



## LEARNING SUPPORT TEAM POLICY

### A Learning Support Team

A learning support team is a whole school planning and support mechanism. It is formed with the purpose of addressing the learning support needs of students through the coordination, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of educational programs.

### Implementing a Learning Support Team

A prime function of our Learning Support Team is to ensure that the needs of all students in the school are being met using a three-tiered model of support addressing universal, targeted and intensive supports for students and teachers. Our team also employs the logic of Positive Behaviour for Learning, i.e. a strong focus on **systems** (what we do to support adults), **practices** (what we do to support students), and **data** (to inform our decision making about systems and practices.)

A key feature of our learning support team is the facilitation of collaborative planning between teachers, support staff, parents and students. Our learning support team also addresses **whole school need**, **teacher need** and **student need** (as outlined in the Special Education Handbook).

### Why implement a Learning Support Team?

The Implementation of a Learning Support Team can be of great benefit to a school. It will:

- enable **coordination of support**.
- enhance **collaboration and provides collegial support** to school personnel and the wider community.
- ensure a whole school and ongoing plan is implemented to meet the needs of students with support needs.
- establish guidance and support systems for all staff in order that they can cater for students with support needs.
- ensure that programs based on current research and best practices are implemented for students with support needs.
- equitably distribute resources based on need with clear criteria for resource allocation.

Learning Support Teams work when:

- teachers see the learning support team as a support for their classrooms
- processes are inclusive, well organised and understood by all
- teachers are involved in the identification of outcomes for support for students
- support is provided and the teacher is involved in identifying what may be most effective in his/her classroom
- realistic action plans are developed
- the learning support team is seen as a group of professionals who coordinate support for teachers and students rather than a step in the referral process to other services.

Adapted from: Hoskins, B. (1996) *Developing Inclusive Schools*

**LST team members**

In principle, every teacher is a member of the LST. However their participation will vary according to the function of the team at a particular time e.g. whether or not our team is focusing on universal, targeted or intensive supports. The intensive / caseload team at Oak Flats Public School is:

**Team Facilitator** – Assistant Principal

**School Principal**

**Learning and Support Teacher (LaST)**

**School Counsellor**

**Teacher representatives – Assistant Principals for each stage**

Other specialist personnel e.g. Itinerant teachers and outside agencies, parents and care givers can be invited to attend as necessary.

**Roles of LST team members:****Principal**

- attend meetings and oversee due process
- establish programs with SLSOs
- supervise SLSOs

**LST Coordinator**

- convene regular meetings
- develop meeting agenda
- maintain LST documents

**LST**

- identify school needs
- establish school priorities
- training and development
- coordinate resources (human and material)
- identify resource needs
- assist in development of school Learning Support policy and procedures
- collaboratively plan to develop action plans with strategies to support students
- liaise with students, parents and outside agencies

**Learning and Support Teacher (LaST)**

- support teachers with writing Personalised Learning Support Plans PLSP's
- discuss alternatives with teachers prior to presenting at the LST
- support teachers uploading data into Sentral
- follow up from LST meeting to support teachers in implementing recommendations
- work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to support assessment for learning of their students with additional educational needs and identify specific learning and support needs
- assist with professional learning for class teachers and school learning support officers within their school and local network of schools where appropriate.

**Classroom Teachers**

- follow steps 1 to 3 to address concerns and meet the needs of the student. This includes making instructional adaptations first and then collaborating with your stage team.
- refer students to LST when programs are not meeting students' needs
- attend LST meetings when required

- implement LST recommendations
- monitor student progress and inform LST

### **School Counsellor**

- follow up on external deadline assessment requirements
- in school referrals
- offer support to parents
- facilitate social programs with specific classes to target identified students.

### **What does our LST team do?**

When implementing a LST it is important that schools determine a priority order and gradually work through areas of need. The LST may:

- develop the schools policy for students experiencing difficulties in learning or those requiring extension
- implement school 'identification' procedures in order that students experiencing difficulties in learning receive 'early' and 'appropriate' instruction.
- develop referral systems for classroom teachers to access support services.
- establish mechanisms to coordinate support personnel within the school (e.g. LaST, Counsellor, EAL/D, and Reading Recovery).
- develop a plan to coordinate and access 'external' specialist personnel (e.g. Integration, Specialist counsellors, EAL/D Consultants, Regional curriculum consultants where they exist.
- implement school 'levels of support' for classroom teachers in order that they can access appropriate personnel and cater for students experiencing difficulties in learning.
- establish support systems for specialist personnel within the school (e.g. policy/ model implementation, funding issues).
- implement mechanisms for on-going support services for students (e.g. progressive monitoring and record keeping).
- provide direction for professional learning programs.
- assist the school with the selection, implementation and evaluation of resources for students experiencing difficulties in learning and those requiring extension.
- establish communication and liaison procedures within the school community (e.g. school based/ home based programs, parent referral procedures).
- implement effective models and programs to improve student outcomes (e.g. early intervention programs, assessment procedures, programs based on current research and best practice in the area of learning difficulties, effective teaching strategies, monitoring and evaluation procedures).
- identify and provide Professional Learning opportunities for all staff to support the aims of the Learning Support Team in meeting the learning needs of all students.

### **Where does the LST fit into our school resources?**

The classroom teacher can access a number of resources to support students, including the LST. These resources range from the least intensive support (adaptation to the class program – universal supports) to the most intensive support (support from outside agencies may be included).

### **School Levels of Support**

1. Instructional adaptations to the class program.
2. Collaborative problem solving with colleagues
3. Support from school specialist resources (LST, LaST, SLSO, EAL/D)
4. Support from out of school resources.

Students experiencing difficulty in learning are catered for by the class teacher within the regular class program. This will involve the teacher making instructional adaptations to the program.

These adaptations could include:

- simplifying instructions
- prompting/cues
- corrective feedback
- grouping students with similar instructional needs
- peer and/or parent tutor programs
- selecting instructional level text on the same topic as the rest of the class
- additional practice of skills.

### **Collaborative problem solving with colleagues**

Teacher meets with colleagues (including supervisor at Stage meetings) to collaboratively problem solve and cater for students within the regular class program.

- Concerns are raised with supervisor and stage team at a stage meeting. Parents are contacted via phone call to make them aware of the concerns about the student's progress.
- Supervisor and stage colleagues provide ideas and strategies for supporting the student and teacher.
- Class teacher will be supported by stage/ supervisor to develop a Personalised Learning Support Plan (PLSP), where appropriate.
- Personalised Learning Support Plan will be implemented.
- Progress on plan will be reviewed after 6 weeks through Stage Meeting

### **Support from school resources**

- Coordinated through the LST
- After steps 1, 2 and 3 have been implemented and the student is still not progressing according to expectations, the teacher may refer the student to the LST
- Collaborative problem solving is used to design appropriate interventions

### **Support from out of school resources**

- If a student has support needs that cannot be met by school resources, the LST can seek support from network or state resources.
- Students are only referred for support after extensive intervention by the class teacher and school resources.
- It is important the parents are involved in the decision making process at this stage of intervention and that communication and collaboration exists between specialists and school personnel.

### **Learning Support Team Operation Guidelines**

The Learning Support Team at Oak Flats Public School will meet on a weekly basis.

Each week the team may discuss, plan and develop intensive interventions for identified students. Students discussed by the LST at these meetings will have already had significant input from the classroom teacher and appropriate team leader.

Each week the LST may discuss and review integration and support programs and to consult with relevant teachers, parents, SLSOs, and Itinerant Teachers (where applicable).

Programs to be reviewed at these meetings will include: Social Skills Program, Access Requests, Gifted and Talented, LaST, SLSO's, Rocket Reading, Maths intervention etc.

**Student is identified by class teacher as having learning and/or support needs**

**Step One** Instructional adaptations are made to class program. These may include;

- simplifying instructions
- prompting/cues
- corrective feedback
- grouping students with similar instructional needs
- peer and/or parent support in classroom (i.e. parent home readers)
- additional practice of skills
- reflect on classroom routines
- explicit teaching
- modify class behaviour program.



**Step Two** Collaborative problem solving with colleagues

Teacher meets with colleagues to collaboratively problem solve and cater for student's needs.

- Concerns are raised with supervisor and stage team at a stage meeting.
- Parents are contacted via phone call to make them aware of the concerns about the student's progress. Record on SENTRAL.
- Supervisor and stage colleagues provide ideas and strategies for supporting the student and teacher.
- Class teacher will be supported by stage/ supervisor to develop a Personalised Learning Support Plan (PLSP) or Group Learning Plan where appropriate. This plan should be discussed with the LaST.
- Personalised Learning Support Plan will be implemented.
- Progress on plan will be reviewed after 6 weeks through Stage Meeting



**Step Three Support from school resources - LaST**

After step 1 and 2 have been implemented and the student is still not progressing according to expectations, the teacher will discuss the student with the LaST and present the current strategies, including PLSP, and discuss future plans.

The teacher may refer the student to the LST (Form A). The referral will be uploaded into Sentral.



**Step Four Support from out of school resources**

- If a student has support needs that cannot be met by school resources, the LST can seek support from regional or state resources.
- Students are only referred for support after extensive intervention by the class teacher and school resources.
- It is important the parents are involved in the decision making process at this stage of intervention and that communication and collaboration exists between specialists and school personnel.

## LaST Tier Criteria for Supporting Students with Additional Learning Needs

1	<p><b>TIER ONE</b></p> <p>Students in this tier receive funding support directly through Integration Funding Support. The amount of funding for these students is in excess of \$6,400 annually. These students have a disability confirmation sign off and the funding is used to directly support them usually with a Student Learning Support Officer.</p> <p>These students may have an intellectual disability or confirmed diagnosis and have particular curriculum access needs. Students in this tier experience quite significant difficulties with literacy and numeracy across all the KLAs and differentiated teaching and learning activities are needed. Frequent additional opportunities are required for practicing skills. Pre-teaching of vocabulary and ideas, the provision of easier texts and peer tutoring are the type of strategies that can be used. Support is provided through school and support personnel to assist the teacher to adjust the class program for the student.</p>
2	<p><b>TIER TWO</b></p> <p>Students in this tier have been identified through the school using a range of data. They have specific behaviour and or academic needs that are extreme and have been identified by the class teacher, school counsellor or parent. Students at this level have a specific need which has been diagnosed by the school or outside personnel. Identification at school level must be through counsellor referral. Students at this level will receive individual support from a LaST and/or Student Learning Support Officer. This may include in class or external support on the playground.</p>
3	<p><b>TIER THREE</b></p> <p>Students in this tier do not receive individual support. Students in this tier have been identified by class teachers through school based assessments. Students targeted in this tier have been identified through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reading Age/Level through PM Benchmark significantly below (a grade or more below)</li> <li>-NAPLAN is in Band 1 for literacy/numeracy</li> <li>-Learning Continuum clusters indicate the student is below stage outcomes (two or more clusters below expected)</li> <li>-Students are working at a stage or more below expected outcomes in literacy and or numeracy</li> <li>-TEN/TOWN Assessment is significantly below expected level</li> </ul> <p>Students in this tier have their additional needs met through a small group setting with a Student Learning Support Officer focusing on their specific areas of need.</p>
4	<p><b>TIER FOUR</b></p> <p>Students in this tier have been identified by class teachers through school based assessments. Students targeted in this tier have been identified through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reading Age/Level through PM Benchmark is below</li> <li>-NAPLAN is in Band 2 for literacy/numeracy</li> <li>-Learning Continuum clusters indicate the student is below stage outcomes (one to two clusters below expected)</li> <li>-Students are working at the beginning of stage/bordering stage outcomes in literacy and or numeracy</li> <li>-TEN/TOWN Assessment is below expected level</li> </ul> <p>Students in this tier have their additional needs met through STLA, ESL, LaST programs, Reading Recovery, Reading Rockets, Maths Intervention Peer Reading Program or other school based initiatives.</p>

### Role of the Learning and Support Teacher

Learning and Support Teachers (LaST) assist students experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy in regular classes.

The LaST works with the school's Learning Support Team to plan, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate programs through:

- team teaching
- professional support and advice
- withdrawal for assessment
- withdrawal of students for short term intensive instruction
- support for peer tutoring

The support teacher position should not be used to:

- establish a separate class
- provide relief for absent teachers
- provide academic extension programs for talented students
- provide release from face-to-face teaching
- permanently assist any one section of the school or any particular subject area.

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* provides the context for the role and activities of the Learning and Support Teacher.

Emphasis in the role will reflect the needs of individual students and school priorities and programs that support students with additional learning and support needs.

The role will be underpinned by a collaborative and consultative approach so that the student and/or their parent or carer is actively involved in the student's education. The LaST will:

- work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to support assessment for learning of their students with additional educational needs and identify specific learning and support needs
- plan, implement, model, monitor and evaluate teaching programs for students with additional learning and support needs in conjunction with regular classroom teachers
- plan, implement, model, monitor and evaluate personalised adjustments for learning where required, with the classroom teacher, student and/or parent or carer
- model exemplary classroom practice when tailoring adjusted learning programs for students with additional learning needs
- provide direct support for students with additional learning and support needs through a range of strategies (including direct instruction, delivery of adjusted learning programs, assessment and monitoring of progress including the areas of social integration, language and communication, literacy, numeracy and behaviour. This may include students with confirmed disabilities.
- provide professional specialist advice, support and mentoring to classroom teachers on:
  - how best to cater for the diverse learning needs in their classrooms, and
  - how to effectively work in partnership with families to maximise learning opportunities for students at school and at home
- provide professional specialist advice and assistance about students with additional learning needs to the school's learning and support team
- assist with professional learning for class teachers and school learning support officers within their school and local network of schools where appropriate.