

# Student Lounge Policy

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## PURPOSE

This policy describes the purpose of Parktone's Student Lounge and sets out the requirements for when and how it may be used by a school to support a student.

## SUMMARY

- For the purposes of this policy, the Student Lounge is a controlled and intentionally created space that provides multi-sensory resources to support a student's sensory needs to enable them to engage in learning.
- Parktone will support a student's learning within regular learning spaces such as classrooms as much as possible.
- An Occupational Therapist with relevant expertise must be consulted in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Student Lounge and in devising specific programs for individual students.
- The Student Lounge is only for students assessed by an Occupational Therapist to have sensory needs.
- The Student lounge must not be used in the disciplining of students.
- The Student Lounge is to be used to promote a student's engagement in their learning and achieve their learning goals in a manner that proactively supports and responds to the student's sensory needs. This will commonly involve making the Student Lounge available to a student proactively to prevent problems, challenging or maladaptive behaviours, before the problem, challenging or maladaptive behaviour occurs. The Student Lounge is not intended to be used in response to problem, challenging or maladaptive behaviours.
- The Student Lounge may sometimes be used to reinforce and reward positive behaviour where it will assist the student's overall learning and engagement, but this use should not be its main purpose.
- Students using the Student Lounge must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with specific learning goals and outcomes linked to the use of the room, and their progress and achievement, regularly evaluated and documented in their IEP or similarly named plan.
- Parktone Primary School must develop a statement which articulates how the Student Lounge is to be used in the school, consistent with this policy.
- The Student Lounge is to be used with guidance from an Occupational Therapist and, if applicable, the student's treating health practitioner.
- The Department does not support the use of deep pressure equipment, such as weighted blankets (we have lap cushions and a small blanket) and vests, worn by or applied to students as they can pose a risk to the health and safety of students.

## DETAILS

- The Student Lounge is to be used by Parktone Primary School as a resource to support students' sensory needs so they can achieve their learning goals.
- The Student Lounge is to be used in a manner that proactively supports and responds to the student's sensory needs not reactively in response to challenging behaviours.
- Parktone Primary School must keep students engaged in regular education settings, such as classrooms, for most of each school day.
- Some students using the Student Lounge must have learning goals and outcomes linked to the use of the room. A student's progress and achievement must be evaluated and documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or similarly named plan.

- Students must be actively supervised and engaged in activities by staff when in the Student Lounge.
- Supervisory staff must support students' safe use of the Student Lounge and to engage in learning according to the student's needs.
- An Occupational Therapist and other appropriately qualified allied health practitioners must be involved in the implementation and evaluation of student supports in the Student Lounge.
- Parktone Primary School must provide consulting Occupational Therapists with a copy of this policy and ensure compliance with it and the Department's Records Management Policy.

## USE OF THE STUDENT LOUNGE

- Students must not be left alone in the Student Lounge and must be supervised and engaged in sensory activities and experiences provided by a staff member.
- Doors of the Student Lounge must remain open whilst the room is in use. This includes when staff are working with one or more students in the room.
- The Student Lounge must be continually evaluated by school staff to ensure it is safe, is being used as intended, and is contributing to positive student outcomes, as described in a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or similarly named plan.
- All equipment in the Student Lounge must undergo periodic checks by school staff to ensure they are in good working order and are safe to use.
- Students' use of the Student Lounge must be scheduled to provide equitable access by all students with an identified need. Equitable access should be based on student need, not simply equity of time.

## PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT AND PRACTICES

- The Student Lounge must not be used in the disciplining of students. Using the Student Lounge in response to student behaviour may reinforce the student's use of the challenging behaviour.
- The Student Lounge must not be used for the purpose of separating students from their peers, either during class or break times.
- The Student Lounge is not an alternative curriculum or alternative to formal education.
- The Student Lounge is not alternative play spaces for students who prefer not to play outside.
- The use of deep pressure equipment on students, such as weighted blankets and vests, is not supported by the Department as they pose a risk to the health and safety of students.

## DESIGN OF THE STUDENT LOUNGE

- An Occupational Therapist with relevant expertise must be consulted in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Student Lounge and in devising specific programs for individual students.
- The design of the Student Lounge must be based on the needs of the students using the room and the school's local context. The needs of students using a room may vary over time necessitating modifications to the room.
- Schools that are proposing to establish the Student Lounge should provide details to the school community about how the room will be used and how student outcomes will be evaluated, consistent with this policy.
- Schools must critically reflect on their need for the Student Lounge, acknowledging that their establishment can take considerable time, resources and funds.

## SENSORY INTERVENTIONS

Schools are expected to support students (including students with Autism Spectrum Disorder) in the classroom and across the school environment and routines, within existing tiered supports, as much as

possible, without the use of the designated Student Lounge. Schools can refer to Behaviour — Students and Students with Disability.

## DEFINITIONS

### Individual Education Plan (IEP)

A written statement of the educational program designed to meet a student's individual needs.

### Occupational Therapist (OT)

A degree-based health professional regulated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Occupational therapists use a whole person perspective to work with individuals, groups and communities to achieve optimal health and wellbeing through participation in the occupations of life, including education.

### Problem, challenging or maladaptive behaviour

Behaviour that interferes with the learning of the student or the learning of other students.

### The Student Lounge

A controlled and intentionally created space that provides multi-sensory resources to support a student's sensory needs to enable them to engage in learning.

## RELATED POLICIES

- [Behaviour — Students](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Performance and Development for Teacher Class Employees](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- [Procuring Low-value Construction Works and Services](#)
- [Procurement — Schools](#)
- [Records Management — School Records](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)
- [School-funded Capital Projects](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [Supervision of Students](#)

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment \(Child Safe Standards\) Bill 2015 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Ministerial Order No. 1038 – Teaching Service \(Employment Conditions, Salaries, Allowances, Selection and Conduct\) Order 2017 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Ministerial Order No. 1039 – School Council Employees \(Employment Conditions, Salaries, Allowances and Selection\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools \(PDF\)](#)

## REVIEW

This policy was last updated in September 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2023.

## PERIOD