STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION POLICY

Hamilton Special Developmental School

2016

To be reviewed annually.   Endorsed by HSDS School Council in August 2016.

Hamilton Special Developmental School is cognisant of its obligations under the **Child Safe Standards** (Ministerial Order 870 – effective August 1, 2016) to protect students from all forms of child abuse. To this end, all necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that student engagement and inclusion practices pose no risk to child safety.

DET PROTECT Guidelines
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1
VRQA Child Safe Standards
http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html

School Profile

Hamilton Special Developmental School is located in the South Western Region of Victoria on the outskirts of the rural city of Hamilton. The school is the only special education setting in the Hamilton area and caters primarily for students with a diagnosed mild to severe intellectual disability. Students are aged from 5 to 18 years and have a wide range of additional learning needs. A significant number of our students have the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and other disabilities, therfore our school uses a holistic approach to behaviour management and group structure.

Our school uses a team approach and recognises the benefits of working closely with parents, mainstream schools, therapists and carers to provide a broad comprehensive education for every student. Our school runs special programs such as Art, Music, Ridability, MARC Library, Community Sport, and Transition Education. The curriculum is determined by each student's individual needs and we use our own dedicated curriculum document based on the Victorian Curriculum as a reference for Individual Learning Plans. We have spaces dedicated for our art and music programs with additional areas for professional meetings. Students aged 16 and over also have Managed Individual Pathways plans and participate in work experience and other post-school learning opportunities.

School Values

'We share a united pride in our school and community through:
- Trust,
- Persistence,
- Respect, and
- Integrity.'

Underpinning these values is an expectation that all students are capable of learning to reach their maximum potential, and that we continue to retain high expectations for all of our students. We set clear goals with the individual student's independence as the focus of their education. Community involvement and a holistic approach towards the growth of the whole child are paramount.

School Philosophy

Our school believes that a positive approach to student behaviour will foster self-esteem. Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

As students progress through school they need to be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.

Students should, with support, be expected by their parents/carers and their school to participate fully in the school's educational program and to attend regularly. Students are expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Demonstration of respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students. Students' engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations should be framed using positive language to support and encourage safe and inclusive behaviour.

Through adopting the *School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support* framework, we believe that we will be able to foster high expectations and agreed norms on how we manage and improve student behaviours. Through a common language and agreed practices all staff, students and families will understand our expectations in a supportive and engaging environment.

Actively teaching students whole school engagement, attendance and behavioural expectations creates a highly predictable environment that allows students to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from each other.

School Vision

While we have strong beliefs in individual learning and growth, we are passionate that this is only possible in a calm and controlled environment. Every student has the right to feel safe and to learn with minimal disturbance. We believe that our focus on the individual student enables us to maintain a general order, comfort and positive behaviours in each and every situation in school.

We are committed to developing whole-school expectations of student behaviour through *School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support* and in cyber-safety through the *eSmart* program. We are relentless in the pursuit of student safety in both the environmental and digital worlds.

eSmart

As an *eSmart* school we are committed to developing the smart, safe and responsible use of information and communications technology as a cultural norm. Students, teachers and the wider school community will be equipped to embrace the best these technologies can offer, while being savvy about the pitfalls.

Students will be regularly involved in developing and delivering information on the smart, safe and responsible use of technologies to a variety of audiences and are taught a suite of social and emotional skills.

In eSmart schools, relationships are strong and supportive and learning outcomes are enhanced. Bullying and cyberbullying are therefore less likely to thrive.

A committee drawn from all areas of the school community provides strong and effective organisation to guide implementation of systems, structures and planning to ensure a school reaches and maintains eSmart status.

School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support
School-Wide Positive behaviour support (SWPBS) is a framework or approach comprised of intervention practices and organisational systems for establishing the social culture, learning and teaching environment, and individual behaviour supports needed to achieve academic and social success for all students.

SWPBS is not a specific "model" but a compilation of effective practices, interventions, and systems change strategies that have a long history of empirical support and development and individually have been demonstrated to be empirically effective. Decades of converging research have consistently demonstrated that these strategies are individually and collectively effective and efficient. In addition, SWPBS has relevant applications to educating all students in schools, not just students with disabilities.

As a school, we are committed to maintaining positive learning environments with clear expectations. We are working towards a common understanding and practices to be embedded in how we treat and manage our students at all times.

Principles for Health and Wellbeing

In general, due to the complex nature of the needs of our students, our school believes in following the *Principles for Health and Wellbeing*. The Principles are a reminder of good practice when working with children and young people and are intended to promote, nurture and support the health and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.

Principle 1 – Maximise access and inclusion
Quality education and support for all, with extra effort directed to ensuring education and support is accessible and inclusive to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Principle 2 – Focus on outcomes
A focus on health, learning, development and wellbeing outcomes is upheld when designing, delivering, evaluating and improving education and support services.

Principle 3 – Evidence-informed and reflective practice
Policy and practice is informed by current and relevant evidence, known to be effective in improving outcomes. Research and evaluation is undertaken to grow the evidence base and enable effective and reflective practice.

Principle 4 – Holistic approach
Educators and support staff work collaboratively and professionals use multidisciplinary approaches and focus on the range of goals, aspirations and needs of children, young people and families.

Principle 5 – Person-centred and family sensitive practice

Successful schools see people in the context of their families and environment, and seek to support and empower people to lead and sustain healthy lives.

Principle 6 – Partnerships with families and communities

Ensuring children and young people have good health and wellbeing is the collective responsibility of families, schools, the community and government; requiring shared commitment and action.

Principle 7 – Cultural competence

To effectively meet the needs of all children, young people, requires an ability to understand and effectively communicate with people across cultures and recognise one's own world view.

Principle 8 – Commitment to excellence

Education providers and services have high expectations for those they work with, and continually assess their own work practices to find opportunities for improvement.

Engagement Strategies

Whole-School Prevention

Before any intervention strategies are implemented, our preferred method of ensuring engagement, inclusion and positive behaviours is through a preventative approach. The SWPBS framework shows us the three levels in which we must operate to ensure maximum potential for positive behaviours:
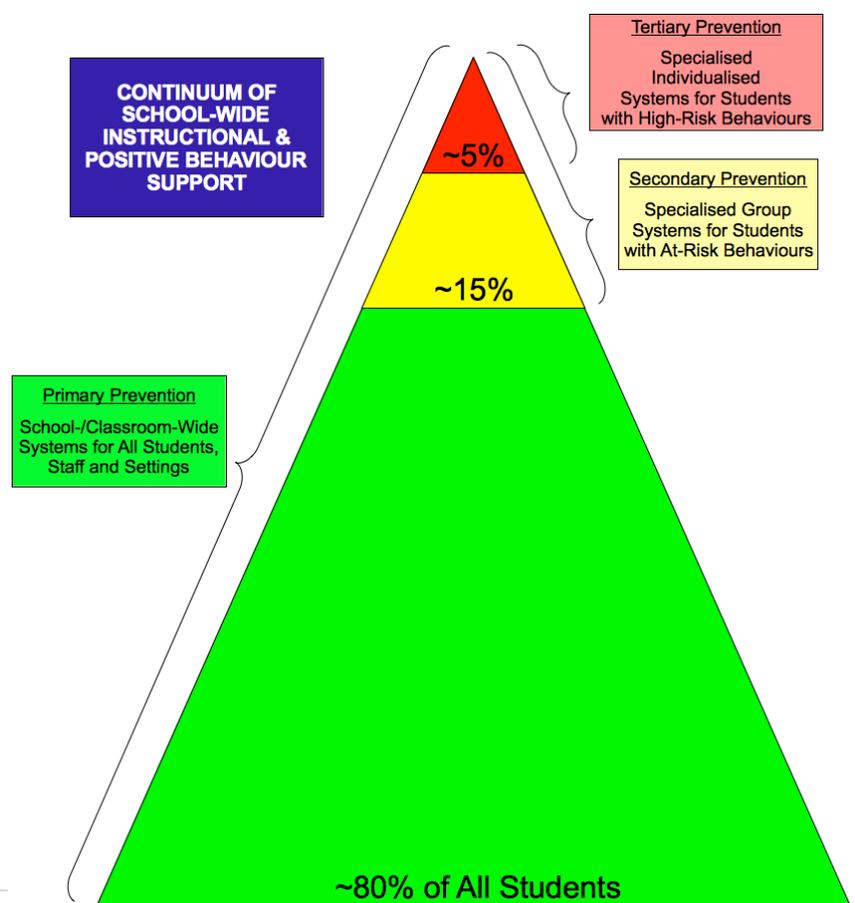
Primary
Preventing the development of new cases of problem behaviours for all students and staff, across all settings (i.e., school-wide, classroom, and non-classroom settings).

Secondary
Reducing the number of existing cases of problem behaviours by establishing efficient and rapid responses to problem behaviour.

Tertiary
Reducing the intensity and/or complexity of existing cases of problem behaviour that are resistant to primary and secondary prevention efforts.

CONTINUUM OF SCHOOL-WIDE INSTRUCTIONAL & POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

Tertiary Prevention
Specialised Individualised Systems for Students with High-Risk Behaviours

Secondary Prevention
Specialised Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behaviours

Primary Prevention
School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff and Settings

~5%

~15%

~80% of All Students

A preventive approach emphasises the following guidelines:

- Removing antecedent or preceding factors that prompt, trigger, or occasion problem behaviour & undesirable intervention practices.
- Adding antecedent or preceding factors that prompt, trigger, or occasion appropriate behaviour & desirable intervention practices.
- Removing consequence or following factors that maintain & strengthen occurrences of problem behaviour & undesirable intervention practices.
- Adding consequence or following factors that maintain & strengthen occurrences of appropriate behaviours & desirable intervention practices.
- Arranging environments so opportunities are maximised to teach & practice appropriate behaviour & desirable intervention practices.
- Teaching social skills and adopting intervention strategies that are more effective, efficient, & relevant than problem behaviours & undesirable intervention practices.
- Removing consequence or following factors that inhibit or prevent occurrences of appropriate behaviours & use of desirable intervention practices.

School Rules

In simplified terms, we ensure that each class generates their own set of classroom rules, which are in alignment with our school rules.

So everyone can feel safe a school, we must have:
- No hurting other people
- No threatening
- No bullying

We must treat everyone and their belongings with respect, which means:
- No swearing
- No arguing with staff
- No damaging school property
- No damaging other people's property

Student Code of Conduct

In ensuring that the rights of all students are maintained fairly, we follow the principles that each student has:
- the right to learn and play happily and safely without disruption from others.
- the right to be accepted as an individual.
- the right to be treated and spoken to fairly and courteously by others.
- the right to expect help in modifying unacceptable behaviour.
- the right to receive quality education.

Expectations:
We believe that the following expectations will enhance the lives of our students within the school and community setting. We will encourage students to:
- Value ideas, opinions and personal safety of peers.
- Look after and respect other people's property.
- Do not fight, hurt or threaten other people.
- Make positive contributions to school/classroom activities and organisations.

In the pursuit to promote a positive school culture, we will also:
- provide a wide range of positive extra-curricular activities for students including sporting, theatrical, leadership, community service and appropriate leisure pursuits
- ensure that positive student behavioural achievement will appropriately recognised
- provide all staff with professional development on student behaviour and discipline management
- provide the students with a school curriculum that will include units on resilience, peer pressure, positive choices, bullying, conflict resolution and leadership.
- Ensure that parents are kept informed, and actively encouraged to assist in the development of their children's behavioural performance.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

This table describes the categories of bullying.

Category	Includes
Direct physical bullying	Hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property
Direct verbal bullying	Name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
Indirect bullying	Action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: • lying and spreading rumours • playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate • mimicking • encouraging others to socially exclude someone • damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance
Cyberbullying	Direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. These are not considered as incidences of bullying:

Mutual conflict: involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike: is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts: of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

In approaching issues concerning bullying and harassment as outlined in this policy we will:
- promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
- put in place whole-school strategies and initiatives as outlined in the Department's anti-bullying policy
- develop processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour
- involve students, staff and parents in updating this policy
- work in partnership with parents to reduce and manage bullying
- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing.

Whole-School Intervention
In the event that students display any behaviour that contravenes the school expectations of behaviours a number of methods may be utilised as deemed fit by the teacher on duty. These will be in a staged response and will include multiple, but not all of the following:

Primary Interventions
1. Ignore behaviour
2. Distract student
3. Reinforce positive behaviour to other student near the student
4. Reinforce positive behaviour to the student
5. Model appropriate behaviour
6. Loss of privileges
7. Verbal consequences – warning

Secondary Interventions
8. Physical assistance to complete task
9. Withdrawal from situation
10. Physical assistance to withdrawal space
11. Sent to principal
12. Sent home – not suspended, but given a chance to settle and reflect on situation

Tertiary Interventions
13. Suspension – A student should only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.
14. Alternate program – off-site
15. Expulsion

Incident reports will usually be made when secondary and tertiary interventions are required. They will be logged on the DET EduSafe website for staff and on CASES21 for students should an incident or near-miss occur.

Behaviour Management Strategies

In general, students will be directed using strategies as per direct action methodology. These may include:

- Direct the student using an open-hand point
- Ignore negative behaviours wherever possible
- If happy during tasks, praise each step completed to encourage them to stay on task and to complete the exercise.
- Provide different options/choices of how to complete the task where possible
- Expectations to be made explicit for each task.
- Break tasks into small achievable steps.
- Offer visual displays of expectations and rewards associated with completion of tasks
- Distract the student through conversation and wait until they are calm before redirecting

The student may also be required to be withdrawn from the setting in order to ensure their safety and the safety of other students and staff. This may include:

- Required to sit on chair away from the group
- Other students removed from the classroom
- Removal from the classroom to another safe and supervised area

In the event that a student requires restraint for their safety and the safety of other students and staff will only use approved methods of physical contact. These will be conducted utilising the approved MOVAIT training holds and methods of self-protection. These will be utilised in accordance with the regulations for the restraint of students.

Students Running Away (Absconding)

In alignment with the DET's 'Running Away from School Policy', our school will endeavour to effectively manage a student who has left the school grounds, or designated area of activity outside of the school grounds by:

1. Establishing whether the student has left the school grounds or a school-approved activity;
2. Discharging the school's duty of care owed to students by taking reasonable steps such as (among others):
    a) contacting the Victoria Police;
    b) contacting the parent, guardian or carer of the student;
    c) searching for the student and following or maintaining visual contact with the student until they are safe i.e. they have returned to school or school-approved activity or are in the company of the police, parent, guardian or carer;
    d) encouraging the student to make themselves safe i.e. return to school or school approved activity, stop the behaviour that is putting them at risk, or remain in the company of a suitable and responsible adult; and

e) restraining the student in appropriate circumstances to protect them from harm, in accordance with the Restraint of Student policy, which can be found at: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/restraint.aspx

3. Reporting the incident to the Department's Security Services Unit on (03) 9589-6266, as soon as practicable; and

4. Documenting the incident and the staff response to the incident.

Physical Intervention of Student under School Policy and Advisory Guide
Full policy found at:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/physicalintervention.aspx

Policy
Regulation 15 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 provides that:
"A member of staff of a Government school may take any reasonable action that is immediately required to restrain a student of the school from acts or behaviour dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person."

The key principles are:
- For physical intervention to be *immediately* required there should be no less restrictive action that could be taken to avert the danger in the circumstances.
- Staff should use the minimum force needed to protect against the danger of harm.
- Staff should apply the physical restraint for the minimum duration required and remove it once the danger has passed. Staff should ensure the type of restraint used is consistent with a student's individual needs and circumstances, including:
    o age/size of the student
    o gender of the student
    o any impairment of the student, for example, physical, intellectual neurological, behavioural, sensory or communication
    o any mental or psychological conditions of the student, including any experience of trauma
    o any other medical or other conditions
    o the likely response of the student
    o the environment in which the restraint is taking place
- The staff member should monitor the student for any indicators of distress or pain.
- The staff member should talk to the student throughout the incident, making it clear to the student when and why the physical restraint is to be applied and calmly explain that the restraint will stop once it is no longer necessary to protect the student and / or others.

Wherever possible, only staff trained in using physical intervention should use physical intervention on a student, and at least one other staff member should be present to witness the intervention being used and monitor the wellbeing of the student. It is recognised that this may not always be possible in a situation requiring an immediate response.

Consequences of Inappropriate Behaviour
- Should be immediate
- Consequences should be relevant and appropriate
- Students should be aware of consequences
- Should reflect student development level/understanding
- Students dignity/rights should be respected
- Should be consistent in all environments
- Parents/Caregivers should be consulted/informed
- All staff should apply consequences in the same ways

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances.

Individual Response

Any student who is deemed commits, or is at-risk of displaying, challenging or consistent inappropriate behaviours will have a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP). A BSP will be developed by the student's teacher, principal, and parents/caregivers. Where possible, student involvement in the development of the plan will be encouraged. Triggers, behaviours, and consequences will be made explicit within the plan, as well as references to appropriate resources and policies.

Where the behaviours escalate and where the student understands the consequence of their actions, a suspension or expulsion may ensue under the DET Suspension and Expulsion Guidelines.

Suspension

Suspension is the process of excluding a student from the standard instruction or educational opportunities being provided to other students at the school for part of a day, a full day, or multiple days. Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and is best reserved for incidents when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response. The procedures for suspension are set out in Ministerial Order 625 and detailed further in this guidance.

Grounds for suspension

In order for suspension to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:

The student's behaviour must have occurred:
- whilst attending school;
- or travelling to or from school;
- or while engaged in any school activity away from the school;
- or travelling to or from any school activity.

The student's behaviour must meet one or more of the following conditions:
a) behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
b) causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
c) commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;

d) possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
e) fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
f) consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes;
g) consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

Only the principal has the authority to make the final decision to suspend a student. This authority cannot be delegated. The principal may implement a suspension with immediate effect if the student's behaviour is such that they are putting the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, or any other person at significant risk.
The student's ability to understand the ramifications of a suspension will be considered prior to a suspension taking place.

Suspensions will not last more than 5 days in any one period.

For more information see: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/ Pages/suspensionconsiderations.aspx

Expulsion
Expulsion is the process of permanently excluding the student from the school in which he or she is currently enrolled. As the most extreme disciplinary measure available to a principal, it should only be used after other forms of behaviour management have been exhausted and the school can demonstrate evidence that this has occurred. The student's behaviour must also be of such magnitude that expulsion is the only available mechanism.

Expulsion cannot not be implemented as a consequence for events of a novel nature such as one-off pranks that do not cause any harm to other students or members of the school community.

Grounds and procedures for expulsion are set out in Ministerial Order 625 and detailed further in this guidance.

Grounds for expulsion
In order for expulsion to be an option, the following conditions must be in place:

The student's behaviour must have occurred:
• whilst attending school; or
• travelling to or from school; or

- while engaged in any school activity away from the school; or
- travelling to or from any school activity

The student's behaviour must meet one or more of the following conditions:

   a) behaves in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
   b) causes significant damage to or destruction of property;
   c) commits or attempts to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property;
   d) possesses, uses or sells or deliberately assists another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons;
   e) fails to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person;
   f) consistently engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person based on age; breastfeeding; gender; identity; impairment; industrial activity; lawful sexual activity; marital status; parent/carer status or status as a carer; physical features; political belief or activity; pregnancy; race; religious belief or activity; sex; sexual orientation; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes;
   g) consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.

The student's behaviour must also be of such magnitude that expulsion is the only available mechanism. In this regard, the principal must consider the need of the student to receive an education compared to the need to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of other students and staff at the school and the need to maintain the effectiveness of the school's educational programs.

Under Victorian Law, in deciding whether to expel a student, principals must undertake an assessment of that course of action under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In addition, when determining whether to expel a student with a disability, principals must be sure that reasonable adjustments have been made to assist the student to manage the behaviours where this is a manifestation of disability.

Only the principal has the authority to make the final decision to expel a student. This authority cannot be delegated.

For more information see: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/expulsionconsiderations.aspx

Part-time attendance
Whilst there is expectation that all school-aged students are required to attend school on full-time basis, in individual cases provision may be made to engage a student in our school part-time. This could utilised as a reasonable adjustment to the student's attendance based on, for example, recommendations that full-time basis may be too overwhelming or tiring

due to their medical condition or disability, in which case part-time attendance may be the recommended option. For this to occur, this decision would be made based on:

- a request by the student's parent/carer;
- the best interests of the student;
- and the request being supported by the school taking into account the student's current needs and any relevant recommendations of the student's treating medical practitioners or allied health team.

Arrangements for part-time attendance should generally be short-term arrangements and the school should ensure that appropriate planning is undertaken to increase attendance and gradually transition the student back into full-time schooling, as appropriate. The decision and the plan should be documented in writing, for example through the student's Individual Learning Plan or a specific plan for returning to school full-time.