



Giant Steps Sydney Annual Report 2018



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Principal's Report

The School completed the Registration and Accreditation process in June of 2018. The process for the school was a review and re-write of all current programmes and assessment processes. The work included mapping all the working parts of the process to improve student outcomes across both therapy and teaching and learning. As part of the review process, staff developed individual Scope and Sequences for each student to track student progress over time and each outcome now has a series of progressions to support the assessment process.

Ms Claire Cherrington, Ms Erin Cowie and Ms Jennifer Loughnan led the process and are to be congratulated alongside the staff for creating such a body of work to enhance the learning opportunities for our student population.

In 2018 the school also won the Special School of the Year Award and this was a highlight of the Year.



The launch of the www.theautismhub.net.au, a project headed by Ms Rachel Bowen in 2017 was enhanced with additional resources being included. The Hub seeks to deliver resources and information to parents, schools and the wider community to support children with autism. The information and resources have been developed collaboratively by Giant Steps staff, based on their experiences and professional backgrounds and are not attached to the sale or marketing of product/s. Giant Steps is committed to sharing work so that it is accessible to anyone.

The work on **student engagement and emotional regulation** continues as a focus area with staff accessing the IABA course as the basic training and in 2018 10 staff completed the Longitudinal Study – a comprehensive functional analysis of behaviour.

Over the last 5 years Giant Steps have supported the **Leading From the Middle** professional learning program delivered by the Association of Independent Schools. Giant Steps considers all teachers and therapists to be leaders and so staff work together and each participant develops, implements and evaluates a

project throughout the year. The quality of this professional learning is directly related to improved student outcomes and staff satisfaction. A group of 9 staff will complete the project and the School was part of the evaluation process for the course with the University of Nottingham and University of Sydney. The report can be found on the AIS website.

The School has strengthened its relationship with the Parramatta Football Club and now employs 12 young players to work as educator staff at a Junior of Intern level on a full time basis as part of the Earn and Play programme – NRL. This programme has supported students in play programmes and outdoor education specifically and has equally supported the emotional growth of these players as well as their work skills. We look forward to continuing this relationship in 2019.



There are so many individual highlights throughout the year however the one that is a standout is the way in which staff work together to truly understand each other's profession and then weave those learnings in to our own work to develop richer, more meaningful and targeted programs to support each child's learning. The staff are to be congratulated on their commitment to their professional growth and collaboration with colleagues.

We are grateful to work with such a vibrant parent community, a committed and dedicated staff and an engaged Board of Directors. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of students.



Ms Kerrie Nelson
Principal



Ms Claire Allen
Director of Finances & Administration

Secondary - Clocktower

In 2018, the Secondary Clocktower program consisted of five classes, with 27 students aged 12-18 years of age, welcoming 7 students from K-6 into the Clocktower. Four of these classes ran out of the Clocktower building, while one made use of Cartier Cottage.

It was another busy year in Clocktower with a range of exciting and enriching programs on offer, all aimed at developing life skills and preparing our young adults for life beyond Giant Steps. The Secondary program implemented the first year of the new 6-year 7-12 Scope and Sequence, with all classes learning parallel units of work. Programs were developed to allow students to access a greater range of focus areas, while individualising learning goals and teaching and learning sequences. Some Units of Work included German, Travel, Chemical Reaction Changes, Energy, and Medieval Europe. The Outdoor Education Program continued to be implemented, with all students participating. Students went bushwalking on trails of varying length and technicality, and swimming in a variety of waterholes, rivers, lakes and beaches. The class running out of Cartier Cottage developed a program to prepare three of the four students there for life after Giant Steps School, with a focus on Work and the Community and integration into post-school programs.

Secondary students also engaged in four camps, continuing the success of the previous year with another overnight hiking camp, along with camps to Milson Island, Canberra, and Myuna Bay. These camps were specifically tailored according to student need, interest, and ability, and were incorporated into supporting student engagement, and provided something of a break point from the regular routine and program. The secondary students always love these camps, enjoying the more relaxed feel, and getting to spend more time with their peers in very different environments.



Ms Claire Cherrington
Secondary – Clocktower
Director



Mr Toby Shi
Secondary – Clocktower
Director
Occupational Therapist



Secondary - Laneway

In 2018, the 'Senior Laneway' program consisted of ten students split across two senior school classes and one junior school class. This hybrid program, which was created in 2017, continued to best cater for the changing needs of a group of young people at various stages of puberty and adolescence. The major focuses of the program consisted of outdoor education (hiking and swimming), process driven tasks and student engagement support. It was fantastic to see students of a variety of ages (9-17 years) participate in a range of activities that were tailored to their individual needs, often working in mixed classroom groupings. The program highlights included 'Money' in which students visited the school Tuck-shop (Junior and Senior School - Mathematics), 'Playgrounds' (Junior School - History, Geography & Science) and 'Lewis Carroll' (Senior School - English). At the end of the year we celebrated with our Senior Laneway Camp at Burrill Lakes on the South Coast of NSW. The students enjoyed a range of activities of interest to them, including swimming (beach and local pool), bushwalking, barbeques and ball sports.



Mr Daniel Snow
Secondary – Laneway
Director
Occupational Therapist



K-6

In 2018, the K-6 Primary Program consisted of six classes. The students of the K- 6 program engaged in a rich and dynamic selection of units of work delivering all of the Curriculum's Key Learning Areas. Learning experiences included both onsite and offsite activities within the community.

In 2018 the NSW National Curriculum was taught across the following Key Learning Areas; English, Mathematics, Science (including technology), Geography and History. Personal Development/Health/Physical Education and Creative Arts continued to be taught using previously

developed syllabus while updates are in progress.

This year was an accreditation and registration year through NESA at Giant Steps. As part of this process the primary team collaborated with teachers, therapist and educators to create and a range of units of work and resources. Whilst we were in Year B (second year) of our curriculum Scope and Sequence the team also developed an individual Scope and Sequence to track the progression of individual student learning goals over time. **This year as per the scope and sequence primary students engaged with the following programs:**

Key Learning Area	Programs
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Assembly • Handwriting • Beary Tales • Julia Donaldson
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Meeting (all year) • Money • My Wardrobe • Built It
History, Science (including Technology) and Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgrounds • Sport
Creative Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the Orchestra (Music, Dance and Drama) • Meet the Orchestra (Visual Arts) • Island Paradise (Music, Dance and Drama) • Island Paradise (Visual Arts)
Personal Development/Health/Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities of Daily Living • Swimming • Sports and Games • Becoming Me • Cooking and Healthy Eating

Students in the primary program also participated in various camps based on their interest and previous camp experience. Over the year we ran three different camps:

Day Camp to Gosford: Here students were given an introduction to the camp experience where they had an extended school day, travelled a long distance on the bus and participated in various activities at numerous location across the day.

2 night Canberra Camp: This camp consisted of a visit to Questacon where students explored various science concepts and had the opportunity to engage in various science experiments.

2 night Shoalhaven Camp: during this 2night, three day camp students travelled south where they accessed the discovery park at the University of Wollongong, went out for dinner, explored the Shoalhaven zoo and completed the high ropes course.

Ms Erin Cowie
Director K-6



Early Learning

The Early learning program in 2019 comprised of 3 classes, all full time with a total of 16 students. We welcomed 9 new families to the Early Learning program and 4 to our play steps program.

We had a very busy year with four children transitioning to other settings including local primary school, private school and aspect support classes. In addition, 4 students transitioned up to our K-6 program at Giant Steps with the remaining students returning to Early Learning full time for 2018.

All classes for the first time in the Early Learning followed the Key Learning Areas Curriculum, with a fast-paced mix of classroom, desktop and wider community based lessons delivered. The curriculum topics included the much loved Julia Donaldson program for English, Build it for Mathematics and Sports for History and Science. Much of this program centred on building the individual students confidence, social and play skills with an additional emphasis on classroom skills and being part of a group. Communication and emotional regulation was a focus with staff working closely with the therapy team to establishing individual communication folders and assessing sensory profiles for each student.



As always, there was a strong focus on working closely with families, particularly in relation to self-care skills. Staff conducted in-home visits and families were invited to attend workshops as a means of sharing strategies and knowledge between school and home. We held the Triple P program for all new families, run by Rachael Bowen and Helen Appleton. This comprehensive workshop program ran over an eight-week period. This 8-week program was very well attended by our families and the feedback from those that attended was extremely positive.

Some of our students attended other settings and therapy centres to complement their days at Giant

Steps. Staff from the Early Learning program worked closely with other settings, visiting schools and preschools, having private therapists come and visit us at Giant Steps and assisting students towards the end of the year when transitioning to another school setting. All this support ensuring students were met with a consistent approach and that any move was as smooth and stress free as possible.



We had many highlights across the year with a visit to the Opera House, Powerhouse Museum, Royal Easter Show, Joeys Day festival, Clifton Gardens, Central Gardens and many fabulous playground visits as part of the wider community access program. At the end of 2018 with 3 families transitioning to other settings and 3 to our K-6 program, we welcomed 6 new families to Early Learning for 2019.

Mrs Jenny Loughnan
Director
Early Learning Program



Occupational Therapy

The occupational therapy team at Giant Steps continues to develop our model of practice. At Giant Steps, the Occupational Therapist works in a transdisciplinary model alongside music therapists, speech therapists and teachers. The OT works with class teams to support each student in three different ways. Each way is focused on sharing knowledge with all team members. This allows for skill development of other staff members outside of their specialization, in turn strengthening all programs at Giant Steps.

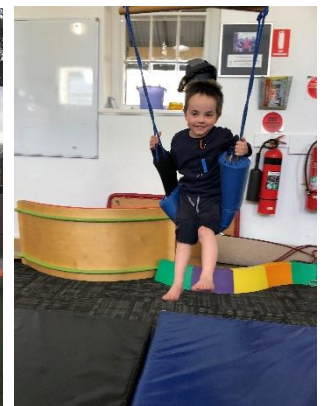
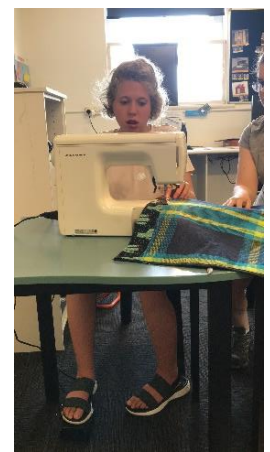
Demonstration - This is where the Occupational Therapist will take a leading role in developing and implementing a group or individual program. Once established the therapist will focus on ensuring information related to the program is shared amongst the team to enable other team members to complement and/or take over the program.

Collaboration - This is where the therapist will develop a program with a teacher 'from the ground up'. This provides an opportunity for therapists and teachers to contribute their specialised skills to a program whilst learning from each other.

Consultation - This is where therapist makes recommendations for classes and individual programs based on assessment and observation. Where required, the therapist will demonstrate how to implement strategies. Consultation also occurs with families. Respecting parents as the experts of their child, therapist works alongside families to implement individualized strategies.

Sarah Monch led the OT team in rolling out the SOS fussy eating program. Sensory issues often result in fussy eating for individuals with autism. We look forward to expanding the program in 2019.

Alice Lockwood and Sarah Monch had their presentations accepted for the national conference next year. We are excited to see them present and continue to get the work of the Giant Steps OT team out there.



Mr Andrew Frakes
Occupational Therapy Director

Music Therapy

It's been a busy year for events in the music department. We had the student from Wenona High School come out to give a concert for our students, a class taught by Dr Dianne Langan, also a music teacher and therapist. A great opportunity for students to learn about how to include students of all abilities in music-making and dance. At the Ball, the staff rehearsed to share a choreographed dance item featuring LED lit helium balloons to the song 'A Better Place' by Rachel Platten. Through this performance, the staff aimed to convey their thanks to the donors and supporters at the event for enabling them to do the work they love. For the end of year, the music therapy team gathered together for the sponsors cocktail event, sharing a rousing rendition of Que Sera Sera and Thank You for the Music.



The music team were invited to present a workshop on using dance in music therapy programs at the Australian National Music Therapy Conference this year. This was a very well attended session, with participants commenting on how practical and immersive the presentation was, and how they planned to use dance strategies in their programs. It was great to share our resources so that more young people with autism can enjoy dance and movement in the schools and homes.

The first semester's unit of work was 'Meet the Orchestra', a great chance to experience up close the instruments of orchestras, such as violins, trumpets, flutes and cellos. Exploring these instruments provides many opportunities for joint attention, sharing emotion and turn taking. The element of the novel is always one that can pique the interest for students who seek out what's new and exciting. To celebrate this unit, the group Quart:Ed came to do an incursion. Quart:Ed are a group of music teaching students from the Conservatorium of Music who are particularly interested in special education access. Their visit to Giant Steps was a chance for them to develop a concert playlist based around our interests, to learn what is most meaningful in a performance for students with autism, and of course for us to experience orchestral music in a familiar environment with all our friends.

Finally, Bronte Arns and Lene Jeffrey attended an intensive training course on the use of the IMCAP-ND assessment tool in music therapy programs. This tool was developed by John Carpente from the Rebecca Centre in New York, and focuses on some of the key challenges for autism that are well addressed through music-making: attention, affect, adaption, initiation, engagement and interrelatedness. These assessments are carried out through video analysis, providing an excellent framework for looking more deeply at how we can support the social growth of our students.



Ms Bronte Arns
Music Therapy Director

Speech Therapy

Enhancing Literacy Outcomes: Research Partnerships

Over the last 12 months, Giant Steps has developed a research partnership with colleagues at Griffith University and Massey University to investigate how educators can optimise literacy outcomes for students with ASD using an evidence-based assessment framework. Children with ASD are at increased risk of persistent literacy learning difficulties, affecting academic outcomes and quality of life. Very little research has been previously conducted with students with ASD who are minimally verbal. The project's overall aims are to improve literacy outcomes for students with ASD through (a) understanding the diversity of literacy strengths and needs in this population, (b) helping teachers and therapists to identify students at risk of literacy difficulties, (c) identifying factors that predict literacy outcomes, and (d) translating this knowledge into real-world settings. A small group of students were included in a pilot project in 2018 investigating the transferability of the current assessment tools for individuals who are minimally verbal and to determine if this information translates into a usable literacy profile. Due to the success of the initial pilot, this project will continue into 2019 as we look at a broader group of students.

The Literacy Project

Leading from the Middle, a program offered by the AIS Leadership Centre, was again offered to a number of Giant Steps professional staff over the course of 2018. This course will wrap up for the current group of participants in 2019. A number of key projects were established by the staff engaging in the program including further investigating the skill development in fundamental movement skills for individuals with ASD, the impact of commenting boards on engagement, establishing a 'war on waste' at the school and reframing of the schools of the literacy framework at Giant Steps.

The Literacy Project, led by a few of our teachers: Caitlin Millauro, Naomi Signo and Kaitlin Hunter with the support of the Speech Therapy Team, Jennifer Winstone, Jedda Meijerink and Katherine Halter, was one of the projects established through this program and has been a key focus in the latter half of 2018. In addition to the project evaluating the framework for Literacy at Giant Steps – using the Four Blocks Model of Literacy and the NSW English Curriculum - a group of 15 teachers and speech therapists took part in a 2-day PD for the InitaLit program in Term 4 2018. This program is one of the suite offered by MultiLit and is classed as a 'tier 1' (whole class) program. The program systematically works through fundamental skills in developing the reading abilities of emergent readers and 2019 will focus on the implementation of this program alongside the teaching expertise at the school to

develop some highly differentiated content for our students based on the ASD learning style.

Talking and Listening

As part of our regular assessment process, all students across the school have a functional and comprehensive assessment of receptive language completed. These are based on a suite of assessments developed by the Board of Studies and include a Comprehension of Oral Instructions and Comprehension of Oral Questions. Both of these assessments take place within the learning context for each student. In 2018 all students were re-assessed using these tools. Learning goals for each student, related to these assessments, are included within the teaching and learning program and reported on under the English Curriculum Outcomes.



Individualised Expressive Communication

Implementation of individualised expressive communication systems continues to be an ongoing priority for each student at Giant Steps. This process is a collaborative one as we seek information and input from the child's family and each child's class team based on the Participation Model framework. Each student's communication preferences, needs, current abilities, opportunities and current barriers are carefully considered through the process of selecting, trialling and evaluating a system of Augmented and Alternative Communication (AAC). 2018 was the second year of a three year project funded by FGX investigating the impact of the implementation of expressive communication supports for students. Whilst students make progress towards their goals at different rates, the data clearly indicates that all students have made progress towards their expressive communication goals.



Mrs Rachael Bowen
Speech Therapy Director

Student Welfare and Family Support

The Rob Llewellyn-Jones Clinical Centre

This year, the Rob Llewellyn-Jones Clinical Centre commemorated 5 years of operation. In 2018 we held 21 clinic days, seeing 45 students from Early Learning, K-6, Secondary and College over 150 appointments. The clinic continues to operate onsite at Giant Steps, with our visiting psychiatrist and developmental paediatrician working collaboratively to see students within the school environment which could be the classroom, playground, out on walks around the site or wherever their timetable has taken them. This ability to keep students in their daily program has given the doctors a clearer understanding of how students are day to day as well as allowing them to see a range of activities and transitions. Some students required regular appointments, while others can now have 6 monthly or yearly follow ups. We also welcomed back some alumni families seeking guidance or a second opinion. This year the clinic also hosted a number of paediatric and psychiatric registrars, who visited the clinic as part of their training, and who have wished to visit the clinic as an example of a very different service model than the public or private systems can offer.

The clinic team is made of the visiting doctors, myself and Andrew Frakes, head of Occupational Therapy. In 2018 we also welcomed to the team Dr Richard Webster, paediatric neurologist at Westmead Children's Hospital. With 25% of our students also having epilepsy, finding appropriate treatment opportunities has been extremely difficult. Several of our students already see Dr Webster, and so bringing his clinic onsite and combining it with our existing doctors has allowed treatment decisions to be a collaborative process between all the treating doctors. We look forward to continuing this relationship with Dr Webster over the next few years.

The key benefits to the onsite clinic continue to be:

- Students not needing to leave school to access hospitals, doctors surgeries or clinics
- Shorter wait times for an initial appointment
- Longer appointment times available, regular follow ups available
- Collaborative care from a highly experienced medical and psychiatric team
- Decreased student and family stress

The ongoing presence of the clinic at Giant Steps continues to facilitate dialogue about mental health for both families and staff, and the need to consider

it as an essential component to our students' wellbeing. The clinic and how we support our student's complex needs was discussed at length with visiting agencies and schools, as well as internationally when myself and Erin Cowie visited other ASD specialist schools and mental health facilities in America.

As part of the clinic, my PhD research continues into how anxiety manifests in children and young adults with ASD and an Intellectual Disability. In 2018, the second round of data collection was completed and data analysis is currently underway.

Stepping Stones Triple P

Stepping Stones ran for its sixth year in 2018, being offered to families in Early Learning and Playsteps. This year six families attended the program for nine weeks, learning about creating positive interactions, autism specific strategies for understanding, communicating and planning, strategies for managing misbehaviour, how to plan for community access and new experiences. Feedback from the parents who attended was very positive and highlighted the practicality of the strategies, having time to discuss difficulties and sharing ideas with other families in similar situations.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The continued rollout of the NDIS across NSW, as well as many reviews meeting, meant that supporting families through this process was a key focus of 2018. This support can include pre meetings with myself or Andrew Frakes, attendance at NDIS meetings held onsite at Giant Steps, and therapy reports, often totally 20-30 hours of work per family.

All families at Giant Steps are now accessing the NDIS, and with the funding allocated to them can make meaningful decisions about the appropriate supports for their child and family. Many families now have access to funds and opportunities for their child that had been impossible in the past, making a real contribution to the ongoing development and wellbeing of our students and the stability of the family unit.

Ms Helen Appleton
*Director of Student and
Psychological Services*



Art

The Visual Arts program at Giant Steps Sydney sits within CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts) a component that marries nicely with Drama, Dance and Music Therapy. The Visual Arts program, also based upon the units of work that the teachers develop for our students in each school year attempts to consolidate the learning process in visual form.

2018 was another exciting and creative year as our students engaged in art activities that related to themselves and the world around them. All students participate in both structured and sensory-based art activities that are themed and modified to suit each individual student across each program. The students also participated in creating art works for the main Auction at the Giant Steps Annual Ball.

In Semester One of 2018 our students explored 'Meet The Orchestra', making 3D instruments and placing them within the context of a theatre hall and concert. Then during the second semester, they developed art based around the theme of 'Island Paradise', exploring and investigating all the bright tropical colours of island life.

As well as providing a structured and themed art program, the students also enjoy exploring a variety of sensory-based art materials that allows them to engage in the raw process of art making.

The students at Giant Steps Sydney are provided with the opportunity to discover what they are good at, what they enjoy and to build a new confidence in knowing they can achieve and create.



Ms Pamela Honeyfield
Art

Outdoor Education

In 2018 the outdoor education programs have continued to be rolled out throughout the school and college programs. A particular focus has been on the establishment and scale up of the programs with our younger students in Primary (K-6) and the development of more accessible locations and activities for all of our students.

The building of a greater repertoire of activities and locations has helped support greater access of all students to program streams. The mapping, risk assessments, building of resources, skilling up of staff around activities as well as safety equipment has allowed the access of students with additional needs (epilepsy etc.) to participate safely. The activities can range from flat hike trails along a road for 3-5kms, up to semi-remote, highly technical hikes, where students are required to carry supplies for up to nearly 20km, which happens on the hike camp program. Swim activities can range from harbour baths, beaches, dams and rivers, to isolated water holes and waterfalls.

As it stands, Giant Steps students have access to hiking, wild swimming, river hiking/canyoning, camping, cycling, kayaking and SUP, surfing and snorkelling programs. Currently we are looking to expand with snow and boating activities. With the large number of different activities, the students have access to a number of seasonal programs to explore and test their skills and expand their horizons. This variety has been identified as an important element in keeping students engaged and building skills, knowledge and confidence.

In conjunction with our off site activities the creation of the bike track and native garden on site has given us a unique opportunity to link learning and experiences. As the space develops, students will learn to identify and use different plants in recipes and look to find them on outdoor education activities, creating a natural transition linking activities in and out of the classroom.

The near future of the outdoor education program will be focused on consolidating the established programs, adding snow and boat activities and the continuous training of staff around implantation of programs, safety, and working knowledge within the programs.



Mr Ben Bowen
Outdoor Education Specialist

Library

2019 has seen an increase in the use of the school library and most classes are now accessing the space. For those students that find it difficult to transition around the school the library comes to them with books and magazines. A couple of senior school classes are accessing the local libraries and this has been a huge success.

The students are growing in independence in the library with self-selection and reading of books. The library teaches the necessary skills that support the student to achieve English Curriculum goals and IP goals - specifically self-occupation skills.

I am always sourcing books from free sites and last year we had a number of books donated from Hunters Hill Primary School. Although we have a large number of books there are favourites that get a lot of love and often need replacing so funding is continued to be required for the up keep and purchase of new books.



Jo McPherson
Library



Contextual Information about the School

Giant Steps Sydney is a school for children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, located at Gladesville. Information regarding the history and context of the school can be found at:

Website:

www.giantsteps.net.au

MySchool:

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/64404/GiantStepsSydney/43740/2014>

The Autism Hub:

<https://www.theautismhub.net.au/>

Student Performance in National and State Wide Tests and Examinations

Higher School Certificate

No students were eligible for the HSC in 2018.

RoSA

In 2018 no RoSA credentials were issued to students in this reporting period.

Literacy & Numeracy Assessments

In 2018 no students participated in the state-wide or national testing. All students had an Individual Plan with a particular focus on the communication outcomes (Support Document – Communication NES). The school uses a range of assessment procedures some administered directly by teaching staff others administered by Speech and Occupational Therapy staff at school in order to ascertain an assessment *for learning* and at regular intervals assessment *of learning*. The goals for the IP are developed using a collaborative team approach including teachers, therapist and parents. The goals are then interpreted and matched with outcomes within the English syllabus documents as well as the Communication Support document. Specific indicators are developed to match the skill level of the child and these are regularly reported against. In all curriculum areas this collaborative process applies.

Senior Secondary Outcomes

No students undertook a VET course in 2018.

For Secondary students 59% of secondary students were involved in Vocational Education programs and these included opportunities at the following work place

- Meals on Wheels
- Fruit and vegetable Co-Op
- Nestle Administration Office
- Local newspaper delivery
- Giant Steps Administration area
- Local Chemist
- School Jobs Program
- Recycling & Community Projects



Teacher Standards

In 2018 Giant Steps employed 24 teaching staff across the year with a FTE of 19.6 positions. These teaching positions were supported 18 FTE therapy staff and 28.62 FTE Educator (teacher aide) positions.

Details of all Teaching Staff

CATEGORY	# of Teachers
Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	19.2
Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications, or	Nil

Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) and (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context (Manual P.39)	Nil
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Staff Retention Rates

Teachers	100%
Therapists	94.1%
Educators	100%
Administration	100%

Average Retention Across Giant Steps – 98.5%

There was some staff movement due to Long Service Leave, Maternity /Paternity Leave and these were supported by casual staff.

Professional Learning

In 2018 Giant Steps staff were involved in **3192 hours** of professional development across the year. The number of courses attended throughout 2018 totalled **52** across the following areas:-

- Safe & Supportive Schools
- Human Resources
- Autism & Related Courses
- Curriculum - Communication
- IT
- Student Engagement
- Other including research projects

Average Professional Learning Hours Per Staff Member – 35.5 Hours Per Annum

The Professional Development program strengthens the skill level of the staff and subsequently the level of staff satisfaction. This program also contributes to the high retention rate of staff including teachers, therapists, educators and administrative support.

Course List:

- Administration of Emergency Medication (Midazolam)
- Adult Communication Style
- Adult Leisure & Self Occupation
- ASD Program Research
- Asthma & Anaphylaxis
- Becoming Accredited as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher
- Beyond Autism
- Child Protection Training

- Developing a Multi-Modal Expressive Communication
- E2 Conference
- Educator Accreditation
- Epilepsy Essentials
- Experienced Mentors Progressional Conversations
- Giant Steps Top Up: Data Excel Graphs
- Giant Steps Top Up: Epilepsy/Midazolam
- Giant Steps Top Up: IT Security Breaches and Protocols
- Giant Steps Top Up: Medication
- Giant Steps Top Up: New Toileting Visuals
- Giant Steps Top Up: Safe Guarding Children
- Giant Steps Top Up: Talking & Listening Assessment
- Governane Online Module Unit – Reputational Risk
- Grief Training
- IABA's Longitudinal Training on Assessment & Analysis of Severe and Challenging Behaviour
- IMCAP-ND- Music Therapy
- Jacqui Roberts – Evidence Based Programming and Current Research ASD
- Jacqui Roberts – PHD Supervision
- Live Life Well at School
- Making the Most of Your NDIS Plan
- MAPA Foundation Units
- Mentee Training
- Mentor Meetings
- Middle Leaders Program
- Nationally Consistent Collection of Data: Moderation and Support
- NDIS Information
- Personalised Learning Processes for Aboriginal Students
- Planning & Programming: NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum English K-6
- Resilient Teams
- Routines & Managing the Classroom Environment
- Safe Guarding
- School Communities Working Together
- Siblings Groups
- Social Reciprocity in the Classroom
- Staff Wellbeing
- Student Wellbeing
- Supervision Mentoring & Peer Support
- Sydney Festival Performance of Alice in Wonderland
- Teacher Accreditation
- Teacher Practicum
- The Mindful Project
- Therapist Accreditation
- Viewing of Experienced Teachers Digital Portfolios
- Visual Support

Workforce Composition

In 2018 staffing was stable across all areas – teachers, educators, therapists, and administration staff including both full-time and part-time staff. The staffing ratio across the 3 programs reflected the differences in the model of program delivery. The transdisciplinary model of staff working and planning together continues to gain strength. Collaborative efforts are the key to success. Teachers, therapists and educators work alongside each other, learning to combine their skills to produce programs that target student's individual needs across a range of contexts and student groupings.

TOTAL STAFF NUMBERS		
	No. of Staff	FTE
Principal	1	1
Teachers	22	19.2
Therapists:	20	17.2
Educators / Teachers Aides	34	30.6
Administration	13	8.9
Total Staff	90	76.9

Student Attendance and Retention Rates in Secondary School

Student Population	
Early Learning	11
K-6	35
Secondary - Laneway	10
Secondary - Clocktower	21

In 2018 the school enrolled 80 students aged 3-18 years of age. Retention of students in a special school setting is not an overarching goal and as a school we seek to transition students to other beneficial school placements in support of their learning. In 2018 the following transitions occurred:

- 4 students integrated to other schools
- 2 students to post school

The retention rate for secondary aged students has showed a 100% retention rate over the last ten years as students with high support needs are unlikely at this stage in their schooling to move to

another educational setting and are very likely to remain at the same school throughout high school.

Retention rates for the K-6 do not adequately reflect the movement of students who integrate into other educational settings as part of their transition plan. A retention rate in this instance does not reflect the movement of students out of the school. In K-6 and Early Learning, Giant Steps actively supports students to move to other educational settings. This decision is always made within the context of an Individual Planning Process involving key personnel, parents and caregivers. Retention rates are not a useful measure in that they do not reflect the integration/inclusion focus of the school program.

The school, due to the small number of students does not report attendance rates against grades as there may only be one student per grade. The average attendance rate is reported on a per year basis for the school.

The attendance rate is very stable and high across the year with an average attendance rate of 94.9%

Managing Non Attendance

The school implements policy and procedures for the management of student nonattendance with parents on an ongoing basis through the Daily Diary. The school follows up where written explanation of absence is not received from the parents. Absences are monitored and parent meetings are held to resolve the non-attendance. Mandatory reporting procedures apply where absences are extended or the student may be at risk.

Post School Destinations

Post school opportunities for students with high support needs are limited creating tensions for both schools and parents. Five students transitioned to post school programs at the end of 2018 funded through the NDIS.

Provision of support services for young people with high support needs continues to be a challenge. Giant Steps continues to be a leader in the field with the establishment of the GS Community College in 2008, and as we progress, the staff are considering more flexible options and programs to meet the changing needs of young adults.

Enrolment Policies and Characteristics of the Student Body

In 2018 the school enrolled 79 students aged 3-18 years of age. The student population come from a very wide and diverse background and includes students with a language background other than English. The school population is drawn from the greater Sydney metropolitan area.

The demand for enrolment at Giant Steps continues to increase with the majority of applications coming from families wanting an educational service that includes autism friendly teaching strategies combined with therapy services delivered within a curriculum framework.

The school population breakdown is as follows:

Student Population	
Early Learning	11
K-6	35
Secondary - Laneway	10
Secondary - Clocktower	21
Total Males	49
Total Females	27
Student Total	76

Ratio of 1 female: 4 males is the usual ratio for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder.



School Enrolment Policy

Giant Steps Sydney is a comprehensive co-educational K-12 special school providing an education for students who have a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The School operates and is registered through the NSW Board of Studies.

All applications will be processed in order of receipt and consideration will be given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, diagnosis, siblings already attending the school and other criteria determined by the school from time to time.

Once enrolled, students are expected to support the school's ethos and comply with the school rules to maintain the enrolment.

Enrolment Policy can be found at <http://www.giantsteps.net.au/enrolment>



Enrolment Procedures

- All applications should be processed within the school's enrolment policy.
- Consider each applicant's supporting statement / interview responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the school's ethos.
- Consider each applicant's educational needs. To do this, the school will need to gather information and consult with the parents/family and other relevant persons.
- Identify any strategies which need to be put into place to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding the enrolment is made.
- Inform the applicant of the outcome.



School Policies

All Policies, Guidelines and Procedures are available in full text on My School (intranet), Operational Handbook and by request. All Policies, Procedures and Guidelines are reviewed on a three cycle.

The Workplace Health and safety Committee also review policies and procedures in the WHS area and provide training for staff through the Top Up sessions- a weekly Professional Learning session for all staff.

- Code of Conduct
- Communication Bill of Rights
- Child Protection
- Code of Ethics
- Enrolment Process
- Mandatory Reporting
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Premises and Buildings
- Reportable Conduct
- Student Attendance
- Student Behaviour Support
- Student Welfare
- Use of Email and Electronic Facilities
- Safe and Supportive Environment
- Attendance
- Assessment

School Guidelines

- Alcohol
- Anaphylaxis
- Anti-discrimination
- Anti-harassment
- Asthma
- Workplace Attire
- Communication Protocol
- Copyright
- Electrical Safety
- First Aid
- Hazardous Materials
- Injuries to Staff
- Injuries to Students
- Toileting
- Injury Management Plan
- Lead Safe
- Playground Supervision
- Privacy
- Return to Work Coordinator
- Return to Work Program
- Smoking
- Staff Mobile Phones

- Student Reports
- Student Sickness
- Sun Protection
- Sunscreen
- Unwanted Visitors
- Visitors
- Volunteers
- Extreme Heat Guidelines

School Procedures

- Administering Medication
- Buildings and Grounds
- Complaints and Grievances
- Early Pick-up of Students
- Education & Financial Reporting
- Emergency Management Plan
- Employment Screening
- Excursions
- Individual Plans
- Late Arrival of Students
- Lead Safe
- Medical Treatment for Students
- WHS Maintenance Work
- Reporting Procedures
- Returns to BOS
- School Operation
- Student Files
- Taxi Drivers
- Taxi Waiting Area



Policies

Policies for:

- Student welfare
- Discipline
- Reporting complaints and resolving grievances

A. Policies for Student Welfare

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- supports the physical, social, academic and emotional development of students
- provides student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare are implemented, policies and procedures were in place and revised during 2014 (see list above).

B. Policies for Student Discipline

Students are required to abide by the school's rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the school. Students with ASD find it difficult to follow rules that may have little personal meaning; however they are part of keeping students safe. Students will be supported through environmental modifications, visual supports and teaching and learning programmes to follow those rules related to health, safety and welfare for both staff and students. The support level of students is constantly monitored. As behaviour is seen as having a communicative function for students with Autism, the onus is on staff to ensure that the appropriate environmental supports as well as communication interventions are in place to support the students as they learn new replacement behaviours.

Corporal punishment or any aversive practice is not permitted under any circumstances.

All disciplinary action that may result in any sanction against the student provides processes based on procedural fairness. Such processes would also include an advocate to act on behalf of the child or family.

The full text of the school's discipline policy and

associated procedures is provided to all members of the school community through:

- The Operational Handbook
- The Parent Information booklet
- On My School

All discipline policies are viewed within the context of the student's disability with a strong focus on assisting student's to develop a range of behaviours that will increase their level of participation in all settings and enhance opportunities not only in school but in other community settings.

C. Policies for Complaints and Grievances Resolution

The school's policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness. The full text of the school's policy and processes for complaints and grievances resolution is provided in the Operational Handbook. An appropriate outline of the policy and processes is also provided in the Parent Information Booklet.



School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

1. Continue the process of developing competency frameworks. In 2018 staff will be working on finalising the framework for Educators) Teachers' Aides) through ISSTA.

Outcome

The project was completed in 2017 and in 2018 the first educators completed the Accreditation process with one staff member attaining the Experienced Educator competency. The project will continue with 9 educators undertaking the process in 2019.

2. Further development of the outdoor spaces with the renovation of the main playground, the sandpit playground and "The Patch" the secondary outdoor space. The Occupational therapists are planning to include movement based activities and equipment to support children's sensory needs.

Outcome

The main playground project "The Patch" has new fences and gates as well as privacy screening and installation of new equipment.

3. Mentoring project, under the direction of Ms Lynne Stone to continue with the development of a formalised system for Educator staff. This project was established in 2015 and continues in 2018.

Outcome

The project continues with further training of mentors and mentees. This project included teachers in 2018. This will be continued in 2019.

4. Student Engagement Team – this team will be developed in 2018 and work across the school to improve the data collection techniques as well as develop a rating scale for student engagement in learning for our student cohort.

Outcome

The team is in place and has developed the student engagement scale and its reliability across the staff group K-12. All staff complete the Tier One for every student and 9 staff have undertaken the Longitudinal Study to add depth to the team. The student engagement will be enhanced in 2019.

5. The school will continue to support the research project around Anxiety and ASD lead by Ms Helen Appleton. School students will participate.

Outcome

This research project in ongoing and training has occurred for all staff and parents based on initial findings.

6. The school will seek to expand student enrolment and procure an additional building on the Gladesville site.

Outcome

The building, after many months of negotiation has been leased and will require renovation in 2019 in order to establish classrooms and increase enrolment.



Priorities for 2019

1. Refurbish newly acquired building.
2. Develop an ASD training unit.
3. Further develop the Autism Hub,
4. Support families through NDIS review process.

Initiatives Prompting Respect and Responsibility

Giant Steps works in partnership with a number of schools through community participation, work experience and integration to support the development of skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes in relation to students with disabilities. The school has developed Buddy programs for schools as well as Kids helping Kids, a HSIE unit of work in K-6 that promotes and develops interaction skills with typically developing peers.

For Giant Steps students there is a program to teach and develop social foundation skills for all our students across a range of environments. These programs are developed and implemented at a class, individual and whole school level.

The school has been very active developing networks with other educational providers and runs a range of workshops to support the inclusion of students with autism as well as training courses for teachers and school personnel. Giant Steps staff works across agencies to develop partnerships in order to increase the opportunities for our student body.

For students at Giant Steps respect and responsibility is promoted and actively taught as students learn to function within the context of a group. Even the most simple of examples, such as waiting for your turn or not pushing into a line, understanding that you may need to be aware of oncoming pedestrian traffic and adjust your walking line. In each and every activity throughout the school there is a focus on students understanding the perspective of another and for children with autism this is a core deficit. In all teaching programs respect and responsibility is actively taught so that our students are able to successfully participate in the full range of community activities.

In 2018 Giant Steps hosted a number of students on Community Service or Work Experience programs from local schools such as St Ignatius College, St Joseph's College, and St Alysious. Throughout the year approximately 76 students worked alongside staff for a few hours up to a week supporting the work of the school. Giant Steps students also attend holiday camps set up by schools in particular St Ignatius and Moriah College. These holiday programs are wonderful opportunities for students with autism to experience a camp activity. The liaison with schools and other community organisations continues.

A special mention here to "Joey's" who, for the last 2

years, have hosted our entire school cohort for a day that includes games, fun, BBQ's ,swimming and a whole host of activities. This is an extraordinary effort by the Year 10 boys and one that is appreciated by our staff, students and families. To be part of, and feel a sense of connection and belonging to a wider community of schools is for us deeply important. Thanks "Joeys" for your efforts.



Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Giant Steps surveys all staff and parents annually. Data is available for previous years. The results of these surveys are compiled and distributed at Parent Information/Staff Information sessions in Term 4 of each year. Both staff and parent satisfaction remained solid in 2018 and showed an overall maintenance of satisfaction levels.

Student satisfaction is not surveyed formally due to the students' variable ability however parents act as strong advocates for their child within the survey and respond to questions on behalf of students.

Giant Steps used an on-line survey to collect data.

Curriculum

Throughout 2018 the school staff worked as a team developing, refining and reflecting on how to create learning opportunities that were meaningful and sustainable, integrating both educational and therapy goals for all students across all contexts including school, home and other environments. The curriculum is inclusive of all students in NSW and challenges the school staff to continually find meaningful, authentic teaching and learning experiences that engage, enliven and challenge our students. Learning should be fun and full of delight and joy as children experience the world through school. At Giant Steps we seek to find those opportunities for our students, to open up options and incorporate individual outcomes in all teaching activities. Staffs are constantly seeking to find new ways to teach and to support student learning, they are to be congratulated.

Throughout 2018 teachers and therapists worked on planning and programming to meet the individual needs of students within classes. Teachers and therapists plan units of work that engage students, are motivating, functional and lead to greater levels of independence and participation in community life.

Family Supports

The school also developed a range of support programs for parents including outreach programs, diagnostic and assessment centre, Triple P parent training, fathers and mothers groups also run as well as siblings group.

Summary

2018 was a year of change and growth across the school. The rate of change and the momentum gained throughout the year via Research projects, Mentoring, Leadership Programs, Student Engagement Teams as well as the continual development of the Australian Curriculum.



Ms Kerrie Nelson
Principal

Summary Financial Information

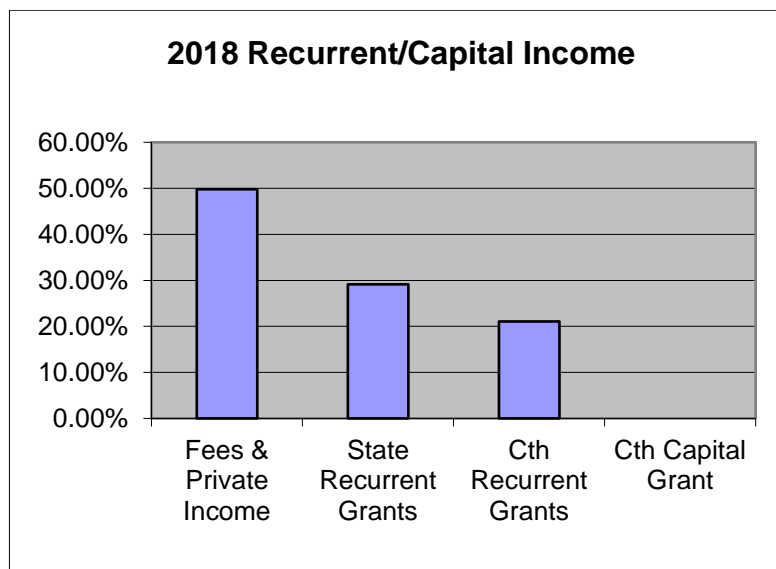
Financial Information

Giant Steps Sydney is a registered Charity and a Public Benevolent Institution. Each year Giant Steps has a full financial audit conducted by

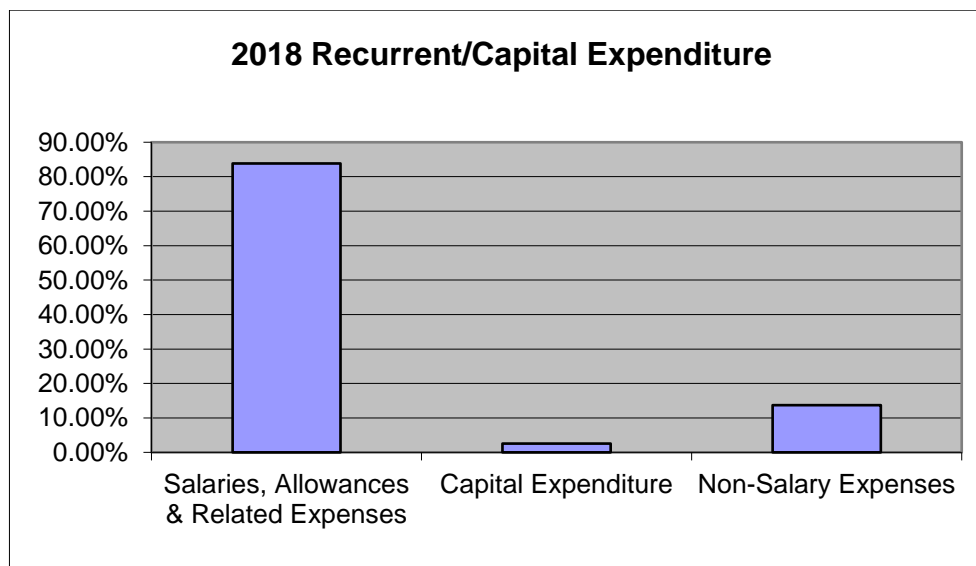
Pricewaterhouse Coopers. Giant Steps does not charge fees and in 2018 received over 45% of revenue from donations, fundraising appeals and support from community organisations and companies.

(a) Graphic one: recurrent/capital income represented by column chart

Please note: Giant Steps does not charge School fees



(b) Graphic two: recurrent/capital expenditure represented by column chart



Appendix 1: Student Enrolment Policy

About Giant Steps Sydney Early Learning Program and School Program

History

Giant Steps Sydney opened on 16 July 1995. It was started by a group of parents who had children with autism. These parents discovered the program, which originally began operating in Montreal, Canada in 1981. Wanting something better for their children's future, they managed to locate suitable premises at Gladesville, find staff and have them trained by Giant Steps Montreal as well as obtain government funding to cover part of the costs and raise the balance required by approaching corporate donors and organizing fundraising events.

Giant Steps Sydney runs a school with a transdisciplinary model integrating teaching and learning and therapy for students with autism. Giant Steps Sydney has an Early Learning Program and a K - 12 School Program.

What are the Special Features of the Giant Steps Program?

- A transdisciplinary approach where speech, occupational and music therapists are on site working with special education staff in a collaborative team developing individual plans specific to each child's needs and abilities within the NSW Board of Studies curriculum framework.
- Integration of students into local schools and communities as an integral part of the Early Learning and School Programs.
- Giant Steps Sydney uses a child and family centred approach that aims to encourage the children to achieve their maximum potential.
- Programs at Giant Steps Sydney may vary from time to time.

How is Giant Steps Sydney Funded?

As an independent school Giant Steps Sydney receives both State and Commonwealth funding which contributes approximately 45% to the total running costs. Giant Steps Sydney is also a registered charity (Reg No DGR 32778) and all parents are actively involved in supporting the school.

Donations to Giant Steps Sydney are tax deductible.

Giant Steps Sydney does not charge fees in the Early Learning Program or the School Program.

What Other Services does Giant Steps Sydney Offer?

Giant Steps Sydney runs a playgroup, Play Steps, for young children with a diagnosis of autism which operates at Gladesville. Giant Steps Sydney also offers a range of outreach services (Speech, Music and Occupational Therapies). It gives extensive training to the staff in integration schools and also runs frequent workshop training sessions. A vacation care program runs over the Christmas break for the children of Giant Steps Sydney.

There are a number of fees for service provisions such as Outreach services and Play Steps.

Giant Steps Sydney's Vision Statement

"Giant Steps Sydney will continue to be recognized as a centre of excellence for the creation, implementation and dissemination of innovative and effective programs and services for individuals with Autism and their families."

Giant Steps Sydney's Mission Statement

"Giant Steps Sydney seeks to develop intensive therapeutic and educational programs to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Giant Steps Sydney also seeks to provide support to families, improve understanding of autism in the wider community and to develop best practice amongst carers and professionals".

Giant Steps Sydney's Core Values

- Maintain a culture of best practice service to individuals with autism.
- Remain open to the acceptance of new ideas and approaches, seeking continuous improvement in all that we do
- Recognise the skills of our staff, encouraging commitment and dedication from a team of quality people.
- Strengthen professional relationships within and outside of Giant Steps Sydney.
- Adopt collaborative approaches to challenges.
- Promote constructive reciprocal involvement within the community.
- Pursue growth opportunities consistent with our core undertakings whilst maintaining prudent financial and risk management.

- Celebrate our achievements.

Giant Steps Sydney Enrolment Process

Eligibility Process

Our school is funded in part by the NSW Department of Education and Training which has very specific criteria for placement. A completed Application Form, with supporting documentation, must be lodged by parents or legal guardians. Students are placed on the Eligibility List based on the following:

- A medical diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder
- A psychological diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder
- May have an associated development delay
- Is aged between 3 and 18 years
- All applicants will receive acknowledgement upon receipt of an Application Form.

Admissions

- A vacancy may arise when:
- a student moves from one program to the next program because of his or her age
- a student leaves Giant Steps
- a student graduates (is integrating independently at his or her local school)
- additional places become available due to the availability of additional resources

Offer of Placement

When a vacancy arises the following will be considered:

- where the class vacancy exists
- age of student
- time on the Eligibility List

Offer of a place is subject to an interview of parents/guardians and child. The Admissions Committee will meet to determine Offer of Enrolment. Students are selected for intake based on the following criteria:

- The assessment process will account for compatibility in relation to the intake group and will consider characteristics related to the developmental age as well as social and behavioural repertoire.
- Parent support and commitment in the program, both school-based and home-based. That is, parents demonstrate past and present commitment to their child's overall developmental needs including education, socialisation,

communication, behavioural / emotional and general well-being.

- Parents demonstrate a willingness to become actively involved in and initiate fundraising activities and parent committee work or be willing to support the program in other ways.

Conditions of Entry

Parent Commitment

Parents are required to have an interview with a Board member prior to admission to gain an understanding of Giant Steps' expectations regarding the participation and commitment required by parents.

Parent Contributions

Giant Steps Sydney is a registered charity (DGR No. 32778) and all donations are tax deductible. Government funding does not fully meet the costs of running the school. The remaining funds are raised through donations and fundraising events. All parents are expected to contribute towards the substantial fundraising effort required to secure the successful on-going operation of the school.

Medical Treatment

If a student needs urgent hospital or medical treatment of any nature and the school is unable to contact the parent or guardian after making reasonable efforts you authorize the school to give authority for such treatment. You indemnify the school, its employees and agents in respect of all costs and expenses arising directly or indirectly out of such treatment.

Change of Details

It is the responsibility of the parents to advise the school of any change of address and contact numbers.

Student Absences

The school needs to be contacted if your child is going to be absent from school for any reason. Parents must send in a Sickness/Absenteeism note each time the child is absent, or partially absent, from school.

Exclusion from Giant Steps Sydney

- If the Principal, or any person deputing for the Principal, considers that a student's behaviour is

of such a serious nature that there is substantial risk to other students or staff, the Principal or Deputy may exclude the student permanently or temporarily at their absolute discretion.

- If the Giant Steps Sydney Board or the Principal believes that a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation between a parent and school has broken down to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship, then the Giant Steps Sydney Board or the Principal may require the parent to remove the child from the school.

Withdrawal from Giant Steps Sydney

The school requires one term's notice if a student's enrolment is to be withdrawn.

Enrolment

Students are offered a place in the Early Learning, K-6 or Secondary programs. Current students need to apply in writing to the Principal if they would like to move to the next program.

See criteria for offer of placement.

Uniforms

We encourage students to wear the school uniform.

Amendment of Terms and Conditions

The Board may alter these conditions of entry at any time by notifying parents in writing. Alterations will apply from the date of the notice.

Appendix 2: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN.

Responding to Allegations: Protocols for Investigations

(To be reviewed following implementation of amendments to the legislation)

<http://portals.studentnet.edu.au/industrial>

The Working with Children Check Guidelines:

www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check/employer.html

NSW Ombudsman – Child Protection Guidelines (revised 2004)

www.nswombudsman.nsw.gov.au/publications

1. Introduction

- a) The aim of this Code is to outline the standards of behaviour expected of all employees of Giant Steps.
- b) This Code does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of your work. Instead, it sets out general expectations of the standards of behaviour required.
- c) The Code places an obligation on all employees to take responsibility for their own conduct and to work with colleagues cooperatively to achieve a consultative and collaborative workplace where people are happy and proud to work

Contractors and Volunteers

Contractors, consultants and volunteers working with Giant Steps must be aware of this Code and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the conduct described in it. Conduct that is not consistent with the conduct set out in this Code may result in the engagement of a contractor, consultant or volunteer being terminated.

If you are engaging or managing external consultants, contractors or volunteers, it is your responsibility to make them aware of Giant Steps' expectations of conduct during the period of their engagement.

2. The Legislative Context

2.1 The consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of this Code will depend on the nature of the breach.

2.2 Employees should report possible breaches by colleagues to their supervisor or the Principal. If the possible breach is by their supervisor then it should be reported to the Principal.

2.3 Factors Giant Steps may consider when deciding what action to take may include:

- (a) the seriousness of the breach;
- (b) the likelihood of the breach occurring again;
- (c) whether the employee has committed the breach more than once;
- (d) the risk the breach poses to employees, students or any others; and
- (e) whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

2.4 Actions that may be taken by Giant Steps in respect of a breach of the Code include management or remedial action, training or disciplinary action ranging from a warning to termination of employment. Giant Steps will reserve the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code.

3. Required Reporting

3.1 All employees are required to inform the Principal if they are charged with or convicted of a serious offence (those punishable by 12 months or more in jail). You must also inform the Principal if you become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order.

3.2 If, through your employment with Giant Steps, you become aware of a serious crime committed by another person, you are required to report it to the Principal, who may be required to inform the police.

3.3 As a Giant Steps employee, you must report to the Principal:

- (a) any concerns that you may have about the safety, welfare and well being of a child or young person;
- (b) any concerns you may have about the inappropriate actions of any other employee, contractor or volunteer that involves children or young people;
- (c) any concerns you may have about any other employee, contractor or volunteer engaging in 'reportable conduct' or any allegation of 'reportable conduct' that has been made to you; and
- (d) if you become aware that an employee, contractor or volunteer has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving 'reportable conduct'; and
- (e) if you become the subject of allegations of 'reportable conduct' whether or not they relate to your employment in Giant Steps.
- (f) if your Working With Children Check clearance is cancelled or if you are or become a disqualified¹ person from working or volunteering with children. You should refer to Giant Steps' Child Protection Policy for further information about these obligations.

3.4 Please note that teachers and some other employees have mandatory reporting obligations under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) where they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child under the age of 16 years is at risk of significant harm and have current concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child. You should refer to Giant Steps' Child Protection Policy for further information about these obligations.

4. Respect for People

4.1 Employees who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Modelling effective leadership and respect in your interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development. This is particularly important as the

student population is very vulnerable due to their disability.

4.2 Similarly, it is important for you to treat your colleagues, other employees, contractors, students and parents with respect. Rude or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, dismissive, threatening, intimidating or derogatory language and physical abuse or intimidation towards other employees, contractors, students and parents is unacceptable. You must not use information and communication technologies, such as email, mobile phones, text or instant messaging, blogs, social media sites and other websites to engage in this type of behaviour.

4.3 You must not discriminate against, or harass for any unlawful reason, or bully for any reason any employee, contractor, student or parent. Your obligations in this regard, including the list of unlawful reasons, are set out in Giant Steps' Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy. Unlawful harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 or federal discrimination legislation. Bullying may be a breach of your obligations under work health and safety legislation or your duty of care at common law.

4.4 You should ensure that you are aware of Giant Steps' Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy. If you believe you are being unlawfully harassed or discriminated against or bullied:

- (a) where you feel comfortable ask the person to stop, or make it clear that you find the behaviour offensive or unwelcome. It may be useful to speak with your supervisor or the Principal in the first instance to seek guidance on how to do this; and/or
- (b) raise the issue as a grievance in accordance with Giant Steps' Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy as soon as possible after the incident(s) have occurred.

4.5 Giant Steps takes reports of unlawful discrimination and harassment or bullying seriously and will consider action it considers appropriate if such conduct is found to have occurred including disciplining or dismissing offenders. Many incidents can be addressed effectively if reported early.

4.6 If you lie about or exaggerate a complaint, Giant Steps will view this as a very serious matter, and you may be disciplined or dismissed.

5. Duty of Care and Work Health & Safety

5.1 As a Giant Steps employee, you have a duty of care to students in your charge. That duty is to take

all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted. For example, risks from known hazards and from foreseeable risk situations against which preventative measures can be taken. The standard of care that is required, for example the degree of supervision, needs to be commensurate with the students' maturity and ability.

5.2 Duty of care to students applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by Giant Steps. The risks associated with any activity need to be assessed and managed before the activity is undertaken.

5.3 You should ensure that you are aware of Giant Steps' Information Sheets relating to Duty of Care and Excursions.

Work Health And Safety

5.4 You also have a responsibility under work health and safety legislation to take care of your own health and safety at work. It is also your responsibility to ensure that your activities do not place at risk the health and safety of your co-workers, students or other persons that you may come into contact with at work.

5.5 Considerations of safety relate to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.

5.6 You should ensure that you are aware of and Giant Steps' Work Health & Safety Statement.

Supervision Of Students

5.7 You should take all reasonable steps to ensure that no student is exposed to any unnecessary risk of injury.

5.8 You should be familiar with and comply with Giant Steps' evacuation procedures.

5.9 Students should not be left unsupervised either within or outside of class. You should be punctual to class and allocated supervision.

5.10 You should remain with students at after school activities until all students have been collected. In the event that a student is not collected you should remain with the student until collected, or seek advice from your supervisor.

5.11 Playground supervision is an integral part of the responsibility of staff. It must take precedence over other activities. It is unacceptable to be late. You should actively supervise your designated area.

5.12 You should be alert to bullying or any other form of discriminatory behaviour, and report incidents to the appropriate staff member. Additional detail about student bullying is set out in the Policy for Supporting Student Engagement.

5.13 Ill or injured students should be attended to by the supervising staff member. Should additional assistance be required you should contact Claire Allen or Kerrie Nelson.

5.14 You should ensure that you understand and comply with Giant Steps' policy in regard to the storage and administration of prescribed medication to students (see the Procedure Administering Medication to Students).

6. Professional Relationships Between Employees and Students

Supervision Of Students

6.1 You should avoid situations where you are alone in an enclosed space with a student. Where you are left with the responsibility of a single student you should ensure that this is in an open space in view of others. Where this is not possible or practical it should be discussed with your supervisor and/or the Principal, and noted in the student's engagement plan.

6.2 You should never drive a student in your car unless you have specific permission from your supervisor and/or the Principal to do so. In the event of an emergency you should exercise discretion but then report the matter to your supervisor.

6.3 Due to students vulnerability, staff must be actively supervising students at all times.

Physical Contact With Students

6.5 You must not impose physical punishment on a student in the course of your professional duties.

6.6 When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience you must exercise caution to ensure that the contact

is appropriate and acceptable, in consultation with the Program Directors and Therapists.

6.7 Attention to the toileting needs of young children should be done with caution. It may be appropriate to have the door open. For students with a disability the management of toileting needs should be included in the student's individual management plan.

6.8 When congratulating a student, a handshake, pat on the shoulder or brief hug are acceptable as long as the student is comfortable with this action. Kissing of students is not acceptable.

6.9 Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching the student. Always advise the student of what you intend doing and seek their consent.

6.10 Sometimes in ensuring duty of care you may be required to restrain a student from harming him or herself or others using reasonable force. Any such strategy must be in keeping with Giant Steps' behaviour management practices or individual student management plans. You should report and document any such incidents. MAPA training is available to assist staff in dealing with crisis situations.

Relationships With Families

6.11 You must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual or heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers. You are reminded of:

- (a) the law prohibiting sexual relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years); and
- (b) the law prohibiting sexual relations between a teacher and their student under the age of 18 years.

6.12 You must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student. An overly familiar relationship with any student (including any adult student) that you are responsible for teaching, tutoring, advising, assessing, or for whom you provide pastoral or welfare support raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence, dependency, and of equality of treatment. Such relationships may also have a negative impact on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues, and may carry a serious reputational risk for Giant Steps. You must not favour one child over another child.

6.13 At all times when speaking with students care must be taken to use appropriate language. You must always treat students with respect and without

favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments. Staff must be aware that adult conversations must not occur where students are present.

6.14 You must not:

- (a) invite students to your home;
- (b) visit students at their home; or
- (c) attend parties or socialise with students, unless you have the express formal written permission of the Principal and their parents or care giver. This includes working with families in Outreach respite arrangements.

6.15 You must not engage in tutoring, coaching, or respite work with students from Giant Steps without the express permission of the Principal.

6.16 You must not invite students to join your personal electronic social networking site or accept students' invitations to join their social networking site (Appropriate Use of Electronic Communication and Social Networking Sites).

6.17 You must not give gifts to students. You should also carefully consider your position before accepting any gift from a student (see Section 10 - Declaring gifts, benefits and bribes)

6.18 Wherever practical, you should avoid teaching or being involved in educational decisions involving family members or close friends. Where it is not practical to avoid such situations completely, another member of staff should make any significant decisions relating to the student's assessments and have those endorsed by a supervisor.

6.19 You should be aware of, and sensitive to, children with culturally diverse or indigenous backgrounds and cultural practices that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour.

Child Protection

6.20 You must be aware of and comply with Giant Steps' Child Protection Policy.

6.21 As set out in Section 3 you must report any concerns you may have about any other employee, contractor or volunteer engaging in 'reportable conduct' or any allegation of 'reportable conduct' that has been made to you to the Principal. This includes self disclosure if the allegation involves you.

6.22 Broadly, 'reportable conduct' includes:

(a) any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child (including a child pornography offence); or
 (b) any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child; or
 (c) any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child,
 whether or not the child consents.

6.23 Reportable conduct does not extend to:

(a) conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards, or
 (b) the use of physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures; or
 (c) conduct that is exempted from notification by a Class or Kind Agreement².

6.24 For further information about 'reportable conduct' see Giant Steps' Child Protection Policy.

6.25 The requirements outlined in Section 6 in relation Supervision, Physical Contact and Relationships with Students set professional boundaries in relation to your behaviour. They make clear what behaviour is unacceptable and could amount to reportable conduct.

The Working With Children Check

6.26 The Working With Children Check is a prerequisite for paid and unpaid child-related work. Under Part 2, section 6 of the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012, child-related work is defined as work in a specific child-related role or face-to-face contact with children in a child-related sector³.

6.27 You must have a Working With Children Check clearance which will be valid for a period of five years. You are responsible for renewing your Working With Children Check every five years.

6.28 All employees must have a Working With Children Check

Appendix 3: Procedure Complaints and Grievances Resolution

The school's procedure for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by

parents, staff and/or students. These processes incorporate principles of procedural fairness.

Grievance Procedure

Giant Steps seeks to ensure problems are identified, reviewed and corrected in a timely manner.

Employees are to seek resolution to work-related concerns following the steps indicated in this document. This procedure has been developed to ensure that staff grievances are recorded and resolved in a transparent, accountable and professional manner.

The objectives of the grievance procedure are to:

- Promote the resolution of disputes by measures based on consultation, co-operation and discussion,
- Reduce the level of work-place confrontation, and
- Avoid interruption to the performance of work.

An employee may raise a grievance regarding any aspect of their employment in accordance with the grievance procedure set out below so that all grievances are resolved as quickly as possible and co-operatively to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned.

A question, dispute or difficulty must initially be dealt with as close to its source as possible, with graduated steps for further discussion and resolution with the Program Director and the Principal / Administrative Director. The procedure for dealing with grievances or disputes is as follows:

The procedure:

- Where appropriate start by addressing the issue with the person/persons concerned.
- In the event that the matter is not resolved, or if it is not appropriate to address the issue directly with the person/ persons concerned the employee or employees shall document the issue in writing on the "Giant Steps Grievance Form" and meet with their Program Director to discuss the issue. The Program Director will then investigate the issue and respond accordingly, seeking support from the Principal as required. The Principal may seek outside assistance in order to resolve the matter.
- In the event the matter remains unresolved, the employee or employees shall then refer the matter directly to the Principal.

- In the event of failure to resolve the matter at the school level the employee shall notify a member of the Giant Steps Sydney Board in writing as to the substance of the issue.