

# Program for Students with Disabilities

## HANDBOOK

# 2006

Available at [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)

Program for Students with Disabilities 2006 HANDBOOK

# 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DE&T will not use irrelevant or out of date documents as this may confuse and delay the decision making process.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 what ever reason, please contact the Disability Coordinator at your regional office. (Refer to page 41 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 your seek.

Please, only send in copies of relevant information.

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# 1

## Foreword

This handbook contains guidelines for principals and teachers in Victorian government 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 2006 provides a framework to support the educational programs of eligible students in Victorian government schools. Resources provided to schools are allocated to assist the education of students with disabilities, not to individual students.

- Regular and special schools that have been provided with additional resources can locate these funds in the disability component of the Student Resource Package for their school.
- Some special 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 special schools provide for a range of students with disabilities. Consult with your regional Department of Education & Training office for specific enrolment criteria.

The handbook provides information on:

- the process by which students who will attend a Victorian government school will be considered for inclusion in the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006
- making an application, including documentation requirements
- information for, and about, Program Support Groups
- Advice for parent/guardian/carer(s).

# Section PROGRAM GUIDELINES

# 1

# 1

## Program for Students with Disabilities 2006

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 supportive learning environments, appropriate program goals and targets as well as timely support from specialist professionals
- Parent/guardian/carer(s) 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 government school is the first point of contact for all students
- is committed to providing detailed and balanced information about all available educational options to enable parent/guardian/carer(s) 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/guardian/carer(s) seek 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 2006?

# 1

The Program for Students with Disabilities 2006 provides a framework to support the educational programs of eligible students in Victorian government schools. Resources provided to schools are allocated to assist the education of students with disabilities, not to individual students.

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 severe to profound disabilities. The criteria are outlined on pages 12 to 15 of this handbook.

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 Student Resource Package, 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 2006 is an additional program for a defined student population with moderate to severe 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/guardian/carer(s) and the student by:

- discussing with the parent/guardian/carer(s) and any relevant medical professionals the unique educational needs of the student
- referring to the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide, Section 4.5, Student Health*, 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 Co-ordinator 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 2006
- as far as practicable, relieving parent/guardian/carer(s) 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 or a student poses a significant safety risk to him or herself or others in the school.

Principals and support staff should take particular care to identify students in these situations immediately and notify the relevant Regional Director of the situation. Contacting the Regional Director on the telephone numbers provided on page 41 of this handbook will result in an immediate investigation and the provision of appropriate support.

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

# 1

## Application Process 2006

(further information in Section 4)

An application to the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006 is a THREE STEP process completed by the Program Support Group: (refer to Section 2)

### Step 1

Establish an initial Program Support Group. Assemble and consider current documentation that provides evidence of a disability that meets the criteria for the program.

### Step 2

Complete an Educational Needs Questionnaire that will be used to determine the level of resources provided to the school including eligibility documentation and the student education program summary statement.

### Step 3

Forward an application from the school to the Resources Coordination Group, Student Wellbeing Branch, Department of Education & Training.

## 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 2006.
2. The **Program Support Group** will consist of:
  - principal (or nominee)
  - parent/guardian/carer(s) of the student
  - parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate where chosen by the parent/guardian/carer(s) (The advocate is not to be in receipt of a fee.)
  - Department of Education & Training nominee.

Further information on pg 23

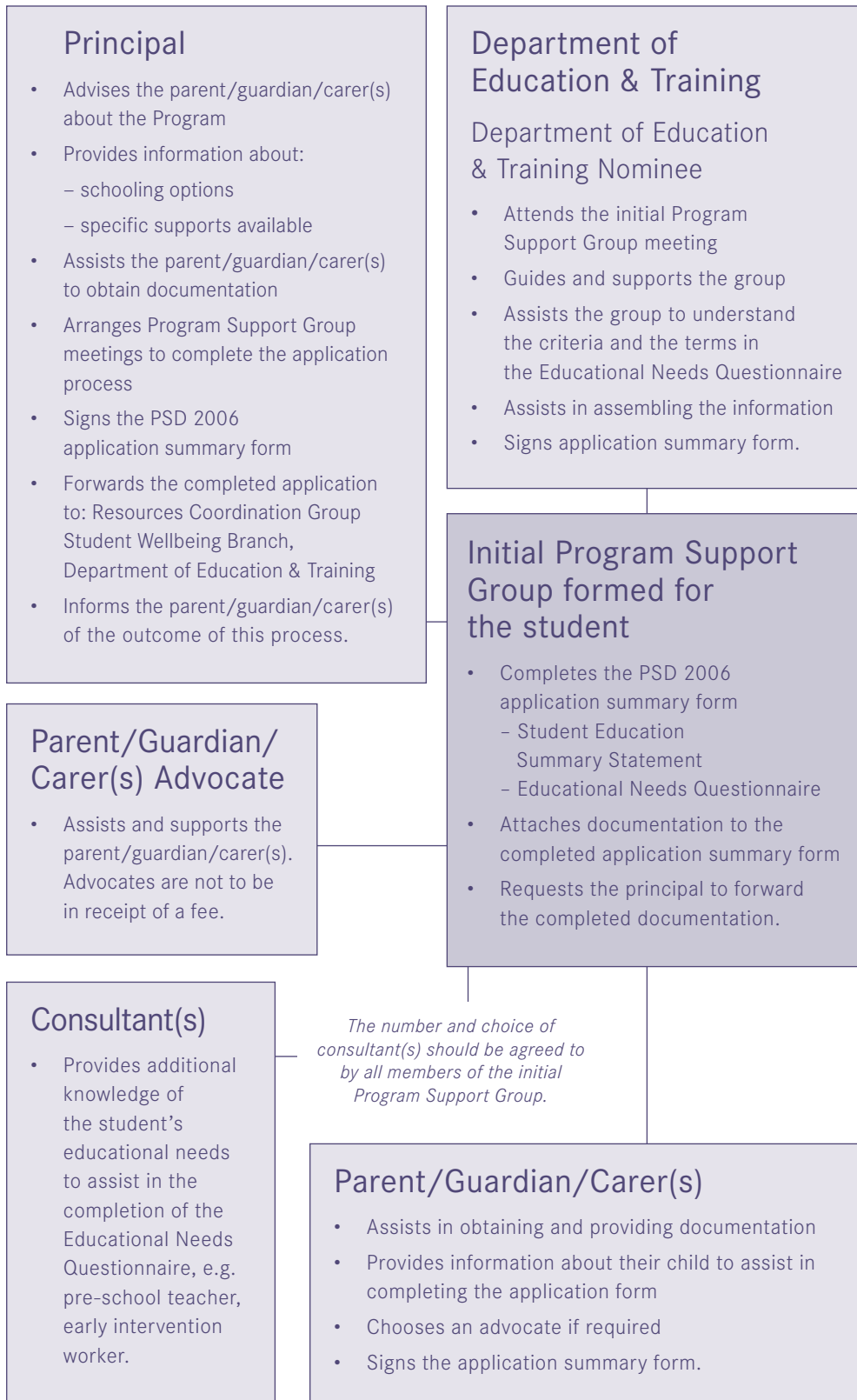
*The Program Support Group may invite input from other persons with knowledge of the student or with information relevant to the education or social needs of the student.*

*The number and choice of consultants should be agreed to by all members of the group.*

3. The **responsibilities** of this group are to:
  - consider the educational needs of students and determine whether to apply
  - provide/attach documentation to a *Program for Students with Disabilities 2006* application that meets one of the criteria for the program
  - complete the Educational Needs Questionnaire on pg 55 or available as a word doc at [www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)
  - complete the Student Education Program Summary Statement on pg 54 or available at [www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)
  - ensure that all documentation is attached
  - sign the completed application form
  - Forward the completed application to:
    - Resources Coordination Group**
    - Student Wellbeing Branch**
    - Department of Education & Training**
    - GPO Box 4367**
    - Melbourne 3001**

# Roles and Responsibilities of Initial Program Support Group

# 1



# 1

## What happens after the application is completed?

The completed application form and supporting documentation is forwarded to the Resources Coordination Group, Student Wellbeing Branch, Department of Education & Training.

The Resources Coordination Group (RCG), comprises representatives from regions and consulting professionals.

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
- validates the educational needs as described compared to the supporting documents provided by Program Support Group
- determines if a student is eligible and recommended for additional resources via the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006

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 via email and by information provided to accompany the Student Resource Package
- has the responsibility of notifying the parent/guardian/carer(s) of the outcome of the application.

Where a decision has been made to allocate additional Program resourcing to a school, resourcing is provided via the Student Resource Package. The principal will continue the Program Support Group process for each student with a disability and follow the planning process as outlined on pg 9 of this handbook.

Where the Program Support Group is not satisfied with the outcome of the application a process for reappraisal is available - refer pg 40.

### Resources provided to the school

Allocations will be part of the Student Resource Package of the school that the student attends. Where agreement has been reached that a student will attend two schools, the allocation will be provided on a pro-rata basis. If a student transfers to another Victorian Government regular or special school during the year, the allocation will transfer on a pro-rata (each term) basis to the new school with the student.

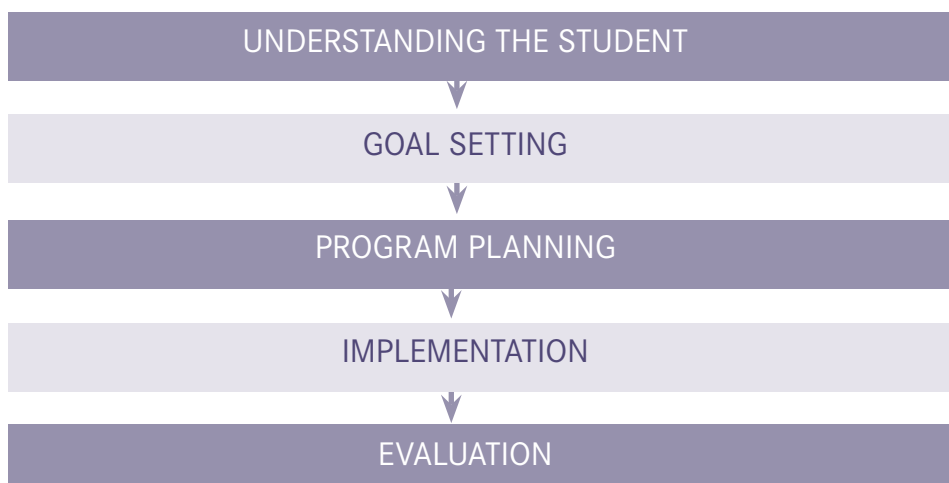
Principals should refer to the disability section in the *Guide to the Student Resource Package* for further details concerning resources. The Program Support Group will have a key role in advising the principal on the educational program for the student and the nature of the additional resources required to support the Program.

Where a school is allocated resources 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

1. Once the application has been completed, schools will need to reconvene an ongoing **Program Support Group** for each student with a disability.
2. The core membership of the Program Support Group is:
  - parent/guardian/carer(s), of the student
  - parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate (where chosen by the parent/guardian/carer(s))
  - 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 special 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.

# 1

## Types of Applications for the PSD

### New application

New applications are received during the annual application period (the Annual Round) each year with a specified closing date. In addition, new applications are received at any time for students transferring to the Department of Education & Training from another school system. There are a small number of students with a serious medical condition that results in a rapid deterioration of physical condition that is life threatening. New applications are received at any time for students in this situation. Details of the Annual Round, including the timetable for submitting an application, is provided to schools via *Circular 137/2005*.

### Reappraisal

A reappraisal can be initiated where it is believed that the allocation of resources 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, a request for a reappraisal should be activated immediately.

### Review – Transition 6/7

The Program for Students with Disabilities has been structured to review the educational progress of students with disabilities and the appropriateness of the allocation made to schools.

It has been determined that a critical review point in terms of establishing educational need for support through the Program for Students with Disabilities is Year 6 or the equivalent in special schools. This information was provided to schools in *Circular 137/2005*.

Students for review include:

- All students undertaking transition from Year 6 to Year 7 attending regular schools.
- Students enrolled in special schools whose date of birth falls between 1 May 1993 and 30 April 1994.

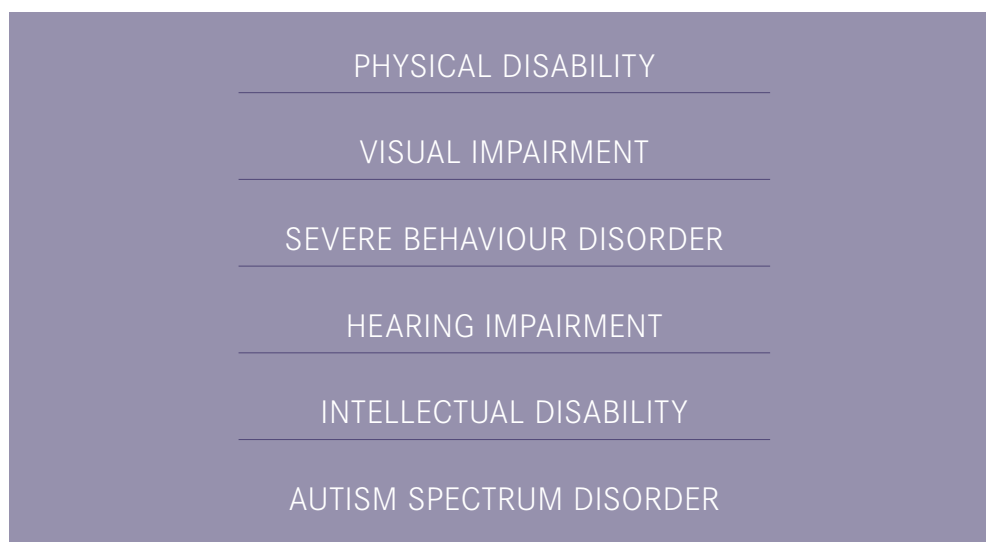
Current Year 6 students or the equivalent in special schools who received level 5 and level 6 funding are exempt from the 6-7 review process. Where the Program Support Group believes that the educational need of the student has changed, an application may be submitted.

For further information refer to *Circular 137/2004*.

# The six categories for consideration for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006

# 1

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 categories 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 the criteria for any of the above categories.

The level of additional resources is informed by 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 parent/guardian/carer(s) and schools in most cases will include information already held by the parent/guardian/carer(s), 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 misdemeanours, 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.

# 1

## 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 parent/guardian/carer(s).*

## 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

# 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 parent/guardian/carer(s).*

### OBTAINABLE FROM:

Department of Education & Training Student Support Services, parent/guardian/carer(s) 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.*

# 1

## 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, e.g. 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 parent/guardian/carer(s).*

#### OBTAINABLE FROM:

Department of Education & Training  
Student Support Services  
or parent/guardian/carer(s) held  
information, or registered psychologist.

# 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**

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

**AND**

D 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**

E 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**

F 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/guardian/carer held information or specialised teams, e.g. Alfred CAMHS, Royal Children's Hospital, MHSKY, Austin Hospital, Monash Medical Centre and regional CAMHS teams.



**Section**  
PROGRAM SUPPORT  
GROUP

2

# 2

## Aims of the Program Support Group

The aims of the Program Support Group are to:

- ensure that those with the most knowledge of, and responsibility for, the student work together to establish shared goals for the student's educational future
- increase the participation of the student in the educational programs and social life of the school
- provide educational planning that is ongoing throughout the student's school life
- provide ongoing support for teachers, parent/guardian/carer(s) and the student in educational program planning and direction as well as regular monitoring and evaluation of the student's progress.

## Responsibilities of the Program Support Group

In order to achieve these aims it is the responsibility of the Program Support Group to:

- identify the educational and social goals for the student
- determine an appropriate educational program to meet the established goals
- identify ways in which this educational program may be implemented
- provide advice to the principal concerning the additional educational needs of a student with disabilities and the type of resources required to meet these needs, and;
- review and evaluate the student's program on a regular basis as determined by the group, and at other times if requested by any member of the group. Refer to *Measuring Academic Performance against each KLA – Students with Disabilities and Impairments*.

It is most important that a good, cooperative working relationship is developed and maintained within the Group and with the school. The Program Support Group represents a partnership in the educational planning process between the parent/guardian/carer(s), the student and the school.

# Membership of the Program Support Group

# 2

A Program Support Group consists of:

- the parent/guardian/carer(s) of the student
- a parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate (where chosen by the parent/guardian/carer(s))
- a class teacher (primary) or teacher(s) nominated as having responsibility for the student (secondary)
- the principal or nominee (to act as chairperson), and
- the student (where appropriate).

The Program Support Group may invite input from any other person with knowledge of the student or with information relevant to the educational or social needs of the student. The number and choice of the consultants should be agreed to by all members of the Program Support Group. The information provided by the consultants will be for the consideration of the group in decision making. Consultants do not have a role in the final decision-making process of the group.

**Note:**

Where a student with a disability is attending two schools on a shared basis, the Program Support Group should be convened by the school where the student attends the majority of time. The principal, or nominee of the other school, is also to be a member of the Program Support Group.

Where a student is being assessed through the 6-7 Review process, the secondary school which the student anticipates enrolling in should be invited to attend the Program Support Group.

# 2

## Principal

When a parent/guardian/carer(s) seeks to enrol their child with a disability into a school, the principal provides them with information about specific support available to facilitate the student's participation in the school's education program. A Program Support Group is established to review and support educational needs which may result in an application for funding.

It is the responsibility of the principal to facilitate the collaborative processes of the Program Support Group by offering support to all members and ensuring their equal participation. For this to occur, the principal may enlist the support of an interpreter, parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate or other community support groups.

The principal or principal's nominee shall convene and chair Program Support Group meetings on a regular basis. The principal ensures that accurate minutes of the Program Support Group meetings are kept and provided to all members. Program Support Group decisions are recommendations to the principal for implementation.

## Classroom teacher

Teachers have skills in the areas of classroom management, instructional techniques and learning and program design. The classroom teacher will provide the Program Support Group with current information regarding the student's progress and assist in determining future educational goals.

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure that the student has access to the school's educational programs. Other staff working with the student do so under the direction of the classroom teacher.

## Parent/Guardian/Carer(s)

Parent/guardian/carer(s) play a vital role in the Program Support Group. They have a holistic understanding of the child and provide ongoing involvement in their education. Parent/guardian/carer(s) are often in the best position to provide information on the effectiveness and practicality of particular strategies and programs. They provide knowledge and experience of previous events that may influence programming decisions. Parent/guardian/carer(s) are able to contribute to the goals and strategies that will support the education of their child.

## Student

Where appropriate the student should be part of the program development process. In some cases, the age or severity of disability may restrict direct participation. However, in all cases, the preferences and interests of the student, regardless of how they are expressed, should be actively considered when planning programs.

## Parent/Guardian/Carer(s) Advocate

A parent/guardian/carer may be accompanied and supported by an advocate to assist the parent/guardian/carer(s) full participation in planning and supporting the student's program and in making decisions about the student.

The role of the parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate in the Program Support Group is a supportive and enabling one. It may include:

- encouraging the sharing of the parent/guardian/carer(s) knowledge, skills and perceptions with the Program Support Group
- discussing any difficulties or uncertainties being experienced by the parent/guardian/carer(s) in participating in the Program Support Group
- assisting the development of a co-operative and collaborative working relationship between the parent/guardian/carer(s) and the school community
- assisting the parent/guardian/carer(s) to understand Department of Education & Training procedures, and
- linking the parent/guardian/carer(s) with relevant services and organisations.

### **Note:**

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/carer(s) to choose and arrange for the advocate.

A parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate may be a friend, supportive community member, a member of the family or formal advocate.

The advocate is not to be in receipt of a fee.

See pg 33 for a list of organisations that provide parent/guardian/carer(s) advocates.

## Interpreter

Where necessary, an interpreter (in languages other than English and sign language) should be present at the Program Support Group meetings as an aid to communication. They are not members of the Program Support Group. The principal will assist in obtaining the services of an interpreter.

# 2

## Consultants

The Program Support Group should ensure that input is obtained from other personnel who have relevant expertise and/or information to:

- assist in the establishment of educational goals for the student
- provide support in the development of educational programs, and
- help determine appropriate strategies to implement agreed programs.

The Department of Education & Training provides Student Support Services, a group of professionals who provide support to students and schools. These services aim to maximise opportunities for the maintenance and development of the wellbeing of all young Victorians and strengthen schools' capacity to keep students connected with schools.

These include:

- guidance officers, psychologists
- social workers
- visiting teachers (for visually, hearing and physically impaired students)
- speech pathologists
- curriculum consultants.

In addition, persons who could make a valuable contribution to the Program Support Group include:

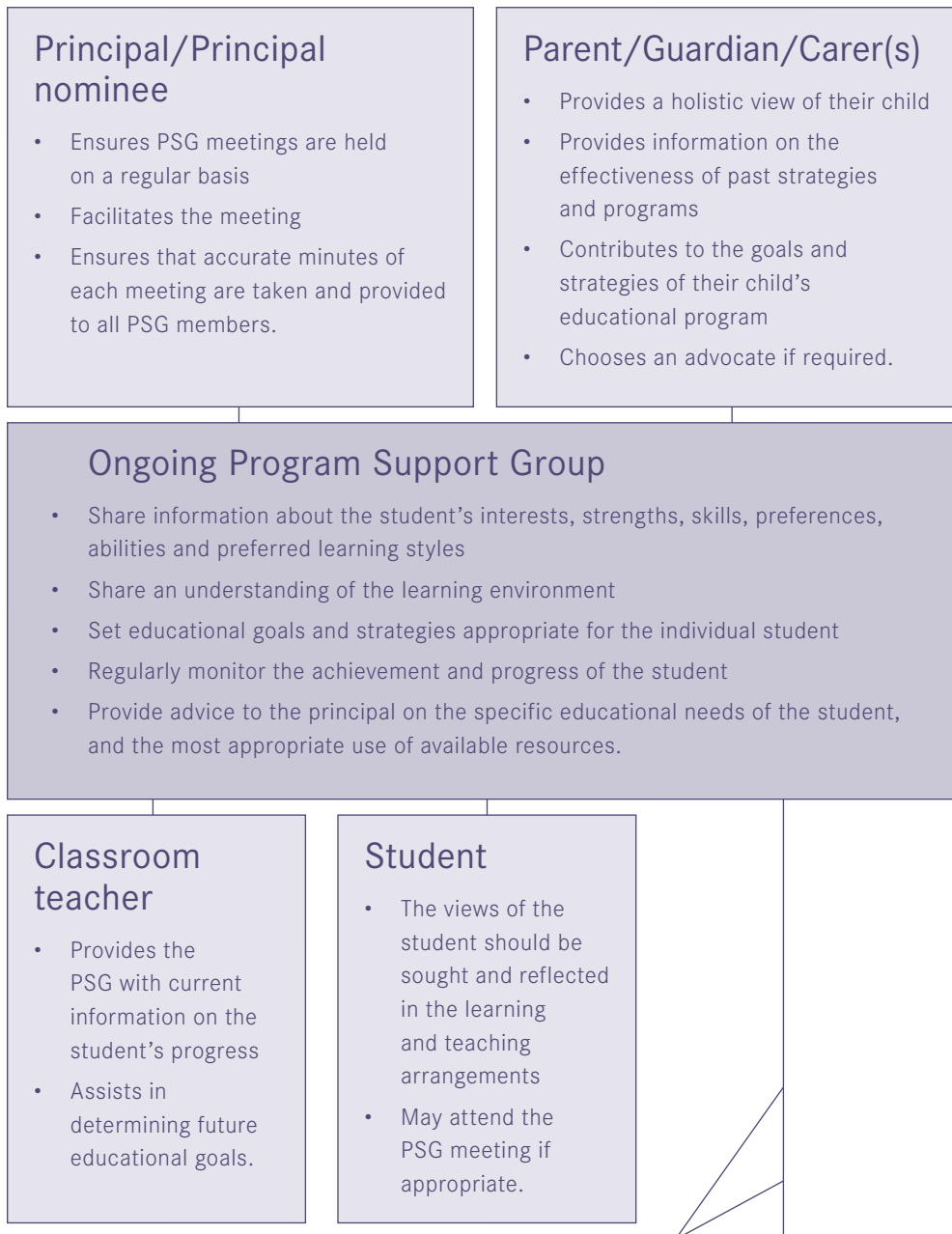
- Department of Human Services staff
- integration teachers
- learning area or year level coordinators
- medical practitioners
- paramedical practitioners
- preschool teachers and/or advisers and/or early intervention staff
- special education consultants
- specialist school staff
- student welfare coordinators
- teacher/integration aides
- teachers who have taught the student previously and/or other members of staff
- visiting teachers.

Schools are advised to work closely together to make the best use of the available resources and expertise within the local area.

Ongoing links should be established between regular and special schools.

# Role/Responsibilities of the Program Support Group (PSG)

# 2



## Principal/Principal nominee

- Ensures PSG meetings are held on a regular basis
- Facilitates the meeting
- Ensures that accurate minutes of each meeting are taken and provided to all PSG members.

## Parent/Guardian/Carer(s)

- Provides a holistic view of their child
- Provides information on the effectiveness of past strategies and programs
- Contributes to the goals and strategies of their child's educational program
- Chooses an advocate if required.

## Ongoing Program Support Group

- Share information about the student's interests, strengths, skills, preferences, abilities and preferred learning styles
- Share an understanding of the learning environment
- Set educational goals and strategies appropriate for the individual student
- Regularly monitor the achievement and progress of the student
- Provide advice to the principal on the specific educational needs of the student, and the most appropriate use of available resources.

## Classroom teacher

- Provides the PSG with current information on the student's progress
- Assists in determining future educational goals.

## Student

- The views of the student should be sought and reflected in the learning and teaching arrangements
- May attend the PSG meeting if appropriate.

The number and choice of additional participants should be agreed to by all members of the PSG, however, they do not have a role in the final decision making process of the group.

## Consultant

- Provides additional knowledge of the student's educational needs.

## Interpreter

- Assists with communication at PSG meetings.

## Parent/Guardian/Carer(s) Advocate

- Assists and supports the parent/guardian/carer(s) (parent/guardian/carer(s) advocates are not to be in receipt of a fee)

# 2

## Operation of the Program Support Group

Ongoing Program Support Groups will be arranged in Victorian government schools for all students with disabilities. The principal will provide the parent/guardian/carer(s) with a copy of this handbook ([www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)) and any related school policy documents concerning the education of students with disabilities. This will assist the parent/guardian/carer(s) to participate fully in the process.

### Meeting procedures

Sufficient time must be allowed for the Program Support Group participants to prepare before meetings are convened, including time for the parent/guardian/carer(s) and parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate to meet. Meetings should be arranged at times that enable all members to be present.

Program Support Group meetings should be convened on a regular basis and as soon as possible following a request by a Program Support Group member.

The principal needs to ensure that efficient and effective meeting arrangements are in place. See Program Support Group Operation pg 32 and Program Support Group Record Keeping on pg 34 for examples.

All discussions and reports considered by, or arising from, the Program Support Group process are to be treated in the strictest confidence and confined to members of the group, unless all members agree otherwise.

### Concerns

Concerns regarding the process used by the Program Support Group or the management of resources by the school should be resolved, if possible, with the principal.

If the issue(s) cannot be resolved at the school level, the concern should be forwarded in writing to the relevant Regional Director. Refer to the list of Department of Education & Training Regional Offices on pg 41.

# Planning the Educational Program

# 2

The focus of the Program Support Group is on educational planning and monitoring of a student's progress. This planning process will enable schools to facilitate optimum learning outcomes for each student with a disability. 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.

## Understanding the student

### 1 Sharing an understanding of the student as a learner

Parent/guardian/carer(s) and teachers are committed to the best educational outcomes for the student and will have information to exchange concerning the student and the learning process. Parent/guardian/carer(s) bring information about the student's skills, teaching methods that have been successful and important background information. Teachers bring expertise in designing and delivering an educational program. Consultants who have an understanding and knowledge of the student as a learner may enhance the information sharing process.

The purpose of information sharing is to bring together understandings, relevant information and identify the implications for the student's educational program. Shared information will form the foundation for deciding what to teach, how to teach and when to teach, and how to deliver the most effective educational program to maximise outcome for the student. It will also help provide the basis for further assessment.

### 2 Student strengths, skills, preferences and abilities

Through direct observation and assessment the parent/guardian/carer(s), teachers and other relevant personnel can identify the student's interests, strengths, skills, preferences and abilities.

### 3 Identify the most appropriate learning style

It will be most important to identify the student's preferred learning styles and rates of learning. All students have preferences in the way in which they interpret information, make connections between learning and demonstrate that learning. Major differences in learning style include learning by experimenting, reflecting, doing or feeling, and learning individually or within a group.

Enabling students to be involved in learning tasks in ways which are most comfortable for them, and which give them the opportunity to face challenges, will enhance the quality of their learning and ultimately the outcome they will achieve.

### 4 Understanding the learning environment

The Program Support Group will need to consider the school environment including the layout of the school, location of toilets and classrooms movement between classrooms and the playground. Equipment requirements for a student with specific physical needs, e.g. seating or tables, should be ordered early to ensure it is available when the student commences school. The cost of equipment will need to be budgeted for within the Student Resource Package.

# 2

## Determining the Student's Educational Program

### Goal setting

#### 5 Focus on planning

The primary focus for all students is preparation for future education and training, employment, or desired life style. When planning for a student with a disability, it is especially important to maintain a focus on the future of the student taking an active role in the community. It is essential to incorporate this focus in planning the immediate program.

#### 6 Setting educational goals

The Program Support Group sets educational goals for the student for both the short term as well as the long term.

The important considerations when setting educational goals are to:

- ensure that all parties are in agreement with the goals
- ensure the goals are a priority for the student
- build on the strengths and skills of the student
- understand the difference between long and short term goals
- ensure they are achievable, measurable and have a review date.

#### Long term goals

Long term goals are broad statements of expected learning outcomes reflecting the social, academic and life skills required by the student, e.g. to live independently, or access further education and training options. Careful recognition of future needs is necessary in all educational planning.

#### Short term goals

Short term goals are developed by identifying the sub-skills that are required for a student to achieve a long term goal, e.g. the ability to successfully validate a public transport ticket. Short term goals specify what is to be achieved in periods ranging from a week through to a semester.

#### 7 Setting goals appropriate for individual students

All goals for students with disabilities should be:

- designed to ensure the participation of the student within their classroom programs
- based on curriculum content and experiences similar to those for same-age peers
- fully inclusive where possible.

The Program Support Group sets goals that:

- enable the student to undertake a meaningful educational program
- are realistic, achievable and written in such a manner that it is possible to measure the extent of the student's progress
- describe the expected learning outcomes for a student at the end of the school year and can be measured against the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF)/Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), or *Measuring Academic Progress Against Each KLA – Students with Disabilities and Impairments* – [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/pdf/D&I.pdf](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/pdf/D&I.pdf)
- describe the actual performance expected at the end of the year, and the level of performance the student should exhibit to show successful achievement of the goal
- enable the school to effectively report the academic progress of students with disabilities and impairments in a similar manner to reporting the learning of all other students in the school.

In ongoing planning for a student, critical transition stages including pre-school to primary school, primary to secondary and secondary to post-school options are linked to specific goals. Careful planning for these times is also necessary.

## Program planning

### 8 Decide on what needs to be taught

Schools have been provided with an educational planning format in the *Companion to Course Advice for Students with Disabilities and Impairments*. This information is available on *Switched on Curriculum 2* on CD Rom and at [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/archives.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/archives.htm)

The Program Support Group is encouraged to utilise this planning format.

It is important that students with disabilities learn content related to that which the rest of the class is learning. Choice of activities should reflect the individual needs of the student.

The activities should be comprehensive and balanced. It is important that activities are age-appropriate, relevant and functional. A sufficiently broad repertoire of activities should be selected to permit student choice of activity.

### 9 Select priorities for the content to be taught

Students with disabilities may learn at differing rates from their non-disabled peers. It is vital that maximum teaching time is spent on identified priorities.

Activities given greatest priority need to be those that build on and extend the strengths of the student and form the foundation for later more complex tasks.

# 2

## 10 Select teaching methods

As well as taking longer to learn than many other students, students with disabilities are often more likely to require more practice exercises and repetition to consolidate learning. Matching the best way of delivering the curriculum with the student's individual learning style is important.

There are many different learning styles that are effective for students with disabilities. Teachers should be skilled in the diverse range of teaching methods available and in selecting the most appropriate learning style for the student's preferred way of learning.

Delivery of curriculum is seen as the next step in the planning process.

## Implementing the Educational Program

### 11 Determine organisational strategies

Organisational strategies need to address the questions of when, where, by whom and with whom the curriculum is to be delivered. For example, the appropriateness of the environment for the student's learning, the amount of time necessary to teach an activity and the amount of time required for practice will need to be considered.

Other factors such as the need for intensive teaching times to coincide with the times of day when the student learns best, and maximising the time spent in active student engagement, also need to be considered.

Flexible groupings of students within classrooms will allow for a variety of learning groups for students. Programs for students with disabilities may include individual learning, small group learning, peer and cross-age tutoring and cooperative learning arrangements consistent with those used for other class members.

Organisational strategies will also need to be flexible. Team-teaching is to be encouraged as is the sharing of resources between schools, including local special schools.

Additional support may be provided by Department of Education & Training Student Support Service Officers such as guidance officers, social workers, speech pathologists, visiting teachers and curriculum consultants.

## Evaluation

### 12 Develop evaluation and review procedures

All schools are required to measure, rate and report the achievement and progress of students. The document *Measuring Academic Progress Against Each KLA – Students with Disabilities and Impairments* has been developed to assist schools in completing this process for students with disabilities.

The evaluation/monitoring/review phase of the planning sequence for students with disabilities is most critical. Evaluation enables progress to be measured, the effectiveness of the program to be assessed and new goals to be developed.

It is important that the educational plan for a student with a disability is constantly monitored so that it is responsive to the changing needs and educational progress of the student, and can be adjusted accordingly.

The review process needs to include all relevant people as agreed to by the Program Support Group. Where progress appears to be minimal, it may be helpful for the group to adopt problem-solving strategies that will help reassess such things as goals and targets, as well as the appropriateness of activities and methods used.

On the completion of this process the Program Support Group will be in a position to offer advice to the principal as to how to better meet the educational needs of the student with a disability.

The publication *Measuring Academic Performance against each KLA – Students with Disabilities and Impairments* provides schools with the methodology to be used in the establishment of a common framework to measure academic progress against the educational goals established for each student.

Where students on the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006 are deemed capable of assessment against the standards of the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF)/Victorian Learning Standards (VELS) they should be included in the CSF student achievement tables.

Where students on the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006 are deemed not capable of assessment against the standards of the CSF/VELS the format for assessment should follow that used for reporting the progress of students with disabilities in specialist settings. These procedures are detailed in the publication *Measuring Academic Performance against each KLA – Students with Disabilities and Impairments* ([www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/pdf/daiprogress.pdf](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/pdf/daiprogress.pdf)).

# 2

## Role of the School Council

The school council is accountable to the Minister for Education & Training and the local school community for performance, achievement of school goals, reporting on student achievement and compliance with the requirements of the Department of Education & Training.

School councils should also be aware of the need to respect the confidentiality of information which may be provided.

It is the responsibility of the school council (*Education Act 1958*) along with other responsibilities to ensure that it:

- determines the educational policy, goals and priorities of the school within the framework of the school strategic plan and statewide guidelines
- makes any recommendations it thinks necessary for, or with respect to, the replacement, extension or alteration of any buildings, and generally for, or with respect to, the making of improvements to the buildings and grounds
- ensures that all monies coming into the hands of the council are expended for proper purposes, and
- generally stimulates interest in the school.

All school councils annually publish a report of activities which contains a copy of the last statement of receipts and expenditure sent to the Department of Education & Training.

Section  
SUPPORT MATERIAL

3

# 3

## Program Support Group operation example

Program Support Groups operate more effectively if:

1. There is a positive problem-solving focus
2. They are chaired by the principal or assistant principal
3. An agenda is prepared
4. Minutes are recorded, photocopied at the end of the meeting and distributed to all Program Support Group members
5. A consistent format is used for all meetings to:
  - clarify the purpose of the meeting
  - clarify membership (and introductions if necessary)
  - set/agree on a finishing time (approximately 1 hour)
6. Emphasis is on what is working well at the present time:
  - parent/guardian/carer(s) and student comments
  - teacher/school comments
7. There is a focus on issues and strategies. (e.g. a planning grid can be helpful)

Issue	Strategies	Who will do this?	When will it be done?

8. A summary of the meeting is read back: Focus on “*What needs to happen now?*”
9. The date for the next meeting is set:     Date: *Insert date of next meeting*
10. Minutes are accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and there is agreement on the actions to be taken.

The key to effective Program Support Groups is the development of a real partnership between the school and the parent/guardian/carer(s) supported by regular communication when progress is going well and not merely when difficulties arise.

Further Program Support Group suggestions are available at  
[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)

## Organisations providing support

Association for Children with a Disability  
or for country callers (03) 9500 1232  
1800 654 013

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ADEC (Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities) Inc. (03) 9383 5566

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Blind Citizens Australia (03) 9372 6400

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Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc.  
or for country callers (03) 9320 9555  
1800 656 632

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Parents of Hearing Impaired Children Victorian Federation (03) 9772 1260

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Spina Bifida Association (03) 9362 6111  
1800 686 533

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STAR Victoria Inc. Acting for those with  
Intellectual Disability and Families (03) 9650 2730

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Tourettes Syndrome Association (03) 9845 2700

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Victorian Council of School Organisations (03) 9429 5900

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Parents Victoria (03) 9380 2158

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# 3

# 3

## Program Support Group record keeping example

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting time: \_\_\_\_\_

Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Apologies: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Correspondence:

2. Review of the goals from last meeting:

Focus	Skills	Goal	Method	Progress

3. Reports of achievements and concerns:

Achievements:      Staff \_\_\_\_\_  
   parent/guardian/carer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Concerns:            Staff \_\_\_\_\_  
   parent/guardian/carer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Set main goals/outcomes for the next phase:

Specific goals we want to set \_\_\_\_\_

Specific outcomes we want to achieve \_\_\_\_\_

5. Confirmation of proposed plan:

Focus	Skills	Goal	Method	Progress

# Facility modifications

Funding is available to provide for facility modifications to support the enrolment of students with disabilities.

Proposed facility modifications may include:

- ramps
- railings
- disabled toilets
- major fittings or other modifications essential to overcome the student's disability.

Applications for facility modifications are made on an annual basis. Schools should contact the regional office for further information as applications need to be made as early as possible.

# 3

## Transition to post-school options

The final years of a student's life at school should culminate in a planned progression into participation in adult and community life. This is the fundamental goal of the Program Support Group.

In order to establish a range of options, transition should be part of the core planning of the last four or five years of school so that students and parent/guardian/carer(s) will have choices and feel comfortable about the decisions to be made. Transition-planning should encompass three major areas of adult life – education and training, employment, and independent living.

Successful transition-planning is based on a partnership between parent/guardian/carer(s) and school, and involves considering the current skill-levels of the student, the knowledge, skills and attitudes a student will need to operate successfully in the post school environment, and the provision of appropriate strategies to ensure the needed skills are developed.

By establishing appropriate linkages to service providers such as employment placement officers or higher education disability liaison officers, and inviting representatives to Program Support Group meetings, the agencies can increasingly become part of the planning process. This ensures a seamless transition to the appropriate post-school option.

In addition, students may be eligible to participate in the Futures for Young Adults Program after they reach eighteen years of age. This is a joint initiative between the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education & Training where funding may be available, if needed, to assist students to access a post-school option.

Further information is available at:

[http://hnb.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/disabilitysite.nsf/pages/prog\\_access](http://hnb.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/disabilitysite.nsf/pages/prog_access)

Centrelink also offers a range of support to young people with disabilities and those planning to pursue further education or job training. Further information is available at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au).

# Principal's Checklist

# 3

Student's name

- Welcome and discuss issues with parent/guardian/carer(s)
  - Examine any existing documentation
  - Provide parent/guardian/carer(s) with an explanation of the Program
  - Provide printed information to parent/guardian/carer(s)
  - Discuss programs provided by the school
  - Arrange for additional documentation to be gathered (if necessary) in accordance with the respective assessment guidelines and for the development of the student education program
  - Principal **checks** that the evidence meets the criteria for the program
  - Set the date for an initial Program Support Group meeting
  - Ensure initial Program Support Group carefully examines the evidence of disability and matches one criterion in the handbook
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| If the evidence meets the criteria proceed with the application<br><div style="text-align: center;">▼</div> | If the evidence does not meet the criteria discuss the program requirements and support that the school will arrange |
|---|--|
- Complete the Student Education Program Summary Statement (pg 54 or at [www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm))
  - Complete the Educational Needs Questionnaire (pg 55 or at [www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.gov.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm))
  - Attach the evidence to establish eligibility to the completed application
  - Ensure that the application is signed by the principal, parent/guardian/carer(s) and DE&T nominee
  - Forward application to:
 

Resources Coordination Group Student Wellbeing Branch Department of Education & Training GPO Box 4367 Melbourne 3001	Closing date: Friday July 15th 2005
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# 3

## Principal's Checklist

On receipt of notification from the Department of Education & Training that the student **is** eligible

- Inform parent/guardian/carer(s) of the outcome and set the date for a Program Support Group meeting
- Convene Program Support Group, set and prioritise educational goals
- Consider the budget available and match with the requests for support
- Consider all disabilities and impairments budgets as a whole-school resource

On receipt of notification from the Department of Education & Training that the student **is not** eligible for the Program

- Inform the parent/guardian/carer(s) of the outcome **assuring** them that the needs of their child can be met by the school
- Set a date for a Program Support Group meeting
- Convene Program Support Group, set and prioritise educational goals
- Consider the resource available in the school and match with the requests for support

### Identification of a student with a serious condition which has the potential to rapidly deteriorate

- Provide support and offer counselling to the family
- Immediately notify the Regional Director of the situation
- The principal and the Department of Education & Training assume responsibility for the delivery of appropriate support to relieve parent/guardian/carer(s) of any procedural concern.

# Abbreviations and websites

# 3

## Abbreviations

<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
<b>CASES</b>	Computerised Administrative Systems Environment in Schools
<b>CSF</b>	Curriculum and Standards Framework
<b>DE&amp;T</b>	Department of Education & Training
<b>ENQ</b>	Educational Needs Questionnaire
<b>KLA</b>	Key Learning Area
<b>MAP</b>	Measuring Academic Progress Against Each KLA
<b>MHSKY</b>	Mental Health Services for Kids and Youth
<b>MIA</b>	Medical Intervention Allowance
<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapy
<b>PSG</b>	Program Support Group
<b>VELS</b>	Victorian Essential Learning Standards

## Websites

Program for Students with Disabilities  
[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)

Interpreting and translating  
[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/einter.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/einter.htm)

Measuring Academic Progress Against Each KLA – Students with Disabilities and Impairments  
[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/pdf/D&I.pdf](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/pdf/D&I.pdf)

Futures for Young Adults  
[http://hnb.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/disabilitysite.nsf/pages/prog\\_access](http://hnb.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/disabilitysite.nsf/pages/prog_access)

# 3

## Further advice

The Student Wellbeing Branch of the Department of Education & Training is responsible for the management and implementation of the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Information about the Program for Students with Disabilities is available at <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm> or by contacting one of the nine regional offices across the state.

## Process for further information

- 1 Approach Principal if you are not satisfied or an issue cannot be resolved.
- 2 Approach Regional Office - speak with regional personnel. Work with personnel to resolve issue. They will provide policy advice.
- 3 Approach Central Office only after local and regional advice has been obtained.

The principal is the key contact for parent/guardian/carer(s) for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006.

The principal's role is to:

- Provide parent/guardian/carer(s) with up to date information about the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006
- Manage the process for submitting an application for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006
- Inform parent/guardian/carer(s) of the outcome of the application for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006
- Liaise with parent/guardian/carer(s), regional officers and the Resources Coordination Group about any matters relating to the process or the allocation of resources
- Determine the educational program for the student in consultation with the Program Support Group
- Contact Student Support Services to provide assessment services or advice in relation to the educational programs

A systemic approach is used to design and develop programs and strategies to support students with special needs through targeted programs that strengthen the capacity of schools, families and regions to improve student outcomes.

Concerns regarding the application process or management of resources should be resolved at the school, if possible with the principal.

If the issue cannot be resolved at the school level, concerns can be raised by contacting the appropriate regional office representative or the Student Wellbeing Branch of the Department of Education and Training (contact details pg 41)

A reappraisal can be initiated at any time where it is believed that the allocation of resources 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.

A reappraisal can be initiated by the school, principal or the Resources Coordination Group.

A reappraisal involves:

- Reconvening the Program Support Group
- Discussing concerns with members
- Forwarding additional information to the Resources Coordination Group.

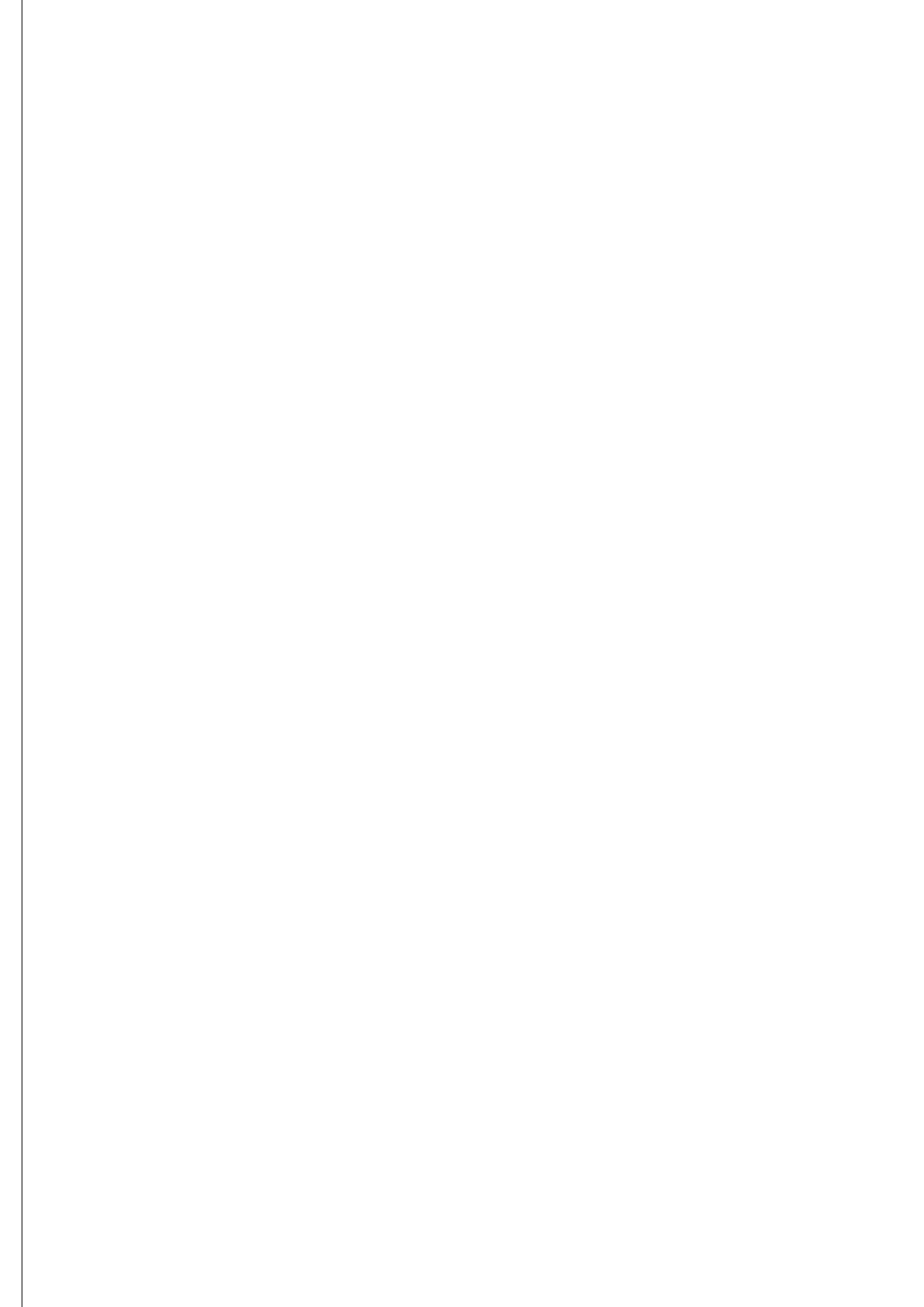
# Department of Education & Training Contacts

# 3

## Regional Offices

Barwon–South Western Region	(03) 5272 8300 or <a href="http://www.bsw.vic.edu.au">www.bsw.vic.edu.au</a>
Central Highlands–Wimmera Region	(03) 5337 8444 or <a href="http://www.wimmeranet.vic.edu.au">www.wimmeranet.vic.edu.au</a>
Eastern Metropolitan Region	(03) 9881 0200 or <a href="http://www.emr.vic.edu.au">www.emr.vic.edu.au</a>
Gippsland Region	(03) 5127 0400 or <a href="http://www.gippsland.vic.edu.au">www.gippsland.vic.edu.au</a>
Goulburn–North Eastern Region	(03) 5761 2100 or <a href="http://www.gner.vic.edu.au">www.gner.vic.edu.au</a>
Loddon Campaspe Mallee Region	(03) 5440 3111 or <a href="http://www.lcmdoe.vic.edu.au">www.lcmdoe.vic.edu.au</a>
Northern Metropolitan Region	(03) 9488 9488 or <a href="http://www.nmr.vic.edu.au">www.nmr.vic.edu.au</a>
Southern Metropolitan Region	(03) 9794 3555 or <a href="http://www.smr.vic.edu.au">www.smr.vic.edu.au</a>
Western Metropolitan Region	(03) 9291 6500 or <a href="http://www.wmr.vic.edu.au">www.wmr.vic.edu.au</a>

Central Office  
33 St Andrews Place  
East Melbourne 3002  
03 9637 2106 or [disability.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:disability.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)



**Section**  
MAKING AN APPLICATION  
FOR THE PROGRAM  
FOR STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES 2006

4

# 4

## Making an Application for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006

### STEP 1

#### A Welcome/initial meeting

Upon the parent/guardian/carer(s) approaching their local Victorian government neighbourhood school with concerns about their child's education because of an identified or suspected disability, it is the responsibility of the principal to discuss several issues with the parent/guardian/carer(s) including:

- the educational needs of the child
- what the school has to offer the child
- the educational options available in the area.

Principals and parent/guardian/carer(s) should remember that any issues relating to disabilities are sensitive and confidential matters that require supportive and positive attitudes as the basis for future working relationships. The principal will provide the parent/guardian/carer(s) with an explanation of the range of services provided to schools for children with disabilities (including the fact that the same level of resources is provided to children in regular and special schools) and explain the process for making an application to the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006.

The principal will set a date to meet with the parent/guardian/carer(s) to consider any documentation they have relating to their child's disability and explain that specific information is necessary to establish eligibility for the program. The principal will arrange for the necessary assessments to be carried out.

**The principal should provide parent/guardian/carer(s) with a copy of the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006 Handbook, available at:**  
**[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)**

#### B Assemble and consider the documentation

In order for a school to obtain additional resources to support a student with a disability, current evidence that the child has a disability must be provided.

Once the parent/guardian/carer(s) and principal have gathered the documentation regarding the student's disability, the documentation must be examined very carefully to ensure that the documentation meets the criteria for one of the categories of the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006.

For consideration for additional resources for a student with a disability, documentation must be provided that meets criteria in one or more of the following categories:

- severe behaviour disorder
- hearing impairment
- intellectual disability
- physical disability
- vision impairment
- autism spectrum disorder.

When parent/guardian/carer(s) and the principal examine the information collected, in a number of cases it will be clear that eligibility cannot be established for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006. In these cases the principal has the responsibility to make arrangements to provide an appropriate educational program from within the available resources provided to the school. Continuing with an application that clearly does not meet any of the criteria will raise unnecessary concerns and expectations.

**If the documentation addresses the criteria:**

- attach the documentation to the application form Educational Needs Questionnaire.
- continue the process of making an application (go to STEP 2)

## STEP 2

### Initial Program Support Group/Educational Needs Questionnaire

- If evidence of a disability has been collected that meets the criteria as outlined in the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006 Handbook, the principal will arrange for an initial Program Support Group to be established.
- The members of this group are to be the principal (or nominee), parent/guardian/carer(s) or the parent/guardian/carer(s) advocate (if requested by the parent/guardian/carer(s)) and a Department of Education & Training nominee. The number and choice of consultants should be agreed to by all members of the Program Support Group.
- The purpose of this group is to complete a questionnaire that will be used by the Department of Education & Training to determine the level of resources that will be provided to the school. The information provided in the questionnaire is considered by the Resources Coordination Group after eligibility has been established.
- The questionnaire provides a quick, reliable and consistent means of identifying key indicators of the educational needs of students with disabilities.
- The key indicators of educational need are designed to be completed by members of the initial Program Support Group based on observable characteristics of the child.
- Information provided in the Educational Needs Questionnaire needs to be supported by current documentation.

**The following procedure should be followed by the initial Program Support Group:**

1. The Educational Needs Questionnaire (page 55 or available at [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)) is carefully examined to clarify any terms or concepts prior to completing the form.
2. A descriptor that best describes the student's current situation is chosen and the number of the descriptor placed in the box.
3. Once all the key indicators have been completed, the choices are transferred to the Educational Needs Questionnaire. Note: Place one number in each box only.
4. **Complete the Student's Education Program Summary Statement on pg 54 or download from [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm)**
5. Complete the Educational Needs Questionnaire summary information form.
6. Attach the documentation to support the criteria for consideration for the Program.
7. Ensure that the application has been signed by all the relevant members of the initial Program Support Group.

Note: The principal should ensure that all steps have been completed and that a copy of the documentation and Educational Needs Questionnaire is kept for the school records.

### Complete the Educational Needs Questionnaire

The principal should ensure the students details are recorded appropriately in CASES, and aligned with the ENQ submitted to the Resources Coordination Group.

# 4

## Educational Needs Questionnaire

### STEP 2

This questionnaire is a tool to establish the level of resources that will be provided to the school once it has been established that the student is eligible for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2006.

### Mobility



- 01 – No impairment
- 02 – Walks short distances independently
- 03 – Walks aided (walker, crutches, assistance of a person etc.)
- 04 – Propels own wheelchair, bears weight for transfers
- 05 – Propels own wheelchair, total assistance with transfers
- 06 – Uses electric wheelchair
- 07 – Unable to propel wheelchair
- 08 – Not mobile due to overriding medical conditions

### EXAMPLES

- 02 The student has an ongoing impairment, e.g. shortness of breath, weakness in one or more limbs that requires modification of the educational program for students of the same age.
- 03 The student walks but requires the use of a mechanical device such as a walking frame or crutches, or may require assistance from a person from time to time to steady the student.
- 04 The student is reasonably independent with the use of a wheelchair (electric or manual) and does not require assistance to move from a wheelchair to other chairs, toilet, car etc.
- 05 The student is reasonably independent with the use of a wheelchair (electric or manual) but has a lack of upper body strength to manage transfers to and from a wheelchair, e.g. a chair or car. The assistance of other persons is required.
- 06 The student is able to operate an electric wheelchair (with hand control or other specialised adaptation) and is able to negotiate most of the school environment. The student will require assistance with transfers to and from the wheelchair.
- 07 The student can sit but has no physical capacity to operate a wheelchair and needs full assistance to move around the school, and requires assistance in transfers to and from the wheelchair.
- 08 The student has limited voluntary movement and has major difficulty in sitting upright. The student is totally dependent on other persons and may require to be in a flat position for the majority of the school day.

## Fine motor skills



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 01 – No impairment                                      | 04 – Impairment present, requires frequent assistance/ adaptations |
| 02 – Impairment present, minimal effect on movement     | 05 – Impairment present, requires constant assistance/ adaptations |
| 03 – Impairment present, requires occasional assistance | 06 – Overriding medical condition, participation limited           |

*Fine motor skills: The ability of the student to undertake a range of age-appropriate tabletop activities necessary to access the curriculum.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 The student can manage regular classroom activities. Writing may be clumsy but can be read.
- 03 The student is clumsy with small objects and may require simple modifications such as a standard pencil grip or a larger pencil.
- 04 Adaptations designed by teachers to assist fine motor skills are required on a frequent basis.
- 05 Specialised equipment is required for the student's physical impairment, e.g. modified wrist-guards or head-pointer or the use of point boards, concept keyboards etc.
- 06 The student is unable to move any part of the body without the full assistance of another person.

## Receptive communication



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 01 – Comprehends conversational speech                         | 04 – Limited comprehension, one to two words                      |
| 02 – Comprehension delayed, understands simple instructions    | 05 – Comprehends signs/ gestures/ modelling prompts               |
| 03 – Comprehends phrases with gestural cues/ modelling prompts | 06 – Does not comprehend verbal, visual or gestural communication |

*Receptive communication: The ability to understand a message or instruction.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 The student can understand simple instructions such as 'go to the computer' or 'stand up' but has difficulty with instructions that require two or more actions.
- 03 The student can understand simple phrases that are accompanied with gestures, e.g. the teacher points the student in the direction of the office where the student needs to collect books.
- 04 The student can only understand simple instructions such as 'stand' and 'sit' but does not understand simple phrases – even with gestures.
- 05 The student understands signs or gestures such as 'stop' or 'come' but does not have any understanding of any verbal communication.
- 06 The student has no understanding of simple one-word commands using either voice, visual or gestural cues.

## Expressive communication



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 01 – Age appropriate   | 05 – Combines signs and gestures to communicate                              |
| 02 – Speech is intelligible to familiar listeners                  | 06 – Uses augmentative communication aid or alternative communication system |
| 03 – Speech is intelligible but not presented in an ordered manner | 07 – Has no expressive communication   |
| 04 – Speech is unintelligible even to familiar listeners           |  |

*Expressive communication: The ability of the student to communicate with others.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 The student's speech can be understood by familiar listeners in the school setting, e.g. close friends or teachers.
- 03 The student has no articulation difficulties, but speech is not presented in an ordered manner, e.g. 'Drink want I.'
- 04 Neither the teacher nor the student's friends can understand what the student is attempting to verbalise. The student communicates by pointing or indicating in some other manner their wants and needs. This indicator includes students who are electively mute.
- 05 To express needs, the student combines informal gestures and signs. The student has a more developed system of indicating needs than a simple point, and has not been taught or not learnt a communication system.
- 06 Effective communication is possible only through an augmentative communication aid such as an electronic communicator (small computer) or a sign board, e.g. Compic signs, or through an alternative communication system (such as sign language or a simpler system such as Makaton). While verbal attempts may be used in conjunction with an aid or alternative system, there is no meaningful verbal communication.
- 07 The student is totally dependent on other people to anticipate their needs. The student is unable to express any needs with either verbal or non-verbal means.

## Challenging (excess) behaviour

	01 – No overt challenging (excess) behaviour	03 – Extreme withdrawal, unpredictable, moody, aggressive or persistent habit disorders (such as self-reinforcing cycles of behaviour)
	02 – Shows depression/emotional outbursts beyond regular classroom control	04 – Unable to function in almost all areas, needs supervision to prevent injury to self or others

### FREQUENCY

	01–Not appropriate
	02–Occasional (e.g. six to twelve times a year)
	03–Episodic outbreaks of excess behaviour
	04–Frequent (e.g. five to six times a week)
	05–Constant (e.g. two to ten times a day)

*Challenging (excess) behaviour: Behaviour that is manifestly beyond the expectations of students of a similar age and major and constant violations of age-appropriate social behaviour that are more than ordinary childish mischief or rebelliousness.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 The student's behaviour is either very quiet and withdrawn or the student has emotional outbursts that are difficult to manage. The behaviours are accompanied by periods of reasonable and acceptable social interaction.
- 03 The student's behaviour is extreme. The extreme withdrawn, unpredictable, moody, aggressive or persistent habit disorders may be a habit – such as screaming, biting or hitting – or be repetitive, such as finger-flicking, constant rocking or self-mutilation. The student is able to be part of activities with constant reminders and structured program intervention.
- 04 The student is unable to function in almost all school activities without constant supervision to prevent injury to self or others. The student requires an individually tailored fully supported program at all times.

The FREQUENCY element is designed to provide some understanding of the number of occasions that the challenging (excess) behaviour is observed.

### EXAMPLES

Student A: Is hitting-out at other students. It appears that there are weeks when nothing is observed but then for a short period of six or seven days the hitting-out behaviour is constant. This student should be scored as 02 in challenging (excess) behaviour and 03 in frequency.

Student B: Is extremely withdrawn, does not interact with people, has a fixed stare and tends to hit own head when distressed (happens daily). Will attempt simple tasks when explained but concentration drifts. The student should be scored as 03 in challenging (excess) behaviour and 04 in frequency.

## Safety



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 01 – Is capable of operating safely in most school environments | 03 – Requires constant supervision in a range of activities                             |
| 02 – Requires supervision in certain activities                 | 04 – Is not able to operate safely in school environments without intensive supervision |

*Safety: The ability of the student to be maintained in the immediate school environment (classroom, playground) with similar levels of supervision provided to the peer group.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 The student requires supervision beyond that required for age-appropriate students at certain times of the day either in the classroom or in the playground. An example is the need for supervision in woodwork classes to guard against the student being injured. At other times of the day, in general classrooms and in the playground, the student is able to operate with normal supervision provision.
- 03 The student requires supervision and physical assistance to assure personal safety in both classroom and playground activities. In a small number of activities the student is able to operate with normal supervision provision.
- 04 The student cannot operate in the classroom and the playground unless constant supervision is provided.

## Hearing



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 01 – No impairment  | 04 – Aware of environmental sounds and some elements of speech only |
| 02 – Copes reasonably well with little difficulty hearing conversational speech   | 05 – No useful hearing  |
| 03 – Difficulty hearing conversational speech, particularly with background noise |   |

*Hearing: The ability of the student to hear the teacher’s spoken instructions within the school with whatever corrective or assisting device provided. Impairment is defined as a bilateral sensori-neural hearing loss that is moderate/severe/profound. These indicators are designed for students with a diagnosed permanent hearing impairment rather than for students with a temporary ear infection.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 With whatever corrective or assisted device is provided, the student may have trouble hearing faint or distant speech but copes reasonably well with conversational speech (may need instructions repeated to ensure complete understanding).
- 03 With whatever corrective or assisted device is provided, the student has difficulty in hearing conversational speech, particularly with background noise.
- 04 With whatever corrective or assisted device is provided, the student is able to identify louder environmental sounds, but will be unable to hear conversational speech well enough to understand.
- 05 With whatever corrective or assisted device is provided, the student cannot follow teacher instructions and is almost entirely dependent on visual clues for information about what is happening.

## Vision



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>01 - No impairment, including vision corrected to normal with glasses or contact lenses</p> <p>02 - Difficulty with print, graphics or small objects OR at level of objects in environment</p> | <p>03 - Difficulty with print, graphics or small objects AND at level of objects in environment</p> <p>04 - Uses tactile, auditory and/or voice-synthesised modes for access to, and production of, written work</p> |
|---|--|

*Vision: The ability of the student to visually access curriculum provision within the school with whatever corrective or assisting device is provided.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 With the use of either spectacles or contact lenses the student has difficulty with print, graphics or small objects OR at the level of objects in the environment, e.g. difficulty with large print OR difficulty negotiating tables/chairs in the classroom.
- 03 With the use of spectacles or contact lenses the student has difficulty with print, graphics or small objects AND at the level of objects in the environment, e.g. difficulty with large print AND difficulty negotiating tables/chairs in the classroom.
- 04 The student is unable to access any learning activities through visual means. The student is dependent on alternative means to access and produce written work.

## Self-care (toileting, eating, dressing)



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>01 - Independent</p> <p>02 - Minimal supervision (formal program not needed)</p> <p>03 - Instruction required with expected outcome of</p> | <p>increased independence</p> <p>04 - Assistance required for portions of an activity</p> <p>05 - Full assistance required throughout all activities</p> |
|---|--|

*Self-care: The ability of the student to look after his/her personal needs within reasonable age-related expectations.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 Minimal supervision. The student may occasionally need to be reminded to complete an activity such as going to the toilet or tying shoelaces. No need for any formal program.
- 03 The student requires an instruction to complete an activity most of the time. However, there are indications that given time and training the student will be able to complete activities independently.
- 04 The student requires assistance for portions of an activity but is able to complete the task, e.g. can complete putting on a T-shirt after it is placed over the head, can wash own hands after the tap is turned on.
- 05 The student is unable to dress, feed and toilet themselves without the full assistance of another person.

## Medical



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>01 – No specialised medical needs at school</p> <p>02 – Requires on-call medical attention for an infrequent but predictable medical condition at school, e.g. severe seizure that requires medical intervention</p> | <p>03 – Needs specialised or frequent support for ongoing medical procedures at school, e.g. catheterisation, daily injections, respirators</p> <p>04 – Requires full-time medical attention throughout every school day</p> |
|---|--|

*Medical: The requirement for support for highly-specialised medical procedures that need to be undertaken during school hours.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 Requires on-call medical attention for an infrequent but predictable medical condition during school hours, e.g. the student regularly has epileptic seizures at school that are managed within the school but may infrequently (twice a year) require an ambulance or local doctor to be called.
- 03 Needs specialised or frequent support for ongoing medical procedures during school hours, e.g. daily medical procedures that requires specialised training such as catheterisation (at school), daily injections that the student cannot self-administer (at school), or access and use of a full respirator (not an inhaler).
- 04 The student requires full-time medical attention throughout the school day. This indicator is for students attending school whose medical condition requires constant monitoring by a designated person during the school day, e.g. a student on life-support equipment.

## Cognitive skills



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>01 – Able to access education programs provided within the year level</p> <p>02 – Impairment, requires occasional assistance in skill acquisition</p> | <p>03 – Impairment, requires frequent assistance/adaptations in skill acquisition</p> <p>04 – Impairment, requires substantial assistance/adaptations in skill acquisition</p> |
|--|--|

*Cognitive skills: The ability to acquire knowledge. Knowledge includes perception, intuition and reasoning.*

### EXAMPLES

- 02 Occasional modifications to the curriculum could involve the student learning the same mathematics skills as all other students but the student needs a longer time to master the skills.
- 03 Frequent modifications to the curriculum could involve the teacher having to break down the skill to be taught into small achievable skills.
- 04 Substantial modifications to the curriculum could involve the teacher having to address the student's individual needs and prioritise the important skills to be taught within the curriculum.

## STEP 2 CONTINUED

### Student Education Program Summary Statement

Provide a summary of the key educational goals of the student's knowledge, skills and behaviours that the Program Support Group considers to be realistic and high priority for the student to acquire or maintain over the next year.

Complete this summary as outlined on the following page. Refer to *Measuring Academic Progress Against Each KLA: Students with Disabilities and Impairments*, for further information.

([www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/pdf/D&I.pdf](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/pdf/D&I.pdf))

## APPLICATION FORM

### STEP 3

Send the completed application to:

**Resources Coordination Group**  
**Student Wellbeing Branch**  
**Department of Education & Training**  
**GPO Box 4367**  
**Melbourne 3001**

**Closing date:**  
**Friday July 15th 2005**

## PSD 2006 Goals and Strategies STEP 2

### Student Education Program Summary Statement

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Send completed documentation by mailing to:  
Resources Coordination Group,  
Student Wellbeing Branch,  
Department of Education & Training  
GPO Box 4367, Melbourne Vic 3001

**DO NOT SUBMIT INCOMPLETE OR UNSIGNED DOCUMENTATION**

CONFIDENTIAL

Detach and submit with support documentation. Documentation should not be bound, placed in plastic pockets or glued together. One staple is sufficient.

# PSD 2006 Application Summary Form – Educational Needs Questionnaire STEP 3

Student Identification Number	Office Use	
Surname (as per birth certificate)		
Former Name (if applicable)		
First name (as per birth certificate)		
Date of birth	/ /	Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/>
School Number(s)	School 1	School 2
School name(s) where student will be attending		
Time Fraction at each school		
Region name/or number		
Year level in 2006		
Currently attending (pre-school name, home, school name, non-government school name)		

SCHOOLS COMPLETE THIS SECTION

SUMMARY OF KEY INDICATORS TO BE USED TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF RESOURCES AFTER ELIGIBILITY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. PLEASE TRANSFER THE NUMBERS FROM PAGES 46 - 52.

<input type="checkbox"/> MOBILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> SAFETY	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAM SUMMARY STATEMENT COMPLETED (Please tick once completed)
<input type="checkbox"/> FINE MOTOR SKILLS	<input type="checkbox"/> HEARING	
<input type="checkbox"/> RECEPTIVE COMMUNICATION	<input type="checkbox"/> VISION	
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION	<input type="checkbox"/> SELF-CARE	
<input type="checkbox"/> CHALLENGING (EXCESS) BEHAVIOUR	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAL	
<input type="checkbox"/> FREQUENCY	<input type="checkbox"/> COGNITIVE SKILLS	

All areas of this application have been addressed and all sections of the booklet have been completed. All appropriate procedures have been followed and this form has been completed to the best of our ability and accurately represents the current circumstances of the student. I have read and accepted the privacy statement as outlined in this booklet.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian/Carer(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Names 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

2: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

DE&T Nominee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date received	Comments	Start date
RCG date		/ /
Initial		End date
Status		/ /
Application considered for category		SEPS
		EN IN RP

For office use only



