



18/04/2024

RE: Disability Inclusion

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Officer Primary School is excited to introduce Disability Inclusion, a new approach to help us improve support for students with disability and build a more inclusive school for all our students.

Inclusive schools have better outcomes in learning, engagement and wellbeing for all students.

Disability Inclusion will help our school better understand what our students need to help them learn, through:

- a new funding model with more investment
- a new strength-based process called the Disability Inclusion Profile to help identify the student's needs and required adjustments
- more training and coaching for teachers and school staff about the best ways to support student learning.

A new funding model with more investment

The new funding model provides additional investment that our school can use to support many students including those with autism, learning difficulties and more.

This additional investment will provide more support for students with disability, including students who haven't been eligible for individual funding through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) in the past.

Our school can use this funding for a range of activities including:

- more training and professional development for teachers and school staff
- getting expert advice about disability
- hiring teachers or other staff to help plan and deliver changes for students
- equipment and resources to support learning.



The Disability Inclusion Profile

The Disability Inclusion Profile will help us find out more about your child's strengths and needs. It will inform personalised funding allocations, help us plan student learning and any changes a student may need to better learn.

The new Disability Inclusion Profile process will replace the Educational Needs Questionnaire used as a part of the current PSD.

As we transition over the next three years, families of students who are part of the PSD will be asked to attend a meeting to complete a Disability Inclusion Profile.

People who know your child will be involved in the meeting, along with an independent, trained facilitator who will help our school and families complete the profile.

If your child is part of the PSD, we will work with you to find the most suitable time to complete their profile.

The profile will also be available to a broad group of students with high needs.

We will identify students who are not currently part of the PSD, who may benefit from a Disability Inclusion Profile. If we consider that your child's education will benefit from having a profile, we will contact you.

More training and coaching for teachers and school staff

Disability Inclusion will give more teachers and support staff a better understanding of disability and how to respond. This could include access to:

- more professionals in schools who are experts in disability
- coaching
- professional learning
- evidence-based guidance and resources
- scholarships.



More information

Visit www.education.vic.gov.au/disabilityinclusion to find out more about Disability Inclusion.

If you would like to talk about your child's needs at school, or if you need translation or interpreting assistance, please contact our school.

Yours sincerely,

Nicole Peachey.

Q and As for parents/carers

These Q and As can help you answer questions from parents and carers.

Schools should consider providing them to parents and carers or keeping them as a useful resource to support communication.

Now that Disability Inclusion has started at our school, what do I need to do?

Our school has three years to complete a Disability Inclusion Profile for students who receive Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) funding to support their education.

If your child is part of the PSD, we will work with you to find the most suitable time to complete a Disability Inclusion Profile.

The profile will also be available to a broad group of students with high needs.

We will also identify students who are not currently part of the PSD, who may benefit from a Disability Inclusion Profile.

If we consider that your child's education will benefit by having a profile, we will contact you.

What is a Disability Inclusion Profile?

The Disability Inclusion Profile is a written description of a student's educational strengths and needs. The profile will be completed at a Student Support Group meeting with people who know the student.

The profile will help determine personalised support and help our school plan for students and make any changes that may help them learn. The Disability Inclusion Profile process will replace the Educational Needs Questionnaire that is a part of the current PSD.

Parents and carers will be asked to provide their consent for a profile to be completed for their child.



What is a Student Support Group meeting?

Some children with disability and their families already participate in Student Support Group meetings. Student Support Groups help children with disability to get the right support at school.

A dedicated Student Support Group meeting will be held to complete the Disability Inclusion Profile for students that require one.

This meeting will run for around 90 minutes. It brings together the people who know most about the student and their learning.

The Department of Education has engaged independent, trained facilitators to help our school, and the families of our students, complete the profile during a meeting.

At the meeting, the group will be asked to talk about the student's strengths, goals and any changes that may allow them to learn on the same basis as other students.

This includes agreeing about what level of changes are needed for each school-related activity.

Everyone is encouraged to share ideas in the meeting, understand one another's point of view and share responsibility.

Following the profile meeting, the Student Support Group will continue to meet regularly to monitor your child's progress against their goals.

Who will be at the Student Support Group meeting?

An independent facilitator will run the meeting. The meeting can include the following people:

- the child
- their parents/carers
- teacher and principal
- an interpreter if needed
- other people who work with the child, such as kindergarten teacher/s and/or other early childhood professionals, an NDIS worker, allied health/social worker or medical professional, therapist, psychologists or similar, or education support staff, can also attend if agreed by the school and the parent/carer.

If you think your child would benefit from having someone else attend the meeting, please talk to your child's teacher.



Can my child attend the meeting?

Yes. It is important that your child is involved in the profile meeting and is included when decisions are being made about their learning. Your child can attend in person or provide information to a trusted adult to discuss on their behalf.

Our school will work with students and their families to determine how to include them in the profile process.

Your child can express their views in the meeting, or contribute by providing photos, video and audio recordings, drawings and other methods.

There are resources on the Department's website to support your child to be in the profile meeting. Visit [Disability Inclusion Profile: Resources | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/disability-inclusion-profile/resources).

How do my child and I prepare for a profile meeting?

A parent/carer may want to spend time before the profile meeting thinking about their child's strengths, goals, and functional needs (what they need to help them learn at school).

There is a tool on the Department's website to help you with this. Visit [Disability Inclusion Profile: Resources | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/disability-inclusion-profile/resources).

If you would like to prepare for the meeting, the school can also provide you with some questions to answer in advance. It will give you an idea of the sort of questions that will be asked in the meeting and allow time for you and your child to think about it.

What wellbeing support will my child receive?

Your child's teacher will be aware of the profile meeting and will support your child in advance.

Some tips to help you support your child are:

- tell them about the meeting and what it is for, who will be there, etc.
- talk positively with them about how the meeting aims to help the school better meet their needs and help them learn
- encourage your child to participate in the meeting, talk about their strengths and needs
- if you have concerns about your child's mental health, start by talking to your child's school. They can help you access a range of supports offered by the Department. It is also worth speaking to your family General Practitioner (GP) about your child's mental health.



What is the parent/carer's role in the meeting?

At the meeting, parent/carer(s) will be responsible for:

- sharing information about their child's goals, learning, participation, social engagement and experiences at home that are relevant to the way they learn
- sharing information about what has helped their child learn in the past
- supporting their child or providing their child's voice if they do not attend the meeting.

Parents are also responsible for nominating a support person or advocate, if required.

Will my child get individualised funding?

Schools must make reasonable adjustments to ensure students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

Completing a Disability Inclusion Profile does not guarantee that a school will receive individual funding to support a particular student. Individual funding is based on a student's needs and their school setting.

Disability Inclusion has introduced an additional type of funding for schools. This allows the school to make better adjustments to all students with disability. Schools can use this funding to hire teachers or other staff to help plan and deliver changes for students, purchase equipment and resources to support learning, provide professional learning for staff and get expert advice.

These adjustments may support students across the whole school or address a student's specific needs.

Even if our school does not receive individual funding to support your child through the profile process, completing a profile is a valuable way to understand your child's needs and aspirations, and how they will be supported to learn at school.



Can I see my child's profile?

Yes. You will be provided with a profile report in the weeks following the meeting. This report will have information about your child's:

- current strengths
- aspirations
- functional needs
- adjustments to the learning environment.

The report does not include details of funding provided to the school to support your child.

Details about the adjustments your child needs are also in their Individual Education Plan. The Student Support Group will also regularly monitor how your child responds to adjustments and whether they are being implemented as intended.

What happens if I'm not happy with the outcome of the profile meeting?

You will have the opportunity to discuss your child's profile report at a Student Support Group meeting.

If you have concerns about the adjustments being made for your child, you should discuss this with your child's teacher and/or the school principal.

There is also an appeals process. You can read more about this from [the Department's website](#).

How often will my child need to have their profile reviewed?

Your child's profile report will recommend when the profile should be reviewed and how often Student Support Group meetings should happen. A school representative/staff member will contact you when it is time to create or review your child's profile.

It is anticipated that a student will complete 2-3 profiles across their school career.

My child does not have a diagnosed disability and hasn't received support in the past, will they be part of this new process?

We will identify students who are not part of the current PSD but may benefit from a Disability Inclusion Profile. We will contact you if we think your child will benefit from a profile.

Other students will receive support in other ways. Disability Inclusion has introduced a new, additional type of funding for schools. This allows the school to make better adjustments to all students with disability.

If you have concerns about your child's learning, please speak to your child's teacher. Our school will determine the next steps that are needed to support your child to learn.