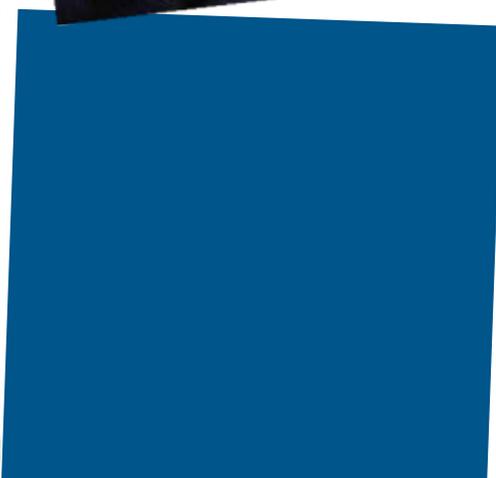
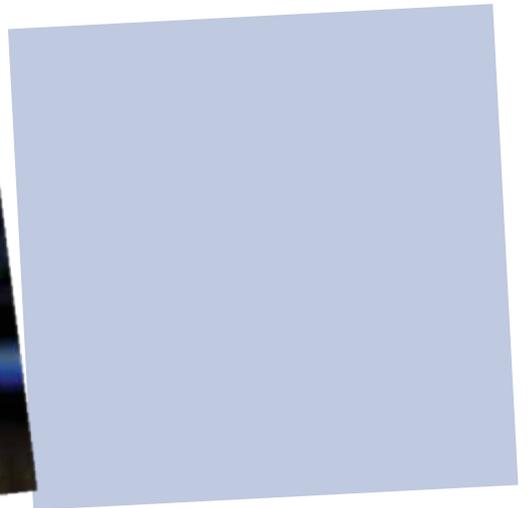


Program for Students with Disabilities – Guidelines for schools 2014



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1. Introduction

With 546,310 students in 1,537 government schools, Victoria has a strong and vibrant education system that celebrates diversity, and is committed to supporting the achievement and participation of all students.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department) is committed to delivering an inclusive education system that ensures all students have access to a quality education that meets their diverse needs.

The Department provides a range of policies, programs and resources for schools to support the delivery of high quality schooling for all students, including students with disabilities. These resources may be provided in the Student Resource Package, through student support services including psychologists, social workers, youth workers, speech pathologists and visiting teachers or through specific early identification and intervention programs. The Program for Students with Disabilities is one such form of provision available to schools.

1.1 The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

Under section 32 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005. The Disability Standards for Education 2005 set standards for education and training providers, including Victorian government schools. To comply with the Standards education providers must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with a disability.

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training **on the same basis** as other students. Adjustments may, or may not require additional resources. Some students benefit from small adjustments to the curriculum such as the delivery of instructions in writing rather than verbally, sitting at the front of the classroom, or taking regular breaks to get up and move limbs or stretch their back. Others require more substantial adjustments, such as assistance with self-care or intensive supervision.

The Disability Standards apply to all students with a disability, not just those who are eligible for support under the Program for Students with Disabilities.

More information on the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and adjustments can be found on page 25. Information about the Disability Standards for Education 2005 can be found at <http://deewr.gov.au/disability-standards-education>

1.2 The Program for Students with Disabilities

The Program for Students with Disabilities is a targeted supplementary funding program for Victorian government schools. It provides resources to schools for a defined student population of students with disabilities, with moderate to severe needs.

Under the program, resources are provided directly to Victorian government schools to support the provision of school-based educational programs for eligible students with disabilities.

Program for Students with Disabilities resources assist schools to meet their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*; they do not define or limit the support provided by a school for a student with a disability.

1.3 Objectives of the Program for Students with Disabilities

1. Student learning –

To support and improve the learning of students.

2. Student engagement and wellbeing –

To support the participation of students in an inclusive education system.

3. Student pathways and transitions –

To support transitions for students, transitioning into, through and post school.

1.4 Working in cooperative partnership

Parents can expect that school leaders and teachers will comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 and that the educational needs and goals of all students with disabilities, including those supported by the Program for Students with Disabilities, will be monitored and reviewed by a Student Support Group.

School leaders and teachers will be supported by the Department to work with parent/guardian/carer(s) and professionals to meet the needs of all students. These guidelines provide schools and regional workforces with:

- information on how to make an application (including online registration and required documentation) (See page 12 for more information)
- essential timelines for the application process (See page 10 for more information)
- links to support materials and templates (See Appendices for more information)
- key contact numbers and websites (See page 28 for more information).

The Department commits to further support schools by:

- responding in a timely fashion to all enquiries
- meeting the deadlines that are detailed in these guidelines
- protecting the privacy of students and their parent/guardian/carer(s)
- handling all information confidentially and securely.

2. Essential information

2.1 Who is eligible for the Program?

The Program for Students with Disabilities provides supplementary resources to schools to support the education of students with disabilities with moderate to severe needs. These students must meet the eligibility criteria for one of seven program categories. The eligibility criteria were developed from guidelines set by the World Health Organisation.

2.2 Program categories and criteria

See Appendix A for supporting evidence requirements and further information.

Category	Criteria
1. Physical disability	<p>A A significant physical disability; AND/OR B A significant health impairment; AND C Requires regular paramedical support.</p>
2. Visual impairment	<p>A Visual acuity less than 6/60 with corrected vision; OR B That visual fields are reduced to a measured arc of less than 10 degrees. Eligibility for these services is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual acuity of less than 6/18 with corrected vision <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual fields reduced to a measured arc of less than 20 degrees.
3. Hearing impairment	<p>A A bilateral sensori-neural hearing loss that is moderate/severe/profound; AND B The student requires intervention or assistance to communicate.</p>
4. Severe behaviour disorder	<p>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.</p>

5. Intellectual disability	<p>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;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>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;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>C A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years.</p>
6. Autism Spectrum Disorder	<p>A A diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>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 behaviours;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>C Significant deficits in language skills established by a comprehensive speech pathology assessment demonstrating language skills equivalent to a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean.</p>
7. Severe language disorder with critical educational needs	<p>A A score of three or more standard deviations below the mean for the student's age in expressive and/ or receptive language skills on TWO of the recommended tests;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>B The severity of the disorder cannot be accounted for by hearing impairment, social emotional factors, low intellectual functioning or cultural factors;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>C A history and evidence of an on-going problem with the expectation of continuation during school years;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>D A non-verbal score not lower than one standard deviation below the mean on one comprehensive intellectual test, with a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between verbal (VIQ/VCI) and non-verbal (PIQ/PRI) functioning (VIQ/VCI < PIQ/PRI);</p> <p>AND</p> <p>E Demonstrated critical educational needs equating to Program for Students with Disabilities funding levels three and above as determined by the validated results of the Educational Needs Questionnaire.</p>

2.3 The types of applications

There are three types of applications within the Program for Students with Disabilities:

- 1. New applications**
- 2. Year 6–7 Reviews**
- 3. Reappraisals**

New applications are for students who are not currently in the Program for Students with Disabilities.

For students who are already in the Program for Students with Disabilities, the two types of applications that can be submitted are Year 6–7 Reviews and Reappraisals.

2.3.1 New applications

New applications can be submitted for students who are not currently in receipt of support from the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Only one application per student per year will be considered for entry into the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Eligible students with a disability who have left the Victorian government school system for a period greater than eight school terms (two years) will need to submit a new application.

2.3.2 Year 6–7 Reviews

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 specialist schools.

Year 6–7 Reviews must be submitted for:

- all students undertaking transition from Year 6 to Year 7 attending mainstream schools
- students enrolled in specialist schools whose date of birth falls between 1 May 2001 and 30 April 2002.

Year 6-7 Reviews are mandatory for students in receipt of Level 1 to 4 Program for Students with Disabilities support. Funding cannot be included in the 2014 Student Resource Package if the review has not been undertaken.

A Year 6–7 Review is required regardless of whether an application was submitted in the previous school year. In the rare instances when students are planning to repeat Year 6, the Year 6–7 Review should be completed during the year the student first commenced Year 6.

Where a Year 6–7 Review has been undertaken and the Student Support Group considers that the student no longer meets the eligibility criteria for the Program for Students with Disabilities, the Year 6–7 Review application must still be submitted following the processes outlined in Section 4 (See page 15).

Current Year 6 students, or the equivalent in specialist schools, who are in receipt of Level 5 or Level 6 support are exempt from the Year 6–7 Review process. Where the Student Support Group believes that the educational need of the student has changed, a reappraisal application may be submitted.

2.3.3 Reappraisal

Where it is believed that an adjustment to the level of support provided for a student is needed for a student currently in the Program for Students with Disabilities, a Reappraisal can be submitted. The Reappraisal will establish if additional resources are required to ensure effective support for the student. In order to submit a Reappraisal, the Principal must reconvene the Student Support Group (See page 13) to complete a new Educational Needs Questionnaire (see page 33). The level of resources that the school receives to support a student in the Program for Students with Disabilities will be adjusted in line with the new Educational Needs Questionnaire.

Only one Reappraisal per student per calendar year will be considered.

2.4 Supplementary information

2.4.1 Preps beginning in 2014

In most instances, parent/guardian/carer(s) of children with disabilities entering Prep in 2014 will approach schools from mid 2013 seeking to commence an enrolment and application process.

Not all students with additional learning needs will be identified through Early Intervention agencies. Schools may be required to check with pre-schools to ascertain the likelihood of a student with additional learning needs enrolling in their school.

Early planning will assist both transition and application processes. Principals can facilitate the transition process by discussing enrolment procedures with parent/guardian/carer(s) when approached for enrolment, convening and participating as a member of the Application Student Support Group, and informing the parent/guardian/carer(s) of their rights within the Student Support Group process and providing them with a copy of the Student Support Group Guidelines.

The following information will assist parent/guardian/carer(s) of children with disabilities entering Prep:

- Will there be an orientation program for my child?
- Does the school community have a sensitive awareness of students with disabilities?
- What level of awareness will the other students in the class have of my child's disability?

With children entering Prep it is advisable to include preschool teacher/s, early-childhood, preschool officer or early intervention worker/s in initial Application Student Support Group meetings and request their assistance in completing an Educational Needs Questionnaire.

To facilitate transition and early notification of outcomes, schools may submit applications from October 2013.

2.4.2 Support for students with a serious medical condition which has the potential to rapidly deteriorate

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

Principals and support staff should take particular care to identify students in these situations and immediately notify their Regional Director of the situation. Contacting the Regional Director (See page 28) will result in an immediate investigation and the provision of appropriate support.

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

2.4.3 Change of category

Where a student is eligible for support under the Program for Students with Disabilities under more than one category, enrolment in a specialist setting will be determined by the categories identified. In these cases, the Regional Disabilities Coordinator should be contacted.

2.4.4 Students turning 19 years or older in 2014 in the Program for Students with Disabilities

In planning enrolment arrangements for students who are turning 19 or older in 2014, schools should refer to maximum age requirements for government schools in the Education and Training Reform Amendment (Age Requirements) Regulations 2009, available at www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/policy/agereqregulations2009.pdf

The Student Inclusion & Engagement Division is responsible for handling applications for the continuation of Program for Students with Disabilities funding for students who are turning 19 or older in the respective school year and are completing an accredited senior secondary course in a government mainstream or specialist school.

Schools are referred to the guidelines, application form and timelines available at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/handbook.aspx

2.4.5 International students

Applications on behalf of international students can be made under the Program for Student with Disabilities on the same basis as for other Victorian government school students. The application is to be submitted by the school once the enrolment has commenced, and it is requested that the student's international status be noted in the application's covering letter.

Information relating to international student enrolment processes is detailed at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/pages/international.aspx

Further information on the process is provided in the International Student Program School Resource Kit which is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/pages/internatresourcekit.aspx

3. Timelines

3.1 Annual Round

The Annual Round closes on 19 July 2013. New applications for students enrolled in Victorian government schools must be submitted during the Annual Round.

3.2 Post-Annual Round applications

Applications received after 19 July 2013 will only be accepted for:

- students transferring from other school systems, including interstate and overseas
- Preps beginning in 2014
- students with a seriously deteriorating medical condition
- students with a seriously deteriorating behavioural condition such that the student's behaviour poses a significant safety risk to him or herself or others in the school, and there is evidence of substantial regional and other intervention

When Post-Annual Round consideration is requested, the application should be completed according to the usual process on pages 12-21 of these guidelines, with a covering letter from the school Principal detailing the reasons for the request for Post-Annual Round consideration.

It is essential that the school Principal contact the Regional Disabilities Coordinator to ensure that all regional and other resources have been fully utilised prior to submitting the application.

3.3 New applications

The table below outlines the timeline for submitting a new application.

	Submit during Annual Round (by 19/7/2013)	Submit post – Annual Round (22/7/2013 – 28/2/2014)	Funded in 2013 or 2014 (if eligible)
(a) New students to Victorian government schools (i.e. Preps beginning in 2014 & transfers from other systems not previously receiving individual funding)	✓	✓	2014
(b) Students currently enrolled in Victorian government schools	✓	✗	2014
(c) Students transferring from other school systems with evidence of individual funding prior to transfer	Submit within one term (10 school weeks) of enrolment		2013 or 2014
(d) Students with a seriously deteriorating medical or behavioural condition	Submit at any time		2013 or 2014

Applications for students transferring from other school systems who were not being provided with individual support, as in (a) above, will only be considered for funding in 2014.

Applications for students transferring from other school systems, including interstate and overseas, from a setting that provided individual support for the student's additional learning needs immediately prior to transfer, as in (c) above, will be considered for funding from their first full term of attendance. Evidence of support from the previous system must be attached to the application. Applications must be submitted within one term (10 school weeks) of enrolment.

(See www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/pages/datesterm.aspx for term dates)

3.4 Year 6–7 Reviews

The table below outlines the timeline for submitting a Year 6–7 Review.

	Submit any time	Submit during Annual Round (by 17/5/2013)	Funded in 2013 or 2014 (if successful)
Years 6–7 Review	✘	✔	2014

Where submission of the Year 6–7 Review is not practicable prior to 17/5/2013, these reviews should be submitted as soon as possible (no later than 19/7/2013).

3.5 Reappraisals

The table below outlines the timeline for submitting a Reappraisal.

	Submit any time	Funded in 2013 or 2014 (if successful)
Reappraisal	✔	2013 or 2014

4 Making an application

It is the responsibility of schools to submit applications for support of students through the Program for Students with Disabilities.

The Application checklist for Principals outlines the application process. Principals are advised to review this document before submitting an application and to plan for sufficient time to complete all necessary components of the application before application closing dates.

Applications received without the signature of a Department Nominee, Principal and parent will be returned to the school.

Both the online and hard copy applications must be completed and received by the Resources Coordination Group by the closing date.

Summary of the Program for Students with Disabilities application process

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
Student enrolls and printed information about school and the Program for Students with Disabilities is provided to parents	SSG established and existing documentation examined	Further assessment occurs if necessary. Lewis & Lewis undertakes eligibility assessment for ID and SLD categories	SSG meets to check eligibility criteria and complete ENQ. Documentation supporting eligibility and ENQ indicators collated	Application submitted online and in hard copy following completion of the Application checklist for Principals	Resources Coordination Group ensures eligibility criteria met. Level of funding determined. School receives notification	SSG meets to make recommendations to the Principal on the resources required to implement the educational plan for student. Funding begins at start of new school year	Student Review occurs at Year 6–7 transition
Student Support Group (SSG) meets regularly to develop and oversee educational plan for student							

4.1 Student Support Groups

A Student Support Group is mandatory for students in the Program for Students with Disabilities.

The Student Support Group is central to making an application under the Program for Students with Disabilities. A Student Support Group is a cooperative partnership between the parent/guardian/carer(s), school representatives and professionals to ensure coordinated support for the student's educational needs. It is the responsibility of the Student Support Group to:

- identify the student's needs
- determine any adjustments to be made to the curriculum
- plan an appropriate educational program
- develop an Individual Learning Plan
- discuss the plan with teachers and provide support to implement the learning plan
- provide advice to the Principal concerning the additional educational needs of the student and the types of resources required to meet these needs
- review and evaluate the student's program once per term, and at other times if requested by any member of the group.

Information about Student Support Groups is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcstuff.aspx

4.2 Assessment service for students in the categories of intellectual disability and severe language disorder with critical educational needs

The Department provides an assessment service for schools applying to the Program for Students with Disabilities on behalf of students in the categories of intellectual disability and severe language disorder with critical educational needs. Lewis & Lewis manage and administer this assessment service on behalf of the Department.

Assessments of students in the categories of intellectual disability and severe language disorder with critical educational needs must be completed through this service.

Lewis & Lewis provide assessments to establish a student's eligibility under the intellectual disability and severe language disorder with critical educational needs categories of the Program for Students with Disabilities. This includes new applications, Years 6–7 Reviews and changes of category into intellectual disability or severe language disorder with critical educational needs. Lewis & Lewis do not provide assessments for Reappraisals.

Referrals

Lewis & Lewis accept referrals for students likely to be eligible under the categories of intellectual disability and severe language disorder with critical educational needs for the Program for Students with Disabilities. If a referral does not contain sufficient evidence to indicate the likelihood of a student meeting the relevant eligibility criteria, then Lewis & Lewis will provide feedback to the school about the reasons the referral was not accepted and appropriate actions the school may take. This may include the establishment of an ongoing Student Support Group, development of an Individual Learning Plan, or referral to Student Support Service Officers for further assessment and advice.

Students already assessed

For applications under the intellectual disability category, a full assessment includes a cognitive assessment, Vineland and detailed case history. Referrals to Lewis & Lewis are not required for students already fully assessed by external professionals or Student Support Service Officers.

The Resource Coordination Group will accept applications that include external assessment reports, provided that the assessments have been administered in accordance with the Program for Students with Disabilities professional guidelines, which are available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators, and all relevant eligibility criteria have been addressed. Schools should contact either their Regional Disabilities Coordinators or Lewis & Lewis for advice as required.

Educational Needs Questionnaire

It is the responsibility of the school and Student Support Group to gather evidence to substantiate Educational Needs Questionnaire indicators. For applications on behalf of students in the categories of intellectual disability and severe language disorder with critical educational needs, Lewis & Lewis endeavour to present a complete profile of a student's educational needs. However, for some students, additional supporting evidence will be required from local service providers, including relevant health professionals and Student Support Service Officers to substantiate Questionnaire indicators.

Schools are advised to contact Lewis & Lewis well before application closing dates to ensure that adequate time is allowed for appropriate assessment and reporting, the Student Support Group meeting and submission of online and hard copy applications.

Schools are also reminded that responsibility for submitting completed online and hard copy Program for Students with Disabilities applications remains with the school.

Information about the assessment service, the stages of the assessment process and about how to refer a student for assessment can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/swdasses.aspx

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4.3 Evidence

An application for the Program for Students with Disabilities must contain current evidence, such as reports and other documents that address the eligibility criteria.

A range of documentation may already be held by the parent/guardian/carer(s), for example information associated with an early intervention program. It is expected that additional formal assessments will only be required in situations where no current and appropriate assessment reports are available.

Schools are reminded to follow Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Privacy Guidelines (www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/privacy.aspx) when collecting information about individual students.

Assessment reports should be current, signed and dated. Documentation should be student specific and should not include information regarding other students.

Suspension notices, school records of misdemeanors, other incident reports including police/court orders, photographs, audio/video tapes, work samples, comprehensive student-subject reports or Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) assessment data should not be submitted as evidence of disability.

See page 19 for details and a checklist of supporting documentation required for each category.

New applications

Once the parent/guardian/carer(s) and Principal have gathered documentation containing evidence of the student's disability, a decision must be made as to whether it meets the criteria for at least one of the categories of the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Where an application is made outside of the Annual Round on behalf of a student with a seriously deteriorating medical condition, the covering letter accompanying the application should indicate the urgent nature of the support required, and appropriate evidence should be included which outlines the student's condition.

When applications are made on the basis of significantly deteriorating behavioural conditions, such that the student's behaviour poses a significant safety risk to him or herself or others in the school, **evidence is required to demonstrate that substantial regional and other interventions have been fully utilised**. It is expected that these interventions would include targeted ongoing support from Student Support Services and regional student wellbeing and/or disability staff, together with involvement from outside agencies where possible.

Year 6–7 Reviews

The documentation submitted as part of a Year 6–7 Review should demonstrate whether the student continues to meet one of the seven eligibility criteria and the student's level of educational need as demonstrated by a current Educational Needs Questionnaire. Some documents/reports submitted as part of the original application may remain valid, and will not need to be re-submitted for the Year 6–7 Review. See table on page 16 and the Documentation Checklist on pages 19-20 for details.

The level of funding provided to a school for the support of a student with a disability is based on the supported Educational Needs Questionnaire indicators submitted by the school. Therefore, if the student continues to meet the eligibility criteria, the level of funding provided to support the student will be adjusted according to the new Educational Needs Questionnaire indicators.

Where a student, upon review, is considered by the Student Support Group to **no longer meet the criteria** for eligibility for the program, a Student Support Group meeting should be held to identify the student's educational needs and plan the support that will be required for the student's transition into secondary school.

Regardless of whether the Student Support Group considers the student to meet the eligibility criteria for the Program for Students with Disabilities, a Year 6–7 Review should be submitted. This will ensure that appropriate information is available to the Resources Coordination Group, should the student require additional assistance in the future.

During the Year 6–7 Review process, the secondary school in which the student anticipates enrolling should be invited to attend the Year 6–7 Review Student Support Group meeting.

Year 6 – 7 Review documentation requirements

Category	Documentation required
Physical disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A current report from a medical/paediatric specialist (not more than two years old) • A current signed report from a paramedical professional (not more than two years old)
Visual impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A current signed report from an ophthalmologist/Educational Vision Assessment Clinic (not more than one year old)
Hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A current signed report from an audiologist (not more than one year old) • A current signed audiogram (not more than one year old)
Severe behaviour disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A signed report from a psychologist containing a current Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) (not more than one year old) • Current evidence of the need for ongoing treatment (not more than two years old) • A current Student Management Plan (not more than one year old)
Intellectual disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A signed report from a psychologist containing a current cognitive assessment (not more than two years old) and a current Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale (not more than one year old)
Autism Spectrum Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A signed report from a psychologist, containing a current Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale (not more than one year old) • A signed report from a speech pathologist containing a current comprehensive speech pathology assessment (not more than one year old)
Severe language disorder with critical educational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A current signed report from a speech pathologist containing two language assessments (not more than one year old) • A current signed report from a psychologist containing a cognitive assessment (not more than two years old)
All categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Reappraisals

The Reappraisal must provide evidence, such as reports from relevant professionals, to support the indicators of the new Educational Needs Questionnaire. The agreed indicators must be transferred to the Application Summary Form. An updated Student Education Program Summary Statement indicating how the additional resources would be used to support the student should be attached to the Application Summary Form.

Students with multiple disabilities are considered to be eligible if evidence is provided that meets the eligibility criteria for at least one of the categories in the Program for Students with Disabilities.

When parent/guardian/carer(s) and the Principal examine the information collected, it will be clear in a number of cases that eligibility cannot be established for the Program for Students with Disabilities. In these cases the Principal is required 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 be unsuccessful and raise unnecessary concerns and expectations.

If documentation meets the eligibility criteria as outlined in in Appendix A, the Principal will arrange for an Application Student Support Group meeting to be convened.

4.4 Application Student Support Group Meeting

The members of the Application Student Support Group are to be:

- the Principal (or nominee)
- the parent/guardian/carer(s) and the parent/guardian/carer(s)' advocate (if requested by the parent/guardian/ carer(s))
- the student (where appropriate) and
- a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Nominee.

Consultants and professionals with specific expertise may be invited to assist the group's decision making and their understanding of the student's educational needs.

The Application Student Support Group should:

1. Carefully examine the evidence and determine whether an application under one of the seven categories of the Program for Students with Disabilities would be supported.
2. Complete the Educational Needs Questionnaire by agreeing on a descriptor that best matches the student's current level of educational need, and place the number of the descriptor in the box. The key indicators of educational need are designed to be completed based on observable characteristics of the student. Ensure that the agreed numbers are supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
3. Transfer the agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire numbers to the Application Summary Form. Only one number should be placed in each box.
4. Complete the Student Education Program Summary Statement – Goals and Strategies. ABLES is a teaching and learning resource that can inform the Student Education Program Summary Statement – Goals and Strategies.
5. Ensure all required documentation is attached and that the application has been signed by all the relevant members of the Application Student Support Group.
6. Provide a copy of the Privacy and Security Notice, in writing, to the parent/guardian/carer(s) of students for which an application has been prepared. See Appendix D for a copy of the Statement.

The Principal should ensure that all steps have been completed and a copy of the Application Summary Form (See Appendix E), all documentation and the Educational Needs Questionnaire is kept for school records.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Nominee

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Nominees are senior Department staff (Principals, Assistant Principals, Leading Teachers or Student Support Service Officers), approved by the Region, who have received training regarding the requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities. The Principal is required to ensure that a Department Nominee (who is not from the school submitting the application) is present at the Application Student Support Group meeting. The role of the Department Nominee is to support the Principal and the Application Student Support Group by acting as an impartial 'critical friend', during the completion of the Application, and to ensure that the Application Student Support Group meeting is convened according to Department guidelines (www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/studentssupportguidelines2013.pdf).

The Department Nominee assists in the application process by ensuring that the application contains all the requisite supporting information.

Before signing the Application Summary Form, the Department Nominee will check that:

- each section of the application is complete and attached
- the application contains all the necessary evidence to demonstrate each of the relevant eligibility criteria and Educational Needs Questionnaire sections (as per the Documentation Checklist on page 19)
- all attached reports are current, dated and signed.

Contact details of Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Nominees are available from Regional Offices (See page 28).

4.5 Online application process – Program for Students with Disabilities Management System

All applications for the Program for Students with Disabilities must be submitted online through the Program for Students with Disabilities Management System, available at www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/PSDMS/Home.aspx

Both the online and hard copy applications must be completed and received by the Resources Coordination Group by the closing date. Schools are advised to allow sufficient time for such factors as online processes and postage. Hard copies of applications that have not been submitted online will be returned to the school.

There are three steps to submitting applications online:

1. Ensure student details are registered on Program for Students with Disabilities Management System. This step will take up to three working days – it can be completed at any time before the application is submitted. It is advisable to complete this step as soon as possible.
2. Enter all the required information, including Educational Needs Questionnaire indicators and Goals and Strategies, and submit the application.
3. Print the Application Summary Form, and attach to the signed Application Summary Form and other supporting documentation (See Documentation Checklist on page 19).

Quick reference guides that provide useful step-by-step instructions for schools are available at the following link:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/pages/swdsystems.aspx.

Please ensure that the Educational Needs Questionnaire indicators are the same in both the online and hard copies of the application. A copy of all the information provided with an application must be kept by the school in a secure location.

Applications received without the signature of a Department Nominee, Principal and parent/guardian/carer(s) will be returned to the school.

4.6 Covering letter

Principals are asked to include a covering letter with the application. This should include the following details:

- student name (including previous name if applicable)
- Program for Students with Disabilities identification number
- type of application (e.g. Year 6–7 Review)
- category under which the application is being submitted
- school name
- international student status
- out-of-home care status.

4.7 Submitting the documentation and checklist

Once the application has been registered online, forward the signed Application Summary Form (See Appendix E), a hard copy of the Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System with the Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies) (See Appendix C) and supporting documentation to:

Resources Coordination Group

Student Inclusion & Engagement Division
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001

Do not bind, pin or glue applications together – this will interfere with the efficient processing of them – one staple is sufficient. Faxed, emailed, couriered or hand-delivered applications cannot be accepted.

It is essential that all necessary documentation is included with the application. The following Document Checklist sets out the required documentation for each category:

4.7.1 Documentation Checklist

Physical disability

- A signed copy of the Application Summary Form
- A printed copy of the completed online Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System
- A Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- A covering letter from the Principal of the enrolling school
- A current report from a medical/paediatric specialist (not more than two years old)
- A current signed report from a paramedical professional (not more than two years old)
- Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Visual impairment

- A signed copy of the Application Summary Form
- A printed copy of the completed online Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System
- A Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- A covering letter from the Principal of the enrolling school
- A current signed report from an ophthalmologist/Educational Vision Assessment Clinic (not more than one year old)
- Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Severe behaviour disorder

- A signed copy of the Application Summary Form
- A printed copy of the completed online Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System
- A Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- A covering letter from the Principal of the enrolling school.
- A signed report from a psychologist containing:
 - A cognitive assessment*
 - A Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) (not more than one year old)
 - A statement regarding withdrawal*
 - A statement regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder*
- Current evidence of the need for ongoing treatment (not more than two years old)
- A signed report from a speech pathologist containing a language assessment*
- Evidence of a history of severe behaviour*
- A statement regarding Hearing*
- A statement regarding Vision*
- A statement regarding Physical Disability*
- A current Student Management Plan (not more than one year old)
- Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Hearing impairment

- A signed copy of the Application Summary Form
- A printed copy of the completed online Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System
- A Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- A covering letter from the Principal of the enrolling school
- A current signed report from an audiologist (not more than one year old)
- A current signed audiogram (not more than one year old)
- Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Intellectual disability

- A signed copy of the Application Summary Form
- A printed copy of the completed online Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System
- A Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- A covering letter from the Principal of the enrolling school
- A signed report from a psychologist containing:
 - A current cognitive assessment (not more than two years old)
 - A current Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale (not more than one year old)
- Evidence of a history of ongoing difficulties *
- Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- A signed copy of the Application Summary Form
- A printed copy of the completed online Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System
- A Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- A covering letter from the Principal of the enrolling school
- A multidisciplinary diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder* containing:
 - A paediatrician/psychiatrist report*
 - A speech pathology report*
 - A psychology report*
- A signed report from a psychologist containing a current Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale (not more than one year old)
- A signed report from a speech pathologist containing a current comprehensive speech pathology assessment (not more than one year old)
- Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Severe language disorder with critical educational needs

- A signed copy of the Application Summary Form
- A printed copy of the completed online Application Summary Form from Program for Students with Disabilities Management System
- A Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- A covering letter from the Principal of the enrolling school
- A signed report from a speech pathologist containing:
 - Two current language assessments (not more than one year old)
- A signed report from a psychologist containing:
 - A current cognitive assessment (not more than two years old)
- A statement regarding social/emotional and cultural factors*
- A statement regarding hearing*
- Evidence of a history of ongoing difficulties*
- Current evidence/appropriate reports to support agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels

Items marked with * provided as part of a student's original application remain valid and do not need to be re-submitted for a Year 6-7 Review

Once applications have been submitted, no further documentation will be accepted unless specifically requested by the Resources Coordination Group.

If the Student Support Group receives documentation relevant to the application after it has been submitted, schools are advised to contact their Regional Disabilities Coordinator for advice. This will avoid causing unnecessary delays to the processing of applications.

4.8 Application checklist for Principals

Student's Name: _____

- 1 Discuss issues with parent/guardian/carer(s)
 - Investigate the student's additional needs
 - Examine any existing documentation
 - Discuss programs provided by the school
 - Provide parent/guardian/carer(s) with an explanation of the Program for Students with Disabilities.
 - Provide printed information to parent/guardian/carer(s)
- 2 Establish a Student Support Group
 - Further investigate the student's needs and existing documentation in the educational context
 - 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.

Where it is considered possible that an application may be submitted under the categories of **intellectual disability** or **severe language disorder with critical educational need**, the assessment should be referred to Lewis & Lewis (See page 13).

- 3 Convene an Application Student Support Group meeting
 - Before the Application Student Support Group meeting, print required documents – e.g. Application Summary Form, copies of Educational Needs Questionnaire indicators, Student Education Program Summary Statement proforma
 - During the Application Student Support Group meeting, carefully examine the evidence of disability and determine whether the evidence would support an application under one of the categories for inclusion in the program (See Appendix A)
 - If the evidence supports the eligibility criteria proceed with the application
 - If the evidence does not support the eligibility criteria discuss the program requirements and support that the school will arrange for the student
 - Complete the Application Summary Form – (See Appendix E and available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/handbook.aspx)
 - Complete the Student Education Program Summary Statement – (Goals and Strategies) (See Appendix C or go to www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/handbook.aspx)
 - Ensure that the application is signed by the Principal, parent/guardian/carer(s) and the Department Nominee
- 4 Register the application online according to the instructions on page 18
- 5 Attach the evidence to establish eligibility and support the agreed Educational Needs Questionnaire levels to the completed Application Summary Form
- 6 Forward all parts of the complete application (See page 18) to:

Resources Coordination Group

Student Inclusion & Engagement Division
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001

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

5. After the application is submitted

5.1 What happens after the application is submitted?

The Resources Coordination Group, comprising regional representatives and consulting professionals, will:

- check that all relevant documentation has been provided
- request additional information from the Student Support Group if necessary
- ensure that the Educational Needs Questionnaire indicators reflect the information in the documentation provided
- check the Student Education Program Summary Statement (Goals and Strategies)
- determine if the application meets the eligibility criteria for additional resources via the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Where an application is incomplete, it may be deemed ineligible or notification of outcome may be delayed. Principals and DEECD nominees should refer to the documentation checklist on pages 19-20.

5.2 Notification of outcome of the application

Principals are required to check the Program for Students with Disabilities Management System for outcomes of applications (www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/PSDMS/Home.aspx).

Outcomes of finalised applications submitted for the 2014 Annual Round will be available on Program for Students with Disabilities Management System before the start of Term 4 2013 to coincide with the school's 2014 Indicative Student Resource Package.

It is the Principal's responsibility to notify the parent/guardian/carer(s) of the outcome of the application, eligibility, and level of support allocated to the school. The Principal will reconvene the Student Support Group regardless of the outcome of the application to inform the group of the outcome and plan ongoing support for the student.

For an ineligible outcome where the Student Support Group believes there were process deficiencies in the consideration of an application, or where additional clinical or professional evidence is available that was not submitted in the original application, an appeal can be submitted (See page 25).

5.3 Resources provided to the school

If an application meets the eligibility criteria of the Program for Students with Disabilities, an allocation of additional funding will be provided as part of the Student Resource Package of the school/s that the student attends in accordance with enrolment details registered on Program for Students with Disabilities Management System.

The Student 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. When making recommendations to the Principal about the additional resources to support a student on the Program for Students with Disabilities, the Student Support Group should consider how the resources could best be used to:

- implement identified adjustments and strategies to meet the needs of the student
- build the capacity of the school and teaching staff to provide support for students with additional learning needs
- increase the student's ability to independently access learning.

It is important that the Student Support Group consider specific, targeted strategies that will have lasting and long term benefit for the student, as well as building the capacity of the school to provide an effective, inclusive curriculum for students with additional learning needs.

Resources from the Program for Students with Disabilities can be used in a number of ways to support students, including providing:

- teaching staff
- specialist staff (e.g. Special Needs Coordinator, occupational therapists, speech pathologists)
- teacher professional development
- specialist equipment/materials
- education support staff.

Where a school is allocated resources to support more than one student, the Principal may choose to liaise with members of the Student Support Groups to discuss and evaluate any common requirements, for example, the funding of therapy services or special needs teacher positions.

For information on the Student Resource Package funding model see www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/pages/srp.aspx.

5.3.1 Attendance

In Victoria, education is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 17 years. Students are expected to attend normal school hours (between 9.00am and 3.30pm) every school day of each term.

Attending two schools

Where agreement has been reached that a student is enrolled and attends two schools, the allocation will be provided on a pro-rata basis consistent with the enrolment details registered on Program for Students with Disabilities Management System.

Transferring to another school

If a student transfers to another Victorian government regular or specialist school during the year, the allocation will transfer on a pro-rata (each term) basis to the new school.

Re-engagement programs

In some situations, a school may receive Program for Students with Disabilities resources for a student who attends a regionally approved senior secondary re-engagement program while remaining enrolled in their current school. This re-engagement program may be delivered by another school or an external provider such as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). In such cases, the enrolling school should transfer the Program for Students with Disabilities resources to the re-engagement program provider. For information re-engagement programs see www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/reengagement.aspx

5.3.2 Parent payment for additional support

Victorian legislation requires that instruction in the standard curriculum program must be provided free to students in Victorian government schools. Free instruction includes the provision of learning and teaching activities, instructional supports, materials and resources, and administration and facilities associated with the standard curriculum program. Schools have flexibility within their budget to provide reasonable and necessary adjustments for all students, including students with disabilities.

The costs associated with the administration and coordination of the standard curriculum program is considered to be part of free instruction and must not be passed onto parents.

The legislation provides that a parent of a student with a disability or impairment is not required to contribute to the cost of the provision of additional support for the education of that student. Further information about parent payments is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pagesparentpayments.aspx

5.4 Procedure for Principals following eligible outcome

On receipt of notification from the Department that the student is eligible, the Principal is to:

- inform the parent/guardian/carer(s) of the outcome and set the date for a Student Support Group meeting
- convene the Student Support Group, and set and prioritise educational goals.

Regional approval is required for specialist school enrolments. Principals are advised to contact their Regional Disabilities Coordinator (See page 31) for further information.

5.5 Procedure for Principals following ineligible outcome

The Program for Students with Disabilities is a targeted program which supports students with disabilities with moderate to severe need by providing schools with supplementary resources.

The provision of reasonable adjustments is not reliant upon a student's eligibility for Program for Students with Disabilities funding, and, in circumstances where a student is ineligible for support through the Program for Students with Disabilities, reasonable adjustments must be made by schools when required, to assist students with a disability participate in their education. For this group of students, modifications to their learning program or access to intervention programs may be required.

Schools are allocated resources through their Student Resource Package to facilitate the development and delivery of teaching and learning programs for all students. Each school is responsible for the effective use of resources for the students in its care and has flexibility to determine the most appropriate learning program for individual students, including the use of support staff, as appropriate, to achieve educational outcomes.

On receipt of notification from the Department that the student is not eligible, the Principal is to:

- inform the parent/guardian/carer(s) of the outcome assuring them that the needs of their child will be met by the school
- set a date for a Student Support Group meeting
- convene the Student Support Group, discuss the support needs of the student, and set and prioritise educational goals
- contact the Regional Disabilities Coordinator for feedback as to why the application did not meet the criteria for eligibility and ensure the parent is informed.

Victorian government schools also have access to a range of student support services, including psychologists, social workers, youth workers, speech pathologists, and visiting teachers, to help cater for all students and particularly those with additional needs. Access to this service is not dependent on eligibility for the Program for Students with Disabilities. For information on Student Support Service Officers see www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/ssso.aspx

Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) is a resource that allows teachers in primary, secondary and specialist schools to effectively assess, monitor and respond to a student's abilities, where students are working below Level 1 of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), including students who are not supported through the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Schools can use the ABLES tools and draw on a set of developmental learning pathways, to develop individual learning plans tailored to meet students' learning needs. Information about ABLES is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/ables.aspx

5.6 Appeal process

An appeal process exists for any application deemed ineligible. After following the process in Section 5.5 the Principal may wish to lodge an appeal with the Student Inclusion & Engagement Division on behalf of the Student Support Group. To pursue this option, the Principal must be able to substantiate his/her concern by providing additional clinical or professional evidence that was not included in the original application or outline the grounds upon which he/she believe there were process deficiencies.

Only one appeal can be submitted per application. An appeal:

- can only be submitted for an application that has been deemed ineligible
- must be lodged within 15 school days of receipt of the outcome of the application

The appeal should contain a covering letter from the school principal, as well as supporting clinical or professional evidence. The covering letter should clearly state that it is an appeal, and outline the reasons for the appeal. No Application Summary Form or online application is required. Appeals are to be submitted to:

Director, Disability and Inclusion

Student Inclusion & Engagement Division
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
GPO Box 4367
Melbourne 3001

The Director, Disability and Inclusion, will coordinate a panel to assess all appeals. The outcome of this assessment will be communicated to the Principal as soon as possible.

For information about whether it would be appropriate to request an adjustment to the level of resources allocated, see the section on reappraisals (See page 16).

5.7 Disability Standards – ‘reasonable adjustments’

Under section 32 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education. To comply, an education provider must make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to accommodate a student with a disability.

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student’s learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

When planning an adjustment for the student, the school should consult with the parent/guardian/carer(s) and, where appropriate, the student, through the Student Support Group process, about the proposed adjustment and consider issues such as whether the adjustment is reasonable, the extent to which the adjustment would achieve its intended aim, and whether there is any other reasonable adjustment that would be more suitable.

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 set benchmarks for education and training providers with which all Victorian government schools must comply. These benchmarks include the right to comparable access, services and facilities, and the right to participate in education and training unimpeded by discrimination, including on the basis of stereotyped beliefs about the abilities and choices of students with disabilities.

The Standards cover:

- enrolment
- participation
- curriculum development
- student support services
- the elimination of harassment and victimisation.

Effective schools have high expectations for all learners, and recognise that all students have the potential to learn.

To maximise opportunities for students with disabilities and additional learning needs to succeed, policy and practice should reflect:

- collaboration between teachers and students, parent/guardian/carer(s), education and health professionals to develop criteria for agreed understandings and responses to a student's behaviours, communication skills and learning needs
- curriculum-based Individual Learning Plans developed by a Student Support Group that set out the student's short-term and long-term learning goals
- teaching and learning strategies that take account of a student's background, experiences and individual goals
- opportunities for the student to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours in a range of domains and contexts
- opportunities for all students to participate in classroom activities with other students.

Further information about the Disability Standards for Education is available at www.deewr.gov.au/disability-standards-education

6. Further information

6.1 Websites

Program for Students with Disabilities

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/pages/disabilityprogram.aspx

Autism Friendly Learning

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/pages/autism.aspx

Interpreting and translating

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/interpreting.aspx

Curriculum Planning (Students with a Disability or Additional Learning Need)

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/needs/pages/assessment.aspx

Ability Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES)

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/ables.aspx

Futures for Young Adults

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/forms-and-templates/futures-for-young-adults-transition-to-employment-registration

6.2 Organisations providing support

AMAZE 1300 308 699

www.amaze.org.au

Association for Children with a Disability (03) 9818 2000

(or for rural callers) **1800 654 013**

www.acd.org.au

ADEC (Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities) Inc. (03) 9480 1666

www.adec.org.au

Blind Citizens Australia (03) 9372 6400

(or for country callers) **1800 033 660**

TTY: **03 9376 9275**

www.bca.org.au

Down Syndrome Victoria

www.downsyndromevictoria.org.au/

Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc. (03) 9320 9555

(or for country callers) **1800 656 632**

www.mda.org.au

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

Spina Bifida Foundation (03) 9663 0075

www.sbfv.org.au

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

www.starvictoria.org.au

Tourettes Syndrome Association of Victoria (03) 9845 2700

www.tsavic.org.au

Victorian Council of School Organisations (03) 9429 5900

www.viccco.org.au

Parents Victoria (03) 9380 2158

(or for country callers) **1800 032 023**

www.parentsvictoria.asn.au

6.3 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Contacts

Regional Offices

For regional contact details see

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/regions.aspx

Central Office

Student Inclusion & Engagement Division

Level 1, 33 St Andrews Place

East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 9637 2032

Email: disability.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

6.4 Assessment service provider

Lewis & Lewis

PO Box 476

Brunswick 3056

Telephone: (03) 9380 5742

Fax: (03) 9380 6883

Email: lewis@mira.net

www.lewisandlewis.com.au

Appendix A

Program for students with disabilities categories, criteria and supporting evidence

Physical disability

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
<p>A A significant physical disability;</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>B A significant health impairment;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>C Requires regular paramedical support.</p> <p><i>Note: Schools can refer students with a mild physical disability or health impairment for support by a visiting teacher.</i></p> <p><i>Note: It is recommended that a medical management plan be developed for any student with a health impairment.</i></p>	<p>A statement detailing the disability or health impairment from a paediatrician;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>A statement detailing paramedical service requirements from a registered physiotherapist or occupational therapist.</p> <p><i>Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement must be provided by the student's parent/guardian/carer(s).</i></p> <p><i>Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of physical disability/health impairment, available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p>

Visual impairment

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
<p>A Visual acuity less than 6/60 with corrected vision;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>B That visual fields are reduced to a measured arc of less than 10 degrees.</p> <p><i>Note: Partially sighted students may obtain support from visiting teachers and/ or the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.</i></p> <p>Eligibility for these services is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual acuity of less than 6/18 with corrected vision <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual fields reduced to a measured arc of less than 20 degrees 	<p>Assessment/report from the Educational Vision Assessment Clinic;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Assessment/report from the student's ophthalmologist.</p> <p>OBTAINABLE FROM:</p> <p>Educational Vision Assessment Clinic PO Box 201 Nunawading Vic 3131 Telephone (03) 9841 0807</p> <p><i>Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of visual impairment available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p>

Hearing impairment

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
<p>A A bilateral sensori-neural hearing loss that is moderate/ severe/profound.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>B The student requires intervention or assistance to communicate.</p> <p><i>Note: Schools can refer students with a mild bilateral hearing loss for support by a visiting teacher.</i></p>	<p>An audiogram with a written statement is required from a qualified audiologist.</p> <p><i>Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of hearing impairment, available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p>

Severe behaviour disorder

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
<p>A Student displays disturbed behaviour to a point where special support in a withdrawal group or special class/unit is required;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>B Student displays behaviour so deviant and with such frequency and severity that they require regular psychological or psychiatric treatment;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>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;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>D A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years.</p>	<p>Evidence is required for each of the criteria. Evidence provided should be coordinated by a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development nominated psychologist.</p> <p><i>Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of severe behaviour disorder, available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement(s) must be provided by the student's parent/guardian/carer(s).</i></p> <p>OBTAINABLE FROM:</p> <p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Student Support Services, parent/guardian/ carer(s) held information and/or Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.</p>

Intellectual disability

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
<p>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;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>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;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>C A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where 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. <p><i>Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of intellectual disability, available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement must be provided by the student's parent/guardian/carer(s).</i></p> <p>OBTAINABLE FROM:</p> <p>Parent/guardian/carer(s) held information or the outsourced assessment service provided by the Department. Information regarding referrals for assessment can be obtained from the service providers. For contact details see page 28.</p>

Autism Spectrum Disorder

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
<p>A A diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>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 behaviours;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>C Significant deficits in language skills established by a comprehensive speech pathology assessment demonstrating language skills equivalent to a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean.</p> <p><i>Note: A Student Support Group should be established and an Individual Learning Plan developed for any student with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, regardless of whether they meet the above eligibility criteria.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidisciplinary evidence provided by professionals with experience and knowledge in the assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder • The multidisciplinary diagnosis will include a comprehensive report from a child psychiatrist or paediatrician, and concurring reports from a psychologist (including a comprehensive report of a Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale assessment), a speech pathologist (including a comprehensive language/ pragmatic language assessment), and where appropriate an occupational therapist. <p><i>Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder, available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p> <p>OBTAINABLE FROM: Parent/guardian/carer held information or specialised teams, e.g. Alfred CYMHS, Royal Children’s Hospital Integrated Mental Health Program, Eastern Health CYMHS, Austin CAMHS, Early in Life Mental Health Service and regional CAMHS and CYMHS teams. CAMHS contact details are available on www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/camhs/</p>

Severe language disorder with critical educational needs

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
<p>A A score of three or more standard deviations below the mean for the student’s age in expressive and/ or receptive language skills on TWO of the recommended tests;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>B The severity of the disorder cannot be accounted for by hearing impairment, social emotional factors, low intellectual functioning or cultural factors;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>C A history and evidence of an on-going problem with the expectation of continuation during school years;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>D A non-verbal score not lower than one standard deviation below the mean on one comprehensive intellectual test, with a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between verbal (VIQ/VCI) and non verbal (PIQ/PRI) functioning (VIQ/VCI:PIQ/PRI);</p> <p>AND</p> <p>E Demonstrated critical educational needs equating to Program for Students with Disabilities funding levels three and above as determined by the validated results of the Educational Needs Questionnaire.</p>	<p>The assessment must be carried out by a speech pathologist and evidence of severe language disorder with critical educational needs must be detailed to meet the relevant criteria. Evidence must be provided which excludes the factors outlined in Criterion B.</p> <p><i>Note: Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of Severe Language Disorder with Critical Educational Need, available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Students with Childhood Apraxia of Speech may be eligible for support under this category. Professionals are requested to refer to the Department guidelines for assessment of Severe Language Disorder with Critical Educational Needs, available from Regional Disabilities Coordinators.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Written agreement for a formal assessment or statement must be provided by the student’s parent/ guardian/carer(s).</i></p> <p>OBTAINABLE FROM: Parent/guardian/carer(s) held information (including reports from early intervention programs, hospital paediatric services, speech pathologists, audiologists, registered psychologists) or the outsourced assessment service provided by the Department. Information regarding referrals for assessment can be obtained from the service providers. For contact details see page 28.</p>

Appendix B

Educational Needs Questionnaire

The level of additional resources is informed by the ENQ. The key indicators within this questionnaire include observable abilities/competencies of the student. The application must provide evidence, such as reports from relevant professionals, to support the scoring of the ENQ. 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. The numbers chosen must be transferred to the **Application Summary Form** (See Appendix E).

A copy of the full Educational Needs Questionnaire should not be included in the application.

Mobility



- 1 – No impairment
- 2 – Walks short distances independently
- 3 – Walks aided (walker, crutches, assistance of a person etc.)
- 4 – Propels own wheelchair, bears weight for transfers
- 5 – Propels own wheelchair, total assistance with transfers
- 6 – Uses electric wheelchair
- 7 – Unable to propel wheelchair
- 8 – Not mobile due to overriding medical conditions

Examples

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.
- 7 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.
- 8 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.

For Student Support Group use only. Do not attach this questionnaire to the application.

Fine motor skills



- 1 – No impairment
- 2 – Impairment present, minimal effect on movement
- 3 – Impairment present, requires occasional assistance
- 4 – Impairment present, requires frequent assistance/adaptations
- 5 – Impairment present, requires constant assistance/adaptations
- 6 – 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

- 2 The student can manage regular classroom activities. Writing may be clumsy but can be read.
- 3 The student is clumsy with small objects and may require simple modifications such as a standard pencil grip or a larger pencil.
- 4 Adaptations designed by teachers to assist fine motor skills are required on a frequent basis.
- 5 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.
- 6 The student is unable to move any part of the body without the full assistance of another person.

Receptive communication



- 1 – Comprehends conversational speech
- 2 – Comprehension delayed, understands simple instructions
- 3 – Comprehends phrases with gestural cues/modelling prompts
- 4 – Limited comprehension, one to two words
- 5 – Comprehends signs/ gestures/ modelling prompts
- 6 – Does not comprehend verbal, visual or gestural communication

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

Examples

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 The student can only understand simple instructions such as 'stand' and 'sit' but does not understand simple phrases – even with gestures.
- 5 The student understands signs or gestures such as 'stop' or 'come' but does not have any understanding of any verbal communication.
- 6 The student has no understanding of simple one-word commands using either voice, visual or gestural cues.

For Student Support Group use only. Do not attach this questionnaire to the application.

Expressive communication



- 1 – Age appropriate
- 2 – Speech is intelligible to familiar listeners
- 3 – Speech is intelligible but not presented in an ordered manner
- 4 – Speech is unintelligible even to familiar listeners
- 5 – Combines signs and gestures to communicate
- 6 – Uses augmentative communication aid or alternative communication system
- 7 – Has no expressive communication

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

Examples

- 2 The student's speech can be understood by familiar listeners in the school setting, e.g. close friends or teachers.
- 3 The student has no articulation difficulties, but speech is not presented in an ordered manner, e.g. 'Drink want I.'
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.
- 7 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

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

Frequency

- 1 – Not appropriate
- 2 – Occasional (e.g. six to twelve times a year)
- 3 – Episodic outbreaks of excess behaviour
- 4 – Frequent (e.g. five to six times a week)
- 5 – 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

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.

For Student Support Group use only. Do not attach this questionnaire to the application.

Safety



- 1 – Is capable of operating safely in most school environments
- 2 – Requires supervision in certain activities
- 3 – Requires constant supervision in a range of activities
- 4 – 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

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 The student cannot operate in the classroom and the playground unless constant supervision is provided.

Hearing



- 1 – No impairment
- 2 – Copes reasonably well with little difficulty hearing conversational speech
- 3 – Difficulty hearing conversational speech, particularly with background noise
- 4 – Aware of environmental sounds and some elements of speech only
- 5 – No useful hearing

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

- 2 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).
- 3 With whatever corrective or assisted device is provided, the student has difficulty in hearing conversational speech, particularly with background noise.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.

For Student Support Group use only. Do not attach this questionnaire to the application.

Vision



- 1 – No impairment, including vision corrected to normal with glasses or contact lenses
- 2 – Difficulty with print, graphics or small objects OR at level of objects in environment
- 3 – Difficulty with print, graphics or small objects AND at level of objects in environment
- 4 – Uses tactile, auditory and/or voice-synthesised modes for access to, and production of, written work

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

Examples

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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)



- 1 – Independent
- 2 – Minimal supervision (formal program not needed)
- 3 – Instruction required with expected outcome of increased independence
- 4 – Assistance required for portions of an activity
- 5 – Full assistance required throughout all activities

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

Examples

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 The student is unable to dress, feed and toilet themselves without the full assistance of another person.

For Student Support Group use only. Do not attach this questionnaire to the application.

Medical



- 1 – No specialised medical needs at school
- 2 – Requires on-call medical attention for an infrequent but predictable medical condition at school, e.g. severe seizure that requires medical intervention
- 3 – Needs specialised or frequent support for ongoing medical procedures at school, e.g. catheterisation, daily injections, respirators
- 4 – Requires full-time medical attention throughout every school day

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

Examples

- 2 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.
- 3 Needs specialised or frequent support for ongoing medical procedures during school hours, e.g. daily medical procedures that require 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).
- 4 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



- 1 – Able to access education programs provided within the year level
- 2 – Impairment, requires occasional assistance in skill acquisition
- 3 – Impairment, requires frequent assistance/adaptations in skill acquisition
- 4 – Impairment, requires substantial assistance/adaptations in skill acquisition

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

Examples

- 2 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.
- 3 Frequent modifications to the curriculum could involve the teacher having to break down the skill to be taught into small achievable skills.
- 4 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.

Transfer the number for each indicator to the Application Summary Form – Education Needs Questionnaire (available online at: www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/handbook.aspx) and enter the numbers online in Program for Students with Disabilities Management Systems – Do not attach the full Questionnaire to the application.

Appendix C

Student Education Program Summary Statement

Provide a summary of the key educational goals of the student's knowledge, skills and behaviours that the Application SSG (for new applications) considers to be achievable and high priority for the student to acquire or maintain over the next year. Indicate how the additional resources from the Program for Students with Disabilities would be used to support the student's learning.

For more information on the SSG process, see www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/studentssupportguidelines2013.pdf

A **current** Student Education Program Summary Statement must be attached to the hard copy of the Application Summary Form for every Application submitted, and entered online in PSDMS www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/PSDMS/Home.aspx

Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) can inform the Student Education Program Summary Statement by enabling schools to develop individual learning plans to meet the learning needs of students who are working below Level 1 of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

For more information about ABLES, see www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/ables.aspx

Program for Students with Disabilities Goals and Strategies

Student Education Program Summary Statement

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Appendix D

Privacy and Security Notice

Schools are required to provide the following statement, in writing, to the parent/guardian/carer(s) of students for which applications have been prepared and submitted:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to complying with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*, the *Health Records Act 2001* and other relevant Acts. As such the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality and security of personal information provided as part of the Program for Students with Disabilities application process.

Personal information is collected as part of the application to enable the Department to:

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

Disclosure of information

The information schools provide is used exclusively to assess the educational resourcing and services a student may require. It is not disclosed to anyone else without written consent. However, there are some occasions when we are required by law to disclose information the Department holds about students.

Security and retention of information

All information provided on students is kept secure and treated as confidential. We respect the right to privacy and will only release information about a student with written parental consent. All Department of Education and Early Childhood Development staff handling such information are required by law to respect privacy. Any information provided that is not required will be destroyed.

Accessing information

A copy of all documentation provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as part of the Program for Students with Disabilities application process is held by the student's school. This should be made available to a student's parent/guardian/carer(s) on their request. If a school cannot assist the student's parent/guardian/carer(s) for whatever reason, the student's parent/guardian/carer(s) should contact the Disability Coordinator at the nearest Regional Office. See www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/regions.aspx

When requested information is not provided

If a school or a student's parent/guardian/carer(s) chooses to not to provide information that the Department needs to assess the resources a student requires, the Department may not be able to provide the student with the resources he/she requires. Schools should only send in copies of relevant information.

