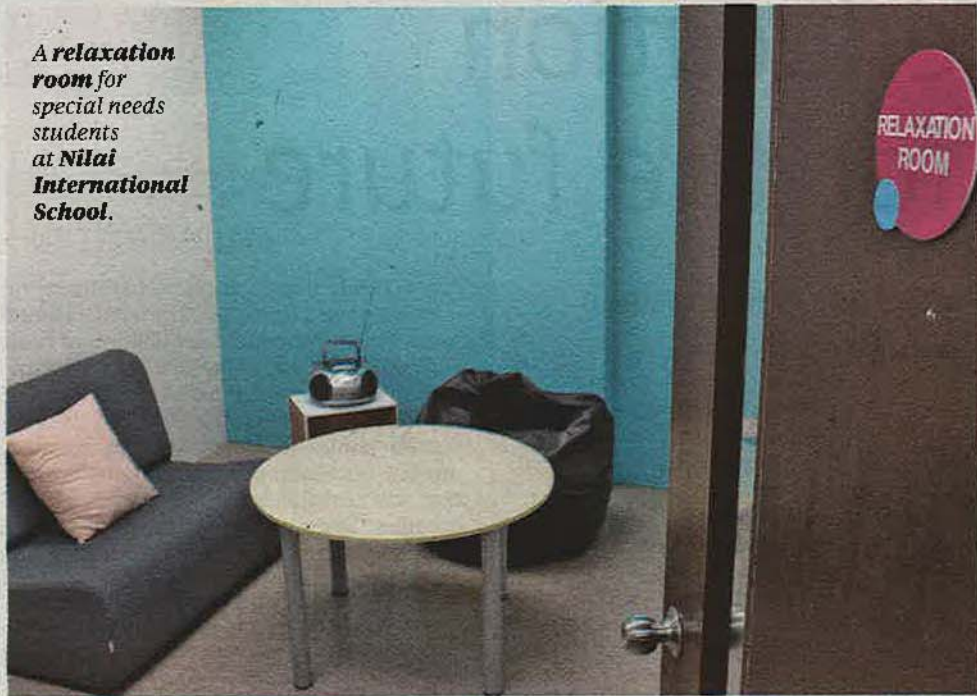


# A platform to excel

**A relaxation room for special needs students at Nilai International School.**



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**A** SOUND education system addresses the individual differences and needs of students. At school, all students have access to basic facilities such as classrooms, libraries and canteens.

However, there are some students who need interventions to achieve a higher level of self-sufficiency and success in school.

These students may have physical impairments such as blindness or learning and behavioural disorders such as autism spectrum disorder.

Nilai International School has offered an inclusion programme to support high-functioning autism students aged between 5 and 17 since 2010.

Joyce Liew Mee Fong, a special education teacher at the Education Support Unit of the school says that the department established the inclusion programme with the help of experts from Western Autistic School in Melbourne, Australia to help students with either Autism Spectrum Disorders or Asperger's Syndrome.

"Students are assisted so that they learn the same curriculum content alongside their peers. They will acquire skills to enhance their communication and interpersonal skills, and problem-solving and organisation abilities, with the aim of building self-confidence and providing them a platform to excel in life," says Liew, who has 28 years of experience in the field.

To be enrolled in the unit, the child needs to be assessed by a public or private psychologist and the unit will use the assessment as a basis to evaluate the education support the child needs and the structure of the learning programme.

"These students are taught skills and instructional strategies, and engage in age-appropriate activities and learn to manage in challenging situations. These activities are slotted into a timetable together with the required amount of support needed," adds Liew.



**"Students are assisted so that they learn the same curriculum content alongside their peers."**

*Joyce Liew Mee Fong,  
special education teacher  
at Nilai International  
School*

The special students are taught by qualified specialists on hand to understand their unique personalities. The specialists help the students with language communication and to understand emotions, use of certain phrases and gestures, and are taught techniques on how to respond appropriately.

Individual learning plans are also drawn up based on assessments administered by psychologists. Support teachers assist children in classroom-based activities, in addition to one-to-one support where necessary.

"Occasionally, we receive visits from teachers at our partner school in Melbourne," adds Liew.

The programme provides students the opportunity to experience school life and recognises that all students can learn to accept themselves and each other in a nurturing environment.

Ultimately, the child is coached to sit the Cambridge International Examinations.

"However, modifications of the curriculum and exemptions can be negotiated according to the student's strengths and weaknesses."

Teachers also discuss the child's progress with parents on report card day and at meetings and reviews. Parents are also invited to attend workshops and seminars.