SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

Rationale
As a Catholic school in the Mercy tradition St Joseph’s recognizes the importance of the individual and the School’s role in providing the opportunity for a holistic education. St Joseph’s will attempt to provide avenues of appeal to support students who are legitimately unable to demonstrate their academic ability.

GOSPEL VALUES
Respect, personal dignity, individual worth, freedom, integrity, trust, justice, understanding, forgiveness, honesty, care, compassion.

Application
Students

Policy Statement
The School will consider applications for special consideration in legitimate circumstances as outlined in the Queensland Studies Authority’s Policy on Special Provisions for School-based Assessments.

Definitions
What is Special Consideration?
The following information comes from the Policy Statement on Special Consideration produced by the Queensland Studies Authority.

Special consideration means making reasonable educational adjustments to standard assessment requirements to ensure equitable assessment for all students. Special consideration may apply to any student, depending on the circumstances. In making a decision about special consideration, the school is required to consider what adjustment to standard assessment requirements is reasonable under the circumstances. Equity in assessment requires that all students have an opportunity to demonstrate their current knowledge and skills, free from bias and misinterpretation.

The School Leadership Team (or member of the Leadership Team) in consultation with the relevant Head of Department and teacher (rather than the Queensland Studies Authority) needs to identify assessment tasks which may require reasonable adjustment for students with specific educational needs or special circumstances. This consultation should also include the relevant student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) and other relevant personnel if considered necessary to make decisions about the nature or appropriateness of alternative arrangements or exemptions.
At all times, principles and practices for high quality assessment should apply.

**Reasonable Educational Adjustments**

Two types of adjustments are appropriate: exemption and alternative arrangements.

**Exemptions**: For reasons of fairness to all students and the integrity of results reported on Senior Certificates no student can be exempted from meeting any of the substantive requirements of the syllabus for any reason. However, in cases of special consideration, schools may decide to exempt students from non-substantive subject requirements. Exemptions should only be allowed when there is sufficient alternative information to make a judgement about an exit level of achievement without the particular piece of assessment. Exemption should not be a substitute for efforts to remove barriers to a student’s access to learning and assessment opportunities.

Exemption is not an option where alternative assessment is appropriate.

**Alternative arrangements**: These arrangements refer to practical arrangements to vary the conditions under which assessment occurs in order to enable students to have opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a course of study or learning programme. This allows students with special needs to have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a subject.

The Queensland Studies Authority states that students with special needs may include, but are not limited to:

- Students with impairments that have a physiological basis, such as those involving sensory, motor or neurological factors.
- Students with educational needs arising primarily from socioeconomic, cultural and/or linguistic factors where there may be some form of educational disadvantage including the following students:
  - Students with non-English-speaking backgrounds
  - Students who are Aboriginal
  - Students who are Torres Strait Islanders
  - Students who are migrants or refugees
  - Students from rural and remote locations
  - Students in low socioeconomic circumstances
  - Students with difficulties in accessing learning which do not appear to be directly or primarily attributable to educational disadvantage arising from impairment or to socioeconomic, cultural and/or linguistic factors.
  - Students with identifiably different pattern of educational development and orientation, influenced by factors such as:
    - Gender
    - Special talents (including giftedness)

In considering appropriate action for Special Consideration for students, the substantive requirement for each subject must be taken into account. **Substantive requirements** of the every subject syllabus are mandatory requirements, and include definitions of criteria and standards for the award of a particular Level of Achievement. Non-substantive requirements of the syllabus are subject requirements which maybe varied without affecting the substantive requirements.

**Responsibilities**

Responsibility for decisions on special consideration in school-based assessment lies with the school. The school is responsible for the procedures for special consideration for:

- The consideration of the student circumstances and further appropriate educational adjustments (if necessary).
The awarding of Levels of Achievement
The deciding of Student Achievement Indicators (SAIs)

However, the Queensland Studies Authority and its moderation panels may provide advice on special consideration to schools. The school is not responsible for the procedures for special consideration in the QCS Test and the calculation of Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs).

Michael McCarthy      Peter Sullivan
Principal       Board Chair

Review 2014

Acknowledgements

See also section on “educational equity” in Queensland Studies Authority syllabuses.
