Mount Ommaney Special School Vision

To provide engaging, relevant curriculum and innovative, specialised teaching in partnership with families and the community in a safe, supportive environment.

Our Values and Beliefs:

- Every student will be provided with high quality educational programs that are relevant and appropriate to their needs.
- Educational programs will be student centred, individualised, specialised and embrace innovation.
- Contemporary teaching practices, built from evidence based research, are most effective when collaboration and reflection occur.
- Students benefit from a holistic approach to education that enables them, builds personal independence and promotes self-esteem.
- Students learn best in an environment that is safe, supportive, healthy, respectful and promotes a sense of fun and enjoyment.
- The principles of equity and social justice will drive decision making. Difference is respected and celebrated.
- All members of our community, including students, staff and families are learners working collaboratively as a team.
Welcome to Mount Ommaney Special School and Early Childhood Development Program

Mount Ommaney Special School caters for students who present with a wide range of both physical and intellectual impairments and complex medical needs. Our campus is located at 94 Capitol Drive, Mount Ommaney and consists of:

- Six teaching blocks, each containing two or four classrooms
- Early Childhood Development Program consisting of three classrooms, a multi-purpose area and an adventure playground
- A multi-purpose area, which houses a heated hydrotherapy pool, a life skills area, sensory room, a kitchen, an adventure playground and the nurse’s station
- A Resource Centre, which also contains a multi-media room
- The administration block including the Principals’ office, the Deputy Principals’ office, Head of Curriculum’s office, the therapy room, and a staff room

The school operates on a trans-disciplinary model to develop and implement programs that enable students to achieve their maximum potential. As such a variety of professionals and para-professionals are employed. Our school emphasises the importance of meeting the needs of individual students. This goal is achieved through the implementation of Individual Learning Plans. These are developed through a close working relationship between the parents and the school staff.
Mount Ommaney Special School has a multi-levelled approach to curriculum and is tailored to the needs of individual students.

The school is divided into the following curriculum sectors and teaching teams.

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**Intensive Interactions**

P-12

• Early Years Curriculum Guidelines
• Essential Learnings
• Australian Curriculum
Volunteering at Mount Ommaney Special School

At Mount Ommaney the classroom staff consists of a Teacher and a Teacher Aide, (some classes do have a second Teacher Aide).

Volunteers at our school have participated in a wide variety of activities including:

- Classroom programs
- Hydrotherapy & Learn to Swim
- Bike riding programs
- Community access programs
- Gym and Gross Motor
- Horse riding

As you can see many of these programs require a high adult to student ratio. Therefore, volunteers play a very important role within our school. With your assistance students are more easily able to access several activities.

It is advisable to bring a packed lunch when volunteering with us, as there are no canteen facilities. There are, however, several local shopping centres nearby.
Volunteering at
Mount Ommaney Early Childhood Development Program

Our Early Childhood Development Program is an integral part of the MOSS campus. The unit caters for children with special needs from birth to five years. Volunteers will assist in the delivery of early intervention educational programs for young children who have moderate to severe impairments across a range of disabilities. Programs are held on a sessional basis between Monday and Friday. Activities are similar to those incorporated in a regular kindergarten program and will involve bending and lifting. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to assist in therapy sessions with our Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and Speech-Language Pathologist.

Volunteers for Playgroup

Playgroup on Wednesday mornings from 9.30 - 11.30am is a unique time of the week at ECDP. Children (0 to 3 years) come with their parent(s) and often siblings who are of a different age range to the children who are enrolled. Within this group are children who present with a range of abilities and special needs. Some have a diagnosis and others are relying on accurate observations from the teacher to assist with a diagnosis.

As well as providing tailored play activities for the children’s development, family support is an integral part of the playgroup program. The teacher needs to spend time with each family to model and teach how to positively involve their child in play situations and discuss any issues or needs arising from their demanding parenting role. The parents have a discussion time together over morning tea.

Volunteers provide valuable assistance by:

- Assisting with the preparation of playgroup resources and activities
Playing, reading and facilitating children’s participation in activities

Assisting with supervision of siblings while parents are engaged with their child with special needs

Assisting with general housekeeping duties

Volunteers in Pre-Prep classes

Pre-Prep classes are run on a sessional basis from 9.00-11.30am and 12.30-2.45pm on consecutive days. Volunteers assist the Teacher and Teacher Aide to:

Set up the daily program

Facilitate children through sensory, gross and fine motor and language activities

Develop individual children’s skills through play

Assist with general housekeeping duties
Before You Start Volunteering

Please go to the Administration office on arrival, the EPO (Education Program Officer) will meet with you and organise day/s and times that are suitable to you. During this meeting you will be asked to complete an application for a 'Blue Card' or suitability notice for a volunteer. Volunteering cannot commence until the Blue Card arrives. If you already hold one a photocopy will be taken. In addition to this you will be asked to fill in a general information sheet.

Your First Day

Upon arrival you will need to sign the volunteer book located in the administration area. The Teacher and Teacher Aide/s will guide you through the daily events. Feel free to ask questions about the program in which you are involved. Take your time and join in the activities when you feel comfortable. Remember first days can be quite daunting!

It is also a good idea to familiarise yourself with the phone system and school and departmental policies.

What We Expect From You As A Volunteer

Although a friendly environment there are some general ideals that we would like our volunteers to adhere to. Most notably is confidentiality. While in the classroom/school you may become privy to certain information. Any personal information about the class, and in particular our students, must be treated in a confidential manner. Respect must be shown to students at all times, and staff are requested not to talk about the students in a disrespectful manner.

During class time you will be expected to follow the teachers’ and teacher aides’ advice when working with students. Please seek clarification if you are unsure. This is very important as each student is unique and therefore
may require different manual handling techniques, mealtime programs and behaviour management strategies.

It is also important to limit social conversations during class time (including student mealtimes) remember this is still student learning time. Excessive talking can prove confusing to many of our students. We also discourage the use of mobile phones in the classroom. As a volunteer we understand you may need to take personal calls. However, it is preferable to keep your mobile phone in the staff area of the teaching block and check it intermittently. If you need to take a call please leave the classroom and inform the other staff.

Importantly we encourage you to enjoy your experiences at our school.

Please contact the school on 3717 6888 if you are unable to attend on your designated day.

What You Can Expect From Us When Volunteering

At Mount Ommaney we aim to make all volunteers feel welcome. You can expect to be treated with respect and as a valued member of staff, and we will endeavour to make your time at the school an enjoyable experience.

For ongoing support while volunteering at our school your contact person is Jim Green, who acts as the volunteer co-ordinator. Please see Jim if you need any assistance while volunteering, would like to re-arrange your voluntary days or change classes.

As a volunteer you may learn new skills, such as sign language. You may also make new friends and contacts.

Voluntary work can also provide future job seekers with practical experience in working with students with disabilities. We will be happy to provide a reference stating the skills you have gained while volunteering at MOSS.
Most of all you can expect to have a great time working with our wonderful students.

We have placed in this booklet information that you may find useful whilst volunteering at our school. They include tips on manual handling, health and hygiene control and some basic Makaton signs.

Good Luck, and Welcome to Mount Ommaney Special School.

Jim Green, Education Program Officer
Email: jgree345@eq.edu.au
Phone: 3717 6888
IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Mount Ommaney Special School phone number is: (07) 3717 6888

Mount Ommaney Special School fax number is: (07) 3717 6800

Early Childhood Development Program phone number is (07) 3717 6840

Early Childhood Development Program fax number is (07) 3717 6844
Principles of Correct Lifting

- Keep fit for lifting
- Plan the lift
- Maintain correct posture - spinal curves intact
- Assess the load
- Place feet apart - side to side or in lunge for a stable base
- Brace the abdominals
- Hold the load with the hands - not the fingers
- Hold the load close to the body
- Avoid lifting with a rotated or laterally flexed spine
- Lift with leg and buttock muscles and use momentum
- Avoid cyclic stress, i.e. frequent repetitive movements

Avoid:
- Extreme range movements.
- Twisting while lifting
- Bending of the spine.
- Jerky, uncontrolled movement.

Safe Manual Handling

- Assess
- Plan
- Prepare and Position
- Communicate then carry out the lift.

Manual Handling Parameters

- Weight.
- Shape and Size.
- Position and Accessibility.
- Distance to be travelled.
- Environment.
Transfer

A transfer is a joint procedure between student and staff member during a move and is the option when the student:
- has some weight bearing ability;
- has an understanding of what is required;
- is cooperative.

One or more staff members may assist in a transfer or a transfer may simply be done under supervision.

A Lift

A lift is a controlled move of the student by staff. It may be assisted or unassisted. Assistance may come from:
- Another staff member - team lift.
- Use of mechanical lifting devices - hoist or trolley.

Lifting a Student out of a Chair

Assess:
- Is lift necessary?
- Is transfer possible?
- Is lift by hoist, team or individual?
- Can student assist?
- Will student hinder - how?

Planning, Preparation and Positioning

- Prepare pathways, remove obstacles, prepare equipment and position correctly.
- Take chair as close to required area/equipment as practicable.
- Position chair correctly.
- Put brakes on.
Communication

- Involve team member if it is a team lift, communicate style of lift and plan lift.
- Involve student and explain what is required.

Lifting

- Tell child and give instructions.
- Undo foot and or knee straps.
- Remove tray.
- Undo shoulder/chest straps and support student's upper trunk.
- Control child in chair while removing hip/lap strap.
- Place feet apart - side to side or in lunge for a stable base
- Bend knees, brace tummy and buttocks, count 1,2,3 lift.
- Lift using knees and hips
- Keep child close to body, hips less than a right angle.

Hints with Wheelchairs

- Where possible, push a chair whose handle height suits your height, and with which you are comfortable.

- Try to avoid pushing down a very steep slope. If it cannot be avoided, then reverse the chair for user comfort.

- To get a chair up onto a kerb, face the kerb and tilt the chair back and roll up onto kerb

- To get a chair down a kerb, travel backwards, taking big back wheels down first

- Always put on brakes when the chair is stopped and student is not being pushed. Some students will rock in their chair which may become mobile.
Safety on a Change Table

- Don’t leave any child unattended on change table.
- If child has tight muscles, roll from side to side to stop build up of tone while changing nappy.

Safety on Equipment

- Most students have little idea of danger.
- Many students have poor balance and need to be supported on equipment.
- Some students who have balance may lose it as they tire.
- Many students have poor stamina.
- Therefore all students need to be supervised on equipment.
Communication

One of the most powerful ways to communicate is through language. There are several ways in which we use language to communicate.

These include:
- Satisfying a need or want (eg. “I want a drink”) 
- Controlling (eg. “Give it to me”) 
- Initiating or maintaining contact with others (eg. “Hi. let’s go outside”) 
- Expressing opinions or feelings (eg. “Yuk! cabbage”) 
- Questioning (eg. “How’s this go?”) 
- Commenting on an experience (eg. “The music is great”)

Expression by students at Mount Ommaney Special School is frequently not conveyed through speech. Their speech is delayed as a result of hearing, visual, physical and/or intellectual impairments. The messages are conveyed by augmentative methods of communication which are natural supplement to speech. This includes actions such as facial expression, eye gaze and movement. Our goal for developing communication is for all students to exert some influence over the environment and to achieve some independence this is a basic human right.

At Mount Ommaney Special School, we utilise a set of general strategies for promoting communication which includes:

- We give students the opportunity to express real choices, needs or preferences. Example - offering the student a choice between colours. The response may vary from a gesture to looking or vocalising.
- We give students the opportunity to request or refuse objects or events when possible. An example is asking “Do
you want to go to the toilet?” when given that opportunity we respect the student’s response.

- We set up unpredictable events within a family’s routine, for example, the student is given a sandwich without taking off the plastic. We wait for a communicative response.
- We set up opportunities for problem solving by individual students. For example, we place a toy out of reach and the student has to obtain the object.
- We set up and participate in joint action routines. These are structured activities in a turn taking game. A wide range of communicative behaviours are targeted depending on the routine/activity.

Systems of communication used at Mount Ommaney Special School are predominantly:

- An augmentative communication system which is used to supplement speech.
- An alternative communication system which is used instead of speech.

These systems may be unaided or aided. Unaided systems involve movements of the hand, arms and use of the body. The most common include natural gesture, signs adopted from Australian Sign Language and modified by the Makaton Vocabulary. We try to sign all key words in simple instructions and interactions to aid the students understanding. It is essential to learn these signs to use in the classroom. Aided communication systems utilise a visuographic symbol set or system. Examples include: Objects, Pictures, Photographs, Compic Symbols. The set may be used in conjunction with boards or electronic equipment, and are called communication aids.

The communication specialist or Speech Language Pathologist is available to discuss any aspect of communication with volunteers.
**YES** - Move dominant fist up and down from the wrist, twice.

**NO** - Shake dominant fist sideways in front of body.
GOOD - Move extended dominant thumb forward with stress.

HUNGRY (1) - Cup both hands and place, palms facing body, at waist height. Turn hands to palms up.

THIRSTY - Extend dominant index finger and place under chin. Stroke down neck.

MORE - Cup dominant hand and place fingertips on centre chest - move hand forward.
**TO EAT** - Close dominant fingertips onto ball of thumb. Tap formation on chin, twice.

**TO DRINK** - Shape dominant hand as for holding a glass - tilt to mouth as for drinking. (Natural gesture)

**FOOD** - Close dominant fingertips on to ball of thumb. Tap formation on chin, twice.

**CUP** - Shape dominant hand as for holding a cup, place on flat palm of non-dominant hand.

**taste** - Tap tip of extended right hand index finger at right corner of mouth, twice.
TOILET - Fingerspell "T" quickly, twice, index finger on edge of hand.

CLEAN - Open both hands, palms together. Sweep dominant hand fingers forward along non-dominant hand, twice.

WET - Open dominant hand, palm up. Simultaneously close tips of fingers to thumb, twice, and lower hand slightly. *May use both hands.

DIRTY - Rub palms of both hands together, in circular movement, fingers spread slightly.

DRESS
Mime natural gestures

WASH HANDS
Mime natural gestures