

Descriptor (Insert division, branch or project name if required)

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State special school enrolment

decision-making guidelines

(Updated November 2023)

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# Introduction

Queensland state special schools (state special schools) are an important part of the Queensland state education system. State special schools provide highly individualised programs delivered by a multidisciplinary team of classroom teachers and support staff.

State special schools support children and young people with intellectual disability, which alone or in combination with other disabilities, severely impacts their ability to access and participate in education. The department’s [Equity and Excellence](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/strategies-and-programs/equity-and-excellence) strategy is committed to a progressive and high performing education system that realises the potential of every student.

While every state school is required to support students with disability, parent/s may choose to apply for their child to be enrolled in a state special school.

## Enrolment in state special schools

Chapter 8 of the [*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/2018-05-01/act-2006-039) (the Act), the [Enrolment in State Primary, Secondary and Special Schools procedure](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/enrolment-in-state-primary-secondary-and-special-schools-procedure) (the school enrolment procedure) and the [State special school enrolment (additional requirements) procedure](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/state-special-school-enrolment-additional-requirements-procedure) (the additional requirements procedure) sets out the requirements for enrolment in state schools, including state special schools.

In particular, to be eligible for enrolment in state specials schools, section 166(1) of the Act requires that:

* the child or young person meets the criteria for determining whether they are a “person with a disability” as set out in a policy approved by the Minister for Education; and
* the special school is able to cater for their educational needs.

The criteria for determining whether a child or young person is a “person with a disability” are set out in the [Special school eligibility (“person with a disability” criteria) policy](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/special-school-eligibility-policy.docx) (the policy), approved by the Minister for Education.

|  |
| --- |
| Additional enrolment requirements in state special schools (s.166(1) of the Act) |
| Special school eligibility (“person with a disability” criteria) policy |
| Criterion 1 | **Criterion 2** | **Criterion 3** | **Criterion 4** |
| The person has a disability as defined by the [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth) (DDA)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00125). | The person has a *severe disability* which includes an *intellectual disability.* | The person is unlikely to attain the levels of development of which the person is capable unless the person receives special education. | The person’s educational program is best delivered in a special school taking into account the appropriateness of this placement for the individual concerned. |
| The special school  |
| The special school is able to cater for the educational needs of the child or young person. |

## About the guidelines

The *State special school enrolment* *decision-making guidelines* (the guidelines) assist decision-makers and staff providing information and reports when making and considering applications for enrolment in state special schools (application) by providing guidance about:

* best practice decision-making;
* the evidence needed against each of requirements for state special school enrolment;
* the circumstances and the evidence needed to offer temporary attendance; and
* students enrolled in one Queensland state special school moving to another.

They may also assist parent/s to gain a better understanding of the type of information that may be taken into account by decision-makers.

They do not provide a checklist of evidence but rather provide guidance on the type of evidence required.

A summary of the definitions and evidence for the Act’s requirements and the policy’s criteria is at [Appendix B - Evidence Summary Matrix – State special school enrolment](#_Appendix_B:_Evidence).

Information regarding the special school OneSchool functionality is available in the [OneSchool help materials](https://oneschoolhelp.eq.edu.au/student/special-school-enrolment).

# Our principles

Three principles will guide decision-makers when considering whether:

* a child or young person meets the policy’s criteria; and
* the state special school is able to cater for their educational needs.

## Principle 1 – Evidence-based decision-making

Decisions regarding enrolment in state special schools will be based on the available evidence demonstrating that all of the requirements for enrolment, including the policy’s criteria, are met.

Evidence for each requirement may include medical reports, school assessments, learning history, any additional information provided by parent/s regarding their child’s individual needs, and assessments made by department employees, guidance officers and therapists.

## Principle 2 – Transparency

It is important that decisions, and the evidence used to make those decisions, are explained to the parent/s and principal/s. At the start of the process, parent/s are given the opportunity to provide any information and evidence that will be used to assess their application.

If during the application process, the decision-maker forms the preliminary view that requirements for enrolment in a state special school including the policy’s criteria are not met, parent/s are provided this preliminary view finding and invited to provide further evidence or information prior to a final decision being made. This process ensures the decision-maker has all of the evidence available to make an informed decision about whether all of the requirements for enrolment are met.

More details regarding the timeframe for the enrolment process are available at [Timeliness: tables 1 - 3](#_Timeliness)*.*

## Principle 3 – Timeliness

Parent/s can make an enrolment application at any time of the year. It is important that decisions are made in a timely manner and seek to ensure children and young people are able to start school on time, and their educational programs are not interrupted.

Applications for children or young people not enrolled in any school should be prioritised and decisions made as soon as possible.

Internal reviews must be finalised within 40 school days after the application for internal review is made as required by section 392(2) of the Act.

# Best practice decision-making

The process for making decisions regarding state special school enrolment is set out in the Act, the school enrolment procedure, and the [State special school enrolment (additional requirements) procedure](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/state-special-school-enrolment-additional-requirements-procedure) (additional requirements procedure). It complies with the policy’s principles: that the decisions are evidence-based, transparent and timely.

The basic process follows six steps:

1. **Parent advice and support** – parent/s are provided advice by departmental officers and schools about options for enrolling their child.
2. **Submit application** — parent/s submit an application for student enrolment to either; the Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) where the child is currently registered; the state special, primary or secondary school where the student is currently enrolled; the department’s regional office; or their proposed future state special school.
3. **Principal recommendation and referral** — the state special school principal makes a recommendation in OneSchool and then refers the enrolment application to the regional decision-maker (section 156(3)).
4. **Decision-making** — the decision-maker decides whether to approve enrolment (section 166) in the proposed state special school.
5. **Notification and actioning decision** — the decision-maker must, if enrolment is approved, refer the enrolment application back to the state special school principal for processing (section 166(2)); or if enrolment is refused, give an information notice to the parent/s and advise the principal/s (section 167).
6. **Internal review** — if the parent/s choose to undertake an internal review, an officer not involved in the original decision can review that decision.

### Designing a regional process

Regions are responsible for designing and implementing a process that complies with the Act, school enrolment procedure and the additional requirements procedure, while also ensuring that decisions are evidence-based, transparent and made in a timely way.

This is particularly important for internal reviews as the Act requires that internal reviews may only be undertaken by officers who have not been involved in making the original decision, including any officers who have previously made recommendations, gathered information and evidence, or supported the parent/s.

### Supporting consistent decision-making

The purpose of these guidelines is to support more consistent decision-making. This can be strengthened further through a range of strategies, including moderation within the region or across regions.

Regions may choose to implement a post-decision moderation process to build a shared understanding of the enrolment requirements and how to apply them to applications. It may not be possible to undertake moderation before a decision regarding enrolment if it results in delayed decision-making and children not attending school.

Please note that decision-makers are responsible and accountable for their decisions. Moderation is not a process to align decisions, but to support shared understandings of the enrolment requirements in state special schools and the evidence required.

#### Moderation process

Regions may find it useful to adopt the moderation process outlined below:

Timeliness

The Act requires that decisions are made as soon as practicable.

#### Table 1: Students currently enrolled in a Queensland state special school

The table below lists the process and estimated number of school days needed to consider an enrolment application for a student currently enrolled in a state special school. Further information about the enrolment process is provided in the [additional requirements procedure](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/state-special-school-enrolment-additional-requirements-procedure). This table does not include the steps or the timeline associated with students not currently enrolled in a state special school or for offers of temporary attendance. These are outlined in subsequent tables.

|  |
| --- |
| Steps > School days |
| Stage 1: Submit application |
| 1. Parent/s complete the [Application for student enrolment form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/application-for-student-enrolment-form.pdf) (Application form), with the support of the school or region if necessary, and submits to: the state special, primary or secondary school where the student is currently enrolled; the department’s regional office; or their proposed future state special school.
 | N/A |
| Stage 2: Principal recommendation and referral |
| 1. The Principal of the school where the student is currently enrolled will consider application, evidence and materials provided by the parent/s.
2. The current school Principal provides additional evidence in the OneSchool special school enrolment record to support whether the student meets all of the policy’s criteria.
3. The proposed state special school Principal indicates within OneSchool whether the special school is able to cater for the student’s educational needs and progresses the application to the decision-maker with their recommendation in OneSchool based on the evidence available.
 | 3 |
| Stage 3: Decision-making |
| 1. The decision-maker reviews the application form, evidence and Principal recommendation, and takes the following steps:
* if all enrolment requirements are met, approves the enrolment; or
* if the decision-maker forms a preliminary view that the evidence does not support enrolment, advises the parent/s of the [preliminary view to refuse enrolment](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/parent-notification-decision-makers-preliminary-view-to-refuse-enrolment-in-a-state-special-school.docx) and invites them to provide additional information; and
* considers any additional information by the applicant/s and either:
	+ approve enrolment if satisfied that all enrolment requirements including the policy’s criteria are met;
	+ delay making a decision about enrolment in the state special school and offer temporary attendance for up to 10 months (if appropriate) to enable the EAP verification process to be completed; or
	+ refuse enrolment if not satisfied that all enrolment requirements or the policy’s criteria have been met.
 | 5 |
| Stage 4: Notifying and actioning decision |
| 1. The decision-maker notifies the parent/s and Principal as follows:
* If enrolment is approved: refers the application back to the proposed state special school Principal who processes the enrolment and advises the parent/s in writing; and
* If enrolment is not approved: advises the parent/s of the outcome in writing and gives them an [Information notice – Requirements for enrolment in a state special school not satisfied](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/information-notice-requirements-for-enrolment-in-a-state-special-school-not-satisfied.docx), advising them of their right to apply for an internal review of the decision; and
* advises the proposed state special school Principal of the decision in writing; and
* advises the current school Principal of the decision and nominates an officer to work with the school to support the student’s continued enrolment.
 | 2  |
| Total estimated school days | **10** |

#### Table 2: Students not currently enrolled in a Queensland state special school

The table below sets out the process and estimated number of school days needed to consider an application for student enrolment in a state special school. This includes students that are: currently registered in an ECDP, transferring from a state primary or secondary school, another state or territory, overseas, the non-state sector or Prep students.

|  |
| --- |
| Steps > school days |
| Stage 1A: Parent/s advice and support |
| 1. Parent/s are provided with advice about enrolment options for their child as required.
 | N/A |
| Stage 1B: Parent application |
| 1. Parent/s complete an [Application for student enrolment form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/application-for-student-enrolment-form.pdf) (Application form) and [State special school enrolment parent consent and informationform](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/state-special-school-enrolment-parent-consent-and-information-form.docx) (Parent consent form), with the support of the school or region if necessary, and submits to: the ECDP where the student is currently registered; the department’s regional office; or their proposed future state special school.
 | N/A |
| Stage 2: Principal recommendation and referral |
| 1. The department collates further information (for example student’s current state school or state special school if student not enrolled in a state school).
2. The proposed state special school principal considers the Application form, Parent consent form and evidence, and then finalises the [Enrolment Application Principal Referral Form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/enrolment-application-principal-referral-form-oneschool.docx) (Principal referral form), indicating whether the state special school is able to cater for the student’s educational needs.
3. The Principal uploads all forms, and evidence to OneSchool, including their recommendation in OneSchool and refers the application to the region.
 | 10 |
| Stage 3: Decision-making |
| 1. The decision-maker reviews all forms and evidence, and takes the following steps:
* if all enrolment requirements are met, approves the enrolment; or
* if all enrolment requirements are met, except that EAP verification in the category of intellectual disability has not been finalised but is likely to be finalised within 10 months, continue the decision-making process and if appropriate, offer temporary attendance (*see table 3 for more details about the decision-making process*); or
* if the decision-maker forms a preliminary view that the evidence does not support enrolment, advises the parent/s of the preliminary view not to approve enrolment inviting them to review all evidence and provide additional information; and
* considers any additional information by the applicant/s and either:
	+ approve enrolment if satisfied that all enrolment requirements including the policy’s criteria are met;
	+ delay making a decision about enrolment in the state special school and offer temporary attendance for up to 10 months (if appropriate) to enable the EAP verification process to be completed; or
	+ refuse enrolment if not satisfied that all enrolment requirements or the policy’s criteria have been met.
 | 10  |
| Stage 4: Notifying and actioning decision |
| 1. The decision-maker to notify the parent and principal as follows:

If enrolment is approved: * refers the application back to the proposed state special school principal who processes the enrolment and advises the parent/s in writing.

If enrolment is not approved: * advises the parent/s of the outcome in writing and gives them an [Information notice – Requirements for enrolment in a state special school not satisfied](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/information-notice-requirements-for-enrolment-in-a-state-special-school-not-satisfied.docx), advising them of their right to apply for an internal review of the decision; and
* advises the proposed state special school Principal of the decision in writing.
 | 2  |
| Total estimated school days | **22** |

***\*Please note:*** *the timelines will be affected if a preliminary view is formed to refuse enrolment (an additional 15 school days).*

#### Table 3: Continued decision-making to enable EAP verification to occur (temporary attendance)

The department enables children and young people to register at and attend state special schools through temporary attendance (for up to 10 months) pending a final decision regarding enrolment if the prospective student is likely to be verified through the EAP in the category of intellectual disability within 10 months. The table below lists the estimated number of school days needed to consider enrolment applications where decision-making continues to enable EAP verification in the category of intellectual disability to be finalised and where temporary attendance is offered.

|  |
| --- |
| Steps > School days |
| Stage 3: Decision-making |
| 1. The decision-maker reviews the [Application](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/application-for-student-enrolment-form.pdf) form, [Parent consent form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/state-special-school-enrolment-parent-consent-and-information-form.docx), [Principal referral form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/enrolment-application-principal-referral-form-oneschool.docx), and all information provided by the Principal and parent/s, and then assesses the evidence.

If all enrolment requirements are met, with the exception of the student being verified in the EAP category of intellectual disability, and the student is likely to meet verification criteria within 10 months, the decision-maker:* offers temporary attendance while continuing the decision-making process to enable EAP verification to be finalised;
* advises the Principal in writing about the decision and provides an offer of temporary attendance letter; and
* advises the parent/s and offers temporary attendance.
1. The parent/s either:
* accepts the offer and contacts the state special school within 10 school days and signs the [Temporary attendance in a state special school – Registration and agreement](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/temporary-attendance-in-a-state-special-school-registration-and-agreement.docx); or
* does not accept the offer of temporary attendance; or
* does not contact the state special school within 10 school days.
1. The state special school Principal advises the decision-maker of the EAP verification outcome using the [Education Adjustment Program (EAP) Outcome (temporary attendance finalisation) form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/education-adjustment-program-eap-outcome-temporary-attendance-finalisation-form.docx) once EAP verification has been finalised, or if the parent/s refused the temporary attendance offer or does not contact the school within 10 school days.
2. The decision-maker makes final decision and notifies school and parent/s (as outlined in table 2, stage 4).
 | 10 10 (up to 10 months) 5 |
| Total estimated school days of decision-making (not including temporary attendance period) | **25** |

Evidence required to satisfy the enrolment requirements for enrolment in state special schools

This section outlines the types of evidence required to support the two enrolment requirements:

* the prospective student is a person with a disability for the purpose of enrolment in a state special school by meeting all four criteria set out in the policy; and
* the state special school can cater for the prospective student’s needs.

Evidence needed to consider temporary attendance is also included in these guidelines.

## State special school eligibility (“person with a disability” criteria) policy criteria

#### Criterion 1: The person has a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwth) (DDA)

**Policy definitions**

The policy adopts the definition outlined in section 4 of the DDA as follows:

* total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; or
* total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
* the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
* the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
* the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or
* a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
* a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

* presently exists; or
* previously existed but no longer exists; or
* may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
* is imputed to a person.

*To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.*

#### Evidence

Evidence for this criterion may include one or more of the following:

* Specialist diagnosis or reports, for example; reports from a medical practitioner such as paediatrician or other specialist, such as guidance officer/counsellor, speech pathologist or audiologist;
* Profiles or assessment reports from schools, including reports from departmental therapists and guidance officers that identify the functional needs of a child or young person with disability, and indicate that the child or young person meets the DDA definition; and/or
* School assessments, learning history, and any additional information provided by parent/s regarding their child’s individual needs.

### Criterion 2: The person has a *severe disability* which includes an *intellectual disability*

Criterion 2 requires that a student’s ability to access and participate in education is severely impacted by:

* a severe intellectual disability; or
* an intellectual disability (which may be profound, severe, moderate or mild) in combination with other disabilities.

The evidence used to determine the severity of the intellectual disability focuses on an overall assessment of function and is not based solely on an Intelligence Quotient score.

##### **Policy definitions**

##### Severe disability

#### Severe disability means a disability where the impact of the intellectual disability, or multiple impairments (including an intellectual disability), results in the student requiring a highly individualised program to access and participate in education.

##### Intellectual disability

An **intellectual disability** is characterised by deficits in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour requiring significant education adjustments*.*

##### Intellectual functioning

**Intellectual functioning** associated with intellectual disability is characterised by deficits in reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgement, academic learning and learning from life experiences. This is typically associated with an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) score of approximately 70 or below.

Adaptive behaviour

**Adaptive behaviour** associated with intellectual disability is characterised by deficits that impair functioning in comparison to a person's age and cultural group in one or more aspects of daily living such as communication, social participation, functioning at school or work, or independence.

##### Significant education adjustment

A **significant education adjustment**, is verified through the Education Adjustment Program by a departmental verifier for intellectual disability.

##### Highly individualised program

A **highly individualised program** includes the following:

* a negotiated individual learning plan identifying the individual curriculum pathway with appropriate learning expectations
* assessment and reporting against these learning expectations
* specialised teaching
* significant education adjustments
* continuous monitoring and support delivered by a multi-disciplinary team, which may include:
* augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) programs
* small groups or one on one support
* therapy programs
* specialised health needs management.

##### Specialised health needs

**Specialised health needs** are defined as procedures/interventions that are essential to enable a student to access their educational program. They are requested, prescribed and/or established by an appropriate qualified health professional, and incorporate routine and/or emergency procedures and interventions.

Specialised health procedures and interventions include, but are not limited to:

* enteral/artificial feeding (gastrostomy, nasogastric, jejunostomy)
* airway management (tracheostomy care, oral suctioning, oxygen therapy)
* epilepsy management (seizure management, emergency medication)
* individualised mealtime programs with supervision
* toileting management (ostomy care, individualised toileting programs, catheterisation)
* diabetes management
* prescribed medication management
* asthma management
* anaphylaxis management.

##### Other definitions

Please see the policy for all definitions including:

* Statewide verifier
* Verification
* Education Adjustment Program (EAP)

#### Evidence

Evidence for this criterion should consider the following:

Intellectual disability

Intellectual disability is determined by a statewide verifier.

Medical reports and assessments from guidance officers or psychologists, as well as any information from parent/s regarding their child’s limited cognitive functioning or adaptive behaviour, can be provided as part of the EAP verification process.

More information about the EAP verification process is available in the [EAP Verification in the Category of Intellectual Disability handbook](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/eap-handbook.pdf).

**Please note:** A child or young person who has been verified as meeting the EAP intellectual disability criteria does not automatically meet Criterion 2 of the policy.

##### Impact of intellectual disability

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Fifth Edition. Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association, 2013) (DSM-5) is the most widely accepted manual used by clinicians and researchers for the classification of mental disorders.

The DSM-5 indicates that the severity of a child or young person’s intellectual disablity is best determined by considering the level of support they require, compared to peers, across the three conceptual, social and practical domains, rather than an IQ score. For more information, please refer to the DSM-5.

##### Impact of severe disability including an intellectual disability (alone or in combination with other disabilities)

The impact of severe disability, one of which is an intellectual disablity, or multiple impairments (including an intellectual disability), is assessed by considering the following:

* the impact of the child or young person’s intellectual disability on their functioning in the conceptual, social and practical domains;
* co-occurrence with other developmental disorders;
* diagnosis of severe medical conditions including degenerative conditions; and/or
* specialised health needs, including procedures/interventions that are essential to enable a student to access their educational program.

**Please note:** Challenging behaviour not related to the impact of a disability that requires a highly individualised program does not satisfy this criterion.

### Criterion 3: The person is unlikely to attain the levels of development of which the person is capable unless the person receives special education

#### Policy definition

##### *Special education*

Special education is defined in Schedule 4 of the Act as the educational programs and services:

* appropriate to the needs of persons with a disability; and
* additional to, or otherwise different from, educational programs and services generally available to persons of the relevant age who are not persons with a disability.

#### Evidence

To meet this criterion there must be evidence that the child or young person has additional or different needs to those of their similar-aged peers in both:

* educational programs; and
* services.

##### Educational programs

For children or young people who are currently enrolled in a school, there must be evidence that indicates that:

* the frequency and intensity of adjustments provided differs significantly from their similar-aged peers for the child or young person’s curriculum access and delivery;
* their achievement of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas/subjects is (or is predicted to be) very significantly below similar-aged peers despite some areas of achievement being explained by splinter skills, intensive intervention, or interests; and
* they have endorsed Individual Curriculum Plans (ICPs) (or equivalent curriculum plan if transferring from interstate or from a non-state school) using lower year level achievement standards (Different Year Level (DYL) or Different Year Level–Partial (DYL-P) categories), or, they have a Highly Individualised Curriculum Plan (HICP) when they are not able to demonstrate their learning against the Prep achievement standards, anywhere on a five point scale, in all learning areas.

 For children about to enter Prep, evidence may include:

* reports outlining extremely low functioning across all areas of development;
* evidence of previous access to intensive interventions/support (e.g. allied health professionals) for a sustained period with minimal or no gains made; and/or
* involvement of a paediatrician or other medical specialists from an early age (which would be expected) with reports documenting the impacts of the disability.

For students in Year 11 and 12, evidence would include their individual learning program that will lead to the recording of achievement on the [Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications) (QCIA).

*Assessment data*

[Reasonable adjustments](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/student-diversity/students-with-disability/reasonable-adjustments) may be needed to demonstrate understanding and skills (for example, a student who is non-verbal may need to respond to questions through gesture, eye-gaze or using an AAC device, and questions need to be phrased according to the level of comprehension and method of communication).

***Please note:*** *An adjustment, according to the* [*Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth)*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767)*, is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in the course or program on the same basis as other students.*

**Additional curriculum information**

The requirements for providing the [Australian Curriculum](https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/), for all students, are specified in the [P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework.](https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/p-12)

Students enrolled in a state special school are entitiled to an education on the same basis as students without disability in primary and secondary schools, with reasonable adjustments.

The requirements for providing an ICP are specified in the [P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework.](https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/p-12)

Further information on meeting the needs of students with disability are available in:

* [Australian Curriculum - Planning for diversity](https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/student-diversity/planning-for-diversity)
* [Australian Curriculum - Meeting the needs of students with disability](https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/student-diversity/students-with-disability)

Services

Evidence must demonstrate that a student requires additional supports, different from their similar-aged peers in one or more of the following areas:

* communication;
* social participation and emotional wellbeing;
* learning environment/access and participation; and/or
* health, personal care, and safety.

#### Communication

Speech language communication skills are significantly impaired compared to similar-aged peers and may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

* speech pathology assessments indicating the child or young person’s communication skills are profoundly below similar-aged peers;
* qualitative assessments based on observations that describe current language use including:
* range of communication functions (e.g. protest, engage, seek information, refuse, discuss);
* mode of communication (e.g. verbal, augmentative and alternative);
* language used (e.g. few single words, phrases, short sentences);
* intervention provided by a speech language pathologist; and/or school, individual and specialised programs; and
* extensive communication adjustments applied throughout the school day:
	+ targeted adjustments; and
	+ adjustments to pedagogy/teaching (consider range, breadth, frequency and intensity).

#### Social participation and emotional wellbeing

Social and emotional functioning is significantly below similar-aged peers and may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

* reports and letters from psychiatrists, psychologists guidance officers, paediatricians, occupational therapists, mental health or disability agencies;
* assessments providing social and emotional data, typically indicating clinical or very low functioning;
* observations of the student’s functioning, considering one or more of the following:
* initiating, sustaining and maintaining appropriate social interactions with peers and adults;
* participating as a member of a group/sharing and taking turns;
* friendship skills, participation in leisure/recreation activities;
* maintaining socially appropriate behaviour in a range of settings;
* consideration of other people’s thoughts and feelings;
* conflict resolution and problem solving;
* attention and concentration;
* emotional regulation;
* understanding the consequences of actions;
* coping with stress and anxiety;
* coping levels and strategies.
* interventions provided through:
* other agencies;
* school, individual and specialised programs;
* targeted adjustments to support social and emotional wellbeing;
* management plans; and/or
* adjustments to pedagogy/teaching, including the range, breadth, frequency and intensity of adjustments required to enable social participation.

#### Learning environment/access and participation

Access to education is significantly compromised and requires reasonable adjustments in the learning environment. Evidence may include one or more of the following:

* reports and letters from occupational therapists, physiotherapists, guidance officers, disability agencies;
* assessments, typically indicating severe delays in personal independence and mild to profound delays of motor skills;
* child or young person’s functioning and observations in comparison with similar-aged peers in:
* ability to function independently;
* self-organisation and management of their belongings;
* access to and participation in the community, including leisure and recreational activities;
* sensory issues which impact access;
* fine and gross motor skills.
* interventions required include:
* physiotherapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy, specialist agencies;
* targeted programs;
* extensive adjustments, specific strategies and support across the school context, (e.g. playground, visual supports, transition within the school, specialist lessons).
* evidence for additional resources and equipment required:
* assistive technology, (e.g. sound field amplification/hearing aids, laptop, tablets);
* augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) (e.g. speech generating device, symbol communication book, support with signing);
* mobility equipment, (e.g. wheelchairs, walkers, specialised seating).
* requirements for modifications to the physical environment (e.g. ramp access, tactile signage, visual alert systems).

#### Health, personal care and safety

The student’s health may be compromised and require significant management, indicated in one or more of the following:

* diagnosis;
* medical letters and specialist reports;
* a comprehensive report from a guidance officer;
* health management plans; and/or
* health procedures and interventions, particularly those required at school where staff training is commonly required.

Personal care is delayed compared to similar-aged peers and may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

* medical letters and therapy reports;
* self-care plans and programs (e.g. eating program, nasogastric tube protocol, toileting program); and/or
* personal care needs and support required, including:
* modified diet prescribed by a qualified health professional;
* individualised eating and/or drinking requirements;
* essential hygiene routines; and/or
* sensory issues which impact care.

Safety concerns exist due to the vulnerability of the student, and/or possibly their own behaviours that may put themselves and other students at risk. Evidence may include one or more of the following:

* risk management, including assessments and plans;
* individualised behaviour management plans and strategies informed by a functional behaviour assessment, and/or
* descriptive evidence of:
* behaviours that put the child or young person, or other children or young people at risk; and/or
* vulnerability to exploitation and bullying; and
* coping strategies.

### Criterion 4: The person’s educational program is best delivered in a state special school taking into account the appropriateness of this placement for the individual concerned.

####

#### Policy definitions

##### *Special school*

Special school is defined in Schedule 4 of the Actas a state school only providing special education.

##### *Special education*

Special education is defined in Schedule 4 of the Act as the educational programs and services:

* appropriate to the needs of persons with a disability; and
* additional to, or otherwise different from, educational programs and services generally available to persons of the relevant age who are not persons with a disability.

#### If all three of the previous criteria have been satisfied, the decision-maker now needs to determine if a state special school is the most appropriate place for delivering the student’s educational program.

#### Evidence

To determine if the student’s educational program is best delivered in a state special school, the decision-maker will consider the evidence provided regarding the student’s needs in one or more of the following areas:

* the pervasive and persistent nature of the student’s disability (determined by considering the impact of the student’s disability across all areas of their development);
* curriculum;
* communication needs;
* social skills;
* personal care;
* mobility; and/or
* specialised health.

Evidence may include:

* supporting documentation from medical practitioners;
* allied health and other education professionals’ involvement;
* the extent of and response to current and previous intervention; and/or
* any other supporting information provided by the parent/s.

## The state special school is able to cater for the prospective student’s needs

To be eligible for state special school enrolment, the Act requires that the state special school is able to cater for the prospective student’s educational needs.

**Act definitions**

Special school

Special school is defined in Schedule 4 of the Actas a state school only providing special education.

Special education

Special education is defined in Schedule 4 of the Act as the educational programs and services:

* appropriate to the needs of persons with a disability; and
* additional to, or otherwise different from, educational programs and services generally available to persons of the relevant age who are not persons with a disability.

#### Evidence

If all the policy’s criteria have been satisfied, the decision-maker needs to determine if the state special school identified in the application is able to cater for the educational needs of the student.

The decision-maker will consider the student’s needs and the state special school’s:

* resources;
* expertise; and
* supports.

## Temporary attendance

Temporary attendance aims to ensure a student is attending school pending the decision about whether the enrolment requirements in a state special school are satisfied. Temporary attendance is not an enrolment or departmental practice, but was developed to support children starting Prep or moving from interstate.

Temporary attendance is **only** offered where:

* the enrolment requirements, including the policy’s criteria are met, except in the circumstance where the student is not yet verified in the category of intellectual disability through the Education Adjustment Program (EAP); and
* EAP verification in the category of intellectual disability is likely to be finalised within 10 months.

The decision-maker will advise the:

* state special school Principal in writing about continuing the decision-making process pending EAP verification in the category of intellectual disability and the offer of temporary attendance to the school for up to 10 months (if appropriate); and
* applicant/s in writing about the decision-making process continuing and the offer of temporary attendance, and advise that they must contact the state special school principal within 10 school days to accept the offer of temporary attendance.

When contacted by the applicant/s, the Principal will organise for the [Temporary attendance in a state special school – Registration and agreement](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/temporary-attendance-in-a-state-special-school-registration-and-agreement.docx) to be completed in collaboration with the parent/s. The agreement is to be signed by the state special school Principal and applicant/s within 10 school days.

The child or young person’s commencement date may be different to the agreement date. The commencement date reflects the date the student will first be attending the school.

If the applicant/s does not accept the temporary attendance offer or does not contact the state special school Principal within 10 school days, the state special school Principal needs to advise the delegated decision-maker by providing a completed [Education Adjustment Program (EAP) outcome (temporary attendance finalisation) form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/education-adjustment-program-eap-outcome-temporary-attendance-finalisation-form.docx).

Principals may choose to contact the applicant/s if they have not heard from them to ensure they received the decision-maker’s offer of temporary attendance.

***Please note:*** *As temporary attendance is not enrolment, students attending a special school on temporary attendance and seeking to transfer to another special school, will have to commence the enrolment process from the start. However, evidence used in the original application can be attached to the new enrolment application if still current.*

#### Evidence

There must be evidence that:

* the enrolment requirements including the policy’s criteria are met except that the child or young person is not yet verified in the EAP category of intellectual disability; and
* EAP verification in the category of intellectual impairment is likely to occur within 10 months.

## Students transferring from one state special school to another

For students currently enrolled in a state special school seeking to enrol in another state special school, the evidence requirements to support enrolment remain the same. However, this process is more streamlined as schools and decision-makers do not need to gather additional information unless seen as appropriate. Decision-makers can make an informed decision about whether all of the requirements for enrolment are met based on the student’s information in OneSchool, and on the Application form and Principal referral form.

## Source materials

Legislation

* [*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2006-039)
* [*Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017* (Qld)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0161)
* [*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1991-085)
* [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00125)
* *[Disability Standards for Education 2005](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767)* [(Cwlth)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767)
* [*[Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767)* [(Cwlth)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A03366)
* [*[Human Rights Act 2019](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767)* [(Qld)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2019-005)

Delegations/authorisations

* [Legislative Delegations – Delegation of Director-General’s Powers](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/delegation/education-general-provisions-act-2006-director-general-delegations.pdf)

Related policies and strategic documents

* [Equity and Excellence](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/strategies-and-programs/equity-and-excellence)
* [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/code-conduct-queensland-public-service)
* [Inclusive education policy](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/inclusive-education-policy)
* Department of [Education](https://qed.qld.gov.au/publications/strategies/strategic-plan) Strategic Plan 2023-2027
* [State special school eligibility (‘person with a disability’ criteria) policy](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/special-school-eligibility-policy.docx)

Related procedures

* [Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/enrolment-in-state-primary-secondary-and-special-schools-procedure)
* [State special school enrolment (additional requirements)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/state-special-school-enrolment-additional-requirements-procedure)
* [Managing students' health support needs at school](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/managing-students-health-support-needs-at-school-procedure)
* [Supporting students with asthma and/or at risk of anaphylaxis at school](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/supporting-students-with-asthma-and-or-at-risk-of-anaphylaxis-at-school-procedure)

Guidelines

* P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
* [A whole school approach to differentiated teaching and learning](https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/p-12)
* [Parent and community engagement framework](https://education.qld.gov.au/parents-and-carers/community-engagement)
* [Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework](https://education.qld.gov.au/students/student-health-safety-wellbeing/student-wellbeing)

## Supporting information/websites

* [Education Adjustment Program (EAP) Verification in the Category of Intellectual Disability Handbook](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/eap-handbook.pdf)
* [Parent/carer factsheet – Queensland state special schools](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/parent-carer-factsheet-queensland-state-special-schools.docx)
* [Inclusive education](https://education.qld.gov.au/students/inclusive-education)
* [Supports at school for students with intellectual disability – enrolment options](https://education.qld.gov.au/students/students-with-disability/supports-for-students-with-disability/intellectual-disability/supports-at-school-for-students-with-intellectual-disability)
* [Retention and disposal schedule](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/InformationTechnology/information-management/information-management-toolkit/recordkeeping/document-records-management/Pages/retention-disposal-schedules.aspx)\*\*

\*\*Please note, even if the student application was not successful or withdrawn, schools are required to temporarily store information regarding admissions, and destroy it five years after it was last actioned.

## Appendix A: State special school forms and templates

**Forms and letters**

*Enrolment application*

[Application for student enrolment form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/application-for-student-enrolment-form.pdf)

[State special school enrolment parent consent and information form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/state-special-school-enrolment-parent-consent-and-information-form.docx)

*Principal referral*

[Enrolment application principal referral form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/enrolment-application-principal-referral-form-oneschool.docx)

*Decision-making*

[Decision-maker’s preliminary view to refuse enrolment in a state special school (letter)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/parent-notification-decision-makers-preliminary-view-to-refuse-enrolment-in-a-state-special-school.docx)

[Parent notification – Decision-making process continuing pending EAP verification offer of temporary attendance (letter)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/parent-notification-continued-decision-making-process-pending-eap-verification-temporary-attendance-offer.docx)

[Principal notification – Decision-making continuing pending Education Adjustment Program (EAP) verification – Offer of temporary attendance (letter)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/principal-notification-continued-decision-making-process-pending-eap-verification-temporary-attendance-offer.docx)

[Temporary attendance in a state special school – Registration and agreement](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/temporary-attendance-in-a-state-special-school-registration-and-agreement.docx)

[Education Adjustment Program (EAP) outcome (temporary attendance finalisation) form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/education-adjustment-program-eap-outcome-temporary-attendance-finalisation-form.docx)

*Notification*

[Principal notification – Requirements for enrolment satisfied](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/principal-notification-requirements-for-enrolment-satisfied-oneschool.docx)

[Parent notification – Requirements for enrolment satisfied](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/parent-notification-requirements-for-enrolment-satisfied.docx)

[Parent notification – Requirements for enrolment satisfied (temporary attendance finalisation)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/parent-notification-requirements-for-enrolment-satisfied-temporary-attendance-finalisation.docx)

[Information notice – Requirements for enrolment in a state special school not satisfied](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/information-notice-requirements-for-enrolment-in-a-state-special-school-not-satisfied.docx)

[Parent notification – Requirements for enrolment not satisfied](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/parent-notification-requirements-for-enrolment-not-satisfied.docx)

[Principal notification – Requirements for enrolment not satisfied](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/principal-notification-requirements-for-enrolment-not-satisfied.docx)

*Internal review*

[Application for internal review of special school enrolment ineligibility form](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/application-for-internal-review-of-special-school-enrolment-ineligibility.docx)

[Decision-maker’s preliminary view of internal review](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/decision-makers-internal-review-preliminary-view.docx)

[Outcome of internal review of special school enrolment ineligibility](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/outcome-of-internal-review-of-state-special-school-enrolment-ineligibility.docx)

|  |
| --- |
| **Appendix B: Evidence summary matrix – State special school enrolment** To be eligible for enrolment in a state special school section 166(1) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld) (Act) requires that the child or young person is a “person with a disability”, and that the state special school is able to cater for the educational needs of the child or young person. Note: This matrix is a guide only. Applications for state special school enrolment must comply with the Act and the [Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools procedure](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/enrolment-in-state-primary-secondary-and-special-schools-procedure). |
| **Child or young person is a “person with a disability” – all four criteria in the Special school eligibility (“person with a disability” criteria) policy (policy) must be met.** |
|  | **Disability** | **Severe disability and impact on education and functioning** | **Educational setting** |
| **Criteria** | 1. **The person has a disability as defined by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA)**
 | 1. **The person has a severe disability which includes an intellectual disability**
 | 1. **The person is unlikely to attain the levels of development of which the person is capable unless the person receives special education**
 | 1. **The person's educational program is best delivered in a special school taking into account the appropriateness of this placement for the individual concerned.**
 |
| **Definitions** | The DDA definition includes a ‘disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction’ and behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.The full DDA definition is outlined in the policy and these Guidelines.  | *'Severe disability'* means a disability where the impact of the intellectual disability, or multiple disabilities (including an intellectual disability), results in the child or young person requiring a highly individualised program to access and participate in education.An intellectual disability is characterised by deficits in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour requiring significant education adjustments.  | Special education means the educational programs **and** services:* appropriate to the needs of persons with a disability; and
* additional to, or otherwise different from, educational programs and services generally available to persons of the relevant age who are not persons with a disability.
 | Special school is a state school only providing special education.Special education means the educational programs **and** services:* appropriate to the needs of persons with a disability; and
* additional to, or otherwise different from, educational programs and services generally available to persons of the relevant age who are not persons with a disability.
 |
| **Evidence** | * Evidence for this criterion may be provided in one or more of the following:
* specialist diagnosis or reports, e.g., medical practitioner such as paediatrician, or a specialist, e.g., guidance officer/counsellor, speech pathologist, audiologist;
* profiles or assessment reports from schools including departmental therapists and guidance officers that identify the functional needs of a child or young person with disability, and indicate the child or young person meets the DDA definition; and/or
* school assessments, learning history, and any additional information provided by the parent/s regarding their child’s individual needs.
 | **Intellectual disability*** Intellectual disability is verified by departmental EAP verifier.

**Impact** * Evidence of the impact of a child or young person’s disability includes one or more of the following:
* the impact of the child or young person’s intellectual disability on their functioning in the conceptual, social and practical domains;
* co-occurrence with other developmental disorders;
* diagnosis of severe medical conditions including degenerative conditions; and/or
* specialised health needs.

**Requiring a highly individualised program** * Evidence that a child requires a highly individualised program includes one or more of the following:
* negotiated individual learning plan identifying the individual curriculum pathway with appropriate learning expectations;
* assessment and reporting against these learning expectations;
* specialised teaching;
* significant education adjustments; and/or
* continuous monitoring and support delivered by a multi-disciplinary team, which may include:
* augmentative and alternative (AAC) communication programs;
* small groups or one on one support;
* therapy programs; and/or
* specialised health needs management.
 | There must be evidence that the child or young person has additional or different needs to those of their similar-aged peers both:* educational programs; and
* services.
* Educational Programs
* For children or young people who are currently enrolled in school, there must be evidence regarding:
* frequency and intensity of adjustments provided;
* achievement of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas/subjects; and
* an endorsed Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP) (internal access)

For children about to enter Prep, evidence may include:* extremely low functioning across all areas of development;
* previous access to intensive interventions/support, (e.g. allied health professionals) for a sustained period with minimal or no gains made; and/or
* involvement of a paediatrician or other medical specialists from an early age would be expected.
* Services (communication, social participation and emotional wellbeing, learning environment, health, personal care and safety).
 | * The child or young person’s educational program is best delivered in a special school having regard to one or more of the following:
* pervasive and persistent nature of their disability;
* curriculum;
* communication needs;
* social skills;
* personal care;
* mobility; and/or
* specialised health.

Evidence may include:* supporting documentation from medical practitioners;
* allied health and other education professionals’ involvement;
* the extent of and response to current and previous intervention; and/or
* any other supporting information provided by the parent/s.
 |
|  | * The evidence supports that the child or young person has a disability as defined by the DDA.
 | * The evidence supports that the child has an intellectual disability and the impact of that disability, or in combination with other disabilities, severely impacts on their ability to access and participate in education.
 | * The evidence supports that the child or young person requires significant additional or different supports to those of their similar-aged peers without disability.
 | * The evidence supports that the child or young person’s educational program is best delivered in a state special school.
 |
| **The** **special school is able to cater for the educational needs of the child or young person** |
| **Definition** | Special school is a state school only providing special education. Special education means the educational programs and services:1. appropriate to the needs of persons with a disability; and
2. additional to, or otherwise different from, educational programs and services generally available to persons of the relevant age who are not persons with a disability.
 | **Evidence** | * The relevant state special school can cater for the child or young person’s educational needs having regard to:
* resources;
* expertise; and
* supports.
 | * The evidence supports that the state special school is able to cater for the educational needs of the child or young person.
 |