Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

Planning for Personalised Learning and Support: A National Resource

Based on the Disability Standards for Education 2005

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Introduction

Schools have responsibility for maximising the learning outcomes and wellbeing of all students and for providing access to a high-quality education that is free from discrimination. All children are entitled to quality education experiences. Students should feel that they are included in an environment of high expectation where they are both able and enabled to learn.

At the core of inclusive education is the human right to education for all, which is pronounced in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948 (UNESCO). This resource supports inclusive education.

Inclusive education means that all students are welcomed by their school in age-appropriate settings and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school. Inclusive education is about how schools are developed and designed, including classrooms, programmes and activities so that all students learn and participate together. In order to create an inclusive environment, changes and modifications may need to be made to help a student or group of students participate on the same basis as other students. The changes or modifications made will reflect the assessed individual needs of the student and can be made in both the classroom and whole school setting.

Modifications are often referred to as adjustments to meet individual needs. Adjustments can be made to a range of areas to support an individual student, including but not limited to the way that teaching and learning is provided, changes to the classroom or school environment, the way that students' progress and achievements are assessed and reported to parents, the provision of personal care and planning to meet individual needs, as well as professional learning for teachers and support staff.

The legal responsibilities of educators who work with students with disability are outlined in the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards). The Standards seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. The Standards were formulated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). The Standards clarify and elaborate the legal obligations of all education providers to students with disability under the DDA. The Standards also set out how education is to be made accessible to students with disability to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as students without disability, including the provision of 'reasonable adjustment' where necessary to enable this.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) is a commitment to action in education, and was agreed to by all Education Ministers. It states that all young Australians should be successful learners. For this to be achieved, educators need to provide personalised learning that aims to fulfil the diverse capabilities of each student.

Schools demonstrate respect and support for the learning, strengths and needs of students from diverse, linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. Effective teachers plan how to best respond to the needs and interests of their students.

Purpose of this document

Personalised learning requires attention to the unique needs of all students of all abilities, acknowledging that each have different learning needs. This resource provides guidance around personalised learning and support.

Guiding Principles

Every student has their own aspirations, learning needs, strengths and interests and it is the responsibility of schools to respond to every student and their unique characteristics, with high expectations for achievement. Providing personalised learning and targeted support is one way they achieve this.

The principles underlying personalised learning and support involve:

1. **Quality teaching and learning**

   - All students can learn.

   - Every child has a right to a high quality education.

   - Effective teachers provide engaging and rigorous learning experiences for all students.

   - A safe and stimulating environment is integral to enabling students to explore and build on their talents and achieve relevant learning outcomes.

   - For students with disability and additional learning needs, reasonable adjustments should be made where required.

2. **Consultation**

   - Effective consultation requires meaningful participation by all contributors and should recognise the input of all participants; the student, their family or carer, school personnel, other professionals and other relevant people.

   - The Disability Standards for Education 2005 state that, before the school makes an adjustment for a student, the student or the family/carer of the student must be consulted about the type of adjustments required.

   - Consultation should be tailored to the needs of the student and their family or carer. It should involve consideration of learning needs and strengths, aspirations, cultural, social and religious diversity.

- Decision-making processes can include the student and people who support the student on a regular basis. This can include parents, carers, other family members, other professionals and relevant school staff. Decisions should be clearly explained to and understood by all people involved in this process.

- Families are able to make decisions about the nature of their involvement in the consultation process.

3. **Collaborative practice and planning**

- Meeting the learning and support needs for all students is the responsibility of the school principal, teachers and the school community working together.

- Collaborative planning is enhanced by focusing on goals, strategies, learning needs and strengths, and achievement.

- Planning should be clear, timely and transparent for everyone involved.

- Decision-making processes should be inclusive and understood by the student and their family or carer, school staff and other relevant people.

Process

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) is a global effort to promote the equal and active participation of all people with disability. Australia ratified this convention, which means that it is committed to promoting, protecting, and ensuring that people with disability are given full equality under the law. The process of personalised learning and support is in line with the Convention, and aims to ensure that effective personalised support measures are provided in learning environments that maximise academic and social development, consistent with the Convention's goal of full inclusion.

Personalised learning requires attention to the unique needs of all students of all abilities, acknowledging that each have different learning needs. This is particularly relevant for students with disability and additional learning needs.

In addressing personalised learning and support, a process can be followed which involves the student's support networks, and which aims to build on the student's strengths.

The personalised learning and support process is informed by:

- Gathering information about the student's learning strengths and needs
- Considering the student's background, including their cultural and family context
- Assessing the available resources within the school and school staff capability. This may lead to additional staff training, re-allocation of school resources, developing new programmes or systems
- Identifying the student's goals and skills required for the future
- Examining strategies for teaching
- Determining timelines for reviewing goals and the planning process.

Below are four key steps in implementing personalised learning and support:

1. **Get to know the student**
   - Get to know the student, their background, strengths, interests and goals.
   - Conduct or gather assessments to identify the types of adjustments required to support the student. Assessment can relate to access, participation, behaviour support, medical needs, or learning supports.

2. **Consult**
   - Engage with the student and their family/carer to identify the student's aspirations, goals, strengths and needs.
   - Seek expert advice, where relevant, on the students' needs; including medical, personal, physical, communication, sensory and learning needs.
   - Seek clarity in understanding current achievement levels to ensure high expectations in personal education outcomes.
   - Ongoing consultation may be required as the students' needs change.

3. **Plan and implement personalised learning and individualised support measures**
   - Identify options and select adjustments, interventions and other supports that will be provided to address the student's identified learning needs and build on their strengths.
   - Consider the impact of the adjustments on the student, other students and the school.
   - Design age-appropriate learning tasks, resources and learning materials
   - Seek any required equipment, assistive technology, or additional resources for the student's learning needs.
   - Identify and complete professional learning if required.
   - Select and implement appropriate teaching strategies to facilitate effective learning for the student.

- Embed differentiated classroom practice within teaching and learning programmes throughout the school.
- Determine a monitoring process and review timeframe.

4.   Evaluate the impact of personalised support measures provided to the student

Support measures provided to the student should be evaluated by the team involved in the planning. The reviews can be discussed and agreed to by the planning members. It is important to review the support measures provided on a regular basis to ensure that the adjustments made are still relevant and required for the student to achieve high quality outcomes, or whether further support measures need to be incorporated.

If the student requires new adjustments, modifications to equipment, or new resources to support learning and participation, these should be discussed again with the planning team. The focus should always be on the student and how these support measures will assist the student to reach their goals.

Where to go for additional guidance or assistance

Most school based learning is a social, collaborative undertaking that happens in a school community. Developing positive and respectful relationships forms the basis for building strong school communities that support student learning.

Teachers should seek additional assistance and guidance from their school principal and support from school teams.

Families seeking additional assistance and guidance are encouraged to discuss this with their child's teacher, and meet with the school principal if further advice is required.

This is best done by:
- Requesting a meeting
- Writing a letter or email to organise thoughts before the formal meeting.
- In the meeting, encourage an open dialogue through active listening and by outlining your views and queries clearly and constructively.
- Ask that the outcomes and any proposed actions are written and distributed to each participant.

If you then still feel that you need further advice or guidance, or have concerns around the outcomes from your discussions with the school, you can discuss the issue with an education authority.

Australian schools are governed by different education authorities:

- Government schools are governed by a State or Territory education authority (such as an 'Education Department').
- Non-government Catholic schools are usually governed by a Catholic education authority in each State or Territory (such as a 'Catholic Education Commission').
- Some non-government schools may be governed by a church or religious organisation (such as the Anglican Diocese, or the Seventh Day Adventist Church).
- Other non-government schools are accountable to their School Boards.

Further information and resources for parents and educators of students with disability are listed on the next page.

Resources

National Resources for Parents and Educators
Australian Curriculum and Students with Disability http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/studentdiversity/students-with-disability This website has information on personalised learning, adjustments and consultation. It also has examples of personalised learning which link to the Australian Curriculum.
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the DDA) http://www.comlaw.gov.au/details/c2013c00022 The Australian Human Rights Commission has a brief guide on the DDA at https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act. This page includes frequently asked questions and complaint information.
Disability Standards for Education 2005 http://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education This webpage includes the Standards, fact sheets and has a stocktake of education sector/jurisdiction information on the Standards. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 http://www.ddaedustandards.info/ This website includes a range of useful information in a variety of accessible formats.
Disability Standards for Education: A practical guide for individuals, families and communities http://resource.dse.theeducationinstitute.edu.au/ The website provides information on the Australian law and discrimination, 'what's fair' in an educational setting, 'reasonable adjustments', and a range of other issues frequently raised by parents and carers of students with disabilities. The website discusses consultation and provides a meeting toolkit. The resource is illustrated by real life stories, scenarios and video clips.
Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/national_declaration_on_the_educational_goals_for_young_australians.pdf

State/Sector Resources for Parents and Educators Information on state and territory government school education is available from the following websites:
Australian Capital Territory Government Education and Training Directorate T 02 6207 5111 Website with information on supports for students with disability: http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/disability_education
New South Wales Department of Education T 02 9561 8000 Website with information on supports for students with disability: http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/our-services/schools/disability-services
Northern Territory Department of Education T 08 8944 9305 Website with information on supports for students with disability: http://www.education.nt.gov.au/students/special-education-and-disability

State/Sector Resources for Parents and Educators Information on state and territory government school education is available from the following websites:
Queensland Department of Education and Training T 07 3237 0111 Website with information on supports for students with disability: http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/disability/index.html
South Australian Department for Education and Child Development T 08 8226 1000 Students with disability policy: http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/StudentswithDisabilitie-1.pdf
Tasmanian Department of Education T 1800 816 057 Website with information on supports for students with disability: https://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents_carers/schools-colleges/Programs-Initiatives/Pages/Students-with-Disabilities.aspx
Victorian Department of Education and Training T 03 9637 2000 Handbook and guidelines for students with disability: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/disabilities.aspx
Western Australian Department of Education T 08 9264 4111 Website with information on supports for students with disability: http://det.wa.edu.au/ssen/detcms/portal/
Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) T 02 6282 3488 National website: http://isca.edu.au/ **ISCA Member Associations in states and territories include:** **Association of Independent Schools of the ACT Inc (AISACT)** Phone: (02) 6162 0834 Website: http://www.ais.act.edu.au/ **The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales Ltd (AISNSW)** Phone: (02) 9299 2845 Website: http://www.aisnsw.edu.au/ **Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory Inc (AISNT)** Phone: (08) 8981 8668 Website: http://www.aisnt.asn.au/ **Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ)** Phone: (07) 3228 1515 Website: http://www.aisq.qld.edu.au/

State/Sector Resources for Parents and Educators Information on state and territory government school education is available from the following websites:

Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA)
Phone: (08) 8179 1400
Website: http://www.ais.sa.edu.au/

Independent Schools Tasmania (IST)
Phone: (03) 6224 0125
Website: http://www.independentschools.tas.edu.au/

Independent Schools Victoria
Phone: (03) 9825 7200
Website: http://www.independentschools.vic.edu.au/

Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia Inc (AISWA)
Phone: (08) 9241 1618
Website: http://www.ais.wa.edu.au/

National Catholic Education Commission
T 02 8229 0800
National website: http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/
Links to all Catholic Education Commissions are included on this website.

In addition, the NSW Catholic Education Commission has an e-learning module for personalised planning: http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/dbpage.php?pg=view&dbase=programs&id=52.

Other Useful Resources

The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training
http://www.adcet.edu.au/
This website has a variety of useful resources on inclusive teaching aimed at supporting students with disability who are in post-school transitions.