

# ***Special Needs and Pastoral Care Policy***

Education is a right, not a privilege. Monument Primary School is bound by the legal and policy mandate espoused first and foremost by the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, stating in Section 29, that everyone has the right to basic education which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressive available and accessible.

In addition, the following Acts and Policies carry this mandate:

- SA Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 “A new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide education of progressively high quality for all “learners.”
- South African Constitution: “Everyone has the right to basic education.”
- KwaZulu-Natal School Education Act, 3 of 1996: “Education must be provided in accordance with the aptitude, ability, needs and interests of the learner.”
- National Policy
- Training System
- Education White Paper 6; Special Education Needs Education, released in July 2001, outlines a 20 year plan to phase in Inclusive Education and Training system.

## **1. ACRONYMS**

ELSEN	-	Education for Learners with Special Education Needs
IEP	-	Individualised Education Programme
LSEN	-	Learners with Special Education Needs
KZNDEL	-	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
PGSES	-	Psychological, Guidance and Special Education Service
TST	-	Teacher Support Teams

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

### **2.1 Opportunity Class**

A class located within the mainstream school, and learners with Special Education Needs are referred to these classes for individualised education programmes.

### **2.2 Teacher Support Teams**

A Teacher Support Team is a learning-centre based facility, which facilitates the identification of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN), and formulates the modus operandi with regard to solving the learner’s problems.

### **2.3 Inclusion**

Because of the social needs in society in general and in our school community in particular, it is of great importance that all role players in our school community should be assisted when special needs arise. These needs could include social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical and other needs.

### **3. AIMS**

- 3.1 Monument strives to establish a co-ordinated learner and educator support service, which is sensitive to, and accommodates diversity, whilst making optimal use of limited resources.
- 3.2 Only after every effort has been exhausted to make the ordinary classroom situation feasible, and it has become clear that an alternative is in the best interest of the learner, should alternate accommodation be sought for the learner.
- 3.3 We will strive to fully develop the potential of each learner.
- 3.4 We will strive to provide quality education for all learners, by minimising, removing and preventing barriers to learning and development in order to promote effective learning and development in all aspects, and levels of education.

### **4. BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 Two predominant models:
  - Traditional perspectives – traditionally ELSEN was learner- based on the specific disability, resulting in admission to a special school, and exclusion from mainstream educators.
  - Modern Perspectives (Inclusive) – There is a paradigm shift in the system, towards the systemic or social model. In this model, management include the LSEN in the mainstream schools / classes full-service or special schools, based on the intensity of support needed.
- 4.2 Learners are no longer seen as children with problems which need pity, but are perceived and treated as dignified human-beings, each with their own unique potential, diversity of needs and abilities. There is the realisation that diversity is a phenomenon of normal society, and that it can be accommodated in an inclusive education system.

### **5. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- 5.1 Inclusive Education is about maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of educational institutions, as well as identifying and minimising barriers to learning.
- 5.2 The following “barriers to learning and development” may impact negatively on the learning process:
  - Barriers within the curriculum
  - Barriers within the Learning Site
  - Barriers within the Education System
  - Barriers within a broader social context.
- 5.3 No learners should be prevented from participating in this system, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, language or other differences.
- 5.4 We should strive to mobilise parents and communities behind inclusion.
- 5.5 Learners who require education support, through for example, the tailoring of the curriculum, instruction and assessment, should be identified early, and for this purpose the Foundation Phase (Grades R – 3) should be prioritised.

## **6. AIMS OF THE TEACHER SUPPORT TEAM**

- To encourage and highlight to educators that they can resolve the problems of learners within the greater school environment.
- To illustrate the need to make use of resources within the school community.
- To draw on the expertise of one's colleagues.
- To jointly decide on the necessary further action.
- To curtail the need to consult with professionals who are far away.

## **7. TYPE OF PROBLEMS**

### **7.1 Individual learner problems**

- Academic issues
- Learning difficulties
- Behaviour problems
- Social issues

### **7.2 Group problems**

- Drugs
- Truancy etc.

## **8. COMPOSITION OF TST AND MEETINGS**

8.1 Co-ordinator. The only permanent member of the team, who will arrange meetings, liaise with other staff members and chair the meetings. He or she must have

empathy for ELSEN and be someone who can maintain confidentiality. It is recommended that the Principal counter-sign any referral forms.

8.2 Other members, including the Head, HOD's or any other teachers who may know the child under discussion. Class teacher from previous year, sports teacher, etc

8.3 On an informal, need to meet basis, i.e. meeting is only called when a teacher wants to present a case. Meetings may be called for staff development.

## **9. DEALING WITH LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

9.1 The TST is to consist of a team of experienced educators who are to provide a formal resource within the school.

9.2 The TST will meet on a regular basis at a time when teachers, learners and even parents are able to present problems and devise solutions. Community resources should be utilised wherever possible.

9.3 The TST, with the knowledge and approval of the parents and school's principal, will when necessary, liaise with or refer to a designated member of the region's PGSES. This is likely to occur when the TST requires additional guidance or when it recognises that a learner's needs cannot be met within the school, or community.

9.4 In certain cases where the problem referred to the TST is not primarily scholastic in nature.

9.5 TST's will be assisted to refer to appropriate resources within their community (e.g. abused or neglected learners can be referred directly to pre-approved social agencies within the school's community)

## **10. OUTSIDE (REFERRING) AGENCIES**

- 10.1 All outside agencies will be required to refer all but the most urgent cases back to the TST of the Learner with Special Educational Needs' present school. The PASES will act as a support service to the TST.
- 10.2 In drawing up an approved resource directory for the school, it will ensure that the mainstream school has genuinely attempted to meet the referred learner's needs.
- 10.3 Should the designated member of the PGSES agree with the mainstream school's recommendation that a LSEN should be placed in a specialised facility providing ELSEEN, the PGSES supports the mainstream school in their recommendation and refers the case to the Admissions Committee of the facility providing ELSEEN.

## **11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- 11.1 PGSES will monitor –
- The progress of the IEP's of learners, on an ongoing basis, in conjunction with the other services offered to the educators and learners.
  - The implementation / development of the TST's.
  - The appropriateness of the referral and placement of the LSEN in the special school or mainstream school.
- 11.2 The District Managers and Superintendants of Education Management will co-conduct regular school evaluations.
- 11.3 Quality Assurance, through its program of Whole school Evaluation will ensure that quality education is also adhered to by L.S.E.N.

## **12. EDUCATORS AT THIS SCHOOL REALIZE THAT**

- 12.1 Each child is unique with his / her own genetic composition, character and spirit.
- 12.2 Each child has certain talents.
- 12.3 The home conditions of learners differ.
- 12.4 The intelligence of all children is not the same.
- 12.5 There are differences in the physical make-up of children.
- 12.6 Some children have disabilities while others have none.
- 12.7 All these factors have an influence on the learners' scholastic progress.

For precisely all these reasons there should be differentiation in the learning process and assistance have to be given to those learners with learning problems.

In order to help the learner the educator must get to the root of the problem before remedial or other intervention strategies are implemented.

## **13. REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION**

- 13.1 We as educators know that giving remedial instruction to the learner will take up extra time.
- 13.2 We also know that we shall never be able to help all the learners. We must however endeavour to help as many of these learners as possible. Fortunately we do not stand alone in this noble task.

- 13.3 The following institutions are there to support us in helping learners.
- The Support Services of the Education Department (Psychologists, remedial consultants, speech therapists, occupational therapists)
  - Social Services (social workers)
  - Medical and Dental Services (Doctors, nurses, dentists, clinics, hospitals)
- 13.4 Teachers must make use of all the above Services in order to help the child with learning problems. In practice it means that
- Educators must identify learning problems that the learner might have as soon as possible.
  - The parents have to be informed about the problem and asked to furnish the school with information about the learner's home conditions, state of health, behaviour at home and importantly what kind of birth the child had.

#### **14. STEPS TO FOLLOW**

- 14.1 Depending on the above diagnosis and the information gathered one or more of the following steps should be taken:
- 14.2 The educator, in consultation with the School's own Learner Support Team, must prepare individual programs for the learners and then start giving remedial instruction.
- 14.3 If necessary the help of a remedial consultant must be procured.
- 14.4 The learner must be referred to a school psychologist for scholastic and psychological evaluation.
- 14.5 The learner must be referred to a medical practitioner or hospital for a medical evaluation.
- 14.6 The help of a social worker must be called in.
- 14.7 Keep the parents informed about every intervention strategy that is followed.

#### **15. BASIC TRAINING**

It is essential that as many educators as possible, especially Foundation Phase educators as well as Language and Mathematics educators, receive basic training in diagnosing learning problems and in remedial instruction methods in order for the school to have a strong Learner Support Team. The larger the team, the more learners can be helped.

#### **16. PLACEMENT IN THE OPPORTUNITY CLASS**

- 16.1 There is only one class unit for the learners of the Opportunity Class.
- 16.2 The opportunity class accommodates both learners from English and Afrikaans home language groups.
- 16.3 Size of the class: Ideally no bigger than 12.
- 16.4 Learners who experience learning barriers are identified by register teachers.
- 16.5 Parents are contacted.
- 16.6 A meeting follows in which the child's future is discussed.
- 16.7 If the Opportunity Class is considered, the parents are asked to have a full psychological assessment done. Only on the recommendation of this assessment, will the child be placed in the Opportunity Class.
- 16.8 In the year in which a learner in the Opportunity Class turns 14, he/she has to be accommodated by a suitable school, such as Tugela.



16.9 Parents are responsible for the assessment, admission, etc. of such a learner to an alternative school.

## 17. PASTORAL CARE

17.1 The learners' academic needs are of paramount importance and therefore any factors indicating that there could be a need for special assistance, should be brought to the attention of the grade head, a member of management and the principal (see the School Policy for ELSEN learners).

17.2 Should emotional needs arise, the educators should do everything within their power to provide the necessary assistance from the school's side.

17.3 The help of parents and even specialists should be called upon. The assistance of professionals can be considered after the matter has been discussed with the parents and principal.

17.4 Any physical disability should be provided for as far as possible, by making the life of the effected person as comfortable as possible: e.g. timetabling to limit the navigating of stairs by learners who are restricted in their movement.

17.5 For financial assistance, the parents need to be informed in writing about the possibility of applying for

- total exemption from school fees
- partial exemption from school fees

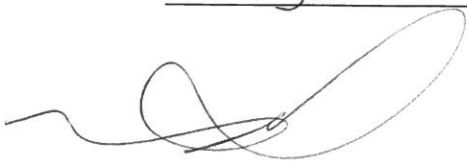
17.6 When a learners' appearance demonstrates a lack of caring at home (pay attention to clothing, cleanliness, health and lunch boxes) the matter should also be reported to management by the register teacher. If it is a very serious case, the necessary intervention must be taken as soon as possible, e.g.

- ask a doctor to examine the child after the parents have given their permission (We do have parents / friends of the school in the medical profession, who are willing to help)
- the help of educators / learners can be called on to collect food / clothes / blankets for the affected learners
- in less serious cases the names of the learners who need a supplementary meal, can be given to the secretary and the child will be added to the list, so that he/she can qualify for free sandwiches and fruit provided at break time(s)

17.7 Emotional and financial traumatic needs such as serious health hazards or death in a family will be addressed by immediate verbal support (telephone calls, sms's) visits and other support which can be obtained for the family from professional people. In the case of a family being affected by HIV/Aids, there should be NO discrimination against the sufferer(s).

17.8 The School Governing Body must put measures in place to ensure transparency and accountability in the whole process.

SIGNED AT Lodgsmith ON THIS 15th DAY OF February <sup>2016 J.B.</sup> ~~2015~~



Governing Body chair