Goodstart Early Learning

**The setting**

Goodstart Early Learning is a group of child minding and early learning centres founded by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, The Benevolent Society, Social Ventures Australia and Mission Australia. It is a not for profit organisation with the goal of providing pre-school services for children throughout Australia. Goodstart have a central office in Melbourne, which manages staffing and finances, but local Goodstart centres handle enrolments. <http://www.goodstart.org.au/>

**Current Practices**

Parents who wish to enrol their child at Goodstart come into the centre and complete an application form and pay a $100 deposit. They normally have to do this by the end of November the year before their child starts, as places are limited at each centre. The application form is processed by the secretary, Sue Bailey and is entered onto a spreadsheet named applications. The manager of the centre, Jenny Hastings has another spreadsheet called enrolments and after checking over the applications spreadsheet, moves the child’s details onto the enrolment spreadsheet if there is a place available. The fees to be paid are calculated by the spreadsheet as it depends on the number of children in the family attending Goodstart and the level of government assistance the parents qualify for. Occasionally siblings are missed and parents are charged incorrect fees. A letter is sent to the parent by mid-December indicating whether their child has been granted a place and includes an invoice for payment of fees or if the child has been placed on a waiting list, which is another spreadsheet called waiting list. If a place has been granted to the parents they have two weeks to come in and pay the first term’s fees. Payment details are stored in the enrolment spreadsheet. If they do not pay within two weeks, the child is removed from the enrolment spreadsheet and the place is offered to another child.

As you can imagine, parents who miss out on a place through late payment often complain that they either didn’t receive the letter of offer, or they couldn’t get into the centre to pay the fees by the required time. Sometimes parents who have applied correctly are overlooked and their details are not moved to the enrolment spreadsheet and the child is not offered a placement. A couple of years ago, the enrolment spreadsheet became corrupted and all data had to be re-entered with the result that some parents were not contacted for a placement.

Once the term fees are paid, the manager produces a receipt which is sent to the parents by mail.

Because staffing requirements are determined by enrolments, the manager needs to know as early as possible how many students are enrolled so they can advise head office if new staff are required.

It is important for the staff at Goodstart to monitor the performance of each child, so the management have given each staff member a mobile device which contains a list of the students and performance indicators that staff can tick off as each child achieves that skill. EG sharing with others, use of good manners, good hygiene habits, etc. A report on the child’s progress is then prepared and sent home to parents each term. The students’ progress is stored on each teacher’s mobile device.

**The network**

Each Goodstart centre has a server and modem which connects to the internet and back to the head office server so statistics can be sent by email to head office and the staff pays prepared. They have two desktop computers running windows 7, which are connected using a hub and Cat 5 UTP cables to the server and to a laser printer controlled by the server. The spreadsheets created using Office 2010 are stored on a shared folder on the server called GSBM, short for Goodstart Bacchus Marsh. Anyone who logs onto the network can access this folder.

Each of the staff are given a Windows 8 tablet to get students lists and to record performance indicators and to write reports. These devices are connected wirelessly using a 802.11 g wireless access point back to the office. No authentication is required to use the wireless as the manager believes only staff within a small area can access the wireless. The mobile devices can also access the spreadsheets on the server.

**Design brief**

Goodstart would like a software application written to centralise all aspects of the running of the centre including the enrolment process, collection and receipting of fees and the recording progress and reporting to parents. The first step in this process is the creation of a software requirement specification. It is now March and Goodstart would like the software solution ready for testing prior to the second semester starting in July.

Complete a software requirements specification report using the SRS template supplied.