

Policy Title: **STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY: MEETING THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

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Legislation: *Education Act 2004*
Discrimination Act 1991
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)
Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth)
Human Rights Act 2004
Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)
Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 ACT public schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability at the time of enrolment and during the course of their education, ensuring they have the support they need to successfully access and participate in the school curriculum, programs and activities in the company of their same-age peers.
- 1.2 ACT public schools will:
- comply with the requirements of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
 - provide appropriate educational programs for students with a disability, which may include, but is not limited to, adjusting curriculum and teaching strategies, resources and the environment to address the learning needs of individual students
 - establish a Special Needs Team to monitor the educational progress of students with additional needs, identify and coordinate the support mechanisms required to meet the educational, pastoral care, safety and health needs and coordinate their planning and review processes
 - provide information about programs and procedures to parents/carers and community members, actively encourage their participation and work in partnership with families
 - involve students and parents/carers in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process as students with a disability move through their schooling
 - ensure all students receiving special education services have an annual Special Education Program Review Meeting
 - ensure staff are familiar with, understand and address their obligations under this policy and relevant legislation
 - ensure staff have appropriate skills and relevant training to work with students with a disability

- establish and maintain a supportive school environment for students with a disability and promote positive attitudes towards students with a disability within the school community
 - document how resources for students with a disability are used in the annual school board report and acquittal processes required by the Directorate.
- 1.3 The Directorate will provide a range of educational services and settings for students aged 3 to school leaving age to accommodate the diversity of curriculum, resource, environmental and support needs of students with a disability. This will include special provisions permitted under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, such as special schools and support units/classes, where parents/carers and professionals agree such placements are in the best interests of the students.
- 1.4 The Directorate will:
- allocate additional resources to mainstream schools through the Student Centred Appraisal of Need process, based on individual student need, in an equitable, transparent and consistent manner, to those students who meet the ACT Student Disability Criteria and who require additional support
 - allocate resources to special schools through the Student Centred Appraisal of Need process, based on individual student need, in an equitable, transparent and consistent manner.
 - allocate resources to mainstream schools to support special classes (Learning Support Centres and Units, Support Class Language, Hearing Support Unit)
 - work in partnership with parents/carers, other government service providers and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support services to meet the student's learning needs and aspirations post school
 - provide information to support the active participation of parents/carers in the education process
 - provide specialist educational advice, professional development and support to schools and staff delivering services to students with a disability.

2. RATIONALE

- 2.1 ACT public schools aim to provide equitable, high quality education for each student with a disability.
- 2.2 The principles of 'equity, universality and non-discrimination' are paramount in providing an inclusive learning environment for each student with a disability. (*Education Act 2004*)
- 2.3 The Directorate acknowledges and supports the rights of parents/carers to be fully informed and active participate in key decisions relating to their child's education.
- 2.4 The Directorate fully supports the enrolment of students with a disability in mainstream school settings.
- 2.5 This policy provides guidance on compliance with *the Disability Standards for Education 2005* and articulates the Directorate's commitment to an inclusive education system that provides high quality learning opportunities and positive educational outcomes for every student enrolled in an ACT public school.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 **Disability:**

A disability results in a loss or reduction in ability to function on day to day basis caused by one or a combination of impairments including intellectual disability, physical disability, vision impairment, hearing impairment, language disorder, mental health condition and autism.

3.2 **Inclusivity:**

In education this means including every student in the educational programs offered by the school. It involves personalising the learning program for each student by valuing their uniqueness - their interests, experiences, abilities, prior learning, insights, needs, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and learning styles.

3.3 **Reasonable adjustment:**

A measure or action (or a group of measures or actions) taken by an education provider that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability:

- in relation to an admission or enrolment
- in relation to a course or programs
- in relation to facilities or services

on the same basis as a student without a disability, and includes an aid, facility, or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability.

(Disability Standards for Education 2005)

3.4 **Student Centred Appraisal of Need:**

The Student Centred Appraisal of Need is an objective process for assessing the educational support needs of individual students eligible under the ACT Student Disability Criteria and determining the level of resourcing needed to make the necessary reasonable adjustments for the student to access and participate in their educational program.

3.5 **Individual Learning Plan (ILP):**

The ILP identifies the student's individual needs, pathway, goals and priorities for learning. An ILP is designed by teachers in collaboration with parents/carers, relevant professionals and the student where appropriate, to inform the planning, delivery and evaluation of the student's personalised learning program. ILPs are regularly monitored and evaluated.

3.6 **Schools:**

The term is used generically in this policy to include government preschool and primary school settings, high schools, senior secondary colleges and educational programs delivered by the Education and Training Directorate for school-age students on other sites, such as Birrigai. School-related educational institutions (or schools in special circumstances) established under section 20 of the *Education Act 2004* are also included as part of this definition.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 **Student Centred Appraisal of Need**

The Appraisal process enables the Directorate to determine the level of any additional resourcing which may be required by the school to support the student's access and participation and the delivery of their educational program. Appraisals are held at key points of schooling. Provision is made for schools and or parents/carers to seek a review of the Appraisal.

4.2 **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**

Every student with a confirmed disability as defined in the ACT Student Disability Criteria or who is supported with additional resources or services from the Student Support Section must have a current ILP. The teacher with the major responsibility for coordinating and/or delivering the student's educational program also has responsibility for coordinating the development of the ILP in collaboration with the student, parents/carers and ensuring it is reviewed at a minimum, on an annual basis. The ILP is reviewed through the annual Special Education Program Review process.

4.3 **Special Education Program Review Meeting**

An annual Special Education Program Review Meeting is required for each student with a disability as defined in the ACT Student Disability Criteria or who is supported with additional resources or services from the Student Support Section. The Special Education Program Review meeting formally reviews progress against the goals and priorities identified in their ILP and reviews the ongoing appropriateness of their current placement.

4.4 **Central Placement Panel**

An annual Special Education Program Review Meeting is required for each student with a disability as defined in the ACT Student Disability Criteria or who is supported with additional resources or services from the Student Support Section. The Special Education Program Review meeting formally reviews progress against the goals and priorities identified in their ILP and reviews the ongoing appropriateness of their current placement.

4.5 **Complaints**

Officers dealing with appeals or requests for review of decisions should identify complaints against the Directorate, which are included in the same correspondence as the appeal or request for review, but which fall outside its scope. This information must be referred to the Community Liaison section. Appellants will be kept informed of any referrals to the Community Liaison section.

5. **POLICY OWNER**

Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Student Support.

6. **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- *ACT Student Disability Interim Criteria (2004)*
- *ACT Special Education and Early Intervention Program Entry Criteria (2006)*
- *Student Centred Appraisal of Needs Booklet*
- *Student Centred Appraisal of Need: School Request for a Review of the Student Profile*
- *Student Centred Appraisal of Need: Lodgement of an Appeal by a Parent/Carer*
- *Student Centred Appraisal of Need: Parent Guide to Lodging an Appeal*
- *Individual Learning Plans – ACT Guidelines, Individual Learning Plan Process (2005)*
- *Guidelines For Conducting In-School Reviews*

- *Special Needs Transport Application*
- *The Inclusivity Challenge (2003)*
- *Reporting on Student Achievement and Progress To Students and Parents Policy (2004).*

7. RELATED POLICIES

Hydrotherapy Pools - School Use

Administration of Prescribed Medication, Catheters & Injections to Students

Health and Safety - First Aid