

## **School Charter**

**Date :** 2004-2006

**School No.:** 5268

**Address :** 27-33 Yana St  
Swan Hill 3585

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**School Principal:** Graeme Scoberg  
**School Council President:** Glenda Martin

## School Profile

Swan Hill Specialist School's vision for the education of students centres on the following values:

- The school has the conviction that every child has the ability and the entitlement to learn.
- The provision of a comprehensive and challenging curriculum, enabling access to seven Key Learning Areas that is age appropriate, and builds confidence and self-esteem through success. The curriculum values individual learning styles and provides for different rates of learning, and is designed to develop the maximum level of independence in each student.
- A view of education as a shared home and school commitment, and the development of a school that is valued and respected in the community.
- Genuine concern for the welfare and safety of students and staff.
- Empowering and supporting all school staff to promote a positive learning environment for students.
- Efficient management of the maintenance, development and security of school resources and facilities conducive to educational needs.

Swan Hill Specialist School is a newly constructed modern multi-mode specialist school.

The school was built in 2000 at its centrally located site adjacent to sporting facilities and a primary school to encourage community interaction.

The school was originally the Lady Byrnes Day Training Centre. It became part of the Department of Education, Loddon Campaspe Mallee Region in 1987. In 1997, formal approval was obtained for the school to provide specialist curriculum for mildly disabled students. The school services a wide area of approximately 100-kilometre radius, which includes Piangil, Manangatang, Sea Lake, Quambatook, Kerang, Barham, Moulamein, Mellool and Culgoa. Students living within the school transport zone are transported to and from school.

Swan Hill Specialist School provides specialist education for students ranging in age from five to eighteen, with mild to severe intellectual disability, associated multiple disabilities and for students with autism. Enrolment procedures require students to meet eligibility standards based on DE&T entry criteria as outlined in the Program for Students with Disabilities Handbook.

Teachers and parents/carers/advocates, in Program Support Group meetings, collaboratively decide on realistic and achievable, short and long-term educational and behavioural goals for each child. Student

progress is constantly monitored against the set goals, with detailed written reports provided each semester.

Swan Hill Specialist School provides a range of curriculum approaches based on the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF), embracing the seven key learning areas of Health and Physical Education, English, Mathematics, Science, The Arts, Studies of Society and Environment and Technology.

This educational curriculum is enhanced by a multi-disciplinary team comprising DE&T psychologists, social workers and speech therapists, contracted physiotherapy and occupational therapy from Swan Hill Hospital, and a dedicated group of volunteers who organise a successful Riding Develops Ability Program.

The curriculum is designed to develop in each student the maximum level of independence. It aims to enable the students to reach their full potential academically, physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally and is delivered in a supportive, caring and safe environment.

Our student enrolment has risen over the period of the previous Charter. The School operates 6 classrooms divided into 3 sections. Early Years Literacy and Numeracy and Middle Years initiatives are an integral component of the curriculum together with an accredited certificate course for senior students.

The School has an Art, Therapy/sensory room and independent kitchen facilities for each classroom. We are a technology friendly School with 25 computers networked throughout the classrooms.

Many of the students are involved in successful integration programs with local primary and secondary schools. A working liaison has been formed with Swan Hill Secondary College for the implementation of The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). VCAL provides a hands on option for our older students and includes practical work related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills together with the opportunity to build personal skills that are essential for life and work. VCAL complements transition to the Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) program as a post schooling option.

There is a close liaison with community groups, especially in the provision of transition programs, recreation options and respite care. The school curriculum places a strong emphasis on personal development and healthy living through outdoor education, swimming, camping and excursions. Swan Hill Specialist School hosts the Annual Regional sports for Echuca, Maryborough, Bendigo and Mildura specialist schools, with assistance from the Secondary College senior students.

Swan Hill Specialist School has embraced the government's initiative of student well being and engagement. This relies upon the close and positive interpersonal relationships that exist between the students, staff and parents/carers. Students' skills are enhanced through their

involvement in shared activities that focus on positive behaviours, praise and reinforcement. The major focus is on self-esteem, personal safety, and healthy values including tolerance and understanding of others.

Swan Hill Specialist School is a training school for tertiary students studying special education, nursing and child care. Local secondary students are also welcomed to participate in communication projects and work experience. Service clubs also provide vital assistance in many aspects of the school. Through School Council owned and maintained buses enable all students' access to the community. The students are provided with as many opportunities as possible to use community resources including local business, recreational and entertainment facilities.

Priorities over the term of this School Charter period (2004-2006) include further development of curriculum for moderate and severely intellectually disabled students and consolidation of our school's playground development including adventure-type playground, outdoor activities for High Needs students enabling wheelchair access, further development of gardens, shade areas, sensory garden, oval, student work areas and provision of covered outdoor play areas.

The school will continue to provide excellent specialist programs for students by continually monitoring the needs of the school community and ensuring that school policies address those requirements.

## School Goals

### Curriculum Goals: Student Achievement and Curriculum Provision

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	IMPROVEMENT AREAS	BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL TARGETS
<p>Student Achievement</p> <p>To continue to improve student performance against the goals set in Program Support Group meetings.</p>	<p>Required Measures</p> <p>Data collected from:            "Teacher Assessment of Student Progress (D&amp;I Students)" covering years 2004+ and comparison using state-wide benchmarks for like schools.</p> <p>Also "Time allocated to each KLA" and Parent Opinion as it relates to "Quality of Teaching" and "Curriculum and Standards."</p> <p>Additional School Measures            Monitor Semester Reports and continue to develop and refine goals set at Program Support Review meetings.            Monitor literacy and numeracy development in Early Years students using formal and informal evaluative techniques.</p>	<p>Further development of teacher skills in the areas of goal setting and assessment of progress.</p> <p>Continued use of speech, physiotherapy and occupational therapists to ensure the relevant programs and goals are implemented for high needs students.</p>	<p>A review of descriptors which define the levels of student achievement to ensure congruency between semester reports and the teacher 6 point curriculum survey data.</p>	<p>To have in place descriptors which define the levels of student achievement and that these descriptors are incorporated in Program Support Groups and student Reports.</p> <p>To appoint an Early years Leading Teacher and Middle Years Leading Teacher to facilitate Teaching and Learning within these Sections.</p>

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	IMPROVEMENT AREAS	BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL TARGETS
<p>Curriculum Provision</p> <p>To provide a stimulating and appropriate curriculum which offers a broad range of individual programs for all students across all learning areas.</p>	<p>Required Measures</p> <p>Consolidation and introduction of new curriculum teaching and learning strategies to further address the individual needs of moderately and severely disabled students emphasising self-expression and independence.</p> <p>Incorporation of the adapted relevant Early Years and Middle Years approaches to address individual student needs.</p> <p>Additional School Measures</p> <p>Timetable allocation for Key Learning Areas.</p>	<p>Maintenance of current time allocation for Health &amp; Physical Education and the Arts.</p> <p>Extension of multi sensory program across the school for High Needs students.</p> <p>Further refinement of the curriculum for students assessed as mildly intellectually disabled.</p> <p>Continued research and development of Learning Technology software and hardware.</p> <p>Extension of the school's Transition program through VCAL, Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy LLENS and TAFE to provide accredited post-school options.</p>	<p>Current time allocation: Health &amp; Physical Education 20% The Arts 10%</p>	<p>To document a curriculum designed for students with moderate to severely intellectually disabled range.</p> <p>All students aged 16-18 years to have a Managed Individual Pathway by 2005</p>

		<p>Continued development of Autism Spectrum Disorder resources to meet the needs of students, families and the wider school community.</p> <p>Continued development of the Middle Years program.</p> <p>Priorities</p> <p>To further develop curriculum to meet the individual needs of those students with moderate to severe intellectually disabled range.</p>		
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## Environment Goals

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	IMPROVEMENT AREAS	BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL TARGETS
<p>To develop and maintain a positive, caring and safe learning environment.</p>	<p>Required Measures</p> <p>Organisational Health Survey</p> <p>Parent Opinion survey</p> <p>Student attendance</p> <p>Additional School Measures</p> <p>Occupational Health and Safety Audits</p> <p>Building and Grounds Audit</p>	<p>To extend the school's outreach to students with disabilities attending regular schools and preschools in the Swan Hill area.</p> <p>Priorities</p> <p>Consolidation of the school's relocation to new premises.</p>	<p>Five students are dual enrolled. Attendance at other schools is as follows:</p> <p>McKillop 0.2 SHNPS 0.6 SHPS 0.2 Manangatang 0.8 Tooleybuc 0.6</p> <p>Average absent days per student in 2003 was 19.6</p> <p>General satisfaction of parents was 5.86 in 2004</p> <p>The school has basic playground equipment and shelter areas.</p>	<p>To establish Swan Hill Specialist School as a resource for schools and students, catering for or experiencing a disabling condition.</p> <p>To undertake projects to provide a stimulating and supportive playgrounds area.</p>

## Management Goals

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	IMPROVEMENT AREAS	BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL TARGETS
<p>To promote a healthy managerial climate within the school by ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-support and genuine concern for the welfare of students,</li> <li>-the provision of effectively targeted professional development,</li> <li>-that the goals and priorities are met.</li> </ul>	<p>Required Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational Health Survey</li> <li>Staff Absences</li> <li>Additional School Measures</li> <li>Professional Development Reports</li> </ul>	<p>Establish a set of value statements for the School Community.</p> <p>Continue to develop professional learning teams across the school to improve staff teaching and learning strategies.</p>	<p>2004 Staff Opinion indices. Organisational Health data is above state benchmark for all variables.</p> <p>2004 Parent Opinion Survey indices are at or above state benchmarks for all variables.</p>	<p>The 2005-07 Organisational Health Survey will indicate maintenance in the indices.</p> <p>The 2005-07 Parent Opinion Survey results will meet and/or exceed state benchmarks.</p>

## Resources Goals

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	IMPROVEMENT AREAS	BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL TARGETS
<p>To allocate resources to enable the achievement of goals and priorities.</p>	<p>Required Measures</p> <p>Combined Comparative Receipts and Payments Report.</p> <p>Annual School Financial Audit.</p> <p>Additional School Measures</p> <p>Analysis of program budgets in reference to school goals and priorities.</p>	<p>Continue to organise the Chart of Accounts to facilitate the effective monitoring of resources allocated to Charter Priorities.</p> <p>Continue to implement a maintenance schedule for the new school facilities using PRMS and review contracts.</p> <p>To develop a master plan to control the refurbishment of computer stocks.</p>	<p>Presently the School has 26 networked classroom computers aged between 3-5 years.</p>	<p>To have in place by 2006, a management plan and budget for the systematic replacement of computer stocks.</p>

## **Priorities**

### **Priority 1: Curriculum**

To further develop curriculum to meet the individual needs of those students assessed to be in the moderate to severely intellectually disabled range.

#### Current School Performance

A priority of the last school charter was to develop curriculum to meet the individual needs of students assessed to be in the moderate to severely intellectually disabled range. Whilst the school has introduced an extensive and vibrant curriculum for its diverse student population, trend data indicates a continued increasing enrolment in prep entries and in the Year 6-7 transition age group. The school's self assessment and school review found that while many of the intended outcomes had been achieved further documentation of curriculum was required.

#### Intended Outcomes

A diverse curriculum providing every child with the opportunity and the entitlement to reach their maximum level of independence.

#### Performance Measures

Extension programs will be available in the Key Learning Areas of Technology, The Arts, Health and Physical Education and English. Student attendance indices will meet and/or exceed state benchmark.

#### School Targets

To document a curriculum designed for students with moderate to severe intellectual disability.

#### Initial Implementation Strategies

To survey existing curriculum in schools providing programs for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities and ASD, with the purpose of introducing similar programs and strategies to Swan Hill Specialist School.

In consultation with staff/parents, determine which of these programs best suits the needs of Swan Hill Specialist School students.

Provide resources for professional development and visitation programs.

## **Priority 2: School Relocation**

Consolidation of the school's relocation to new premises.

### Current School Performance

A priority of the last school charter was to relocate to new purpose designed facilities. Whilst extensive ground works have been completed the school's self assessment and school review found that the grounds and play areas need further development to enhance the facility.

### Intended Outcomes

To establish attractive and welcoming play areas that meet the individual needs of all students.

### Performance Measures

Provide adventure-type playground.

Provide outdoor activities with wheelchair access for High Needs students. Further develop the playground, gardens, shade areas, sensory garden, oval and student work areas.

Provision of covered outdoor play areas.

### School Targets

To undertake the projects listed in the Performance Measures above.

### Initial Implementation Strategies

To engage a Landscape Architect to prepare a plan for the overall development of the school's playground

### Principal Class Code of Practice

The principal is responsible for the leadership, management and development of the school and its programs. The principal of Swan Hill Specialist School operates within the relevant sections of the Education Act, D&ET policies and the "Role and Accountabilities" statement (1994).

The principal will provide educational leadership and management in the following ways:

- Lead and manage the implementation of the School Charter and report on school performance.
- Develop and maintain a school environment that values the rights, abilities and achievements of all students.
- Facilitate the use of quality teaching and learning strategies to maximise student outcomes.

- Work cooperatively with the School Council to develop policies and guidelines that are consistent with government and D&ET policies and directives.
- Consult and provide a clear vision, leadership, guidance, advice and support to School Council, staff, students, parents and community.
- Ensure principles of merit and equity and valuing diversity are applied.
- Consult with staff to ensure collaborative decision making.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and growth of staff.
- Develop and maintain financial and administrative systems that will ensure effective school management.
- Coordinate a safe and harassment free environment for both staff and students.
- Observe Occupational, Health and Safety guidelines.
- As the primary contact coordinate and liaise with D&ET, with other authorities, community agencies, groups and individuals.
- Promote Swan Hill Specialist School in the community and enhance links with all sectors of the educational community in order to enhance learning outcomes for students.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to liaise with the Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team will

- Develop comprehensive curriculum appropriate to vastly different individual student needs.
- Supervise and coordinate the work of KLA leaders and Section teams in the delivery of teaching programs.
- Contribute to the overall management of the school including assistance with policy development and charter implementation.
- Manage programs to improve the knowledge and experience of staff, in collaboration with the professional development committee.
- Foster a commitment to the use of learning technologies to improve teaching and learning.
- Accept responsibility for student and staff welfare, in conjunction with the Principal.
- Accept responsibility for the provision of student behavioural management advice and support of classroom teachers and Section teams as required.
- Attend to the day-to-day management of the school and deputise for the Principal.
- Assist the Principal in the maintenance and management of school facilities.
- Assist the Principal in the review of staff performance.
- Participate in School Council Committees and other organisational committees as assigned by the Principal.
- Additional duties including special projects as directed by the Principal.

## Staff Code of Practice

Swan Hill Specialist School staff acknowledges that they operate within the framework of all relevant State and Federal Legislation governing the employment of teaching and ancillary staff within the school.

Staff at Swan Hill Specialist School are expected to:

- Work effectively as multi-skilled professionals in multi-disciplinary teams.
- Treat students with dignity, care and respect.
- Take leadership roles in areas of expertise.
- Maintain confidentiality.

Teachers:

- Are responsible for the overall planning, implementation and development of programs for each student in their care.
- Are responsible for the delegation of tasks and supervision of programs carried out by teacher assistants and paramedical staff.
- Participate in the Staff Mentor Program for new graduates and returning teachers.
- Take an active role in administration aspects of school planning and decision making processes.
- Participate in professional development activities and report back to colleagues.
- Communicate and cooperate with other teachers, parents/carers, professionals and agencies.
- Encourage parents/carers and community members to have input into school programs and student learning.

Ensure that students are:

- actively involved in their learning;
- are given maximum opportunity to access the community;
- instructed to behave acceptably in the school and the community;
- challenged to achieve personal objectives and goals;
- given opportunities to learn in a productive environment;
- encouraged to take increasing responsibility.
- Adopt teaching strategies that:
  - build upon students' experiences, interests and needs;
  - are age appropriate;
  - link theory to practice;
  - provide learning experiences in a real context;
  - foster cooperation and communication in learning;
  - encourage risk taking and learning from errors;
  - demonstrate the important link between home, school and community.

School Support Officers:

School Support Officers are also integral to the team approach in program delivery, and work as team members in program planning, delivery and day-to-day school operations, performing duties assigned by the Principal and teachers.

## **School Council Code of Practice**

The School Council of Swan Hill Specialist School acknowledges that it operates within the Education Act and Regulations. Within these regulations and guidelines the School Council has resolved that it will observe the following principles:

- The learning outcomes and needs of students will be the primary focus of all decision making.
- Establish directions for policy development consistent with the Charter goals and priorities. It is the role of the Principal to implement policy.
- The school community will be kept informed and consulted, and opinions will be sought and considered on major policy decisions.
- Disagreements will be resolved within the School Council.
- Commitment to the school, its charter and staff will be demonstrated.
- Members of the council will be given opportunities for training in council operations and D&ET policies.
- Members will respect the confidentiality of discussion and abide by the decisions of the School Council. Discussion related to individuals will be strictly confidential.
- Public comment will be the responsibility of the School Council President and/or Principal.

School Council will use the following practices:

- The Council will meet on the second Tuesday of the month, and not less than eight times a year, with minutes of these meetings available to parents/carers.
- Adherence to Council meeting procedures and decision making processes.
- Sub-committees will be formed on a needs basis and operate for specific purposes.
- Sub-committees will be convened by a council member, but may draw on non-council membership.
- Decisions of School Council will be publicly justifiable.

The Principal as Executive Officer of School Council will ensure that:

- Adequate advice is provided to the council on educational and other matters.
- Decisions of the School Council are implemented.
- Necessary support and resources are provided to School Council to accomplish its objectives.

## Community Building

The Swan Hill School community comprises a diverse range of people that includes parents, carers, extended family and friends, volunteers, members of the local business and service sectors, district organisations and residents of a wide geographical area.

Swan Hill Specialist School aims to provide high quality education that is relevant to the needs of our students. The school encourages an “open-door” approach, and relies on close liaison with the local and wider community in order to:

- Access local resources, services, amenities and opportunities to support a variety of educational and recreational programs.
- Access integration and interaction with mainstream schools and community settings.

Swan Hill Specialist School seeks to strengthen community identity by participating in and contributing to the local community. The school will ensure that:

- The rights of community members are respected and confidentiality observed.
- The rights, responsibilities and acceptance of students with a disability in all community settings will be promoted, while respecting the cultural and social diversity of the community.
- Parents/carers respect the welfare of students and staff, by making alternative arrangements for students that are unwell, to minimise the risk of cross infection.

The school provides the following community resources within School Council guidelines:

- Placements for tertiary special education students, nursing and child care trainees.
- Meeting facilities.
- Work experience programs.
- Reverse integration and interaction programs.

The local community is kept informed of the school’s activities and achievements through:

- School Internet site.
- Contributions to and reports in the local media.
- Regular newsletters to all families.
- Student communication diaries.
- The annual report to be distributed to interested parents and community members.
- School magazine and open days.
- Distribution of information pamphlet to interested community members.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct for students at Swan Hill Specialist School has been formulated within, and is consistent with D&ET guidelines and regulations. Swan Hill Specialist School aims to provide a caring, secure and cooperative environment that fosters the development of self-esteem and positive social behaviour. This will be achieved through the use of success oriented, age appropriate curriculum that aims to develop each student's ability to monitor his/her own behaviour. The staff is committed to working in close consultation with parents/carers to achieve positive and consistent student management to improve student quality of life and integration into the community.

Consistent with the D&ET Student Code of Conduct, the school is committed to the following:

- Provision of structure and routine in learning and play situations.
- Development of self awareness and esteem.
- Development of self control.
- Attention to task, directions and being aware of other people.
- Participation.
- Cooperation.
- Encouraging acceptance of, and caring for other people.
- Expression of enjoyment.
- Positive reinforcement.
- Appropriate social interactions and the encouragement of friendships.
- Encouraging the development of a clear understanding of rights, responsibilities, rules and consequences.
- Development and maintenance of respectful treatment to reduce any aggression or embarrassment in student - teacher interaction.
- Provision of student right of reply.
- Encouragement of parent/teacher interaction.
- Obtaining expert advice where necessary.
- Individual behaviour management programs.

Breaches of school rules may incur an appropriate penalty or action. These penalties or actions will be logical consequences of the misbehaviour. Examples of such consequences may include:

- Discussion of unacceptable behaviour and restatement of rule.
- Warning to allow time for correction of behaviour.
- Removal of student from the immediate situation in the class or yard.
- Repeat task to an acceptable standard.
- Confiscation of objects.
- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Parent/care-giver contact.
- Period of detention.
- Written or verbal apology.
- Referral to principal.

- Supervised withdrawal when a student is endangering self or others.

These consequences are essential to a secure learning environment, and it is important to note that there may be times when it is necessary to establish other short-term rules.

It is recognised that the management of challenging behaviour is often an important component of an individual student's learning goals, especially as some students may not have yet acquired the social awareness or communication skills, to readily learn appropriate behaviours.

In dealing with serious and persistent abusive or violent behaviour, acknowledgment is made of D&ET, Occupational Health and Safety, Health and Well-being policy guidelines. Understanding the close school-home partnership necessary in dealing with behaviours, which seriously jeopardise the wellbeing of other students or staff, parents/carers will be contacted to revise goals and strategies in a Program Support Review meeting. New short term strategies may include a "cooling off" respite period, the enlistment of Human Services Intervention Support Teams, and seeking of additional support. Serious and persistent inappropriate or violent behaviour which causes distress or injury to staff or students is not acceptable, and can lead to discipline procedures as outlined in Student Discipline

This code also acknowledges the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 which supports racial and religious tolerance and prohibits vilification on the ground of race or religion

### **School Council Motion**

At the Swan Hill Specialist School meeting of 13th December 2004, the following motion was passed:

"That the Swan Hill Specialist School Council:

1. Endorses the school charter to be effective from January 1st 2004.
2. Empowers the Principal to make minor amendments to the wording of the School Charter that may be necessary during negotiations with the Department of Education and Training."

**Moved:** Graeme Scoberg

**Seconded:** Glenda Martin