

Disability Action Plan

2023 - 2027



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Department
of Education

Acknowledgement

The Department of Education acknowledges and pays respects to Elders and all Victorian Aboriginal communities. We honour and respect Traditional Owners, past and present, and value the rich culture and history of the First Peoples of this land.

Aboriginal peoples represent the world's oldest living culture. We celebrate and respect this continuing culture.

We recognise that we have a long way to go in understanding and addressing the intersections of ableism, racism and the ongoing effects of dispossession and colonisation. We are committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to see what additional actions the Victorian Government needs to take to address inequality for Aboriginal people with disability.

We also acknowledge the significant role that Aboriginal families and communities play as carers for people with disability in Victoria.

Throughout this document the term Koorie is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the terms Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are retained in the names of programs and initiatives and unless noted otherwise are inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Introduction

The Victorian government has a vision of an inclusive Victoria where all people are given the opportunities and support needed to engage fully in life and contribute to their communities.

Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026) is Victoria’s plan for making things fairer for people with disability. The plan is a key guiding document for the Victorian Government to deliver reform activities and provide accountability for making all parts of the community inclusive and accessible for everyone. This is the fourth Department of Education Disability Action Plan. It outlines a wide range of reform activities and initiatives to achieve our vision for children and young people with a disability.

The Department of Education’s vision is for: *A great education for every child and young person — so they can thrive now, and in the future, for a fairer, smarter, and more prosperous state.*

The Department of Education (the department) provides policy leadership, plans for the future of education in Victoria, and leads key cross-sector collaboration. The department plays an important system steward role by providing support, guidance, oversight and assurance across early childhood and school education systems, as well as directly providing school education and 50 new early learning centres.

The department and its portfolio entities work collaboratively with a diverse range of public, private and not-for-profit providers serving Victorian children and young people.

The Disability Action Plan 2023 to 2027 (the plan) demonstrates the department’s work to support the Victorian Government’s vision of an inclusive Victoria. It sets out the current actions the department is undertaking to provide inclusive schooling for all Victorian students.

The plan acknowledges that people experience disability in different ways, depending on their individual circumstances, life experiences, and the nature of their needs and abilities. It also recognises that early childhood education and school systems need to respond to these individual needs to support every Victorian to reach their potential and live the life that they want.

The department is building an education system that is inclusive and produces excellence. Work is underway to ensure Victoria has an inclusive education system that allows every child and young person to learn in a safe and supportive environment by providing settings that are best suited to the learners’ needs. This will ensure that all Victorians have access to quality education and training that meets their needs and enables meaningful participation in society.

The plan was developed in alignment with the Department of Education 2023–2027 Strategic Plan’s outcomes: Learning and development, Equity and inclusion, and Pathways and opportunities. These outcomes are closely aligned with the State Pillars in Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022 – 2026).

In 2023, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Royal Commission) and the independent review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was concluded. Any updates to this plan as a result of these reports will be incorporated when the plan is reviewed at its mid-point.

The department has a strong record of providing services for children and young people with disability.

The department has a strong record of providing services to people with disability across the early childhood and school education sectors. It also recognises that there is more work to do. This is the fourth Disability Action Plan, and it sets out how the department is working towards changes to improve the lives and experiences of children and students with disability and diverse learning needs.

Education has the power to transform lives. It supports children and young people to realise their potential by providing skills they need to participate in the economy and in society, as well as contributing to every aspect of their wellbeing. It is essential that every child and young person has a safe, positive, and supportive learning environment in which to learn that is suited to their individual needs.

Early childhood education is one of many steps in the journey of lifelong learning and inclusive education. 'Inclusive education' means that children and young people are supported to fully participate, learn, develop, and succeed within an inclusive kindergarten and school culture.



The Victorian Government's \$14 billion Best Start, Best Life (BSBL) reforms are the most significant change to Victoria's early childhood sector in a generation.

The BSBL reforms include:

- **Free Kinder:** Free Kinder is now available for Victorian three and four-year-old children at participating services in standalone (sessional) kindergartens and long day care centres.
- **Pre-Prep:** Over the next decade, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to 'Pre-Prep' – increasing to a universal 30-hour a week program of play-based learning for four-year-old children in Victoria by 2032.
- **Three-Year-Old Kindergarten:** The continued roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, with programs increasing to 15 hours a week across the state by 2029.
- **Early learning and childcare centres:** The establishment of 50 Victorian government-owned and operated early learning centres. These integrated centres will be built in areas with the greatest need and will make it easier for families to access early childhood education and care. They will also provide room for services like Maternal and Child Health, Allied Health and NDIS approved service providers where possible. The first of the centres will be available in 2025.

These ambitious reforms show the government's commitment to the early childhood education sector and the capability of its highly skilled workforce. In addition, Free Kinder will also alleviate financial pressures faced by families, particularly those dealing with additional costs associated with disability.

The department is progressing a range of developments and improvements to existing supports for including children with disabilities and additional needs. This is supported by significant investment from the 2023-24 State Budget. This will strengthen programs such as Kindergarten Inclusion Support, Preschool Field Officer, and the Specialist Equipment Program which build the capacity and capabilities of services to include children with additional needs.



Disability Inclusion is the biggest investment in disability support for Victorian government schools in the state's history. The key features include a new strengths-based Disability Inclusion Profile, a facilitator workforce to administer the profile in schools state-wide, a new school-level funding allocation (Tier 2 funding), and a new student-level funding allocation (Tier 3 funding). Disability Inclusion will be available in all schools from 2025.

Disability Inclusion also invests in capability-building initiatives to ensure that school workforces are equipped to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. These initiatives are now operating state-wide and include the Diverse Learners Hub, the Inclusion Outreach Coaching Initiative and other professional learning opportunities.

How we measure our success

The department uses a set of objective indicators and performance measures to evaluate outcomes and assess how well we are meeting our objectives and delivering our services and support outputs. The Disability Action Plan will continually evolve to include new initiatives to support its strategic pillars that will reflect the Victorian government's responses to the Royal Commission and the Review of the NDIS and other inquiries into education.

The department will monitor progress and continuously improve by:

- building and tracking key datasets to measure progress for students with disability
- staying up-to-date with the latest research and best practice
- listening to students with disability and their families about support needs.

Through the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) 2.0, Victorian government schools are provided the opportunity to reflect on their practice and processes in relation to improving student wellbeing and learning outcomes for all students, including students with disability. This is monitored through School Reviews and the Strategic Planning Online Tool.

The plan's structure

The department's Disability Action Plan is organised under the 4 pillars of *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022 - 2026*.

Pillars and priority areas	Inclusive communities	Health, housing and wellbeing	Fairness and safety	Opportunity and pride
	Changing attitudes Transport Digital inclusion Assistance animals Sport and recreation Parks and tourism	Health Mental health Housing Supporting a high-quality NDIS Children and families	Safety in emergencies Disability advocacy Preventing abuse and neglect Family and sexual violence Justice system Right to expression of sexuality and gender identity	Education Employment and economic participation Voice and leadership Creative industries Pride and recognition

The following sections summarise the focus of the department's work under these 4 pillars.

Pillar 1: Inclusive Communities

“I feel included”

Introduction

The department is committed to embedding inclusive education in early childhood education settings and school environments for children and young people with diverse learning needs. An inclusive education reform agenda is underway to strengthen the capacity of early childhood and school education systems to support children and young people with disability, and to facilitate their full and active participation.

The Disability Inclusion reform provides all children and young people with disability, the support they need to achieve a high-quality inclusive education. Implementation of initiatives and resources are strengthening the skills and knowledge in inclusive education across the school system, ensuring all schools have the resources and expertise to include and support students with disability.

“We’re all different, and that’s a good thing. We all have different strength” Hope, Birmingham Primary School

Reform – activity, initiative, or program	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Autism Education Strategy Implementation of the Autism Education Strategy will improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for autistic students. There are 6 strategic pillars for schools and the education system to direct effort to address the issues facing autistic students and meet their educational aspirations.	The purpose is to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for autistic students and foster inclusive school communities that welcome them and their families, and value their contribution.	End 2024	Students with disability	Inclusive Education
Diverse Learners Hub (DLH) The DLH initiative forms part of Disability Inclusion and is the flagship of the Autism Education Strategy. The DLH, through its regional workforce provides coaching and support to school leaders on whole-school best practice inclusion that supports, welcomes and engages diverse learners.	The purpose is to build system wide capability, enabling more consistent support for diverse learners in all Victorian government schools.	Ongoing	School staff Students with disability and diverse learning needs	Inclusive Education
I CAN Network The department has partnered with the I CAN Network to provide programs and training to build school-wide capability in supporting autistic students. It will provide outreach supports such as webinars, presentations, and information sessions for school communities.	The purpose is to improve social connections and self-esteem and creating autism-friendly school environments that better support autistic young people.	Mid 2027	Students with autism School staff	Inclusive Education

The I CAN Network will also provide mentoring support to autistic students in 254 schools by 2027 and through the extension of the Disability Inclusion Student Ambassador pilot, student ambassadors will be supported to deliver presentations to Victorian government schools and other key government bodies, advisory groups, and conferences to support better understanding of the school experience of autistic students.				
Inclusion Outreach Coaches Provision of 89 (FTE) Inclusion Outreach Coaches (IOC) by 2025, based in specialist schools to support mainstream 'partner' schools to build inclusion capability. Coaches work closely with schools to provide best practice evidence-based coaching guidance, information, resources and professional learning to school staff.	The purpose is to improve the capabilities, practice and confidence of the education workforce to better meet the learning and wellbeing needs and aspirations of all students, with particular attention to students with disability and diverse learner needs.	End 2025	Students with disability School staff	Inclusive Education
New Schools 2025 and 2026 Program Implementation of the program includes universal design being applied to all new mainstream schools, and all new Supported Inclusion Schools, which will provide an inclusive education environment for a substantial cohort of students with disability within mainstream primary and secondary school settings.	The purpose is to provide students with disability the ability to attend their local school, which is a fundamental right of every child. Supported Inclusion Schools further integrate stand-alone special schools into mainstream settings and will provide a safe, accessible and inclusive environment for every student.	End 2026	Students with disability	Victorian Schools Building Authority
Core – activity, initiative, or program	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
AllPlay Learn This program provides evidence-based resources to support teachers, educators and other professionals working with children, young people and families across Victorian early childhood education and care settings, primary schools and secondary schools.	The purpose is to create inclusive education environments for children and young people with developmental challenges and disability through practical online information, courses, and resources for teachers, as well as information and resources for parents, children and the community.	End 2024	Students with disability Early childhood teachers and educators	Inclusive Education
Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) Available support for funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is	The purpose is to strengthen supports to help children with additional inclusion needs, including children with	Ongoing	Children with disability and additional inclusion needs	Early Learning Practice and Participation

responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs.	disability, developmental delay or additional needs to engage in funded kindergarten and to transition successfully into school.			
Kindergarten Inclusion Support Specialised Equipment Program (KIS SEP) Funded kindergarten services can borrow, at no additional cost, specialised equipment to enable the greater inclusion of children with significant disability.	The purpose is to provide specialist equipment to help children with additional inclusion needs, including children with disability, developmental delay or diverse learning needs to engage in funded kindergarten.	End 2027	Children with disability and additional inclusion needs	Early Learning Practice and Participation
Preschool Field Officers (PSFO) Capability building program delivered by PSFOs, who are inclusion experts with teaching backgrounds. PSFOs can enable funded kindergarten services to support the access, inclusion and participation of children with additional needs in a kindergarten program.	The purpose is to assist early childhood educators through consultative support, resourcing and practical advice to build their capacity and knowledge to create an inclusive kindergarten environment.	Ongoing	Children with disability and additional inclusion needs	Early Learning Practice and Participation
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Provide AAC software for teachers and support staff of students with disability in all Victorian government schools as part of the Software for Connected Learners program.	The purpose is to enable teachers to transform print activities into interactive, visual activities for use on various devices, such as smart boards, computers, tablets, and communication devices leading to more inclusive practices.	End 2027	Students with disability School staff	Curriculum Implementation
Students with Disabilities Transport Program The program facilitates travel assistance for eligible students to and from their designated government specialist school regardless of their disability.	The purpose is to provide a service to students with disability to attend government specialist schools and help families.	End 2024	Students with disability	Financial Services
LOOKOUT The LOOKOUT program aims to improve educational engagement for students in out-of-home care by providing support through schools and improving the understanding of the unique needs and experiences of children and young people living in this situation. Over half of students living in out of home care are recorded as needing an adjustment and are counted within the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD).	The purpose is to support schools to better understand the impact of trauma on student behaviour and engagement and ways in which trauma affected students can be supported to learn.	Ongoing	Students in out of home care School staff	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement

Marrung Aboriginal Education Continued implementation of Marrung to support more effective access to services and programs that meet the needs of Koorie Victorians. Principles of self-determination underpin Marrung, focusing on cultural inclusivity and supporting schools to better support Koorie students.	Marrung includes actions to create a positive climate for learning and development where services demonstrate the highest levels of respect and inclusion for Koorie learners of all ages. Marrung aims to achieve excellence in teaching, learning and development at all stages so that Koorie children are on track in their health, development and wellbeing, and can engage fully throughout their schooling.	End 2026	All students	Koorie Outcomes
Building Blocks Grants – Inclusion This grants stream provides funding to kindergartens to upgrade early childhood buildings and facilities (including playgrounds), and purchase equipment to provide safe and more inclusive equipment and environments for children of all needs and abilities.	The purpose is to increase engagement and improve learning outcomes for children with disability by strengthening inclusive early childhood environments.	End 2025	Children with disability	Victorian Schools Building Authority
Inclusive Schools Fund This initiative promotes inclusive learning environments and supports the educational and social needs of students with disability.	The purpose is to support Victorian government schools to implement innovative projects that increase participation and improve outcomes for students with disability by strengthening and developing inclusive learning environments.	Round 9 – End 2025	Students with disability School staff	Victorian Schools Building Authority
Accessible Buildings Program This initiative provides school building access such as ramps and handrails, modifications to toilets and showers, and support for those with vision impairment and hearing loss.	This purpose is to improve access to buildings for all students with disability, meeting their needs where accessibility issues occur. The program also supports access for employees and visitors.	End 2027	Students with disability	Victorian Schools Building Authority
School Sport Victoria (SSV) This program offers opportunities for students with disability to compete in school sport, including the capacity building and education of teachers and SSV coordinators.	The purpose is to increase opportunities for students with disability to participate in school sport by improving the knowledge and competence of teachers and sports coordinators to deliver modified sport in schools.	Ongoing	Students with disability School staff	School Sport Victoria

Pillar 2: Health, housing and wellbeing

“I live well”

Introduction

All Victorians, irrespective of the early childhood education setting or school they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, should have access to high quality early childhood and school education. All children and students have the potential to learn and the right to participate in a learning environment that is committed to supporting their engagement in a funded Kindergarten or school educational program, including children and young people with disability.

Inclusive early childhood and school education systems enable all children and students to be welcomed, accepted and engaged so that they can participate, achieve and thrive in kindergarten and through to school life. The department supports children and young people with disability and their families to access the services they need to improve health, education, economic and social outcomes.

“It is important to include others, so they feel happy and safe.” Kalea, Armstrong Creek School

Reform – activity, initiative, or program	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Hydrotherapy Pools for Specialist Schools This grants initiative is providing \$25 million funding to Victorian government specialist schools to build new hydrotherapy facilities to provide extra recreational and therapeutic opportunities.	The purpose is to further expand therapeutic opportunities through increased access to hydrotherapy. Hydrotherapy can offer a range of benefits for students with disability and complex needs, including improving physical health and wellbeing, which can assist with communication, engagement, and learning outcomes.	End 2026	Students with disability	Victorian Schools Building Authority
School Readiness Funding (SRF) The funding supports three and four-year-old children in all early childhood education and care services delivering state-funded kindergarten and must be used on three priority areas: communication (language development), wellbeing (social and emotional), and access and inclusion.	The purpose is to support children experiencing educational disadvantage. Kindergartens can select from a menu of evidence-informed programs and supports that have been externally validated for how well they support children's learning and development.	Ongoing	Children facing educational disadvantage	Early Learning Practice and Participation
Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu	The purpose is to provide schools with a Menu to purchase initiatives that	Ongoing	All students	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement

This initiative supports Victorian government schools to select programs, staff and other support from an evidence-based menu that best meets their students' mental health and wellbeing needs.	promote mental health and wellbeing, enables schools to intervene early to support students, and provides targeted support for individual students.			
Mental Health in Primary Schools This initiative provides funding to every government and low-fee non-government primary school in Victoria, including specialist schools to employ a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader to implement a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.	The purpose is for Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders to build the capability of school staff to support students with mental health concerns, create referral pathways for further assessment and intervention, and coordinate targeted mental health support for students.	Ongoing	Primary school students School staff	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement
Mental Health Practitioners initiative This initiative provides funding to every government secondary school campus and specialist school with secondary enrolments to recruit a school-based Mental Health Practitioner (MHP). MHPs are fully qualified and registered (where applicable) psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, or mental health nurses.	The purpose is to increase the ability of young people to readily access high quality mental health services in a familiar school environment. MHPs contribute to whole-school approaches to mental health prevention and promotion, provide direct counselling support and other early intervention services to students and coordinate supports for students with complex needs.	Ongoing	All secondary students	Inclusive Education
NDIS Navigators This initiative provides NDIS Navigators in all Victorian government specialist schools.	NDIS Navigators will support families and carers to navigate and understand the NDIS, enabling them to get the most out of the supports available.	Mid 2027	Parent/carers of students in Victorian government specialist schools Students with disability	Inclusive Education
Core – activity, initiative, or program	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) This framework brings together school communities to develop positive, safe, and supportive learning cultures. Implementation of SWPBS requires commitment by the whole school community, particularly from the principal and leadership group. Coaches work with school teams to clarify a school's needs and provide the necessary professional learning	The purpose of SWPBS is to help schools improve the social, emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes for all students.	Ongoing	All students School staff	Inclusive Education

for teams to embed essential SWPBS features.				
Student Support Services (SSS) Student Support Services are multi-disciplinary teams comprised of professionals including psychologists, speech pathologists and social workers. They assist students facing barriers to learning to achieve their educational and developmental potential.	The purpose of the SSS teams is to provide assessments and interventions to maximise engagement and participation in the curriculum. This includes providing expertise to formulate reasonable adjustments for Disability Inclusion profiles and capability building for school staff.	Ongoing	Students with disability School staff	Inclusive Education
Early Childhood Intervention Services Continuity of Support (ECIS CoS) This program provides supports to children from birth to school entry who are ineligible for NDIS due to non-Australian residency and have a disability or developmental delay.	The purpose of ECIS CoS is to provide special education, therapy, counselling, service planning and coordination, school transition, and assistance to access services such as kindergarten and early childhood education and care services.	Ongoing	Non-Australian residents aged from birth to school age with a disability or developmental delay	Inclusive Education
Visiting Teacher Service This program provides supports for health and wellbeing of students with disability and complex health issues.	The purpose is to provide provision of supports for students with vision impairment, hearing loss, complex health needs and other disabilities.	Ongoing	Students with disability	Inclusive Education
Schoolcare The program equips Victorian government school staff with the skills and knowledge to support students with complex medical needs. Royal Children's Hospital nurses provide specialist training to nominated school staff responsible for the care of a student requiring regular interventional medical procedures during the school day.	The purpose is to enable students with ongoing complex medical needs to have their health care requirements met safely at school to ensure their ongoing participation in education, where they would otherwise not be able to safely attend school without the procedure being performed.	Ongoing	Students with complex medical needs School staff	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement
Doctors in Secondary Schools The program operates in 100 select Victorian government secondary schools, providing an adolescent health-trained general practitioner and practice nurse to attend up to once a week during school terms to provide medical advice and health care to students.	The purpose of the program is to provide equitable, accessible and professional primary health care services to secondary school students. As well as making primary health care more accessible to students and assisting them to identify and address health problems early, the program complements existing student wellbeing	Ongoing	All students	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement

	programs aimed at improving health literacy and encouraging preventive health.			
Newly announced workforce initiative	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Pre-service teacher Placement Grant (PPG) program This initiative will provide support to pre-service teachers undertaking placements in regional, remote and specialist Victorian government schools.	In the 2023-24 Budget, the Victorian Government announced an investment to provide a significant uplift in financial support to pre-service teachers undertaking placements in all regional, remote and specialist schools.	For students completing teaching placements between 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2025	Pre-service teachers	Workforce Policy and Strategy
Secondary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Scholarships This initiative will provide additional payments for students who complete their studies and teach in a Victorian government secondary or specialist school setting for two years.	In the 2023 Budget Update, the Victorian Government announced an investment in scholarships to support Victorian students enrolling in secondary teaching degrees in 2024 and 2025.	From 2024 – 2029 (Eligibility includes students enrolling in secondary teaching degrees in 2024 and 2025)	People interested in enrolling in Victorian secondary teaching degrees in 2024 and 2025	Workforce Policy and Strategy
Undergraduate employment-based secondary teaching degree programs This initiative will support people who do not already have an undergraduate degree to study and qualify as a teacher while undertaking paid work in a Victorian government secondary or specialist school.	In the 2023 Budget Update, the Victorian Government announced an investment to develop and introduce undergraduate employment-based Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs to help reduce financial barriers to entering the teaching profession.	From 2025	People interested in studying teaching, who do not have an undergraduate degree	Workforce Policy and Strategy
The Aspiring Koorie Teachers (AKT) Now project This initiative aims to significantly increase the number of First Nations people in the teaching workforce through promoting various pathways to teaching.	Part of the Initial Teachers Education programs, the AKT Now project will attract and retain new and returning First Nations peoples to the school's workforce. The initiative emphasises 'pathways' into education and education support and reflects community expectations that new departmental initiatives will strengthen the valuing and celebration of First Nations cultures across the Victorian education system.	From 2024	School staff	Koorie Outcomes

Pillar 3: Fairness and safety

“I get a fair go”

Introduction

Inclusive education means that all members of every Kindergarten and school community are valued and supported to fully participate, learn, develop and succeed within an inclusive Kindergarten and school culture. This includes ensuring the learning environment is safe so that children and young people with disability thrive in their education.

The initiatives focus on developing school and early childhood staff’s capabilities and knowledge bases to better respond to the needs of children and young people with disability. The initiatives aim to provide clearer guidance and specialist support to achieve more inclusive education across the state.

“The school shows how kids with learning problems and disabilities can still learn like other kids, they’re not treated specifically different.” Tiffany, Roxburgh Secondary College

Reform – activity, initiative, or program	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Inclusive Student Voice Toolkit The toolkit provides accessible and multi-modal tools to support the voice, agency and leadership of students with disability. It is developed primarily for use by school staff and regional staff in preparation for the Disability Inclusion profile. The toolkit can also be used by parents and to support any purpose related to inclusive student voice, agency and leadership.	The purpose of the toolkit is to provide schools with flexible and accessible tools to make sure that all students with disability can participate in decisions about their education.	Ongoing	School staff Students with disability	Inclusive Education
Investment in implementation and disability support roles in regions Disability Inclusion is increasing regionally based resources to support the implementation of the new model in schools, through capability building in regions and schools. This includes time limited roles to establish Regional Implementation Teams and the expansion of existing Regional Disability Coordinator roles that support collaboration between schools and families.	The purpose is to support schools with implementing Disability Inclusion and embedding inclusive practices in schools to benefit students with disability to be supported throughout their education.	Ongoing	Regional and school staff Students with disability	Inclusive Education

Safe Schools This initiative helps Victorian schools foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning and asexual (LGBTIQ+) students.	The purpose is to provide support for schools to review school policies and practice to improve inclusion for LGBTIQ+ students, through consultation, advice and resources to support individual students.	Ongoing	School staff LGBTIQ+ students	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement
Respectful Relationships This initiative is supporting and building capability in over 1,950 Victorian government, Catholic and independent schools, including all government schools, and early childhood services to embed a culture of respect and equality. The initiative is a primary prevention of family violence reforms.	The purpose is to build capability in schools and early childhood services to facilitate the Respectful Relationships program as a whole school approach as well as promoting and modelling respect, positive attitudes and behaviours, teaching students how to challenge traditional gender roles, build healthy relationships, resilience, confidence and problem solving.	Mid 2024	All young children and students	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Early Learning Practice and Participation
Core - activity, initiative, or program	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Health, Wellbeing Key Contact (HWKC) The initiative was established in 2020 in response to the delivery of remote and flexible learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to assist schools in accessing health and wellbeing supports and services for students at risk or experiencing vulnerabilities. Due to its effective impact, it is now an ongoing function implemented by the Health, Wellbeing Inclusion Workforces across the State.	The purpose is to provide timely advice to schools and greater communication between area teams and schools.	Ongoing	School staff	Inclusive Education
Health, Wellbeing Inclusion Workforces (HWIW) Practice Model. The model supports consistent, high-quality practice, enabling HWIW to enhance their impact on student achievement, engagement and wellbeing.	The purpose is to support student wellbeing, engagement and learning.	Ongoing	School staff	Inclusive Education
Child Safe Standards The compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools and early childhood services ensure they are well prepared to keep children and young people safe and protect them from abuse. Under Child Safe Standard 5, schools and	The purpose is to provide guidance to Victorian schools and early childhood services to help keep children and young people safe and protect them from abuse.	Ongoing	All children and students Early Childhood and School staff	Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Quality Assessment and Regulation Division

early childhood services must pay particular attention to the needs of students with disability.				
Staff Capability Build staff capability through training in the establishment of safe, respectful, and inclusive workplaces.	Ensure safe, respectful and inclusive workplace experiences for staff with disability.	Ongoing	Early Childhood, School and corporate staff with disability	Employee Safety, Wellbeing and Inclusion

Pillar 4: Opportunity and pride

“I contribute”

Introduction

Inclusive early childhood and school education contributes to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. Equitable access to lifelong learning and education for children and young people with a disability is critical to enabling meaningful participation in society.

Inclusive education means that all children and students are welcomed by their Kindergarten or school in age-appropriate settings and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of their education.

“Ask, don’t assume. Invite everyone to take part. And treat people with respect.” Dylan Alcott AO

Reform – activity, initiative, or program	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Best Start, Best Life reforms (BSBL) The BSBL reforms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Kinder • Pre-Prep • Three-Year-Old Kindergarten • 50 early learning and childcare centres 	The BSBL reforms are a clear policy commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve early learning outcomes for Victorian children through quality education programs in the 2 years before school • provide greater choice, savings and access for families • make it easier for parents and carers, especially women, to make their own choices about work and study. 	Ongoing	All children	Kindergarten Expansion and Pre-Prep Reform
Disability Inclusion The Disability Inclusion funding and support model is ensuring all schools have the resources and expertise to include and support students with disability. The Disability Inclusion profile is designed to be strengths-based and to support the aspirations of students with disability. School and regional workforce professional development programs strengthen inclusive schools.	The purpose of the profile process is to help schools and families identify the strengths, needs and educational adjustments schools can make to assist students with disability to thrive in school.	End 2026	Students with disability Regional and school staff	Inclusive Education

High-Intensity Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) The expansion of this initiative to 30 specialist schools will provide social and learning opportunities, high-intensity support for children with a disability, and allow families respite and the opportunity to participate in the workforce.	The purpose is to provide OSHC services to children with a disability which results in many educational, social and financial benefits for children and their families.	End 2027	Students with disability	School Services Branch
VCE Vocational Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) The initiative provides the VCE Vocational Major, and the VPC where it is an agreed pathway for students at the school. Mainstream and specialist government schools are supported to introduce high-quality VCE Vocational Major and VPC programs. In 2024, the School Provision and Establishment Division will work with specialist schools to support them to register to deliver the Victorian Pathways Certificate.	The purpose is to support schools to improve vocational and applied learning opportunities and provide a flexible secondary certificate for students with disability as a pathway to a senior secondary certificate, further training or work.	Ongoing	All students	Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce
Levels A to D: Towards Foundation Levels A to D: Towards Foundation will be reviewed in 2024 to ensure this curriculum continues to offer flexibility for teachers to tailor their teaching in ways that provide rigorous, relevant and engaging learning and assessment opportunities for students with disabilities.	Levels A to D: Towards Foundation provides students with a significant intellectual disability access to curriculum content and standards that enable students to move toward the learning described at Foundation level.	2025 and 2026	Students with disability	VCAA: Curriculum Division
Review of the department's Disability Employment Plan 2019-2022 To review the Disability Employment Plan 2019-2022 and other evidence and develop an ongoing mechanism to drive and report on workforce representation, inclusion and equity outcomes for employees with disability.	The purpose of the review of the Disability Employment Plan 2019-2022 is to ensure targeted, impactful workforce initiatives are developed and implemented.	Ongoing	Early Childhood, School and corporate staff with disability	Employee Safety, Wellbeing and Inclusion
Workforce and professional development	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Master of Inclusive Education and Graduate Certificate Initiative This initiative provides post-graduate study opportunities via annual application rounds for school staff and regional	The purpose of the initiative is to build capacity of inclusive education school-wide practices.	Ongoing	Regional and school staff	Inclusive Education

workforces to enhance their capability in inclusive education to support students with diverse learning needs.				
Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) Professional Learning Program VDEI designs and delivers high-quality professional learning resources to strengthen the knowledge and practice of practitioners in the deaf and inclusive education workforces. The VDEI professional learning program catalogue features a wide range of on-demand presentations, short courses, e-Learning modules and training resources.	The purpose is to provide access to a wide range of inclusive education professional learning resources and digital hubs to strengthen the knowledge and practice of teachers and allied staff who educate and support deaf and hard of hearing students.	Ongoing	Regional and school staff	Inclusive Education
Inclusive Education Professional Learning (IEPL) IEPL Digital is a learning management platform dedicated to hosting a variety of accessible inclusive education professional learning opportunities focused on upskilling the education workforce to better support diverse learners. IEPL Digital hosts a range of professional learning programs, e-learning modules, virtual hubs, and communities of practice.	The purpose is to provide a dedicated, centralised professional learning hosting platform to ensure inclusive education professional learning opportunities are accessible to the Victorian educational workforce.	Ongoing	School staff	Inclusive Education
Inclusive Classrooms Inclusive Classrooms offers a suite of courses for school staff. Courses have been designed specifically for the Victorian education context and focus on practical teaching strategies, adjustments and supports at the school, classroom and individual levels.	The purpose is to support school staff to strengthen their capability to implement inclusive practices for students with disability and diverse learning needs.	Ongoing	School staff	Inclusive Education
Early Childhood Inclusion for Children with a Disability The early childhood inclusion for children with disability professional learning modules support early childhood education and care professionals to provide programs that are inclusive of children with disability or developmental delay.	The purpose is to support early childhood teaching teams' planning for quality, inclusive early childhood education and care programs.	Ongoing	Early childhood teaching teams	Early Learning Practice and Participation
Individual Education Planning This initiative is to raise awareness of best practice in creating and implementing high-quality Individual Education Plans (IEPs). An IEP is a written statement that describes the adjustments, goals and	The purpose is to help school staff understand best practice when creating and implementing IEPs to support students' unique learning needs.	End 2025	School staff and other education professionals working with children and young people	Inclusive Education

strategies to meet a student's individual educational needs so they can reach their full potential.				
Strengthening Professional Capability of Principals in Koorie Education (SPPIKE) SPPIKE is an intensive professional learning program for Victorian government school leaders. The program fosters greater cultural awareness and provides school leaders with the skills to promote positive, whole-school narratives for and about Koorie learners through understanding deficit discourse, unconscious bias, and white privilege. Outcomes of the program have seen participating schools experience a reduction of chronic absenteeism by 50% and a reduction in suspensions by 50% over a four-year period.	The purpose is to equip principals and other school leaders with greater cultural awareness and the ability to further build teacher capability and responsiveness to support improved Koorie student outcomes.	Mid 2024	School leaders	Koorie Outcomes
Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) CUST is professional learning provided to all school-based staff to increase their understanding of Koorie culture and experiences and provides strategies to improve cultural inclusion and safety.	The purpose is to support schools to build environments and practice that is more welcoming and inclusive of Koorie learners and their families. CUST builds the confidence of teachers and school leaders to incorporate Koorie culture, history and perspectives into the learning and teaching program.	Ongoing	School staff	Koorie Outcomes
Newly announced workforce initiative	Purpose	Timeframe for implementation	Target group	Responsible division
Work-based learning for priority cohorts This pilot supports students with disability who experience disadvantage to access work-based learning opportunities with the support of qualified career practitioners.	The purpose is to provide improved access to and preparation for work-based learning activities.	Pilot running in 2024	Students with disability	Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce
Engaging students to remain in learning Support will be introduced for young people with disability who have disengaged from school prior to age 17.	The purpose will be to connect early school leavers with disability with appropriate pathways support to support successful post-school transitions.	From 2025	Early school leavers with disability	Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce