

Aurora School

School Strategic Plan



2006–2009

Part 1– School Profile

Aurora is a purpose-built, innovative Department of Education & Training school located in Holland Road, Blackburn South. It provides onsite and home based programs for children living in metropolitan and regional Victoria. Aurora offers accommodation for country children and their families who access the school based programs. Videoconferencing facilities increase the scope of the school's outreach services. Aurora School delivers quality educational programs to maximise the achievement of deaf and deafblind children.

Early Intervention programs are available to families of children, living anywhere in Victoria, aged from birth until school entry who have a confirmed bilateral hearing loss and who are eligible for the provision of hearing aids or an assistive hearing device.

Within Early Intervention the child's needs are seen within the context of the whole family. Aurora School's aim is to provide parents with the knowledge and skills they need to promote their children's development, especially their language and communication, during the early years. All programs are designed to meet the needs of all children and families, including specialized approaches for children with additional disabilities. Bilingual programs, in which young deaf children are encouraged to acquire early communication and language skills by being exposed to both spoken and signed languages, are provided. The development of listening skills is encouraged so that all children can make the best use of their residual hearing. Communication is the key. Included in Early Intervention programs are:

- Regular home based sessions
- Support from inter-disciplinary teams, including Teachers of the Deaf, Psychologists, Social Workers, Speech and Language Therapists and Deaf Educators
- An early communication program delivered by Deaf Educators
- Information about deafness and educational options
- Early Learning Groups and Play groups
- Language Enrichment Group - three year old Bilingual Kindergarten (accredited with the Department of Human Service)
- Parent support groups, weekend seminars, family camps
- Consultancy support to caregivers other than parents
- Video conferencing
- Liaison with Australian Hearing and Cochlear Implant Clinic and other service providers
- Centre-based and community-based services
- Consultancy and professional development programs

Early Education programs are available for children from three years of age who have a confirmed moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss. Early Education focuses on a play based, developmental pathway with particular emphasis on the effective use of expressive and receptive language. Early Education at Aurora School provides:

- individualised programs for children from 3 years of age

- a play based curriculum ranging from early education through kindergarten to the early years of primary schooling
- communication and language development through meaningful experiences, events and outings
- a choice of oral/aural and bilingual, Auslan / English, groupings in early education, kindergarten and prep programs
- a warm and encouraging environment that fosters the development of all students according to individual needs and abilities
- transport provided for students from southern, northern and eastern regions
- parent accommodation available for country families

Individualized programs include:

- curriculum tailored to each child
- specialized speech and listening programs
- local kindergarten experience
- local primary school experience
- outreach and home visiting program
- bilingual programs delivered by deaf and hearing staff
- play based early education curriculum
- prep curriculum aligned to DE&T standards
- camp program
- music & creative movement program
- transition program for children moving to other educational settings
- access for some hearing children with specific communication needs

Effective, on-going communication between teachers and families is fundamental to all programs.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school, participate in discussion groups, school and social activities, join the Auslan classes and share the school program. Individual learning plans are developed, implemented and monitored in partnership with parents.

A strong interdisciplinary team work together with teaching staff to build on the strengths of each child. This team includes a Speech Pathologist, an Audiologist, a Physiotherapist, an Educational Psychologist, Australian Hearing, the Cochlear Implant Clinic and other service providers

Deafblind Education programs are available for children with both vision and hearing impairments from the age of three years to eighteen. These programs offer specialised education for students with both visual and hearing impairments. Aurora is the only school in Victoria providing specialised education for these unique students.

Individualised programs build on the strengths of each student.

- Play based programs focus on meaningful experiences.
- The support of strong interdisciplinary teams maximise student learning
- A range of Augmentative Communications including visual, concrete and sensory strategies encourages learning which meets each child's preferred learning style

- An outreach program provides older students with inter school contact and age appropriate alternatives

All children can learn to communicate. Deafblind Education specialises in establishing communication and language. To facilitate meaningful communication programs can provide speech, sign, objects of reference, touch cues, picture systems, pictographs and Braille

The environment is designed to enhance the development of awareness, confidence and independence. Students have access to spacious learning areas that include:

- Specifically designed learning playgrounds
- Sensory Room
- Art Room
- Library
- Multipurpose Room
- Auditory Training Booth

Strong, interdisciplinary teams work together to provide individual programs building on the strengths of each child. These teams can include Teachers of the Deaf, a Speech Pathologist, an Audiologist, a Physiotherapist, an Occupational Therapist, an Educational Psychologist and an Orientation and Mobility instructor.

Effective on-going communication between teachers and parents is an essential component of this program. Individual goals for each child are developed and regularly reviewed by staff and parents. This partnership enables us to provide a specialised, individualised education in a happy, safe, supportive and caring environment.

Purpose: (Vision)

Aurora School is an innovative educational organisation that provides optimal learning environments for Deaf and DeafBlind children and their families across the State of Victoria. Communication, Language and Literacy form the foundation of programs that support each child's whole development.

Values:

The things that we believe in and strive for:

We value,

- **Curiosity**
- **Versatility**
- **Respect**
- **Integrity**
- **Resilience**
- **Persistence**
- **Patience**
- **Empathy**
- **Humour**
- **Interdependence**

Environmental Context:

Aurora School is a Specialist School with a difference. Many of the programs run by Aurora School do not take place on the Blackburn South campus. Another campus in Sunshine (hosted on the grounds at Furlong Park School for Deaf Children), provides Early Intervention staff base support from which to provide a service to families in the North and West of Victoria. Other programs take place in family homes across Victoria and, to allow some of the group programs to take place, Aurora School staff are hosted and accommodated by pre-schools, other schools, maternal health centres and community centres in areas such as Shepparton, Geelong, Keilor Park and Cranbourne.

Travel is an important part of the operation of programs from Aurora School which is facilitated by the necessary lease of two vehicles full time and the hire of other vehicles as required when staff travel long distances to meet rural and country families' needs.

Information Technology is playing an increasing part in our service delivery as we continue to develop and implement Videoconferencing, a multimedia Visual Address system and further explore other technologies including Video Podcasting and the development and production of more DVD resources. These resources and facilities, while unable to replace the existing service, are going a long way to provide more options to families and enhance the programs currently in operation.

Newborn Infant Hearing Screening is now standard in all major, metropolitan hospitals and is operating in a number of hospitals as standard in large, regional centres. The impact of NIHS is that families identified as at risk of their children having a hearing loss are screened soon after birth, identified as having a hearing loss and referred to Australian Hearing for the fitting of hearing aids or other suitable, assistive hearing devices. This means that families have need, if their child is identified as having a hearing loss, of early intervention services. **The impact of this, now standard, procedure is a predicted increase in the number of families seeking the programs offered by Aurora School, Early Intervention.** The support offered a family in the first few weeks of diagnoses is critical to the communication, language and cognitive development of each child.

Demographics

Families accessing Aurora School programs span the State of Victoria. Our Socio-Economic Profile ranges from newly arrived families, working-class families, single-parent families and middle and upper class families. Aurora School families come from a range of Non English Speaking Backgrounds including Deaf families. Interpreting Services across a range of languages including Australian Sign Language (Auslan), Turkish, Arabic, and Vietnamese are in frequent demand.

Part 2 – Strategic Intent

School Goals	School Targets	Key Improvement Strategies
<p>Children and Family Learning Outcomes (impacting on Staff Learning Outcomes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To foster a learning environment where children are challenged to meet their individual goals To provide educational opportunities which maximise children’s potential in the core areas of language and communication 	<p>Children and Family Learning Outcomes (impacting on Staff Learning Outcomes)</p> <p>All deemed as capable Prep students to be reading at Text Level 1 with greater than or equal to 90% accuracy by 2009</p> <p>All children provided with Individual Learning Improvement Plans to be achieving their goals at <i>Satisfactory</i> or above by 2009</p> <p>All children in the Early Intervention Program measured on the British Protocols to be</p> <p>All children to be achieving their language and communication goals at <i>Satisfactory</i> or above by 2009</p> <p>All children in the Early Intervention Program measured on the British Protocols to be achieving their language and</p>	<p>Children and Family Learning Outcomes (impacting on Staff Learning Outcomes)</p> <p>Develop a Vision, Mission and Values Statement for Aurora School (children/students, staff and wider community)</p> <p>Establish a collective accountability for rigorous and robust assessment and monitoring of progress by individual students that indicates growth commensurate with each student’s ability</p> <p>Improve processes for reporting to parents child / student achievement that meets DE&T/Early Childhood accountability requirements, reflects ILIP / Service Plan goals and meets the needs of families.</p> <p>Involve parents more fully as partners in supporting learning</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a comprehensive curriculum / program (encompassing DE&T and Early Childhood guidelines) specifically designed to cater for individual needs and abilities . <p>Child/Student/Family/Staff Engagement and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a safe, stimulating and caring environment which recognizes, respects and caters for individual differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide ongoing learning opportunities for staff to ensure 	<p>communication goals at.....or above by 2009</p> <p>By the end of the Strategic Plan, to show improvement in children’s learning for all children based on the(testing instruments)....baseline as established in 2007</p> <p>To establish trend data through baseline (generic) and local assessments that report children/students as making ‘good progress’ or above, in relation to their individual goals</p> <p>Child/Student/Family/Staff Engagement and Wellbeing</p> <p>To improve parent perceptions of the school climate by greater than or equal to 10% by 2009</p> <p>All children, staff and families to have a foundation understanding and be implementing and practising Aurora School values by the end of the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>All staff to have developed self-reflection strategies as part of their PDR process and work with the School’s Critical Friend by</p>	<p>Child/Student/Family/Staff Engagement and Wellbeing</p> <p>Develop a school-wide professional performance and development culture</p> <p>Improve staff morale (and therefore realise opportunities for engagement) through adoption of a distributed model of leadership</p> <p>Improve student management practices including processes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour Medical needs Preferred learning styles
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<p>children / students are provided with a challenging learning environment focussed on developing resilience in all learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure equity and access across Aurora School and School Community through the provision of IT equipment that is used effectively and is maintained for optimal program and service delivery 	<p>the end of the Strategic Plan</p> <p>To achieve, by the end of the School Strategic Plan period, extended staff survey results that reflect structures that support children / student engagement and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of the Strategic Plan Period each staff member will have remote access to the school's intranet By the end of the Strategic Plan Period each teacher working under Teaching Conditions will have had access to the Laptop rollout program By the end of the Strategic Plan period other staff (not eligible for the Laptop rollout program) will have had the opportunity to access laptop provision through a locally brokered arrangement. By the end of the strategic Plan period all staff requiring to travel to implement Aurora School Programs will have access to workplace, mobile communications (phone, 	<p>Involve parents more fully as partners in supporting learning</p> <p>Improve school facilities to enhance student engagement and learning</p>
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<p>Children and Family Pathways and Transitions</p> <p>To provide appropriate educational opportunities for all children / students at Aurora</p> <p>To consolidate links with other providers of early childhood / educational programs to ensure smooth transitions or enrolments of deaf / deafblind children</p>	<p>Bluetooth, internet access)</p> <p>Children and Family Pathways and Transitions</p> <p>The proportion of parents reporting satisfaction with the transition to Aurora School, within Aurora School and from Aurora School to other settings to be 90% or above by 2009</p> <p>To increase parental satisfaction with the quality of opportunities available to children by the end of the planning period (specific target will be identified once baseline data, external to the Parent Satisfaction Survey, is established in 2007)</p> <p>To increase the number of educational opportunities for children enrolled in the Deafblind program by the end of the Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Children and Family Pathways and Transitions</p> <p>Explore placement options of all children in classes or groups at Aurora School (Early Education, Deafblind Education and Early Intervention) that enhance the learning opportunities for all children</p> <p>Strengthen the collaboration between associate educational settings (kindergartens / playgroups / local schools / specialist services) for Deaf / Deafblind children</p> <p>Further develop the staff professional development program for improved program delivery, flexibility and effectiveness</p>
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Part 3 – Signatures

SIGNED by the Principal

Name [INSERT NAME]

Date .../.../.....

SIGNED by the School Council President

Name [INSERT NAME]

Date .../.../.....

SIGNED by the Regional Director (or nominee)

Name [INSERT NAME]

Date .../.../.....