Education Act 1999 for pre and post-compulsory aged students to enrol in a school, there is an expectation that once enrolled students will attend on a regular basis, and positive attendance patterns should be fostered with all students by schools.

Prosecution for non-attendance is only to be used as a last resort.

See also: School Attendance Panels; School Attendance Officer's Manual

4.3 RECORDING ATTENDANCE

a) The school Principal is to ensure that accurate attendance records are kept for each student enrolled at the school. This includes recording attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions for kindergarten, pre-primary and primary students, and recording attendance for every lesson or period for secondary students.

o A continuous attendance by a child of not less than two (2) full hours' secular instruction is to be recorded as a half day's attendance. Students who arrive late but still meet this requirement are not be included as a half-day absence.

Students who are on an excursion, participating in an off campus program or in some other school-approved activity or are not to be counted as absent.

Students on suspension are to be recorded as absent during the period of suspension.

b) Attendance records may be kept in electronic form, but must be capable of being reproduced in written form.

c) Attendance records (eg, attendance registers, class rolls) must be kept for a period of seven years. (Refer to *Manual for Records Management: School, College and Campus Records*)

d) Absentee notes that are separate from the student's records are to be kept for two (2) years from the date of receipt and then destroyed. This includes details recorded by the school when a parent provides the school with a verbal reason. If the absentee note is included on a student's record file, then the note must be kept for 25 years from date of birth. (Refer to *Manual for Records Management: School, College and Campus Records*)

e) Unsatisfactory attendance reports on students must be retained in a student's records for 25 years from date of birth (Refer to *Manual for Records Management: School, College and Campus Records*).

4.4 MONITORING ATTENDANCE

a) Schools are responsible for developing and implementing an attendance monitoring and action system for systematic, consistent and effective identification and action for all students with attendance issues.

b) When a student has been absent from school and an acceptable explanation has not been forthcoming, the school is to send a written request for an explanation to the student's family to establish the reasons for non-attendance.

c) If it is established that the student was absent from school for a legitimate reason, the school need not do anything further unless the frequency and or number of absences gives the school cause for concern. As there is no requirement in the School Education Act 1999 for the reason to be provided in writing, schools must record all details when a parent or caregiver provides the school with a verbal reason, either in person or over the telephone, that the school believes is an acceptable reason in the context of the school.

d) If a student's attendance rate falls below 90% over a ten-week period, the school must further investigate the reasons why the student is not attending school.

e) Schools are to use a case management approach for attendance issues. Schools must be mindful of consulting with all stakeholders, and accessing support from other community groups and agencies if required.

f) If a school is having difficulty or little success with restoring a student's attendance, prior to making a formal referral to the school attendance officer, the school must make informal contact with the school attendance officer who may be able to provide advice or alternative intervention strategies.

g)   Consistent with Departmental records management policies, the school must keep detailed records of all contact, or attempts to make contact, with the student's family and the intervention strategies implemented to restore a student's attendance. This documentation will need to be made available to the school attendance officer and/or the School Attendance Panel if the student is subsequently formally referred to the school attendance officer and/or the School Attendance Panel.

4.5 REFERRALS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

a)   If a school has identified a student as being a regular or chronic non-attender, and the intervention strategies implemented by the school have not been successful in restoring the student's attendance, the student is to be referred to the school attendance officer by the school Principal.

b)   The appropriate referral form must be completed by the school Principal and forwarded to the school attendance officer along with all documentation demonstrating the school has made reasonable and repeated efforts to restore the student's attendance.

c)   The school is to work collaboratively with the school attendance officer, the student's family and other community groups and agencies to restore the student's attendance at school. If the school attendance officer considers it to be appropriate, he or she will facilitate inter-agency access and support through structures and or protocols established by the district office.

4.6 CHILDREN WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN

a)   If all attempts to locate a student have failed after fifteen (15) school days and the school has not received advice that the student has enrolled at another school, the school Principal is to refer the student to the "Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown List" through the school attendance officer.

b)   The school Principal is required to regularly review the Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown list and advise the school attendance officer if a child has enrolled at the school.

4.7 REFERRALS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PANEL

a) If the student's attendance at school has not been successfully restored the school Principal, in collaboration with the school attendance officer, is to refer the student to the School Attendance Panel.

b) The District Director is to establish a School Attendance Panel in accordance with the Procedures for School Attendance Panels.

c) The School Attendance Panel is to fully consider the issues that contribute to the student's non-attendance at school, and establish strategies to ensure the re-engagement of the student in an appropriate educational setting.

d) The school Principal is to implement the relevant strategies established by the School Attendance Panel and monitor the subsequent attendance of the student.

4.8 DATA COLLECTIONS

a) All schools are required to comply with requests from district and central office to provide information on attendance.

5.0 Supporting Indigenous Students

The Department of Education and Training has developed a range of programs and strategies to improve Indigenous students' access to, and participation in, all levels of schooling and training. The various strategies focus on:

- leadership and mentoring
- literacy and numeracy
- achievement of standards for Indigenous students

The Aboriginal Education and Training Indigenous Participation and Achievements Standards Directorate implements the Department's programs and strategies through its Operational Plan which sets the direction for Aboriginal education and training in our public schools.

o 5.1 WHAT WORKS. THE WORK PROGRAM

What Works. The Work Program provides professional materials for teachers and school administrators to improve outcomes for Indigenous students.

The resources were developed from research and other information derived from the Australian Government Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme's Strategic Results Projects.

The [What Works. The Work Program website](#) provides information about that effort, provides advice and information about how improvement can be achieved through the use of its online resources.

6.0 Improving the Curriculum

The Department of Education and Training has a continued commitment to develop and promote an inclusive education agenda through curriculum that best meets the needs of all students.

As part of this commitment, the Department has adopted educational frameworks that support inclusive practice and provide better support for students at educational risk. These include:

- *Plan for Government Schools 2004-2007*
- *Curriculum Framework*
- *Outcomes and Standards Framework*

  o **6.1 PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS 2004-2007**

The *Plan for Government Schools 2004-2007* is the Department's overiding four year strategic plan for all public schools. This plan underpins all other Departmental strategies, policies and practices.

One of the four key objectives of the strategic plan is to provide inclusive, safe and stimulating learning environments. This means recognising, responding to and accommodating academic, social and cultural diversity within school communities through:

- building inclusive and positive learning environments
- building, refurbishing and maintaining facilities for the future

  o **6.2 THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

The *Curriculum Framework* is an inclusive framework intended for all students attending public, private or home schools in Western Australia.

The knowledge, skills, understandings and values that students in Western Australia need to learn as a result of attending school are defined as outcomes.

Its purpose is to provide a structure around which all schools can build inclusive educational programs that ensure students achieve agreed outcomes regardless of culture, disability, race, class and gender.

○ **6.3 THE OUTCOMES AND STANDARDS FRAMEWORK**

The *Outcomes and Standards Framework* has been developed for public schools by the Department of Education and Training to provide developmental sequences for learning area outcomes described in the Curriculum Framework.

This framework acknowledges that students with physical, intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties do not achieve different outcomes but that the difference could be in their rate of achievement and the way in which they demonstrate particular outcomes. It promotes fair, valid and inclusive assessment practices.

7.0 Students at Educational Risk Coordinators

Students at Educational Risk (SAER) Coordinators help to identify students who may be at risk, and then provide support for school processes which will assist those students.

These coordinators work across seven key areas which are based on the *Students at Educational Risk* policy:

- developing processes for early identification of students at risk
- assisting in the development and delivery of quality curriculum which is responsive to individual needs
- collection of performance information which can be used to plan for the needs of students at risk
- collaborating with those who have a stake in the development of educational plans
- supporting the creation of learning environments that are responsive to and supportive of the needs of students at risk
- establishing reporting practices that provide meaningful information to improve learning outcomes
- identifying professional development requirements for teachers of students at educational risk

Approximately 20% of students could be at risk at any one time. This means that the scope of the role of the SAER Coordinator is very broad. For example, the SAER Coordinator in some schools may:

- work with individuals or groups of students
- be involved in case management
- provide advice regarding professional learning opportunities for individual teachers and/or the school as a whole

The target group of the SAER Coordinator may also include those students at risk due to learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are a number of other staff within schools who also support students at risk including the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) and Getting it Right specialist teachers .

At different times, the roles of all these support officers may overlap and their work may be supported by a school based Learning Support Team.

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