

Disability Strategy Checklist

Did you know?

- In February 2019 the NSW Department of Education released a Disability Strategy, which aims for a more inclusive education system.
- In 2018 teachers told us that **19% of children in the classroom needed additional support**. The number of students with disability is growing at **4x the rate of overall enrolment growth**.
- **97% of students with disability learn in mainstream schools.**
- Students with disability have a diverse range of abilities and make valuable contributions to society.
- That the Disability Standards for Education outline our obligation to students with disability.



Meet Jack

Jack is in high school attending regular classes. His teacher says he's brilliant in many ways and completes tasks quickly in areas where he excels.

Jack says, **"Some days I think life is unfair. That's because as my mind is speeding up, my body is going the other way."**



Meet Fatima

Fatima attends a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) in a large regional area. Her teachers says she is a joy to be around and is progressing towards her learning goals.

Fatima says, **"My moving chair is put in a car that takes me to school. I speak on the inside but I use my hands so I can tell the teacher when there is too much 'loud' around me."**



Meet Joshua

Joshua undertakes a pathways pattern of study at a mainstream high school. His teacher says that he contributes a lot to the school and they would love to see more of him.

Joshua says, **"If something makes me angry or I can't do something, I can lose it. Losing it makes me feel better but then I get in trouble."**

We want to ensure that all students:

- Feel welcomed and included in their local school community
- Enjoy a wide range of experiences
- Learn to their fullest capacity, with demonstrable learning, wellbeing and independence outcomes.
- Receive an excellent 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.

Our Disability Strategy works towards these outcomes:

1. Learning and growth

Students demonstrate progress in learning against the curriculum. Families and children report high expectations for achievement of meaningful learning goals.

2. Wellbeing

Children and young people have demonstrable physical, emotional and health outcomes.

3. Independence

Young people have the skills and capacity to live a post-school life as independently as possible and to thrive in their community.



Start here

Spend some time thinking about how your work impacts students, even if the connection is indirect. All initiatives in the department must consider the needs of students with disability. Examples of initiatives include policies, programs, training systems and agreements.

Integrating this thinking into your initiative from the start will help save you time and resources. Even if your initiative is well advanced, you should still consider the needs of students with disability.

This checklist will guide you on how to reflect the aims of the strategy. Not all aspects will be relevant to every initiative.

Download the Disability Strategy at education.nsw.gov.au/disability-strategy





Preparation and Development

- ❑ My initiative is developed taking account of the fact that approximately 20% of students will require additional support.
- ❑ I am aware of the full range of student needs - including intellectual, physical, vision impairment, hearing impairment, language disorder, mental health conditions, autism and behaviour disorders - that will have to be met through this initiative.
- ❑ My initiative reflects the fact that school staff need to be equipped to understand and address the needs of the diverse student body.
- ❑ My initiative is inclusive – for example, documents and meetings are accessible; inclusive language is used; it adheres to the department's [Disability Inclusion Action Plan](#) and the [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#), (please see resources link below).



Feedback

- ❑ I have sought feedback from stakeholders or experts who can reflect the needs of students with disability.
- ❑ Where appropriate, I have tested my initiative with students with disability and their families.
- ❑ I have sought advice from the [Disability Learning and Support team](#) or the [Disability Strategy Implementation Team](#).



Outcomes

- ❑ My initiative is designed to give families and communities a better and easier experience of our education system.
- ❑ My initiative is consistent with the Strategy's aim of creating a more inclusive education system, one where all students feel welcomed and are learning to their full capability.
- ❑ Where my initiative relates to students' learning growth, wellbeing and independence it aims to improve those outcomes for all students.
- ❑ I have considered how the outcomes of my initiative can be measured and evaluated.

Hypothetical examples of integrating the Disability Strategy:

- An induction program for new principals is designed to educate them on the diversity within our student body and provides access to resources to help them support students with disability.
- A protocol for designing or renovating schools requires that buildings address participation and inclusion protocols for all students with disability.
- A new online portal is accessible for all users.
- A program to provide post-school pathways addresses the needs of students with disability.
- A new school excursion policy includes the requirement to address the needs of students with disability to allow for full participation and inclusion.
- A student survey is delivered in a format that is accessible to all students, including those with visual and auditory needs and those who require communication support.

What part do you play in ensuring every student is known, valued and cared for?

Where to from here

If you need more guidance or information:

Contacts

For queries regarding support for students with disability contact

Disability Learning and Support

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

For queries on the strategy contact Disability Strategy

Implementation Team

Email: Disability.strategy@det.nsw.edu.au

Links

You will find resources including the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and information on accessibility and inclusion.

Go to <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/disability-learning-and-support/our-disability-strategy/resources> and click on Checklist Resources.