



Giant Steps Sydney Annual Report 2020



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Principal's Report

The year had barely begun before the impact of COVID-19 was felt deeply by our students, staff and school community. We recognised very quickly that it was not possible for our families to successfully replicate the supports required to facilitate their child's learning in the home environment. Given the vulnerability of our student population and the impact of having a child with autism at home for sustained periods, Giant Steps provided continuous service, remaining open. Giant Steps operated with high attendance rates (over 90 per cent) throughout the different levels of restrictions. The school implemented significant measures to ensure the wellbeing of both students and staff. The success of our school during this pandemic is undoubtedly attributed to our hard-working staff. Not only did they continue to deliver normal programming and adapt to the additional work load brought on by COVID-19, they also continued with the implementation of a number of initiatives.

There were so many individual highlights throughout the year. However, the one that stands out is the awarding of the Independent School Principal of the Year award to our National Director of Schools and Colleges Kerrie Nelson. This was a very well-deserved award for Kerrie who has shown incredible leadership at Giant Steps.

The transdisciplinary approach to education plays a significant role in the success of Giant Steps programs. Autism specific supports and strategies, including speech, music and occupational therapy support, are layered onto the curriculum within the classroom setting, to ensure our programs are engaging and motivating to our students so they are active learners. Individualisation of these supports and outcomes allow for students to be at their edge of learning, while remaining part of the social context of the classroom. With most therapy moving to telehealth during the pandemic lockdowns, the integration of therapy in to the school program allowed Giant Steps to maintain face to face therapy services throughout the year.

The significant disruption of COVID-19 threatened the continuation of key initiatives the school had rolled out in recent years. Staff however, demonstrated incredible adaptability and creativity in ensuring the following key projects continued in 2020. These projects included: a Disability Innovation project with a partner school and the NSW Department of Education supporting the successful inclusion of students with Autism in the classroom; a research project investigating the literacy profiles of minimally verbal children with autism with Griffith, QUT and Massey Universities; through the online Autism Hub (www.theautismhub.net.au) where information and resources are freely shared; and the recently

established Autism Hub, a training centre set-up to meet demand from schools in our local and regional communities.



The staff are to be congratulated on their commitment to their professional growth and collaboration with colleagues in what was an exceptionally challenging year for the whole community. 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.

Mr Andrew Frakes
Acting Principal 2020



Ms Kerrie Nelson
Principal & National Director of Schools and Colleges



Ms Claire Allen
Director of Finances & Administration



Secondary – Quad

In 2020, the 'Senior Quad' program consisted of 36 students split across seven different classes. The program was primarily based out of a new location on the school premises, the Quad, with one Transition Class (consisting of Year 12 school leavers) engaging in their program out of the Laneway space. The Quad space provides an environment that fosters social engagement between students of different classes when accessing its common areas during recreational and mealtimes, and enabled the Senior Quad to maintain its functionality when having to separate from much of the rest of the school during periods of increased concern regarding COVID-19.



The major focus of the program consisted of Outdoor Education (hiking, surfing and swimming), the 2020 academic programs, process and experiential tasks, and student engagement support. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our ability to access our community activities were greatly diminished, however students were able to continue to access Outdoor Education during the Sydney lockdown period with 1:1 support. Other highlights of the program included lessons focused around a new integrated Literacy program focusing on texts including Jeannie Baker stories, Moana and Over the Hedge to develop concepts of different worlds

and community, the Science unit of work Substances, Italian in Languages, and concepts around money and space in mathematics. Students transitioning out of school in 2020 focussed on investigating a variety of post-school options, developing independent, vocational, and self-management skills that will serve them well after leaving school. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, all of our annual camps were cancelled, as were many of our annual excursions.



Ms Claire Cherrington
Secondary – Quad Director

Secondary - Clocktower

In 2020, the 'Senior Laneway' program consisted of eleven students split across three different classes. The program made a significant shift from its initial conception in 2017, moving to a whole new location on the school premises. The program hence changed its name to 'Senior Clocktower Program'.

The major focus of the program consisted of outdoor education (hiking and swimming), process and experiential tasks, and student engagement supports. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our ability to access our community activities were greatly diminished, however students continued to enjoy safe activities in wide open spaces with staff support. Lessons within the classroom focused on 'Money' with our onsite canteen and then community cafes when appropriate. Other highlights of the class included lessons focused around Maths Yoga, Substances, Belonging and Friendships. Students also continued to work towards independence in their daily living tasks and self-care skills.

Again due to COVID-19, our annual camp was cancelled however students began to access the wider community as restrictions eased. This included accessing the local shops to purchase snack items as well as local eateries to practice money exchange and choice.



Mr Toby Shi
Secondary – Clocktower
Director



Junior Program

The year 2020 saw Giant Steps go through one of its most challenging years. With the outbreak of COVID and many restrictions put in place as a result, staff were asked to be even more creative than usual with programming, creating engaging classroom-based lessons while still providing safe access to the great outdoors and reinventing ways to continue to invigorate and motivate our students. Through this staff continued to come to work to support our students with much enthusiasm through what was a very tricky time. We continued to follow the NSW curriculum and together with our therapy team delivered lessons across all KLA's.

Not surprisingly, given the incredible skill and commitment of our wonderful staff and the resilience and supportive nature of our families, there was still a lot to celebrate and a lot of learning and fun to be had across the year.

In 2020, the Primary Program consisted of eight classes, with a total of 44 students. We welcomed 6 new families to the Primary program across the year.

Prior to the COVID outbreak we were accessing the community, organising whole class excursions to the Golden Ridge Farm as part of our English program - My Farm and visiting local cafes to practice our money skills. In addition to "The Farm" topic for English we also explored the rhyming classis of "Dr Seuss". Literacy lessons continued across the program with students breaking in to small groups across classes for specifically designed literacy lessons and the library was moved to the primary space so that students still had access to their favourite books and story time.

Maths continued to feature with an emphasis on money skills, measurement through cooking, whole number, calendar and number-based games. With much of our community access not deemed safe we created our own shops, food stalls and even our very own Uber Eats program.

In Art and Music, we explored the themes of Pop and Bollywood. Once again, we are so lucky to have such a talented creative arts team and together with teachers the students learnt the many dances of Bollywood and Pop in music and Created Pop and Bollywood art exploding with colour and creativity.

We are very lucky to have a large site here at school and although we could not participate for much of the year in many of our regular PDHPE programs,

such as swimming and gymnastics, we made the most of the beautiful on-site grounds, enjoying Yoga at the Bay, learning to bike ride, flying kites and bushwalking.

Once restrictions eased towards the summer many of our students relished the opportunity to get back in the pool or enjoy our local beaches. Thank you once again to Carlisle Lane Cove for their wonderful support, providing us with sole use of their lovely pool and giving us the added support of an instructor for our lessons. The water is certainly a favourite with most of our primary students

Perhaps the highlight of the year was celebrating NAIDOC week. There were plenty of opportunities to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Culture and Traditions within the classroom and playground. Each class made an artwork representing their Indigenous class name. These were displayed in a gallery and classes were able to visit throughout the week.

We were sorry to not be able to invite families in to celebrate Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparents day. Birthdays too were still celebrated but unfortunately parents were unable to join us at school. Fortunately, we were still able to enjoy Eater and Halloween, students and staff relished the opportunity to dress up, have an Easter hat parade and trick or treat.

In Term 4 we transitioned 2 students to other educational settings, 1 to another special school and the other to an aspect satellite class. In addition to this 3 students transitioned to our Secondary space.



Ms Jenny Loughnan and Ms Rachael Bowen
Directors of Junior Program

Occupational Therapy

At Giant Steps, the Occupational Therapist work 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 individualised strategies.

The past twelve months with covid-19 brought a new set of challenges to the school and the Occupational Therapy team worked closely with teachers and other therapists to adapt the class program where required, especially given the lack of community-based activities that were available. In some instances, this meant providing:

- exercise and gross motor opportunities on the school campus with the restrictions to outdoor education, swimming, gymnastics and trampolining
- class food preparation and tuckshop programs in lieu of shopping and money exchange programs
- theoretical and role play based lessons on road safety, protective behaviours in the community

As restrictions eased, we supported class teams to consider the sensory needs of each student when implementing social distancing, hygiene practices and mask wearing.

We continued to implement our Interoception programs within classrooms and were able to share this knowledge and expertise with other school settings through The Autism Hub online training program. We are always excited to get the work of the Giant Steps OT team out to the wider community. We explored ways in which we can best support our students with regards to noticing, recognising, identifying and responding to changes taking place in their internal physical and emotional states. Many of our students have difficulty recognising when they are too hot, need the toilet or when they are beginning to feel upset.

This year we farewelled Sarah Monch from the Giant Steps OT team after over a decade of service.



Mr Daniel Snow
Occupational Therapy Director

Music Therapy

In 2020, the Music Therapy team continued to seek effective ways of sharing resources and creating relationships with families, professionals and partner organisations. To meet the needs of a growing student body, we also welcomed Kate Leung, Alice Lai and Isaac Grouse to the team. These new music therapists bring a range of new skills and experience to the school to enrich programs. Mentoring new staff will continue to be a focus in 2021.

Resources

In response to the lockdown and urgent importance placed on hygiene practices, a range of resources using music and video modelling were created and shared with families. These included procedural routines around washing hands and wearing masks in the community. The shifting of a range of transition and self-care songs onto the Microsoft Teams platform meant that all staff could have access to these resources both when moving around the school and when offsite. Latest findings in music research were also shared with the whole staff body during an afternoon Top Up session.



Professional Development

In July, the music therapy team developed an Autism Essentials training webinar for the Australian Music Therapy Association. This was in response to requests for Giant Steps to share its considerable knowledge in the area with music therapy professionals. The shift from a face-to-face event to online provision did not deter participation, with over 100 music therapists from around Australia attending and engaging in deep discussion around supporting students and clients with autism. As face-to-face professional development opportunities were limited, the team

also embraced online learning courses, such as those provided by Rhythm Village and the AMTA.

Partnership

Towards the end of the year, an opportunity emerged to partner with independent music creator, publisher and licensor Entertainment One/Audio Network. As a company made up of professionals from a range of creative backgrounds, they invited Giant Steps in for a collaboration day. Here the music therapists and E1/Audio Network produced a range of music and dance learning resources for the upcoming 2021 Disco theme. These included video modelling of dance and movement routines, choice banks of themed music videos for leisure, and access to their huge database of royalty-free music searchable by theme, mood and style. We look forward to growing this relationship in the coming year.



Program

The creative arts program themes for 2020 were Pop and Bollywood, both proving to be motivating for expanding student interests, and for the many multi-sensory experiences offered particularly through Indian music, dance and culture. Whist Arts Access was put on hold for the year, opportunities were sought to provide authentic musical experiences for each semester theme, including a visit from Scott Benning - a professional sitar player who provided an excellent performance and chance for students to engage directly with the instrument. We are very much looking forward to the return of Arts Access and events in 2021.

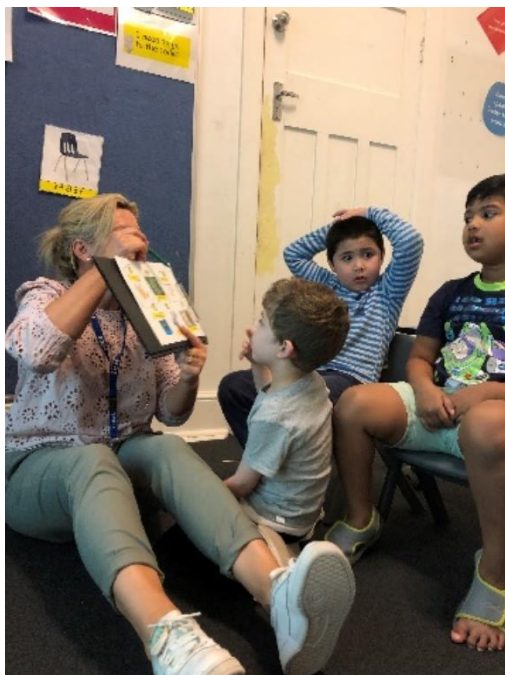


Ms Bronte Arns
Music Therapy Director

Speech Therapy

Enhancing Literacy Outcomes: Research Partnerships

Giant Steps has continued the research partnership with colleagues at Griffith University, Massey University and Queensland University of Technology to investigate how educators can optimise literacy outcomes for students with ASD using an evidence-based assessment framework. Following on from the pilot project, which commenced in 2018, a research article was published highlighting the impact of assessment for children with autism in a tutorial format. The article, "Emergent Literacy Assessment in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder Who Have Limited Verbal Communication Skills: A Tutorial" was published in Language, Speech and Hearing Service in Schools journal. Giant Steps' current research partnership with Griffith and Massey university is looking to develop a suite of professional learning resources, based on our experiences of literacy assessment and intervention at Giant Steps, to share with the broader Autism community. This professional learning suite aims to provide practical guidance and case student examples of how assessment can be conducted with students with autism across educational settings through a self-paced online, module based format.



Individualised Expressive Communication

A continued focus on the implementation of individualised expressive communication systems has continued for each student at Giant Steps. This

is process is a collaborative one as we seek information and input from the child's family and each child's class team based on both the ICF and Participation Model frameworks. 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). An online professional learning course was designed across Term 4 2020 with the aim of disseminating information about how individuals with autism learn language, process information and the impact of these considerations of assessing, designing, implementing and evaluating effective systems of expressive communication. Giant steps staff will be completing the professional development course early in the new year, with the scope to offering this course to support the understanding of the broader community in regards to AAC implementation with individuals with autism.



Whilst most face to face professional learning and conferences were not available due to COVID-19, the speech therapists were able to access some remote professional learning through virtual workshops with Professor Jacqui Roberts, through the Griffith University Autism Centre of excellence. This workshop style professional learning enabled us to apply theoretical knowledge around information processing and autism leaning style to practical case examples and was supportive of us further refining our assessment of communication and implementation of systems of communication.

Collaboration with External Providers

With the introduction of NDIS we have continued to see an increase in the number of private providers working with our students and families outside of the school context. These services often takes different shapes and forms and providing opportunities to collaborate about students goals and strategies, to provide a level of consistency for the student across settings, continues to be a key consideration at school when supporting the expressive communication of our students. One of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic was maintaining the relationships we have with external providers given they were unable to visit the school site to observe and meet about students. Whilst unable to meet face to face, most of this communication was successfully transitioned to an online format with therapists, families and external providers able to spend time discussing goals and strategies that were supportive of each individual students needs across the different social contexts via platforms such as zoom and Microsoft Teams.

COVID-19 impact

In addition to the logistical impact of COVID-19, many of our students and their families found the restrictions in access to environments and activities challenging. The speech therapy team was able to offer practical support through developing and sharing a number of resources including forewarnings and 'social stories' explaining the changes to what was and wasn't available and use an autism friendly format to explain the importance of some of the hygiene practices that needed to be put into place to ensure the health and wellbeing of our students, staff and their families.

Ms Rachael Bowen
Speech Therapy Director



Student Welfare and Family Support

The Rob Llewellyn-Jones Clinical Centre

In 2020 we held 19 clinic days, seeing 63 students from K-6, Secondary and Adult Services over 152 appointments. The clinic continued to bring the doctors onsite even during the pandemic, with doctors observing students with social distances in place. Parents attended meetings remotely for portions of the year, particularly in Terms 2 and 3, with video links and phone conferencing being widely used.

The clinic team is made of the visiting doctors, myself and Andrew Frakes, head of Occupational Therapy. Dr Richard Webster, paediatric neurologist at Sydney Children's Hospital Westmead, continued to collaborate with the team, consulting remotely in Term 2 and then joining us in person by December. This continues to be a highly valuable resource to our families.

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, particular in such uncertain and unpredictable times.

Ms Helen Appleton
Director of Student, Family and Psychological Services



Art

The Visual Arts program at Giant Steps Sydney sits within CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts), a component that blends 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.

2020 was another exciting and creative year as our students engaged in art activities that related to themselves and the world around them. All students participated in both structured and sensory-based art activities that are themed and modified to suit each individual student across each program.

In semester one of 2020 our students explored 'Pop Art', making 2D and 3D works based on the artists, Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol. For second semester, the students developed art works based around the theme of 'Bollywood'. Here they investigated and created stage set, props and design for performances held in the music rooms using art, dance, music and drama. The decorations and props served as a full theatrical experience where all sensory and CAPA components were incorporated.

As well as providing a structured and themed art program, the students also enjoyed exploring a variety of sensory-based art materials that allowed 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 almost anything.



Ms Pamela Honeyfield
Art



Outdoor Education

With COVID seeing the closure of many of the camps and more adventurous activities like snow sports the students have made the most of the freedoms experienced on their favourite trails as well as a few new ones. A concerted effort was made for the Outdoor Education team to find more variety in the locations, types of trails and natural environments to ensure students continued to have positive experiences throughout the year. In addition to the hiking activities students also were able to experience and enjoy wild swimming, surfing, stand up paddle boarding (SUP), kayaking, bike and scooter riding and snorkelling programs. The variety of activities has allowed the school to build a seasonal calendar of programs for students to continue their learning journey and exploration of their developing physical capabilities.



With the return to a more stability around the impact of COVID the Giant Steps Outdoor Education program team has been focussed on scaling up of programming opportunities for our student. With some of the students already accessing overnight camps there are also plans in place to relaunch the snow sports program in the late winter period.

Giant Steps celebrated its first NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) students had the opportunity to access culturally significant areas and better understand the land they live and travel on as well as explore a suite of learning sensory lessons on site. Plans for NAIDOC in 2021 are in full swing with a suite of activities and lessons building on the great foundations from the 2020 event.

The Outdoor Education team are excited to continue innovating the programs and extending the opportunity to all the students.



Mr Ben Bowen
Outdoor Education Specialist

Library

The Giant Steps library has been relocated into the new quad building. The increase in size has allowed us to have a well-stocked fiction and non-fiction section with a variety of seating and tables to suit all our students. It is great to see the students feel relaxed and comfortable in this fabulous space and self-selecting books to read or share peers and staff.

With more shelving we have divided the library into fiction and non-fiction space. The Dewey classification systems has been adapted and simplified so that our students can access the books they are interested in. Whilst the shelves are now labelled we are slowly labelling the books so that students can independently find and put books away. It is a massive job to label all the books and will be ongoing over the years.

There is now a library jobs program running with our older students. These students are labelling, shelving and tidying the library as part of their work experience programme. Such roles increase confidence, self-esteem and a better understanding of the library.

Books continue to be sourced by voluntary donations with the occasional purchase. Recently "Child's Play" kindly supported the purchase of some books which are particularly loved by our younger students. It is great to see the lower junior students enjoy books, knowing how to select, handle and share with others.

Our aim over the next year is to add images to the walls so that the space is more engaging to both our younger and older students, continue to develop our selection of books so everyone's needs are met and label the 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 2020.

RoSA

In 2020 no RoSA credentials were issued to students in this reporting period.

Literacy & Numeracy Assessments

In 2020 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 2020.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, no external work experience was undertaken.

Internal work opportunities included:

- Office & Administration Jobs
- Store Replenishment
- Recycling
- Cleaning
- Library Book Cataloguing

Teacher Standards

In 2020 Giant Steps employed 22 teaching staff across the year with a FTE of 18.7 positions. These teaching positions were supported by 15.9 FTE therapy staff and 39.32 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	18.7
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

Staff Retention Rates

Teachers	90%
Therapists	79%
Educators	77%
Administration	91%

Average Retention Across Giant Steps – 84.25%

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

Professional Learning

In 2020 Giant Steps staff were involved in **1,756 hours** of professional development across the year. The number of courses attended throughout 2020 totalled **50** across the following areas:

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

Average Professional Learning Hours Per Staff Member – 19.5 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:

- Area Warden Training
- Human Resources Professional Breifing
- Experienced Teacher Accreditation
- Crossing Professional Boundaries
- Understanding Sensory Processing
- Music Celebrations – Top Up
- Disability Legislation
- Bronze Medallion
- Investigations Masterclass – Reportable Conduct
- Investigations Masterclass – Workplace Investigations
- Update to Child Protection
- CPR Training
- MoneySmart Maths (Primary School)
- Designing Surveys
- Dr Wenn Lawson
- The AIS Annual Briefing 2020
- Midazolam – Emergnecy Seizure Medication Administration

- Toileting and Privacy Top Up
- Team Building
- Engagement Scale Training
- Moving Beyond NumbersL Using Qualatative Data
- Making Your Numerical Data Work
- Work Health & Safety
- Obligations in Identifying and Responding to Children and Young People at Risk
- Enhancing Your Child Protection Investigation Skills
- First Aid
- Viewing of Experienced Teacher Digital Portfolios
- Sensory Support in the Classroom
- Epilepsy Awareness
- NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission Training
- Interoception in the Classroom
- Expressive Communication Needs of Students with ASD
- MYP Software Training
- Understanding the NSW Child Safe Standards
- The Principles of Purposeful Programming
- Professional Support for Experienced Teachers – ETSB Supervisors
- What is Educational Data?
- Teaching Road Safety
- Live Life Well @ School
- New Child Protection Legislation Updates
- Crisis Prevention Intervention – Management of Actual or Potential Aggression Foundation Course
- Crisis Prevention Intervention – Management of Actual or Potential Aggression Refresher
- Multi Enterprise Agreement (MEA)
- Nationally Consistent Collection of Data: Overview and Modernisation
- RAPA – Recreational and Play Assessment
- PHD Learning
- Service Plan Training – Emergency Skills Procedures
- What is ASD and what can I do about it?
- Talking and Listening Review
- Understanding the NDIS – What is it?

Workforce Composition

In 2020 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	18.7
Therapists:	18	15.9
Educators / Teachers Aides	43	39.32
Administration	12	9.47
Total Staff	96	84.39

Student Attendance and Retention Rates in Secondary School

Student Population	
K-6	46
Secondary	44

In 2020 the school enrolled 90 students aged 4-18 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 2020 the following transitions occurred:

- 3 students integrated to other schools
- 9 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 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 92.1%

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

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 Adult Autism Services Giant Steps (AASGS) in 2008, and as we progress, the staff are considering more flexible options and programs to meet the changing needs of young adults.

Nine students transitioned to post school programs at the end of 2020 funded through the NDIS. All students took up a part time placement at AASGS and were supported in their transition to other services that made up a five day per week program for each of the students in 2021.

Enrolment Policies and Characteristics of the Student Body

In 2020 the school enrolled 90 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	
K-6	46
Secondary	44
Total Males	62
Total Females	28
Student Total	90

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

School Enrolment Policy

Giant Steps Australia 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 Education Standards Authority. 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, families 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

1. Continue the development of the ASD training unit.(Autism Hub).

Outcome

The face to face delivery of courses was disrupted by the COVID-19 restrictions. A new online learning platform was utilised to adapt courses for remote learning.

2. Further development of the secondary school spaces in new 'Quad' space.

Outcome

New joinery in 3 classrooms with a further 3 classrooms designed and scheduled for completion in 2021.

3. Undergo strategic review of IT across the organisation.

Outcome

Strategic planning initiated with the support of Capgemini.

4. Continue research partnerships with Universities

Outcome

Rachel Bowen Director of Speech Therapy co-authored the article "Emergent Literacy Assessment in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who have Limited Verbal Communication Skills: A Tutorial" published in Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools.

Director of Student and Psychological Services Helen Appleton is nearing completion of her PhD. Helen was lead author on the article "How is Anxiety Identified and Diagnosed in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disability? A Scoping Review" published in the Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities.

Priorities for 2021

1. Executing IT strategic plan.
2. Renovation of bathrooms across school to promote student independence in increase facilities.
3. Continue research partnerships with Universities.

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 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions Giant Steps was unable to host students on Community Service or Work Experience programs from local schools. We expect that next year we will be able to welcome schools such as St Ignatius College, St Joseph's College, and St Alysious back on to school grounds. In previous years we have had around 75 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.

Curriculum

Throughout 2020 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.

Staff are constantly seeking to find new ways to teach and to support student learning, they are to be congratulated.

Throughout 2020 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

COVID-19 caused great disruption across society in 2020. In this tumultuous year the staff, families and Giant Steps community pulled together to ensure the students of Giant Steps continued to receive a quality education. Despite the disruption across the year the staff worked incredibly hard demonstrating flexibility and creativity to ensure that programs were not only maintained but improved.



Mr Andrew Frakes
Acting Principal 2020

Summary Financial Information

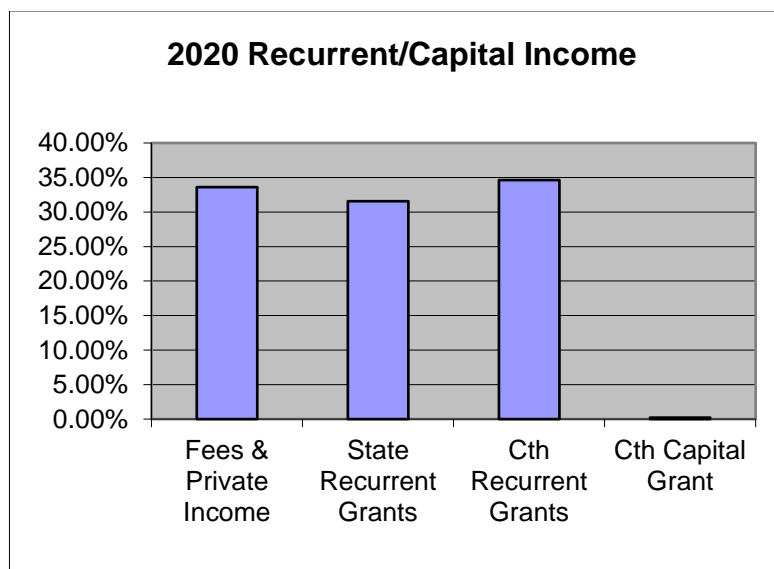
Financial Information

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

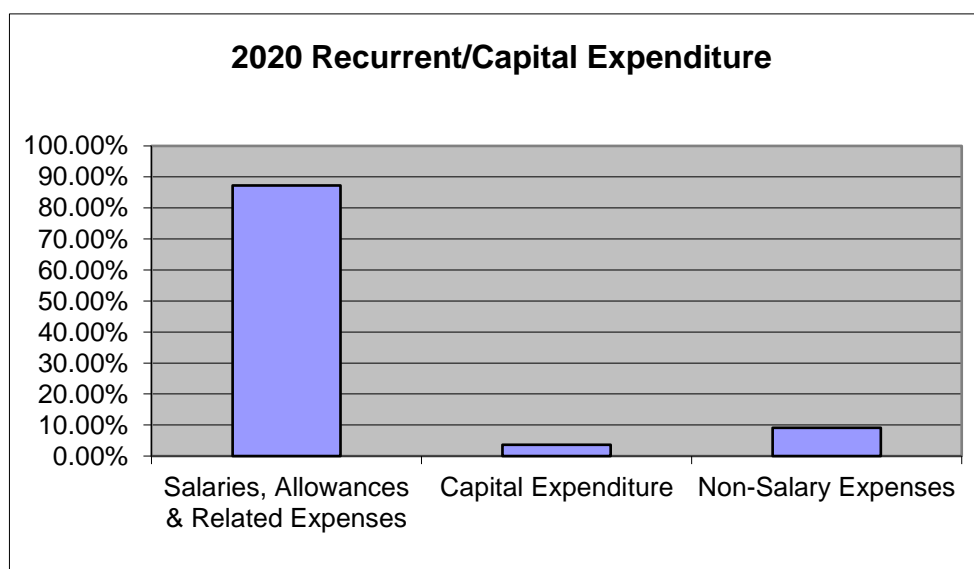
Pricewaterhouse Coopers. Giant Steps does not charge fees and in 2020 received 33.6% of revenue from donations, fundraising appeals and support from community organisations and companies.

(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 Australia School Program

History

Giant Steps Australia 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 Australia runs a school with a transdisciplinary model integrating teaching and learning and therapy for students with autism. Giant Steps Australia is 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 Education Standard Authority curriculum framework.
- Integration of students into local schools and communities as an integral part of the School Program.
- Giant Steps Australia uses a child and family centred approach that aims to encourage the children to achieve their maximum potential.
- Programs at Giant Steps Australia may vary from time to time.

How is Giant Steps Australia Funded?

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

Donations to Giant Steps Australia are tax deductible.

Giant Steps Australia does not charge fees in the School Program.

What Other Services does Giant Steps Australia Offer?

Giant Steps Australia gives extensive training to the staff in integration schools and also runs frequent workshop training sessions for other people in the Education industry working with Autism, through the Autism Training Hub.

Giant Steps Australia also has an Adult Services Program, where graduating students can move onto post-school.

Giant Steps Australia's Vision Statement

"Giant Steps Australia 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 Australia's Mission Statement

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

Giant Steps Australia 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 Australia'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 Australia.
- 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 Australia 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 Australia 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 Australia

- 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 Australia 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 Australia Board or the Principal may require the parent to remove the child from the school.

Withdrawal from Giant Steps Australia

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

Enrolment

Students are offered a place in the K-6 or Secondary programs. Parents of 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 Australia Board in writing as to the substance of the issue.