

# Program for Students with Disabilities 2004

Booklet 1

handbook

Additional copies available from:  
[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)

**Knowledge&Skills**  
Building a Future



Department of  
Education & Training

# PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

## PRIVACY NOTE

Please read this notice **before** you complete the application form.

The Department of Education & Training (DE&T) is committed to protecting your privacy along with the confidentiality and security of personal information you have provided. We are committed to complying with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*, the *Health Records Act 2001* and other relevant Acts.

### Why do we ask you to provide personal information?

We collect personal information when your school applies for additional resources to support a child.

This information is collected to enable DE&T to:

- provide you with detailed and balanced information on all available educational options
- help determine the specific educational needs of your child
- determine the level of additional resources to be provided to the school after eligibility has been established.

### Disclosure of information

The information you provide is used exclusively to assess the educational resourcing and services your child may require. It is not disclosed to anyone else without your written consent. However, there are some occasions when we are required by law to disclose information we hold about your child. In most circumstances we will let you know if we are required to do this.

### Security and retention of information

All information about your child that you provide is kept secure and treated as confidential. We respect your right to privacy and will only release information about your child with your written consent.

All DE&T staff handling such information are required by law to respect your privacy.

DE&T will not use irrelevant or out of date documents as this may confuse and delay the decision making process. Any information provided that is not required will be destroyed.

### Accessing information

A copy of all documentation is held at your child's school. This can be made available to you on request. If the school cannot assist you for whatever reason, please contact the Disability Coordinator at your Regional Office (refer to page 16 for contact details).

### When requested information is not provided

If you choose to not tell us something that we need to assess the resources your child requires, we may be unable to provide your child with the resources you seek.

Please, only send in copies of relevant information as indicated in Booklet 1.

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# Purpose of the handbook

This handbook is provided as a guide for principals and teachers in regular and specialist schools as well as for parents, guardians and carers of students with moderate to severe disabilities who are considering the attendance of their child at a government school.

The Program for Students with Disabilities 2004 provides additional resources to government schools in Victoria to support the educational programs of eligible students. The resources are provided to schools to assist in the education of students with disabilities, not to individual students.

- Regular and specialist schools are provided with additional resources in the disability component of the school global budget.
- Some specialist schools have a specific enrolment policy for a particular group of students, for example students with mild intellectual disabilities or students with hearing impairments. Other specialist schools provide for a range of students with disabilities. Consult with your Regional Department of Education & Training Office for specific enrolment criteria.

This handbook provides information on:

- the process by which students who will attend government schools (regular or specialist) will be considered for inclusion in the Program for Students with Disabilities 2004
- the documentation requirements
- making an application
- program support groups.

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## Program for Students with Disabilities 2004

The Department of Education & Training is committed to providing a high quality education to all Victorian students. A quality education results from a school experience that is positive for all students, in a school environment and culture based on respect and acceptance.

A key component of quality education is the provision of inclusive education so that students with special educational needs are able to participate fully in educational programs provided by schools.

Inclusive education is the term used to articulate the rights of all students, including those with disabilities, impairments and learning difficulties, to participate in the full range of programs and services, and to access any facilities provided by the education system. This term implies that all students have access to a system that consistently delivers a quality education and leads to outcomes best suited to their unique skills and competencies.

The principles that embody and give meaning to inclusive education are:

- Educational programs provided by schools will seek to ensure full acceptance and participation of all students in the life of the community.
- All students with special educational needs should have access to learning environments, appropriate program goals and targets as well as timely support from specialist professionals.
- Parents are valued partners in the educational process and play a vital role in setting learning goals for their children.
- The views of the student should be sought and reflected in learning and teaching arrangements.

The Department of Education & Training:

- acknowledges that the neighbourhood school (regular or specialist) is the first point of contact for all students
- is committed to providing detailed and balanced information about all available educational options to enable parents to make a choice of school location for their child. This includes education at a regular school, at one of the many specialist settings located across the state or, alternatively, in a shared part-time arrangement between a regular school and a specialist setting
- will ensure that when a parent seeks to enrol a child with a disability, an initial program support group will be formed to undertake an appraisal and provide information to help determine the specific educational needs of the student
- recognises that the funding of an appropriate education for students with disabilities is based on educational need, rather than the description of disability
- will require that an ongoing program support group is formed for each student with a disability to advise the principal on the appropriate educational program
- acknowledges that educational opportunities for students with disabilities are non-discriminatory and in accordance with the relevant Acts.

# What is the Program for Students with Disabilities 2004?

The Program for Students with Disabilities 2004 provides additional support to either a regular school or one of the various specialist schools for eligible students with disabilities.

Eligibility is defined by criteria based on guidelines set by the internationally recognised World Health Organisation and are designed to identify that group of students with more severe or profound disabilities. The criteria are outlined on pages 10 to 15 of this booklet.

The Department of Education & Training provides a range of resources to schools to enable the delivery of a high quality program for all students, including students who are having difficulty learning. These resources may be provided in the school global budget, through other support services such as visiting teachers, social workers, guidance officers and curriculum consultants, or through specific early identification and intervention programs.

The Program for Students with Disabilities 2004 is an additional program for a defined student population with significant disabilities. The majority of students within this population are identified with a disability prior to the commencement of school or early in their school years. There is also a small number of students who, as a result of a serious illness during their school years, will require consideration for school-based support or additional support under this program. This is particularly important when a child first returns to school after the illness.

In these situations principals are advised to support the parent(s) and the student by:

- discussing with the parent(s) and any relevant medical professionals the unique educational needs of the student
- referring to the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide, Section 4.5.2, Students and medication*, and also *Circular 340/2001, Victorian Government Schools – School Service Officers Agreement 2001* for advice concerning the development of an individually written management plan, and if relevant
- contacting the Regional Director to arrange for an assessment for immediate support from a visiting teacher, and/or
- preparing an urgent application for additional resources from the Program for Students with Disabilities 2004
- as far as practicable, relieving parents of any procedural concerns to ensure the speediest possible deliverance of the support.

## IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH A SERIOUS CONDITION WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RAPIDLY DETERIORATE

On rare occasions students may have a serious medical condition that results in a rapid deterioration of physical condition that is life threatening.

Principals and support staff should take particular care to identify students in this situation immediately and notify the relevant Regional Director of the situation. Contacting the Regional Director on the telephone numbers provided on page 16 of this handbook will result in an immediate investigation and the provision of appropriate supports.

The principal and the Department of Education & Training will assume responsibility for the delivery of appropriate support at school to relieve parents of any procedural concerns during this traumatic time as well as provide counselling and other support for parents as required.

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## Making an application

An application to the Program for Students with Disabilities 2004 is a THREE STEP process completed by the program support group:

### STEP 1

ASSEMBLING AND CONSIDERING CURRENT DOCUMENTATION THAT PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF A DISABILITY THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR THE PROGRAM.

### STEP 2

COMPLETING A QUESTIONNAIRE THAT WILL BE USED TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF RESOURCES PROVIDED TO THE SCHOOL INCLUDING ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION AND THE STUDENT EDUCATION SUMMARY STATEMENT.

### STEP 3

POSTING A SIGNED APPLICATION FROM THE SCHOOL TO THE ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER, STUDENT WELLBEING, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & TRAINING (SEE ADDRESS BELOW).

## PROCESS

1. An initial **program support group** is to be established for each student for whom the school requests resources from the Program for Students with Disabilities.
2. The initial program support group will consist of:
  - principal (or nominee)
  - parent(s) or carer of the student
  - parent advocate where chosen by the parent. (The advocate is not to be in receipt of a fee.)
  - Department of Education & Training nominee

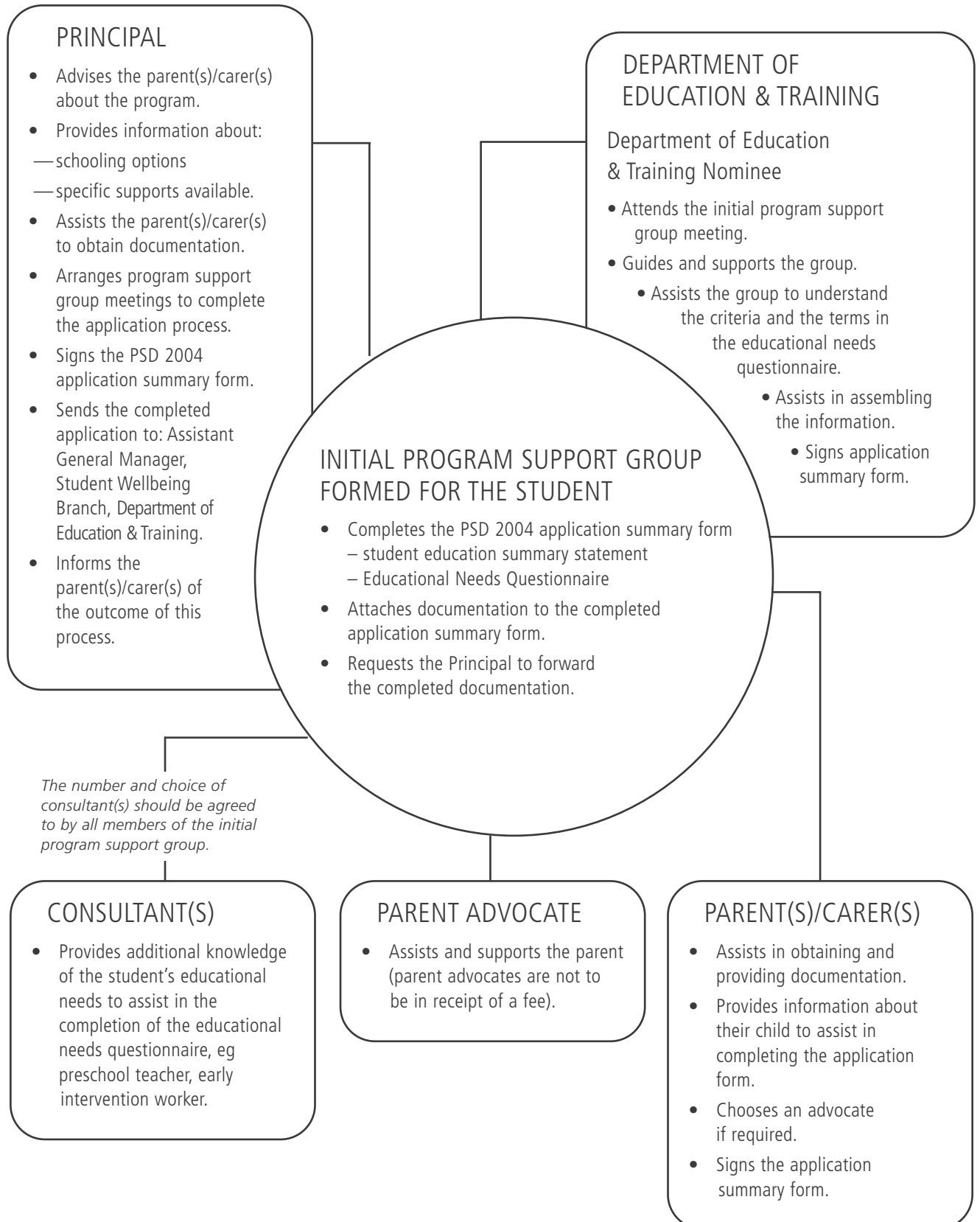
See Booklet 3, page 4, for further information.

*The initial program support group may invite input from other persons with knowledge of the student or with information relevant to the education or social needs of the student. The number and choice of consultants should be agreed to by all members of the group.*

3. The **role** of the initial program support group is detailed on the next page. The **responsibilities** of this group are to:
  - attach documentation to a *Program for Students with Disabilities 2004 application* (Booklet 2) that meets one of the criteria for the program
  - complete the educational needs questionnaire included in Booklet 2
  - complete the summary statement of the student's education program included in Booklet 2
  - ensure that all documentation is attached
  - sign the completed application form
  - send the completed application form to:

**Assistant General Manager  
Student Wellbeing Branch  
Department of Education & Training  
GPO Box 4367  
Melbourne 3001**

# The role of the initial program support group



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## What happens after the application is completed?

The completed application form and supporting documentation is forwarded to the Assistant General Manager, Student Wellbeing Branch, Department of Education & Training.

The Resources Coordination Group (RCG), comprising representatives from regions, personnel from the Student Wellbeing Branch and consulting professionals (where required) consider the application.

The Resources Coordination Group:

- considers applications for the program
- checks that all relevant documentation has been provided
- if necessary, requests additional information from the initial program support group and ensures that the educational needs questionnaire reflects the information in the documentation provided
- determines if a student is eligible and recommended for additional resources via the Program for Students with Disabilities 2004
- assists in the calculation of funding based on the information in the questionnaire
- provides the information to Financial Services, Department of Education & Training, for notification to schools.

All applications are considered very carefully on an individual basis.

## NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME OF THE APPLICATION

The principal:

- will be notified of the outcome of the application by letter or by information provided to accompany the school global budget
- has the responsibility of notifying the parent(s) of the outcome of the application.

Where a student is deemed eligible for inclusion in the program, funding is provided to schools as part of the school global budget. The principal will continue the program support group process for each student with a disability and follow the planning process as outlined on page 8 of this booklet.

## RESOURCES PROVIDED TO THE SCHOOL

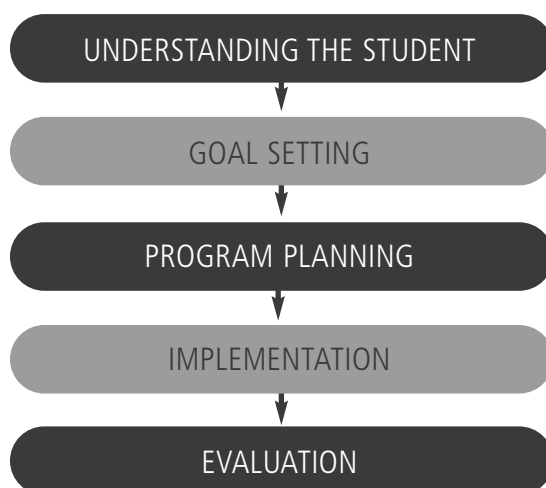
Allocations will be part of the global budget of the school that the student attends. Where agreement has been reached that a student will attend two schools, funding will be provided on a pro-rata basis. If a student transfers to another Victorian Government regular or specialist school during the year, the allocation will transfer on a pro-rata (termly) basis to the new school with the student.

Principals should refer to the disability section in the *Guide to the School Global Budget* for further details concerning resources. The program support group will have a key role in advising the principal on the educational program for the student and the nature of the additional resources required to support the program.

Where a school is receiving funding to support more than one student, the principal may choose to bring members of program support groups together to discuss and evaluate any common requirements, for example the funding of therapy services or integration teacher position.

# Educational program – a school responsibility

1. Once the application has been completed, schools will need to reconvene an ongoing **program support group** for each student with a disability as outlined in *the Program for Students with Disabilities 2004 Program Support Group Guidelines* (Booklet 3).
2. The core membership of the program support group is:
  - parent(s), guardian or caregiver of the student
  - parent advocate (where chosen by the parent)
  - class teacher (primary), or teacher(s) nominated as having responsibility for the student (secondary)
  - principal or nominee (to act as chairperson)
  - student (where appropriate).
3. The focus of the program support group is on educational planning and monitoring of the student's progress. A planning process will enable schools to facilitate optimum learning outcomes for each student with a disability attending a regular or specialist school. In planning and program development to meet the learning needs of a student with a disability, the program support group is advised to use the following sequence of steps:



4. The program support group provides advice to the principal and the school on the specific educational needs of each student with a disability and the most appropriate use of available resources.

### NEW APPLICATION

New applications are received during the annual application period in Term 4 each year with a specified closing date. In addition, new applications are received at anytime for students transferring to the Department of Education & Training from another school system. If eligible, all new applications are supported for a period of time set by the RCG. There are a small number of students who have a serious medical condition that results in a rapid deterioration of physical condition that is life threatening. New applications are received at anytime for students in this situation.

### TIME LIMITED APPLICATION

An application is required when the funding for support of a student is due to cease and the program support group considers additional support is still required. This will occur during the annual application process.

### REAPPRAISAL

A reappraisal can be initiated where it is believed that the allocation of resources as determined by the outcome of the student appraisal process will not meet the student's educational program requirements because of a change in the educational needs of the student since the time of the original application. This will generally occur during the annual application process.

Principals should note that if additional information is available as a result of a deteriorating condition, as outlined on page 4 of Booklet 1, a request for a reappraisal should be activated immediately.

### REAPPLICATION

A reapplication for the program can be requested where relevant information not provided with the initial application has become available. This will generally occur during the annual application process and needs to be supported with a new Educational Needs Questionnaire.

### REVIEW – TRANSITION 6/7

In all matters relating to a review, principals should refer to the *Program for Students with Disabilities: Review 2004* document ([www.sofvweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofvweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)).

# The seven criteria for consideration for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2004

For consideration for additional resources for a student with special educational needs, documentation must be provided that meets the criteria below in one or more areas:



The criteria are used by the Resources Coordination Group to establish which students will be considered for additional resources under the program.

Students with multiple disabilities are considered to be eligible if evidence is provided that meets any of the above criteria.

The level of additional resources will be based on information provided by the Program Support Group in the Educational Needs Questionnaire (ENQ). The key indicators within this questionnaire include observable abilities/competencies of the student. The application must provide evidence to support the scoring of the ENQ.

The range of documentation that can be provided by parents and schools in most cases will include information already held by parents, for example information associated with an early intervention program. It is expected that formal assessments may only be required in situations where no current and appropriate assessment reports are available.

In most cases, assessment reports should be not more than two years old. As stated in the Privacy Note (refer to inside front cover), documentation should be student specific. It should not include information regarding other students. Suspension notices, school records of misdemeanors, other incident reports including police/court orders, photographs, audio/video tapes, work samples or comprehensive student-subject reports for Jan-June, July-Dec are not required to be submitted as evidence of disability.

Refer to the following pages for the required documentation.

## Physical disability

### CRITERIA

- A A significant physical disability.  
**AND/OR**
- B A significant health impairment.  
**AND**
- C Requires regular paramedical support.

*Note: Students with a mild physical disability or health impairment are referred for support by a visiting teacher.*

### EVIDENCE

A statement detailing the **disability** or **health impairment** from a paediatrician.

**AND**

A statement detailing paramedical service requirements from a registered physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

*Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement must be provided by the student's parents or guardians.*

## Severe language disorder

### CRITERIA

- A A score of two or more standard deviations below the mean for the student's age in expressive and/or receptive language skills on **two** of the recommended tests;  
**AND**
- B The **severity** of the disorder cannot be accounted for by hearing impairment, social emotional factors, low intellectual functioning or cultural factors;  
**AND**
- C A history and evidence of an on going problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years;  
**AND**
- D A score at or above minus one standard deviation from the mean on **one** comprehensive intellectual test (performance subtests only);  
**AND**
- E A score at or above minus one standard deviation on **one** additional non verbal test of cognitive functioning.

### EVIDENCE

The assessment must be carried out by a speech pathologist and evidence of a severe language disorder must be detailed to meet the relevant criteria. Evidence must be provided which excludes the other factors.

*Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department of Education & Training guidelines for assessment of severe language disorder.*

*Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement must be provided by the student's parents or guardian.*

#### OBTAINABLE FROM:

Department of Education & Training student support services or parent held information which may include reports from early intervention programs, hospital paediatric services, speech pathologists, audiologists, registered psychologists.

# Severe behaviour disorder

## CRITERIA

A Student displays disturbed behaviour to a point where special support in a withdrawal group or special class/unit is required.

**AND**

B Student displays behaviour so deviant and with such frequency and severity that they require regular psychological or psychiatric treatment.

**AND**

C The severe behaviour cannot be accounted for by: Intellectual Disability, Sensory (vision, hearing), Physical and/or Health issues, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Severe Language Disorder.

**AND**

D A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years.

## EVIDENCE

Evidence is required for each of the criteria. Evidence provided should be coordinated by a Department of Education & Training nominated psychologist.

*Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department of Education & Training guidelines for assessment of severe behaviour disorder.*

*Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement(s) must be provided by the student's parents or guardian.*

### OBTAINABLE FROM:

Department of Education & Training student support services, parent held information and/or Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

# Hearing impairment

## CRITERIA

A bilateral sensori-neural hearing loss that is moderate/severe/profound and where the student requires intervention or assistance to communicate.

*Note: Students with a mild bilateral hearing loss are referred for support by a visiting teacher.*

## EVIDENCE

An audiogram with a written statement is required from a qualified audiologist.

*Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department of Education & Training guidelines for assessment of hearing impairment.*

## Intellectual disability

### CRITERIA

- A Sub-average general intellectual functioning which is demonstrated by a full scale score of two standard deviations or more below the mean score on a standardised individual test of general intelligence.
- AND**
- B Significant deficits in adaptive behaviour established by a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean on an approved standardised test of adaptive behaviour.
- AND**
- C A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years.

### EVIDENCE

- The primary disability is intellectual, eg mild intellectual disability, a written report by a registered psychologist is required.
- In the case where a student has severe/profound disabilities including intellectual disability, the student may not need a formal psychological assessment but a statement from a paediatrician, or a registered psychologist is required.

*Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department of Education & Training guidelines for assessment of intellectual disability.*

*Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement must be provided by the student's parents or guardian.*

#### OBTAINABLE FROM:

Department of Education & Training student support services  
or parent held information,  
or registered psychologist.

# Visual impairment

## CRITERIA

Visual acuity less than 6/60 with corrected vision.

**OR**

That visual fields are reduced to a measured arc of less than 10 degrees.

*Note: **Partially sighted students** may obtain support from visiting teachers and/or the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.*

Eligibility for these services is:

- visual acuity less than 6/18 with corrected vision

**OR**

- visual fields reduced to a measured arc of less than 20 degrees.

## EVIDENCE

Assessment/report from the Educational Vision Assessment Clinic.

**OR**

Assessment/report from the student's ophthalmologist.

*Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department of Education & Training guidelines for assessment of visual impairment.*

### OBTAINABLE FROM:

Educational Vision  
Assessment Clinic  
PO Box 201  
Nunawading Vic 3131  
Telephone (03) 9841 0807

## Autism spectrum disorder

### CRITERIA

A Significant deficits in adaptive behaviour established by a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean on an approved standardised test of adaptive behaviours.

**AND**

B A score of two or more standard deviations below the mean for the student's age in expressive and receptive language skills.

**AND**

The severity of the language disorder cannot be accounted for by hearing impairment, social emotional factors, general intellectual disability or cultural factors.

**AND**

C A score above the cut-off for diagnosis of autistic features on an approved standardised test (CARS) for the presence of autistic features in current behaviour.

**OR**

Moderate and severe abnormalities in items 1, 3, 5 and 6 on an approved standardised test (CARS) for the presence of autistic features in current behaviour.

**AND**

D A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with the expectation of continuation during the school years.

### EVIDENCE

- Evidence provided by a multidisciplinary team of professionals with experience and knowledge in the assessment of autism spectrum disorders.
- The multidisciplinary team should include a psychologist, speech pathologist and a child psychiatrist or paediatrician.

*Note: There are a limited number of students with significant deficits in pragmatic skills who do not meet the eligibility criteria for support in this or any other category. Specialised teams are requested to refer to the Department of Education & Training guidelines for assessment of autism spectrum disorder.*

**OBTAINABLE FROM:**

Parent held information or specialised teams, eg Alfred CAMHS, Royal Children's Hospital, MHSKY, Austin Hospital, Monash Medical Centre and regional CAMHS teams.

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## Further information

If other issues require clarification, parents should contact their school, or if necessary, the relevant officer in their region.

Barwon–South Western Region	(03) 5272 8300
Central Highlands–Wimmera Region	(03) 5337 8444
Eastern Metropolitan Region	(03) 9881 0200
Gippsland Region	(03) 5127 0400
Goulburn–North Eastern Region	(03) 5761 2100
Loddon Campaspe Mallee Region	(03) 5440 3111
Northern Metropolitan Region	(03) 9488 9488
Southern Metropolitan Region	(03) 9794 3555
Western Metropolitan Region	(03) 9291 6500



