

**Easy  
Read**



Department  
of Education

# **Specialist school eligibility review**



## About this fact sheet



Department  
of Education

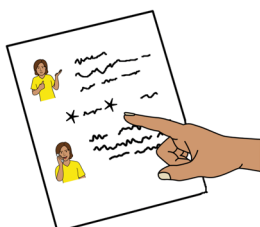
This fact sheet is from the Victorian Government.



This fact sheet is written in a way that is easy to understand.



You can read more information about this topic on our [Department of Education website](http://www.vic.gov.au/department-of-education) [www.vic.gov.au/department-of-education](http://www.vic.gov.au/department-of-education)



We add a star before and after **\*hard words\***. Then we explain what the words mean.



You can ask someone to help you read and understand this fact sheet.



Contact information is at the end of this fact sheet.

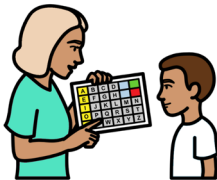
## About the review



The Department of Education has done the **\*specialist school eligibility review\***.



Specialist schools are for students with disability and high needs.



For example, schools for

- students with intellectual disability
- autistic students
- students with physical disability
- deaf and hard of hearing students.



Eligibility means students meet the rules to go to a specialist school.



The review looked into the rules and the way students are **\*enrolled\*** in specialist schools.

Enrolled means you have joined the school.

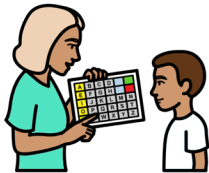
## School options in Victoria



Every child has a right to go to their local school.



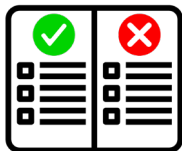
Most Victorian students with disability and high needs go to **\*inclusive\*** local schools.



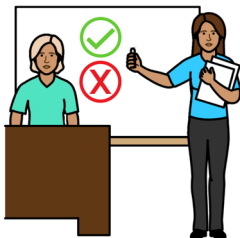
Inclusive means everyone can go to the school and learn in ways they need.



Families can choose to apply for their child to go to a specialist school.



Specialist schools have **\*enrolment criteria\***.

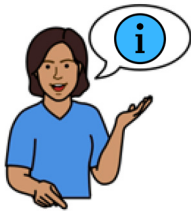


Enrolment means joining a school.

Enrolment criteria are the rules a specialist school uses to decide who can join.



For example, rules about the type of disability a student has.



A parent or carer gives the school information about their child when they ask to join a school.



The school decides if it is the right place for the student by using the criteria.



Students can ask to join a specialist school if

- they meet the enrolment criteria

and



- the school has a place for them.

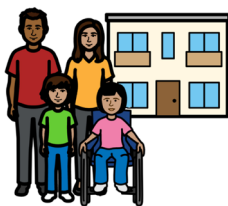


The government wants to help more families find the right school for their child's needs.

## Who helped with the review?



A company called Ernst and Young helped the department with this review.



The review got information from

- people with disability and their families



- people who work in disability services



- people who work in schools.

## What we found out

### Communication and information



Parents and carers said the process of applying to a specialist school was hard.

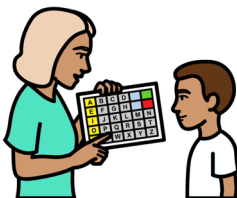


Parents and carers want more information about school choices for their children with disability and high needs.



Parents and carers want better information about applying to enrol in specialist schools.

### Eligibility rules



Specialist schools need to understand more about a child's needs to help make an enrolment decision.



The enrolment process is different across schools, which is hard for parents and carers to manage.



Schools for students with intellectual disability use scores from a **\*cognitive assessment\*** when students enrol.



A cognitive assessment is a test of the student's thinking skills.



Using only assessment scores can leave out students who would do well in a specialist school.



Schools for students with a physical disability ask for assessments from a medical specialist.



Schools for autistic students ask for assessments from a medical and allied health team.



These rules can make the enrolment process harder for parents and carers.





Deaf schools ask parents and carers for hearing test results.



Hearing tests do not give much information about what the student needs at school.

## How specialist schools check eligibility



When specialist schools check eligibility it can

- be hard to understand



- take a lot of time



- cost a lot of money.



Specialist schools do **\*enrolment reviews\***.

Enrolment reviews check if a student still meets the eligibility criteria for the school.



Enrolment reviews can cause stress for families.

## How to make things better



Our review has ideas to make the specialist school enrolment system better for everyone.

## Access to information



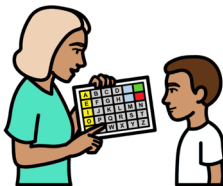
Parents and carers will get better information about school choices for students with disability.

## Eligibility criteria

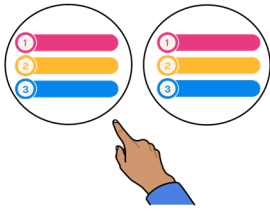


Specialist school eligibility criteria will

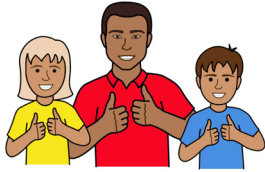
- be easier to understand
- ask for more information about student needs
- be the same for schools of the same type
- match how disabilities are diagnosed today.



## Better processes



Students who enrol in specialist schools will follow the same process at each school they apply for.



The enrolment review process will be better so it is not so stressful for parents and carers.

## What happens next?



Changes to the eligibility process will be made by the end of 2027.

## The plan for changes



Eligibility criteria for specialist schools will be changed to make it easier for families and schools to find the best school for their child's needs.

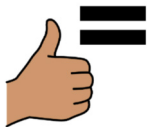


The way to enrol at a specialist school will be

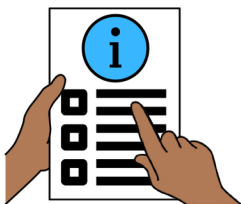
- easier to understand



- the same for schools of the same type



- fair for everyone.



Government will get information from schools to help make the enrolment process better for students, families and schools.



## More information



Department  
of Education

For more information contact the  
Department of Education.



### Call

1800 338 663



### Email

[disability.inclusion@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:disability.inclusion@education.vic.gov.au)



### Website

[Department of Education website](http://www.vic.gov.au/fighting-students-disability-and-their-families)

[www.vic.gov.au/fighting-students-disability-  
and-their-families](http://www.vic.gov.au/fighting-students-disability-and-their-families)

## Help to speak and listen



If you need help to speak or listen, the National Relay Service can help you make a call.

**Call**      1800 555 660



**Website**    [NRS Helpdesk](#)

[www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs/nrs-helpdesk](http://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs/nrs-helpdesk)

## Help in your language



If you need help with other languages, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service.

**Call**      131 450



**Website**    [TIS National](#)

[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

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Available at [Fighting for students with disability and their families](https://www.vic.gov.au/fighting-students-disability-and-their-families)

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