

Parent resources

The department is committed to supporting you and making sure your child gets the best possible education.

We are well-prepared to support students with disability and additional learning and support needs, and our staff are ready to answer your questions.

There is a place for every child at their local public school, and all children have the right to enrol in their local public school.

This pack has been put together to help you support your child at school. It includes information on the following:

The learning and support journey

An overview of how our schools will help support your child throughout their schooling.

Requesting support

Talking to your local school about getting additional learning support for your child.

Available support

An overview of the wide range of support options available in NSW public schools.

Personalised learning and support for your child

How your child's teachers and other school staff can work with you to meet your child's educational needs.

The NDIS

How your local school can work with the NDIS to support your child.

Access requests

What they are and why your child's school may start this process for your child.

Getting in touch

Contacting your local school, your local educational office, and the department.

Your details:

Date:

School name:

Parent/carer's name:

Student name:

Key contact and details:

Notes:

The learning and support journey

Supporting your child's learning needs throughout their school years is an ongoing process.

Step 1: Identify your child's needs

1. You and your child's local school identify what your child's needs are. This may happen before your child starts school or at any point during their education.
2. You can provide information about your child if you have it, and your child's school may collect additional data. This can include information from your child's preschool, allied health providers, paediatricians, NDIS-funded early childhood partners or any other key workers.

Step 2: School adjustments and additional support provisions

1. Teachers in your child's school will talk with you to identify possible adjustments for your child.
2. Most students will attend their local school and be supported there.
3. If your child has complex needs and meets eligibility criteria, the school can apply for additional support, with your agreement. This includes Integration Funding Support (IFS), early intervention, itinerant support teacher hearing/vision or enrolment in a support class in a mainstream school or a school for specific purposes (SSP).

Step 3: Review regularly

1. Together, you and your child's school will discuss the current adjustments for your child to make sure they're still meeting your child's needs and are still helping them achieve their potential. These reviews usually happen during Term 3 each year, but you can also request one at other times.

What are adjustments?

Adjustments are ways that teachers and schools make changes to teaching and learning programs, lessons, assessments or the school environment for children with disability and additional learning and support needs. This allows all students to access and participate in education on the same basis.

How we will work with you

We want to ensure that all children and young people attending NSW public schools are known, valued and cared for and that they:

- are welcomed and included in their local school community
- enjoy a wide range of experiences
- learn to their fullest capability by accessing the same curriculum-based learning outcomes as their peers, in developmentally appropriate ways
- receive a quality education, with expertise available to support access to the full curriculum in a way that is relevant to them
- build friendships, interact with other students, and feel a sense of belonging.

In collaboration with you and your child, teachers:

- will discuss your child's strengths, interests and areas of need
- will give feedback on your child's progress
- will help to explain what personalised learning and support for your child might look like, and may develop this support for your child
- will discuss specific learning adjustments that could be made to support your child
- will keep in mind that adjustments can relate to curriculum, instruction and/or the school environment
- may suggest any community supports or allied health providers who may be able to support you and your child.



Personalised learning and support

Personalised learning and support helps a wide range of students with additional learning and support needs.

You and your child's school – and other professionals where needed – will work together to identify your child's educational needs and determine how the school will provide adjustments and support to meet them.

Planning for your child's education should consider their strengths and interests, which are important for engaging your child at school. It should also take into account their areas of need and set out a path to help them achieve their goals.

A plan created to assist your child may be referred to in a number of ways, and could be called a personalised learning and support plan, an individual education plan or an individual learning plan.

Your child's plan will be reviewed regularly by your child's school, in consultation with you, and adjusted to meet your child's needs over time.

Identifying your child's needs

The school will develop an understanding of your child's needs by talking to you and looking at information the school already has about your child.

They will consider things like your child's reading and numeracy skills, their language and communications skills, social skills, their school attendance, their health care needs and their personal and cultural background.

Any documentation you have from medical and other professionals such as doctors, nurses, psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, audiologists or early childhood educators will also be taken into account.

If your child has an NDIS plan you can let the school know, this may help with planning within the school setting.

How you can work with your child's school

All schools will provide support for your child, although personalised planning may not be necessary in all cases.

You will be invited to provide input into any plan or adjustment for your child's education. These should be updated regularly, most schools do this every school year and as your child's needs change.

Staff at your child's local school will:

- discuss your child's strengths, interests and areas of need with you
- help to explain what personalised learning and support for your child might look like
- discuss specific learning adjustments that could be made to support your child, such as adjustments to the curriculum, learning resources, the way the curriculum is taught, assessment, or your child's classroom environment
- develop a personalised plan for your child's learning and support
- suggest any support groups or external providers who may be able to support you and your child.

When you meet with your local school to discuss your child's personalised learning, they may consider your child's:

- academic progress
- physical, behavioural, emotional and wellbeing needs within the school and home environment
- ability to study and care for themselves independently
- social interactions with their classmates.

Before these meetings, you might find it helpful to think about how you see your child's future at school and their life after school. Your child's plan should be helping them work towards these goals.

You can also talk to your child about how they feel about going to school and any worries they might be having. Their friends and siblings might also be able to give you some insights into how they are progressing.



Available support

There are a wide range of support options available to your child in NSW public schools.

Your local public school is the first point of contact and your voice is important. You can discuss your wishes for your child's education with your local school principal, as well as your child's specific needs and the different support options that are available. This should happen before enrolling.

Support for your child in mainstream classes

Your local public school is well-prepared to support students with disability and additional learning and support needs, and staff are ready to answer your questions.

Most students with disability are supported directly in their local school in mainstream classes. This is done through personalised learning and support and adjustments.

Your child's teachers will talk to you about your child's strengths, interests and needs. They can make changes to the way they teach in the classroom to help support your child's learning.

All schools are given resources to be able to access a specialist learning and support teacher and funding that the school can use flexibility to support their students.

Most NSW public schools have a learning and support team to work with you and your child, your child's teachers and other professionals.

If your child has complex health care needs, you can work with the school to set up a formalised health care plan.

Personalised learning and support

Personalised learning and support refers to the adjustments teachers and other school staff make to support your child's learning in class.

These adjustments can be changes to teaching and learning programs, lessons, assessments or the school environment. These adjustments allow all students to access and participate in education on the same basis.

To create a personalised learning and support plan for your child, teachers, support staff and other professionals will work together with you to assess your child's education needs.

The plan is reviewed regularly and can be changed if your child's needs change.

Requesting physical changes to your child's school

Your child's school may be able to make changes to the physical environment to meet your child's needs at any time during their schooling.

If possible, talk to your local public school before your child starts school about making sure the physical environment is accessible.

If you believe the school may need to make changes to the building such as the bathrooms or ramps before your child arrives, you should contact the school two years before your child would be starting.

Additional support

If your child needs additional support or specialist support provisions, your school will talk to you about the options for your child. They might suggest applying for Integration Funding Support (IFS) or a placement for your child in a support class in a mainstream school or a school for specific purposes (SSP).

Some targeted and specialist programs or support services will require students to have a confirmed disability which meets the department's disability criteria.

Integration Funding Support (IFS)

If your child meets the department's disability criteria, extra support may be provided in mainstream classrooms through Integration Funding Support .

The funding could be used to provide extra teaching staff or school learning support officers (SLSOs, also known as teacher's aides), or it could mean your child's classroom teacher is given more time for professional learning and to plan for your child.

SLSOs work under the direction and supervision of your child's classroom teacher. They provide assistance to the teacher for students with disability and additional learning and support needs at school.

IFS is only considered if the learning and support team decides that the school needs additional resources to provide adjustments for your child, or the most appropriate resource is extra teacher time and/or extra SLSO time. You will be part of this discussion.

Itinerant support teachers

Itinerant support teachers hearing and vision work with students who have a confirmed sensory disability prior to school and in NSW public schools. They may visit your child at specific times throughout the week, and may work in partnership with your child's class teacher.

Support teachers transition help teachers and high school students in mainstream schools and SSPs – as well as their parents and carers – with the process of moving from high school to adult life.

Support classes

For children with moderate to high needs, places in support classes in mainstream schools and SSPs are determined by a panel who assess the needs of all children in the area. You cannot enrol your child directly into these classes, but your local school can lodge an access request to apply for a placement for your child.

Starting your child in a particular school setting does not mean they need to stay there. You can review your child's placement every year, or as needed.

You can also decline a place if it's not what you want for your child.

Other forms of support

Your child may also:

- Use assistive technology
- Require specialised equipment that is not assistive technology, e.g. standing desks, hoists, etc.
- Be supported by NDIS service providers in their class if this is approved by the school's principal and your child needs this assistance to help them learn
- May be offered or apply for disability provisions for exams.



Requesting support

NSW public schools work with families and carers every day to identify and support children who require additional support at any stage of their time at school.

This support can be for a short time or it can be for their whole time at school and it can change over time.

You can ask about extra support at any time during your child's life at school, including in the middle of the school year.

If you would like to discuss additional learning and support for your child, the first step is always to contact your child's school and ask who the best person is to speak to.

All schools are able to adapt the way they teach students to give support to children with disability or additional learning and support needs. You may hear school staff talking about these changes as 'adjustments'.



You and your child can work with the school to:

- identify their strengths, interests, and areas for development
- plan ways to adjust and support your child's learning
- monitor and review your child's progress.

Support at school is flexible and caters for each child's individual needs. You and your family can ask questions and make requests while you plan how your child can be best supported at school.

Some things you can discuss with the school could include:

- the factors affecting your child's learning
- any current support or adjustments the school may be providing
- what other supports or adjustments your child could need.

Your child can also be involved in these plans and discussions.

Your child's school may recommend or discuss the following support with you:

- Integration Funding Support (IFS)
- support classes in mainstream schools and schools for specific purposes
- itinerant support teachers vision and hearing
- early intervention support.

To get some kinds of additional support, you may need to work with the school so that they can submit an access request.



Access requests

An access request form is a document that is submitted by your local school or educational office with your input. It is used to apply for Integration Funding Support or a support class placement if your child meets the department's disability criteria and this is what you want. You will be notified about the result of the application.

Disability confirmation

If an application has been created for additional funding or support for your child, a disability confirmation is also required.

It confirms your child's eligibility for additional support services or resources or that an enrolment in a support class can be allocated.

You can talk to your school counsellor or school psychologist about this document and how it is reviewed.

Access requests

What is an access request and when would my child need one?

Local schools are well equipped to provide support for every student. Your local school is the best source of information about what kinds of support would be most appropriate to help your child to get the most out of their education.

What is an access request?

If your child has moderate to high needs, your child's school may apply for additional support using an access request.

This is a way for the school to access specific types of additional support for your child, such as extra training for class teachers or a placement for your child in a support class.

Most students with disability and learning and support needs will not need an access request submitted for them because their local school is well equipped to meet their needs.

In cases where one is required, your school manages the application process. They will talk to you and get your input about your child's needs and the types of support that you would prefer depending on eligibility.

Your child's school will then submit the application to be assessed by an independent group of experts in your school's local area. This group – referred to as a placement panel – will consider the request and give their decision about it to your local school.

No matter what the outcome is, your child will continue to be offered support at their local school.



What is a placement panel?

A placement panel is a group made up of specialist staff from Student Support Services and schools who meet at the local education office to consider all the requests for support class placements for schools within that area.



What kind of support might need an access request?

The following forms of support could require an access request:

- Integration Funding Support (IFS) - This provides additional funding to support students in mainstream classes in their local school. This funding may be used to provide training for your child's teacher or employing additional staff.
- A placement for your child in a support class in a mainstream school or in a school for specific purposes (SSPs). Most support classes are in local, mainstream schools, although not all types of support classes are available in all areas.
- Early intervention resource - transition to school planning with an Early Intervention class teacher.

It's important that you are involved in this application process by talking to your child's school about your child's needs. You can involve a support person to help you when you are meeting with the school or you can ask for the school to arrange for an interpreter for you.

When might my child's school need to submit an access request?

An access request could be submitted before your child starts school or at any time during their schooling.

If your child is in Year 5, the school will need to submit an access request for a placement in a support class in high school. However, this does not apply if your child attends a school for specific purposes or a central school.

The NDIS and your child's education

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is an Australia-wide scheme to support people aged 0 to 65 years with permanent and significant disability.

Through the NDIS, people with disability can access 'reasonable and necessary' supports to achieve their personal goals. Reasonable and necessary supports are those that help participants build their skills and abilities so they can engage in education, employment and community activities.

The NDIS gives participants and their families more choice and control over their disability supports and how those supports are provided.

The NDIS is managed by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) which is responsible for determining eligibility for the scheme and for developing personalised support plans for participants.

If your child becomes a participant in the NDIS they will have an individual plan that lists their goals, as well as the funding they have received to purchase supports and services that will help to achieve their goals.

How will our local school work with the NDIS to help support my child?

Contacting the NDIS

Your local school can help you get in touch with the local area coordinator to check if your child is eligible for NDIS support.

If you choose to submit an application, the school can add to it by giving you any existing information they have about your child – such as personalised learning plans and school-based assessments of your child's educational needs – which you can request. The school is not required to complete new assessments or produce new reports for the NDIS application process.

[ndis.gov.au/contact](https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact)

NDIS-funded service providers at school

Some children and young people with disability benefit from allied health and specialist therapies, like physiotherapy, speech pathology and occupational therapy. In most cases, these therapies can be delivered at home or in a therapist's office. Some therapies may be best delivered in school during school time.

Schools work with both parents and carers and allied health providers to meet the needs of students and support their learning and development. This may include sharing information about the student and what activities might work best to support them. Where it is suitable this may mean working directly with the provider in the classroom.

If your child is being supported by the NDIS, there may be times when you can ask for an NDIS-funded service provider to work with your child at your local school.

The school's principal makes the decision about if and when these services can be provided during school hours and will make sure that the flow of the school day is not interrupted.

The principal's decision will consider the educational needs of your child, the impact on your child's learning programs, the school's operational requirements and their duty of care obligations towards all students and staff.

Working together

You can also share your child's NDIS goals and aspirations plan with your school, so it can be used to further your child's learning and development. You do not have to share your child's NDIS plan with the school if you do not want to.

If you ask your local school and it is operationally convenient for them, they can take part in your child's NDIS planning or review process in person or over the phone.



Getting in contact with us

For general enquiries about disability support, you should contact your local school first - even if your child is not enrolled yet.

If you feel as though your question has not been answered or you would like further information, you should contact your local education office and ask for the Student Support Services learning and wellbeing team.

Contacting your local Department of Education office

Below, you can find the contact information for our local network offices across NSW.

Office location	Phone	Email
Adamstown	02 4904 3900	adamstown.office@det.nsw.edu.au
Albury	02 6051 4300	alburyofficeadmin@det.nsw.edu.au
Armidale	02 6776 4100	ruralnortharmidale@det.nsw.edu.au
Arncliffe	02 9582 2800	metrosoutharncliffe@det.nsw.edu.au
Batemans Bay	02 4475 3300	BatemansBayEO@det.nsw.edu.au
Bathurst	02 6334 8200	psnswbathurst@det.nsw.edu.au
Broken Hill	08 8082 5700	FarwestbrokenhillEO@det.nsw.edu.au
Campbelltown	02 4633 2700	campbelltownnsc@det.nsw.edu.au
Coffs Harbour	02 6656 6666	ruralnorthcoffsharbour@det.nsw.edu.au
Dee Why	02 9982 0500	metronorthdeewhy@det.nsw.edu.au
Deniliquin	03 5898 3700	ruralsouthandwestdeniliquin@det.nsw.edu.au
Dubbo	02 6883 6300	psnswdubbo@det.nsw.edu.au
Foster	02 6591 7600	ruralnorthforster@det.nsw.edu.au
Gateshead West	02 4088 3560	regionalnorthgatesheadwest@det.nsw.edu.au
Glenfield	02 9203 9900	glenfieldEO@det.nsw.edu.au
Goonellabah	02 6623 5900	goonellabah.office@det.nsw.edu.au
Grafton	02 6641 5000	ruralnorthgrafton@det.nsw.edu.au
Griffith	02 6961 8100	griffithofficeadmin@det.nsw.edu.au
Macquarie Park	02 9886 7000	macquariepark.psnsw@det.nsw.edu.au
Maitland	02 4931 3500	maitland.office@det.nsw.edu.au
Miranda	02 9531 3900	metrosouthmiranda@det.nsw.edu.au
Moree	02 6757 3000	ruralnorthmoree@det.nsw.edu.au
Murwillumbah	02 6670 2300	murwillumbah.office@det.nsw.edu.au
Newcastle	02 4924 9900	regionalnorthnewcastle@det.nsw.edu.au

Office location	Phone	Email
Port Macquarie	02 6586 6900	ruralnorthportmacquarie@det.nsw.edu.au
Queanbeyan	02 6200 5000	QueanbeyanEO@det.nsw.edu.au
Riverwood	02 9408 8900	metrosouthriverwood@det.nsw.edu.au
Ringrose	02 8848 4902	swsr.faadmin@det.nsw.edu.au
St Peters	02 9582 5800	metrosouthstpeters@det.nsw.edu.au
Strathfield	02 9582 6300	metrosouthstrathfield@det.nsw.edu.au
Tamworth	02 6755 5000	ruralnorthtamworth@det.nsw.edu.au
Tuggerah	02 4357 5300	TuggerahEO@det.nsw.edu.au
Wagga Wagga	02 6937 3800	waggaeduadmin@det.nsw.edu.au
Warilla	02 4267 6100	PSNSWWarilla@det.nsw.edu.au
Wollongong	02 4247 1005	regionalsouthwollongong@det.nsw.edu.au

NDIS Coordinators

You may approach your child's school with questions about the NDIS, or for help to resolve issues with the scheme.

NDIS coordinators can provide advice and support to NSW public schools, help resolve NDIS-related issues, and deliver information sessions to school staff, parents and carers.

NDIS coordinators for NSW public schools are:

Office	Name	Phone
Nirimba Education Office	Fran Tinley	02 9208 7680
Coffs Harbour Education Office	Rachel Pregnell	02 6656 6638
Campbelltown Education Office	Susanne Andrews	02 4633 2700
Dubbo Education Office	Wendy English	02 6883 6314
Warilla Education Office	Angela Hay	02 4267 6165
State Office	Linda Cormack	02 7814 2982

Inclusive Education team state office

For general enquiries you can contact the Inclusive Education team on:

Phone: 02 7814 3879

Email: disability.support@det.nsw.edu.au

Assisted School Travel Program

To find out if your child is eligible for the Assisted School Travel Program and how to apply you should contact the principal of your school.

For general enquiries contact ASTP on:

Phone: 1300 338 278

Email: generalenquiries.astp@det.nsw.edu.au

Post: Locked Bag 9, Wollongong East, NSW 2520

Interpreter services

Interpreting and translation services are available to help you talk to your local school if you do not understand English well, or are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

National Relay Service

The National Relay Service is an Australia-wide phone service for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment.

Complaints, compliments, and suggestions

You can get in touch with the department to give us feedback about:

- any aspect of the services we provide
- any decision, including those about enrolment or support for your child's learning at school
- any practice, policy or procedure
- staff behaviour or conduct at your local school.

Any complaint you might make will be handled fairly, objectively and promptly, and at your local school level when it is possible.

Generally, your child's teacher is your first point of contact to make a complaint. You can also refer the issue to your school's learning and support team as a next step.

If you have already raised your complaint with your child's teacher and the learning and support team, you can ask to speak to the school principal or another member of the school executive team.

Sometimes, your complaint may not be able to be resolved straight away and we may ask you to put the complaint in writing. If this is the case, include specific details and tell us what you would like to happen as a result of the complaint.

If you are unhappy with the outcomes from this, or wish to take the matter further, you can request the contact details for your local Student Support team from your local school.

This team is your next point of contact with the department to raise any issues or concerns you may have around your child's education.

education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback