



Partnerships in transition

a support guide

FOR PARENTS AND CARERS OF STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS

Foreword

This resource has been developed for parents and carers of students with diverse learning needs in recognition of the valuable role they play in their child's educational journey. The Catholic Schools Office, Maitland-Newcastle, acknowledges that building a strong partnership between a student's family and their school community is essential in ensuring that their child's school experience is reflective of, and responsive to, their diverse learning needs, whilst also supporting their spiritual development and their wellbeing.

The information and resources contained in this document are intended to strengthen the family-school partnership, by ensuring that parents/carers are fully informed about the range of supports and options available in our diocesan schools for students with diverse learning needs.

The information in this handbook has been compiled from a range of sources, including the Catholic Schools Office policy documents for enrolment and transition, NSW Department of Education policies and documents, and information from several other external agencies. One document that is referenced in this package that requires specific mention is *Supporting Diverse Learning Needs in Catholic Schools – A Guide for Parents* by Parents, which was developed by the Council of Catholic School Parents, NSW/ACT. This is a comprehensive guide for parents/carers around many aspects of your child's school life, and strongly complements the Partnerships in Transition handbook. It is recommended that parents/carers refer to this guide for additional information and resources about supporting their child's education.



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RATIONALE

In our schools, we welcome each child and young person as a unique creation in God's likeness, and we recognise parents/carers as the first educators of their children.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS EDUCATE FROM AND FOR VIBRANT, WELCOMING AND DIVERSE COMMUNITIES WITH A PARTICULAR COMMITMENT TO THE POOR; FOR JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND PEACE; AND WITH HOPE FOR THE FUTURE."

(CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT).



Parents/carers and their advocates are recognised as significant participants in negotiating and planning their child's education. Consultation is vital and must occur.

Transitioning from one school or setting to another, or from school to post-school options, is a significant event for children, young people, and their families. It is a time when parents/carers want to ensure that their child will be welcomed, understood, and supported in their new environment. This is particularly important for parents/carers of children with additional needs.

It is also a time when parents/carers and their children seek to gather information so that they can fully explore the options available and make informed decisions about what will be the best fit for their child.

This resource package aims to assist parents/carers and their children as they explore options, make decisions, and plan and prepare for a smooth and supportive transition process, and to build strong relationships with key personnel in their child's new setting. It also aligns with the *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards – standard 3.1*

"Families and carers participate in decisions affecting their child."



Schools' obligations

What must schools do for students with disability?

All students have the right to a quality learning experience at school. Students with disability must be able to take part in education without discrimination and on the same basis as other students. To ensure this, schools must make reasonable adjustments if needed, for students with disability. Educators, students, parents, guardians, carers and others (e.g. health professionals) must work together to ensure that students with disability can take part in education. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 describe schools' responsibilities

What is a reasonable adjustment?

A reasonable adjustment is an action taken to help a student with disability take part in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments can be made in classrooms (e.g. adapting teaching methods), in the playground (e.g. giving extra time for transitions to and from the playground), to excursions and camps (e.g. planning excursions to accessible locations), and to the premises (e.g. ramps into school buildings). They can also be for individual student need (e.g. providing personal care support). The school assesses the needs of each student with disability and consults with the student and/or their parents, guardians and carers. Schools must make reasonable adjustments if needed. The Disability Standards for Education 2005 define 'reasonable adjustment' as an adjustment that balances the interests of all parties affected.

Funding

Funding from the Australian Government for students with disability is based on the NCCD through the student with disability loading. Students with disability who are counted in the top three levels of the NCCD (extensive, substantial and supplementary) attract the loading. Funding is based on a per-student amount at each of the three levels of additional support. The amount of the loading reflects the level of support students with disability need to participate fully in school, with higher funding for those who need higher levels of support. Australian Government recurrent school funding is provided as a lump sum to school authorities including state and territory governments, which can then distribute the funding to their member schools according to their own needs-based arrangements.

Transition points include key milestones of:



pre-school to school



primary school to secondary school



secondary school to post school options

GETTING PREPARED FOR TRANSITION

It's a good idea to start thinking about school options at least two years before your child is due to start school or their next transition point, including transitioning from one year to another, from primary school to high school, as well as post-school transition.

Decisions about the best schools for children requiring additional support can seem daunting. Visiting schools you're interested in and talking with principals about how schools can meet your child's needs will help you find the right school for your child.

Decisions about where your child goes to school are very personal and can be difficult. It's common and normal to feel anxious about getting this decision right.

All families have a lot to think about when they're choosing schools, including distance, finances, and availability of before and after school care. When your child has a disability, you're likely to have extra considerations – for example, accessibility or learning support.

School open days and tours will give you a general feel for a school. It can help to take a friend or a disability advocate with you, so you can both gather information and discuss it afterwards.

Things to consider when choosing a school

When you're researching a school or when you go to an open day or on a tour, it can help to think about the school's physical environment, transport options, attitude to diversity and difference, approach to additional needs, and policies.

Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Schools have a range of policies to ensure the wellbeing of students and staff and to keep schools running smoothly. These include policies on emergency procedures, management of medical conditions, bullying, attendance, student engagement and many other things. You can ask for copies of these documents.



Questions to ask schools

The questions you ask will depend on your child's needs and any particular concerns you have. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Physical access

You could ask the principal to tour the school with you to talk about accessibility, if this is a concern for your child. For example:

- ▶ How would you adjust the environment, so all areas of the school are accessible for my child?
- ▶ How long will the adjustments take to be implemented?
- ▶ How will any changes be funded?

Safety

If your child tends to wander or has particular safety issues, you could ask some questions like these:

- ▶ What kind of school security do you have during school hours?
- ▶ How do staff keep track of children?
- ▶ How often is the roll taken?
- ▶ What happens if a student is missing?
- ▶ What happens if there are strangers at or near the school?

Learning

Your child might need adjustments to tasks and activities in some or all areas of the curriculum. You could ask about changes relevant to your child's needs. For example:

- ▶ How will my child who uses a wheelchair be included in outdoor physical games?
- ▶ How will my child with limited hand movement be included in table activities?
- ▶ How will my child using a communication device be included in the literacy program?
- ▶ How will my child be included in school camps and excursions?
- ▶ How will my child have the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths?
- ▶ Will my child have a targeted resilience program to support her emotional health and wellbeing?
- ▶ What adjustments can be made to ensure that my child's learning needs are met?

Communication

You might ask about communication within the school. For example:

- ▶ Who will get the information about my child's needs and strategies to support him?
- ▶ How will information about how best to teach my child be passed on to teachers and other relevant staff from one year to the next?
- ▶ How will the school ensure that the strategies in my child's Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. plan or behaviour support plan are put into practice by all staff who work with my child, and who will monitor their progress ?

And you can also ask how school staff will communicate with you. For example:

- ▶ How will you let me know about everyday things?
- ▶ How often will we have a personalised planning meeting?
- ▶ Who should I talk to if I have concerns?

Complex care needs

If your child has complex medical or personal care needs, you might want to ask questions like the following:

- ▶ How can the school meet my child's needs so s/he is cared for safely and with dignity, privacy and respect?
- ▶ Who is the school's first aid officer?
- ▶ Who will be managing my child's medical and/or personal care needs?
- ▶ How many staff will be trained in managing my child's needs? Will there always be someone available to cover staff absences?

Social interaction

Here are some examples of questions to ask about social interaction for your child:

- ▶ How does the school encourage and support social interaction generally?
- ▶ Is help available in the playground to encourage, supervise and support social interaction?

- ▶ Is there a supervised room available at lunchtime for students to play board games and other activities?
- ▶ Is there a supervised space that my child can access to reset for a short period during the day if needed?
- ▶ Where can my child go if s/he needs some quiet time?
- ▶ My child experiences social anxiety, how will they be supported?
- ▶ How does the school manage the interactions between older and younger students?

Transport

It's worth checking out practical things like transport. For example:

- ▶ Does the school have a bus (or other transport) service for students?
- ▶ What areas does the bus service go to?
- ▶ Do we have to pay for this?
- ▶ How will the bus service accommodate my child who uses a wheelchair?
- ▶ Will my child be eligible for the Assisted School Travel Program ?

Outside school hours care

If you need out of school hours (OOSH) care, here are some questions to ask:

- ▶ Does the school provide an OOSH program, or is there an arrangement with a school nearby that provides one?
- ▶ How will the program look after my child's needs?

(Adapted from Raising Children Australian Parenting Website (n.d.). Choosing primary schools: Children with disability.)

For further suggestions, you may wish to refer to Supporting Diverse Learning Needs in Catholic Schools - A Guide for Parents by Parents

Educational options

There are a range of educational options to support students with disability and additional learning and support needs during their schooling years. These include:

Catholic Schools (Maitland-Newcastle Diocese)

Mainstream classes

The vast majority of students with disability are educated in mainstream schools. If you are looking to identify the best setting for your child, you are able to commence your search in the identified mainstream school, which will provide advice about their capacity to support your child.

Note: Further information please contact your local catholic school

Support classes in mainstream schools

CSO Diocesan schools may offer support classes from time to time within the mainstream setting, usually on a part-time basis. This is more likely to occur in the secondary setting, for example, small, discreet classes for students enrolled in Life Skills courses. Please contact specific schools for further information.

Special school

St Dominic's Centre at Mayfield is a Kindergarten to Year 12 school for children with a range of disabilities including hearing impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder and an Intellectual disability. These options are available when:

- ▶ a child meets the disability criteria,
- ▶ an enrolment application is completed, and
- ▶ a placement panel considers and makes a recommendation that a placement is available.

Note: Further information please contact St Dominic's Centre <https://www.mayfieldsd.catholic.edu.au/>

NSW Department of Education

Mainstream classes

Most students with disability and additional learning and support needs can be supported through resources at their local school, allocated through a learning and support resource package as part of the school budget. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/inclusive-learning-support>

Specialist support classes in mainstream schools

Specialist support classes located in some mainstream primary schools and high schools across NSW are available for students with moderate to high learning and support needs - as defined by the Department's disability criteria. Specialist support classes cater for students with moderate to high learning and support needs including students with:

- ▶ intellectual disability
- ▶ mental health issues
- ▶ autism
- ▶ physical disability
- ▶ sensory impairment
- ▶ behaviour disorders.

Schools for Specific Purposes (SSP)

Schools for Specific Purposes, previously known as special schools, provide specialist and intensive support in a dedicated setting for students with moderate to high learning and support needs.

Schools for Specific Purposes support students with intellectual disability, mental health issues or autism, students with physical disability or sensory impairment, and students with learning difficulties or behaviour disorder. They cater for students from kindergarten to Year 12 who meet the Department's disability criteria.

Note: Further information including enrolment process regarding NSW Department of Education please visit your local public school or visit the website Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs).

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/inclusive-learning-support/primary-school/how-your-child-can-be-supported-in-primary-school/schools-for-specific-purpose>

Distance Education

Students whose individual circumstances prevent them from regularly attending school may be eligible to enrol in distance education services provided by the NSW Department of Education.

Note: For further information Parents are encouraged to contact the Department of Education, or to download a brochure from <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/rural-and-distance-education/distance-education>



Independent Schools

ALESCO: This is a senior college, established by ATWEA, for vulnerable students whose circumstances have previously prohibited them from succeeding in mainstream education. It provides an adult learning environment that is designed specifically to support inclusion and individual needs, catering for students in Year 9 and older. There are currently 6 campuses across the diocese.

Note: Further information please contact Alesco Senior College on 02 4925 4200, or visit www.asc.nsw.edu.au or download a brochure from <https://atwea.edu.au/high-school-at-alesco/>

Arise Christian College: is a school of Specific Purpose which caters for students with a diagnosed disability. Our core focus is as a learning facility which engages students in remedial literacy and numeracy while also speaking into critical life-skills and independent living skills. <https://www.arisecc.nsw.edu.au/>

Autism Spectrum Australia: Aspect Hunter School provides education for students on the autism spectrum across nine sites, including main school site at Thornton (primary and high school) and in satellite classes in a mainstream school. Aspect Hunter School also offers a Distance Education program for students in Year 3 and older.

Note: For further information please contact ASPECT Hunter School) <https://www.autismspectrum.org.au>

Margaret Jurd College: is dedicated to providing students with a supportive alternative to mainstream schooling. We embrace young people who want to complete secondary schooling that live with mental health conditions that can be seen as challenging behaviours. <https://mjc.nsw.edu.au/>

St Laurence Flexible Learning Centre: offer full time and multi-year secondary education and social inclusion programs for young people who are disengaged from mainstream education.

Note: Further information please contact St Laurence Flexible Learning Centre <https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/stlaurenceflcnwcastle/>

St Philip's Christian College DALE: is a Dynamic Alternative Learning Environment for students in Years 3 – 12 who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder, social and emotional difficulties or a mild intellectual disability.

Note: For further information please contact DALE <https://www.spcc.nsw.edu.au/dale>

When to start kindergarten

- ▶ To be eligible for Kindergarten enrolment in diocesan schools, pupils must celebrate their fifth birthday on or before 31 May of the year in which their parents seek enrolment for them.

(This varies from NSW government advice which states that the minimum starting age for a child to be enrolled in a NSW school is four years and six months, i.e. a child must turn five by 31 July in the year of starting school).

- ▶ By law, all children must be enrolled in school by their sixth birthday.

Exemption

Parents of children with disabilities may apply to the Director for a delayed start to kindergarten when it has been clearly demonstrated it is in the student's best interests in the short and long term and that alternatives to exemption have been considered.

Applications for exemption from enrolment must be made in writing following conversations with the Principal.

The Director of Schools may grant such exemptions due to

- ▶ age, where a child turns six years on or after 1 October or later in a school year and is engaged in:
- ▶ full time preschool education at an accredited preschool for the remainder of that school year
- ▶ participation in full or part-time accredited preschool programs for students with disabilities leading to enrolment and full-time attendance not later than six months after the child's sixth birthday
- ▶ the health or disability of a child necessitating the continuation of an individual program supported by medical specialists not longer than six months after the child's sixth birthday.
- ▶ Cultural/trauma/medical

Readiness

"Notions of readiness and transition are often conflated and much discussion about transition still focuses on the child's skills as they start school (Dockett & Perry, 2013a; Petriwskyj, Thorpe, & Tayler, 2005). This is in contrast to current research that emphasises the importance of child, family, community and school characteristics in promoting positive transitions (Dockett & Perry, 2009, 2013)."

(CSO Early Learning Procedure 2017). This research places the focus of successful transitions on the importance of developing a strong partnership between the student and their family and the school community.

In NSW, Early Childhood Teachers are asked to complete a Transition to School Statement as part of the transition to Kindergarten process. It is a practical tool designed to enable information sharing between families, prior to school services and schools. In the statement, early childhood educators summarise the child's strengths, interests and learning. There is also opportunity for the child and family to provide information. It covers 5 key areas of the child's development:

1. Sense of Identity
2. Connection and contribution to the world
3. Their Wellbeing
4. Being a Confident and Involved Learner
5. Effective Communicator

[Transition-to-School-Statement.pdf](#)





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ABC



ENROLMENT PROCESS



Enrolment checklist

Checklist of information and documents that are required from parents/carers during enrolment

Required for Enrolment

- Completed Enrolment Application for Catholic Schools
- Signed Pre-enrolment – Parent Permission – Release of Information Form
- Pre-enrolment Questionnaire (This may be completed during a pre-enrolment interview)
- Reports from medical or allied health professions (if available), preferably within last 12 months including:
 - Letter of diagnosis (from medical specialists)
 - Assessment reports (e.g. from paediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, audiologist, ophthalmologist).
 - Therapy reports

If Applicable

- Educational reports from current school (semester reports, NAPLAN results, standardised test results)
- NDIS plan and/or progress report
- Permanency Support Plan
- Signed Parent Permission Form – Referral to Education Officer (if your child requires significant support)
- Copy of court orders for care arrangements

Additional documents and information that may be useful for transition

Beginning Kindergarten

- Transition to School Statement from preschool
- Results of recent hearing and vision checks
- Contact details for Early Intervention team or therapists working with your child
- Completed **Transition to School Student Profile**
- Photo of your child

Year 6 to Year 7

- Transition to Secondary School Student Profile** (Completed by/with your child)
- Results of recent hearing and vision checks
- Photo of your child

Year 10 to Year 11

- Transition To Secondary School Student Profile** (Completed by/with your child)
- Areas of interest for post school – work, study or community participation
- List of strengths and skills, and areas for support
- Stage 6 subject information and choices booklet (obtained from the school in advance)

Transitioning from another school

- Contact details of key personnel from current setting
- Photo of your child
- Transition To School/Secondary School Student Profile** (Completed by/with your child)

Year 11- to Year 12

- Documentation to support application to NESA for **Disability Provisions for HSC exams**. This may include medical reports, letters of diagnosis, therapist assessment reports, health care management plans, etc.

Note: Applications for disability provisions open in Term 4 of the year prior to the HSC exam.

Further information about Disability Provisions is provided in this document, contact the school's Learning Support Coordinator or click on the link below: [Disability Provisions Guide for Teachers and Parents](#)

Post School

['Let's Talk About Work'](#) or ['Get Ready for Study or Work'](#) booklet

Areas of interest for work, study or community participation

List of strengths and skills, and areas for support

Discuss the *School Leaver Individual Transition Plan* at a collaborative planning meeting with your child's school.

School zoning

Students seeking out-of-zone enrolments must provide a summary, with their enrolment form, of the reasons for their request. This will be considered by the Principal and Parish Priest or Enrolment Panel.

(Enrolment Procedure Page 6 of 10 Issue Date: October 2021)



SUPPORTING A SMOOTH TRANSITION

Starting school / new school transition

Transition to or within school can be a stressful time not just for the student involved but also for the whole family.

Setting up new routines and supporting your child to enter into something new for the first time can often unsettle families and heighten emotions. Some tips on decreasing anxiety and stress within these times are:

- ▶ Get to know the school, staff, community – get as familiar as you can with teachers, the physical grounds of the school and other families in that community before your child/young person starts at the school or transitions into the next stage of schooling. The more comfortable you and your child feel about the school, the less stressed and anxious you will all be.
- ▶ Ensure your child/young person has plenty of opportunities with family or school staff to ask questions or just verbalise ideas and thoughts about the transition
- ▶ Talk positively about school with your child and young person. Relay a sense of confidence in them transitioning well and present a calm you when you talk about the topic. Children sense anxiety and stress in parents and look to you as a guide to how they should understand a situation, person or topic and what they should be feeling toward it. If you do have certain worries about school speak to school to help resolve them so you can genuinely present a relaxed parent to your child.
- ▶ Ask the school as many questions as you need to. They are there to support a smooth transition and build healthy positive relationships with families, they will welcome questions.
- ▶ In the first few weeks/months it is important to have frequent communication with your child/young person's new teacher to check and see how the transition is going and share any information between school and home. Taking a team approach is the aim, where you work with the teacher and school to create a supportive team around your child that promotes positive engagement with school life.
- ▶ In the lead up to the transition consider the routines, processes and items needed to get things organised at home. Consistent set routines will help to relieve stress and keep everyone's feelings like they have everything under control. Organising what can be done the night before can help take some of the thinking out of the morning busyness.

For further suggestions, you may wish to refer to [Supporting Diverse Learning Needs in Catholic Schools - A Guide for Parents by Parents](#)

Seek support from the school. Schools have lots of resources (skilled people, knowledge, materials and hard resources) to support families in all sorts of ways. And if they don't happen to have the resource to meet your need they will refer you onto those external people who will. You're not alone on this journey.



Post-school transition

Just as transition to school, or from one school or setting to another, requires planning, preparation and careful consideration, so does your child's post-school transition.

Whether they are planning to enter the workforce (paid, supported or voluntary), pursue further study, focus on community participation and/or independent living goals, or a combination of these, there are many things to take into account, and plenty of practical steps that be can taken to ensure that they are the best prepared they can be when they take the big step in their life.

It is really important to remember that parental involvement in transition planning and activities is vital and makes a crucial difference to a young person's outcomes in their after school pathway. Research shows that when parents/carers are involved in transition, their young person has an easier transition and achieves more after school.

The school's Learning Support Coordinator or Teacher will work with you and your child to develop a post-school transition plan. This process should begin as early as possible, but no later than term 1 of the year your child is finishing school.

The following are examples of the types of positive roles you can fill during the transition planning period:

- ▶ participate directly in meetings at school where transition plans and goals are discussed and agreed
- ▶ maintain an open and constructive relationship with the professionals involved in school-based transition planning and seek their advice
- ▶ help your son or daughter gather information about and understand their options
- ▶ initiate and encourage your young person to give substantial consideration to their goals and which options suit them best
- ▶ assist your young person to develop the skills, independence and resilience they will need in life after school
- ▶ get involved in practical activities with your daughter or son, such as work experience, visiting potential future education/training or work settings and/or practicing travelling independently
- ▶ guide your young person to work out what supports they will need, how to get them and who to speak to, perhaps make the first contact with a disability service that could help in the post-school setting

Useful links

General

National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program

The Australian Government's NDCO Program works strategically to assist people with disability access and participate in tertiary education and subsequent employment, through a national network of regionally based NDCOs.

To find your nearest NDCO, go to [Website link here](#)

NDIS – School Leaver information

[Website link here.](#)

NDIS – Service Provider Finder

[Website link here.](#)

Transition to community participation

NDIS

[Website link here.](#)

Transition to work

Job Access

[Website link here.](#)

Job Capacity Assessment

[Website link here.](#)

NDIS School Leaver Employment

[Website link here.](#)

Apprenticeships Australia

[Website link here.](#)

Registered Training providers

[Website link here.](#)

Transition to further education:

TAFE NSW student services

[Website link here.](#)

UoN National Disability Coordination Office

[Website link here.](#)

Australian Disability Clearing House on Education and Training (ADCET)

[Website link here.](#)

NDIS Pre-planning Toolkit for people with disability entering Higher Education or Vocational Education and Training

[Website link here.](#)

- ▶ talk to your young person about their disability and encourage them to be able to speak confidently about the impacts of it on study or work
- ▶ provide support in giving both positive and negative feedback around services they receive.

States and Territories fund a range of transition and community participation programs specifically for people with moderate to severe disability. Supports are provided by the NDIS through an individualised plan and package of supports. Transition programs may be designed to support people to develop the skills needed for work or tertiary education, for example time and money management, independence, work experience, travel training, and teamwork. Community participation programs focus on individual

goal achievement, skill development and active participation in the community.



PERSONALISED SUPPORT RESOURCES

School-based support

Learning Support Teachers and Co-ordinators (LST/LSC)

All primary schools employ a Learning Support Teacher, and all secondary schools employ a Learning Support Coordinator. The primary role of the Learning Support Teacher / Coordinator is to assist Class Teachers to identify individual student needs and to design, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate curricula plans and programs for identified students. They may coordinate the school Learning Support Team and may act as the primary point of contact for Catholic Schools Office Education Officers, Support & Wellbeing and external service providers. They may have the responsibility to organise, conduct, minute and provide the follow-up for PP meetings and student reviews. They may be responsible for selecting and utilising diagnostic assessment measures to identify levels of student learning.

Learning Support Assistant (LSA)

The Learning Support Assistant is responsible to the school Principal, and either the Learning Support Teacher or Learning Support Coordinator, and is supported by the Catholic Schools Office Student Learning & Wellbeing Team. Responsibility for enabling the learning of students with identified additional needs lies with the Class Teacher. Under the supervision and direction of the Class Teacher, a Learning Support Assistant is responsible for providing support and assistance in school routines; classroom activities; and the care and management of students with additional needs.

Psychological / counselling services

Each school has access to a school counsellor. School Counsellors have qualifications in psychology, social work or counselling and are registered with their professional associations. School counsellors have expertise in:

- ▶ child and adolescent development including mental health assessments and interventions.
- ▶ learning and cognitive assessment and interventions.
- ▶ knowledge and skills in behavioural assessments and interventions.

School counsellors work within a multi-tiered system of support and can deliver individual and group interventions as well as delivering mental health literacy education and prevention programs for whole school communities. School counsellors have clear professional and ethical guidelines and are committed to providing confidential and evidence-based service to schools with the wellbeing of the child at the heart of the service.

Learning Support Team

The Learning Support Team functions as a collaborative group that links all school resources, processes relevant referrals, and discusses identified issues to target the support of students with academic, social, emotional, or behavioural needs. Membership of the team must consist of Learning Support Teacher / Coordinator, member of the School Executive, School Counsellor and other relevant staff.

Education Officers, Support & Wellbeing

The Education Officers, Support & Wellbeing form part of the Student Learning & Wellbeing Team at the Catholic Schools Office. Team members support the implementation of inclusivity and contribute to productive outcomes for students with additional needs and disabilities in schools in the areas of: Speech, Language and Communication; Behaviour Support; Developmental Disabilities; Learning Difficulties and Student Wellbeing. They work collaboratively with relevant school personnel, parents/carers, individual students, other CSO personnel, and external providers as required, and particularly at times of transition.

Depending on the level of support and adjustments a student may require, an Education Officer from the Student Learning & Wellbeing Team may be allocated to support the school to gather more detailed information about the student's needs. The Education Officer will then provide direct assistance, and work in partnership with Learning Support staff in collecting information, observing the student, and determining the student's educational and support needs.



Learning Support Package

Every school receives a Learning Support Package and Guidelines for the use of Learning Support Packages. The Learning Support Package includes information about the Learning Support teaching staff and the Students with Disabilities (SWD) Allocation. The Learning Support package is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Personalised Plans (PP)

Individualised plans are developed to support students who require additional support. These plans are used by teacher and support staff to guide their practices and ensure they are providing relevant support for the student to access the curriculum and more holistically school life. The plan is developed collaboratively with parents, specialist external supports (e.g. Health professionals) and relevant school staff. The plans are regularly reviewed and updated as new information becomes available and the student develops specific skills to make sure the practices used at school best meet the child's needs.

Disability provisions

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in HSC courses that require examinations as part of the assessment schedule, are eligible to apply to NESAs for Disability Provisions.

Disability provisions are one way that NESAs ensure there are reasonable adjustments available to students with disability so that they can access and participate in the HSC on the same basis as students without disability.

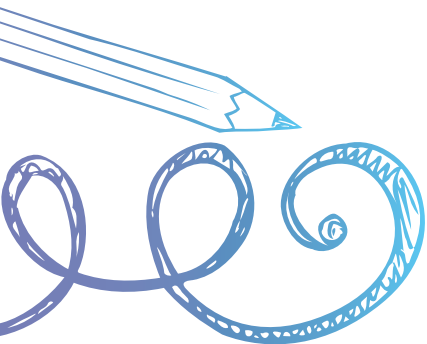
Where possible, schools may also offer similar provisions to students with disabilities in Years 7 -11 for undertaking formal examinations.

Disability provisions address students' exam needs related to learning, medical, vision or hearing disabilities. For example, students with a:

- ▶ learning disability may use reader or writer
- ▶ medical disability may access toilet breaks or use adapted furniture
- ▶ vision disability may use braille or large-print papers
- ▶ hearing disability may use an oral or sign interpreter.

For further information about Disability Provisions, contact the school's Learning Support Teacher / Coordinator.

[Disability Provisions Guide for Teachers and Parents](#)



Government supports

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)

What is the NCCD and how will this impact my child?

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) takes place every year. The NCCD is a collection that counts:

- ▶ the number of school students receiving an adjustment or 'help' due to disability
- ▶ the level of adjustment they are receiving to access education on the same basis as other students. Students are counted in the NCCD if they receive ongoing adjustments at school due to disability. This 'help' allows them to access education on the same basis as a child without disability. The NCCD uses the definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

What information is collected?

A student is counted in the NCCD if they receive reasonable adjustments at school due to disability. Each year, schools collect the following information about the student, including:

- ▶ their year of schooling
- ▶ the level of adjustment received
- ▶ the broad type of disability.

How is this data used?

The NCCD data informs funding and work by schools and sectors. It ensures that support for students with disability becomes routine in the day-to-day practice of schools. The NCCD also supports students in the following ways.

- ▶ helps schools better understand their legislative obligations and the Disability Standards for Education 2005.
- ▶ Schools focus on the individual adjustments that support students with disability. This encourages them to reflect on students' needs and to better support students.
- ▶ facilitates a collaborative and coordinated approach to supporting students with disability.
- ▶ improves communication about students' needs between schools, parents, guardians, carers and the community.

(Excerpt from NCCD Fact Sheet for Parents, Guardians and Carers)

More information can be found on the NCCD website <https://www.nccd.edu.au>

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

What is NDIS?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a national system of providing support to individuals with disability, their families and carers. The NDIS helps people with disability achieve their goals, which may include greater independence, community involvement, employment and improved wellbeing. The NDIS also provides Australians under the age of 65 who have a permanent and significant disability with the reasonable and necessary supports they need to enjoy an ordinary life.

Additional information is available from the NDIS website: www.ndis.gov.au

Can NDIS-funded services be delivered in the school?

Catholic schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and the National Disability Insurance Agency recommend that therapy services funded through a child's NDIS support plan are best delivered outside of school time. This allows the school to focus on teaching your child and all other students and ensures your child does not miss out on important learning. In some cases, however, it may be more suitable for these services to be provided at school.

If this is the case, the school Principal will manage these services in a way that does not affect your child's opportunity to take part in class. It is important that your child does not miss out on important learning and school programs because they are receiving therapy services. The Principal will also make sure that the school is able to run to benefit all students without undue disruption to learning.

How can I request for the service to be provided at school?

There are four key steps for parents and carers to follow when seeking to have NDIS-funded services delivered in the school:

Step 1: ask the school in writing

Step 2: meet with school staff to discuss details

Step 3: your school Principal will consider your request

Step 4: if agreed, the service provider will enter into an agreement with the school

For further information regarding this process please contact the *Learning Support Teacher/Coordinator* to request a copy of the "NDIS Information Sheet for Parents / Carers".

GLOSSARY

Disability (Definition of disability under the Discrimination Disability Act 1992)

The definition of disability for the purposes of the DDA can be found in Section 4 of the Act. The DDA defines disability as:

- ▶ total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- ▶ total or partial loss of a part of the body
- ▶ the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- ▶ the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- ▶ the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- ▶ a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction

a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The federal Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA) makes it illegal to harass or discriminate against a person with disability or their associate, on the basis of disability, in the areas of:

- ▶ education
- ▶ employment
- ▶ accommodation
- ▶ goods and service provision
- ▶ premises
- ▶ transport
- ▶ access to Commonwealth laws and programs

Disability Provisions

Disability provisions in the HSC are practical arrangements designed to help students who couldn't otherwise make a fair attempt to show what they know in an exam room. The provisions granted are solely determined by how the student's exam performance is affected.

Disability Standards for Education 2005

The Disability Standards seek to ensure that students with disability can access

and participate in education on the same basis as other students. On the same basis means that a student with disability must have opportunities and choices which are comparable with those offered to students without disability. This applies to:

- ▶ admission or enrolment in an institution
- ▶ participation in courses or programs
- ▶ use of facilities and services.

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Is an annual national assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 to see whether or not young Australians are developing the literacy and numeracy skills that provide the critical foundation for other learning, and for their productive and rewarding participation in the community.

National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)

The NCCD is a collection that counts:

- ▶ the number of school students receiving an adjustment or 'help' due to disability
- ▶ the level of adjustment they are receiving to access education on the same basis as other students.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Is a national system of providing support to individuals with disability, their families and carers. NDIS provides funds for supports and services that families need as a result of a family member's disability.

Out of School Hours services (OOSH)

Organisations provide care, play and learning for primary school-age children before and after school, in school holidays and on Pupil Free days.

Permanency Support Plan

A case plan is developed to make sure every child in the statutory Permanency Support Program receives the care and support they need to experience safety, stability, permanency, connection, and wellbeing.

Permanency case planning is a collaborative approach to achieve safety, permanency, and wellbeing for vulnerable children. It is a family-led, goal driven process including ongoing conversations and observations with the child, their parents/carers, family/kin and other persons important to them. It helps parents and family/kin make a clear link between specific actions and behaviours and increasing the safety of their child.

Personalised Plan

If you are a parent, guardian or carer of a child with disability who requires ongoing adjustments at school, a teacher or another school staff member will consult with you to understand your child's needs. This collaborative approach ensures the most appropriate adjustments are chosen to support your child's learning and participation at school. In some cases, a Learner Profile or Personalised Plan (PP) may be developed to document specific educational goals and to review your child's progress over time. These collaborative documents outline the adjustments the student requires to address their disability and support them to reach their individual goals.

Transition

Transition to school is an active process of continuity of change as children move into the first year of school. The process of transition occurs over time, beginning well before children start school and extending to the point where children and families feel a sense of belonging at school and when educators recognise this sense of belonging. Transition also includes students moving from one school to another (e.g. year 6 to year 7) or post school transition to tertiary study or a workplace. (Strong and Successful Start to School - Transition guidelines, NSW Department of Education, 2020).

Reasonable Adjustment

A 'reasonable adjustment' is a measure (or group of measures) implemented by an education provider to assist a student with a disability to apply, enrol and participate in a course or program on the same basis as a student without a disability. Reasonable adjustments also apply to ensuring students with a disability can participate in and utilise the facilities and services of the institution on the same basis as a person without a disability.

Contacts

The first point of contact is the Principal of the school for which you are seeking enrolment.

School contact details can be found on the websites below.

Primary Schools: <https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/primary-schools/>

Secondary schools <https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/secondary-schools/>

If further information is required, a secondary point of contact may be the Professional Officer, Family Engagement at the Catholic Schools Office, who supports the role of parents and carers to engage with their child's education.

www.mncatholic.edu.au/contact-us

Want to know more?

You can also find information on the Catholic Schools Office website that may further assist you.



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