

Success for All – Every School, Every Child Aggregating sensory resources

Key messages from 28. Feb 2011

Bernie Mulcahy, Tess Hillman from van Asch Deaf Education Centre and Karen Stobbs from BLENNZ were unable to attend the meeting because of the Christchurch earthquake. As well as the well being of local students and staff, Bernie, Tess and Karen are also coping with their own family concerns. Our thoughts are with them.

We made a decision to go ahead with the meeting without the van Asch team and Karen to ensure the project's momentum and will update and if necessary revise actions when van Asch staff indicate that they are able to join the project again.

Next steps as of 28 February 2011

- The project management team confirmed the importance of communications with schools in the early part of 2011. The next formal contact with schools will be by letter in mid March. This changed time line allows time to get the information data base of students and schools more refined and to accommodate for the situation in Christchurch schools.
Separate letters will go to regular schools and to special schools. Special Schools tend to have students enrolled who have multiple needs and the range of specialist, teaching and support services these students need tend to be more complex.
The letters will follow the letter from the Minister in November 2010. It will be signed out from the Ministry.
Principals of schools will be asked to reinforce the Ministers message and assure parents, teachers and teacher aides of no change for the 2011 school year. However if students are entering or transferring schools in 2011 then this opportunity should be taken to discuss support from one of the sensory schools.
Copies of the letters will be sent to people receiving this communication.
- A series of articles over 2011 for the Education Gazette will be developed with the Editor of the Gazette and the Ministry Editorial Group.
- The data base of students eligible for the aggregation of sensory resources is close to be finalised and the next task is to understand from information held by the sensory schools and from the Ministry Special Education what services the students are currently receiving and how that is meeting current and emerging needs for the students.

- With the above information the sensory schools will start the development of priorities and plans for the roll out of the aggregation of sensory resources from 2012.
- As well as receiving these monthly communications the principals and senior staff of the sensory schools will keep advocacy and support organisations informed on a more informal bases so that parents can be kept updated.
- The 4th project management team meeting is scheduled for 30 March 2011.

Background to Aggregating Sensory Resources

This policy initiative is the result of:

- feedback to the Review of Special Education discussion document. The majority of the feedback came from parents. Educational staff, advocacy and interest groups also contributed.
- the need to get a more flexible and responsive service which meets the individual needs of children with sensory impairments
- the Ministry of Education working with the sensory schools over time. In particular, this initiative follows on from the work of sensory schools to match student need with specialist teacher capacity.

Benefits of policy initiative for children

- allows for more flexibility in how and what resources are provided
- allows for redefinition of types of workforces to most appropriately meet student need
- will strengthen relationships between sensory schools and regular schools which have children with a sensory impairment on their rolls
- will allow for more direct access to specialist teachers
- supports specialist teachers to manage workloads efficiently to meet the needs of individual students
- allows opportunity to strengthen and build professional development of those working around children with sensory impairments
- contributes to lifting confidence of schools through providing better training and understanding
- will increase access to a wider range of services by families
- strengthen collaborative approach of the team to supporting the learning needs of individual children.

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