

How to work with your child's school and information about student support groups

Easy Read version



What is in this booklet

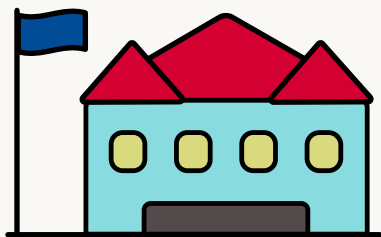
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About this booklet



Department
of Education

This booklet is from the
Department of Education.

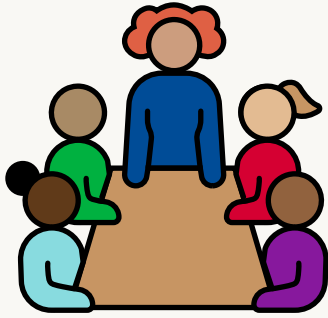


We are part of the government.
We manage public primary and secondary
schools in Victoria.

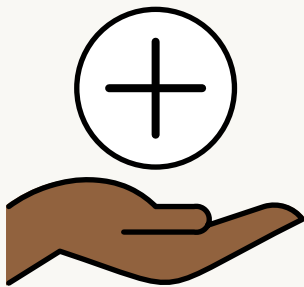


We wrote this booklet to tell you about:

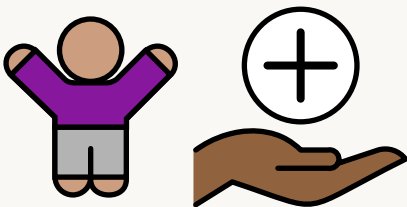
- how to work with your child's school if
your child has additional needs
- student support groups.



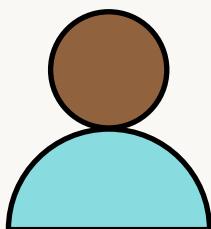
Student support group means a group of people who plan ways to help your child with disability or additional needs at school.



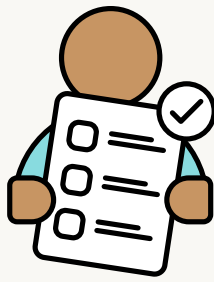
Additional needs means a disability, health condition or learning delay some students have that affects how they learn.



A child with additional needs may have to have supports or adjustments to fully join in at school.

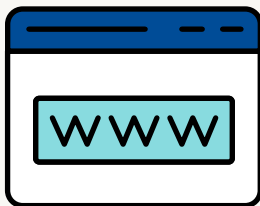


When we write you, we mean a child's parent, carer or guardian.

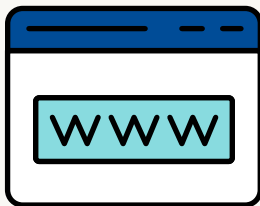


This booklet is an Easy Read summary of information on our website.

You can read the full information here:



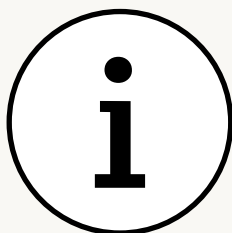
- [Student support groups for children with additional needs](#)



- [Working with education providers if your child has additional needs.](#)

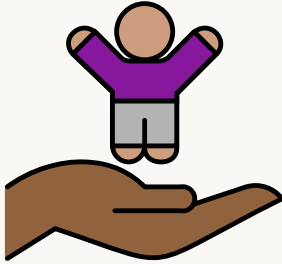


Summary means we only include our most important ideas.

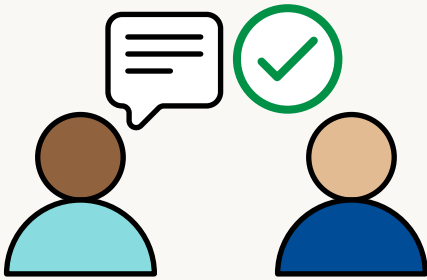


You can find our contact information on [page 32](#) at the end of this guide.

How you can work with your child's school

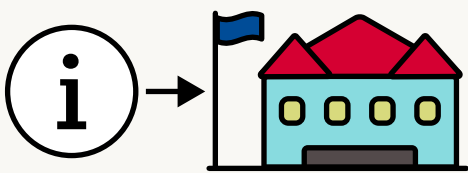


You can do some things that help the school to support your child.

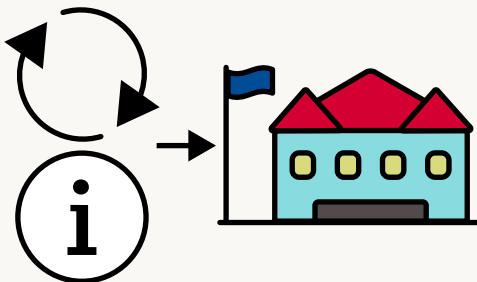


For example, you can:

- talk to your child's teacher about your child's learning



- share information about your child, including health reports



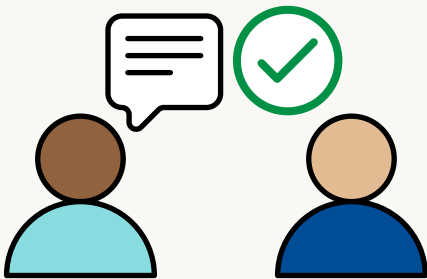
- let the school know if your child's needs change.

Talking to the school about your child



You can talk about your child:

- at student support group meetings



- with their teacher.

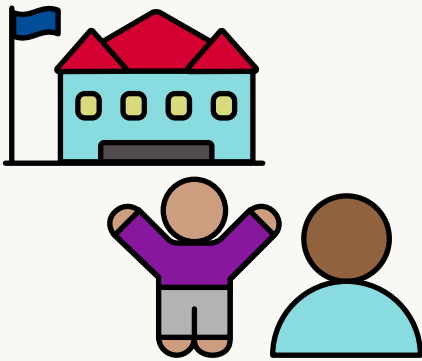


Together you can work out the best way to help your child in class.

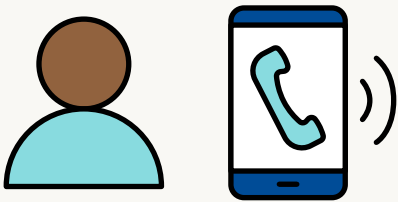


You might talk to them about the best way to communicate with your child.

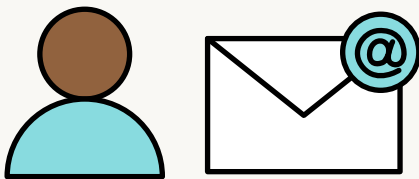
You can do this:



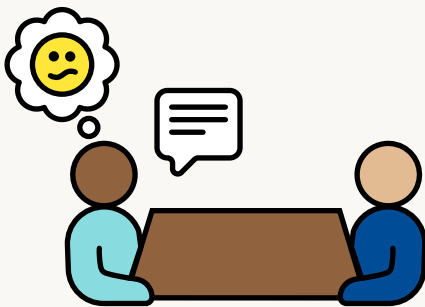
- when you drop off or pick up your child



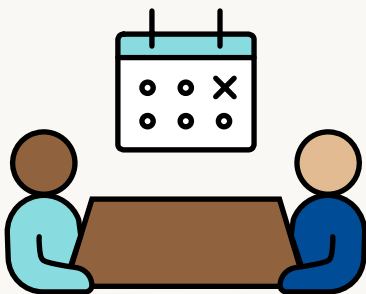
- by phone



- by email.

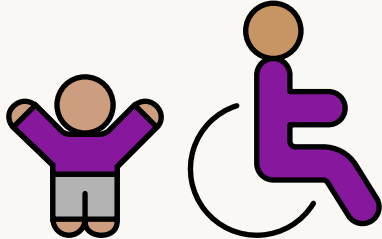


You can organise an in person meeting with your child's teacher to talk to them about things that are worrying you.

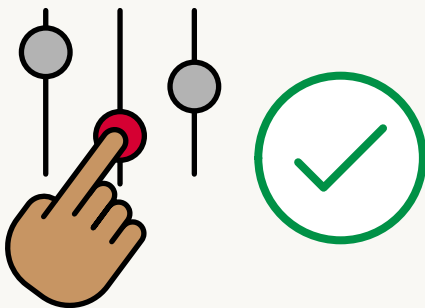


Your child's teacher might want to meet with you often to talk about your child.

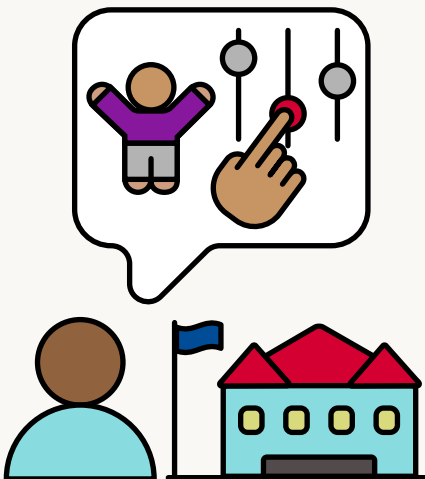
Talking about reasonable adjustments for a child with disability



If your child has a disability, the school might make reasonable adjustments.

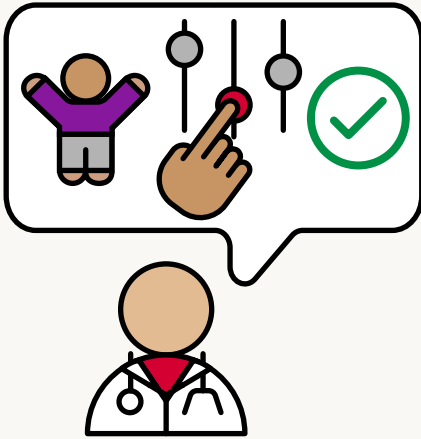


Reasonable adjustments are changes made by a school to help a student with disability learn on the same basis as a student without disability.



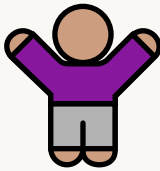
You can talk to your child's school at any time about reasonable adjustments your child might need.

You can have these talks in a student support group meeting.

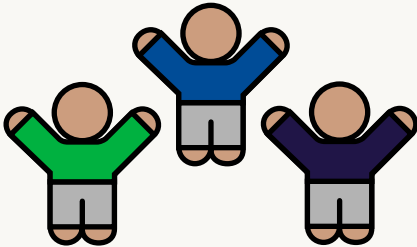


If your child's doctor or therapist has said that a reasonable adjustment would be good for your child, tell the school.

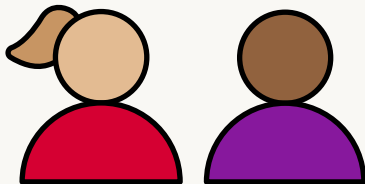
An adjustment is reasonable if it balances the needs of:



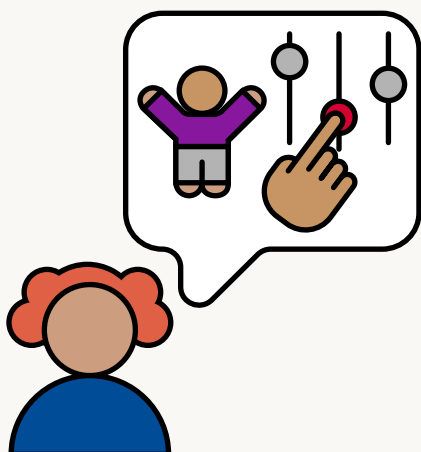
- a child with disability



- other students



- teachers.

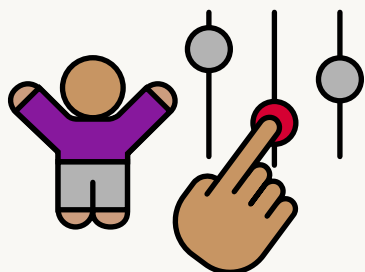


Your child's teacher, the principal or another school staff member may talk with you and your child about what adjustments might be best for your child.

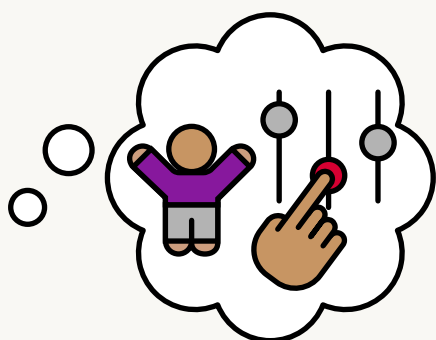
They might want to ask you:



- how your child's disability affects their learning



- what adjustments your child has now

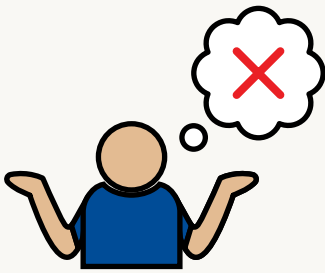


- what adjustments your child might need in the future.

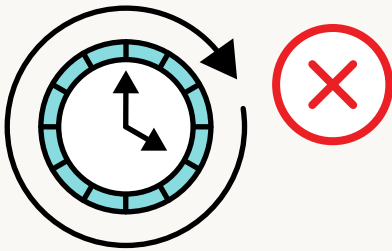
A school may decide not to make a reasonable adjustment if it:



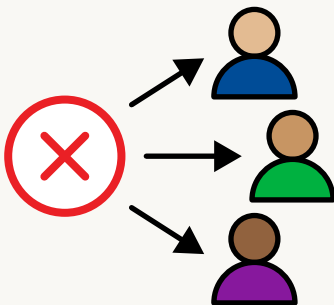
- costs too much money



- is too hard to do

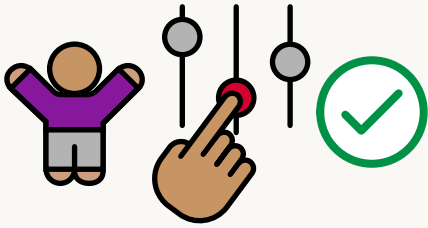


- takes too much time

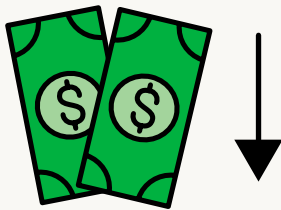


- is bad for other students or teachers.

The school might decide to make a different adjustment to the one you asked for because:



- it gives your child the same benefits

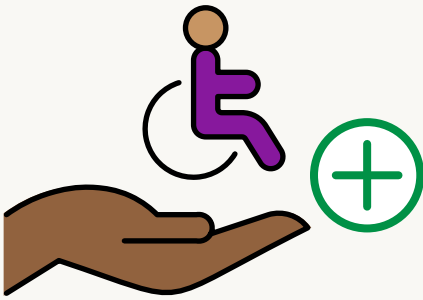


- it costs less



- it is easier to do.

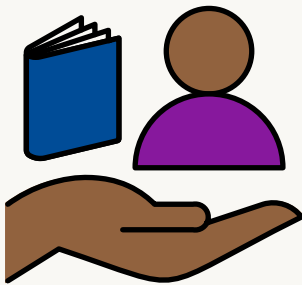
Talking about getting extra support



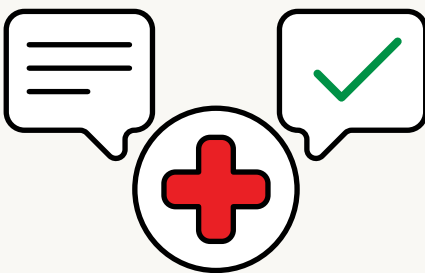
If your child has additional needs they might need extra support at school.

Extra support is not the same as a reasonable adjustment.

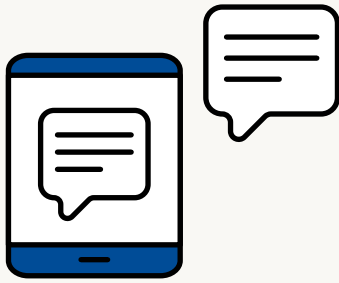
Examples of extra support are:



- teacher aide



- speech therapist



- communication devices



- funding from the department of education for disability support.



You can talk to your child's school about applying for extra support at any time.

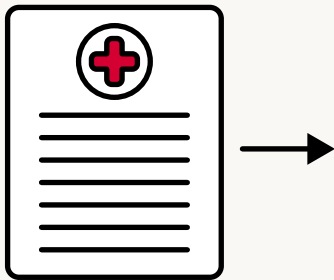


You can also talk about it at a student support group meeting.



Your child's school will usually write and hand in the application for extra support.

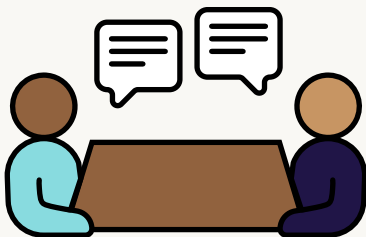
To help with the application, the school might ask you to:



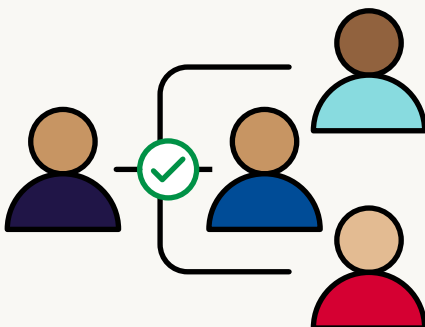
- give them a copy of your child's latest medical reports



- read and sign forms.



The school might ask you to have a meeting with a Disability Inclusion facilitator.

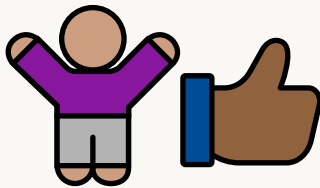


A facilitator is someone who makes it easier for a group of people to work together.

A Disability Inclusion Facilitator guides schools and families to help students based on what they need.



The facilitator helps the school make a Disability Inclusion Profile for your child.



The Disability Inclusion Profile says:

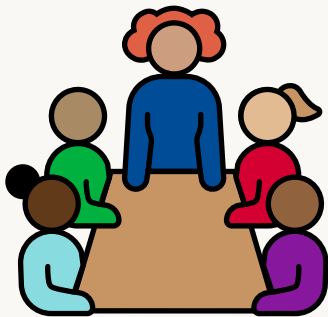
- things your child is good at



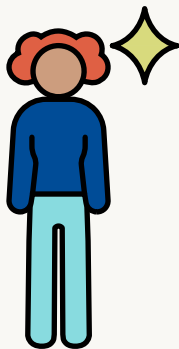
- ways the school can help your child to join in.

Student support groups

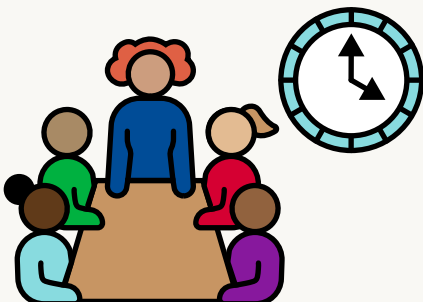
What is a student support group



A student support group is a team of people who plan ways to help your child with disability or additional needs.



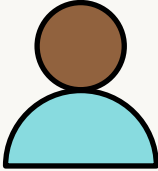
The school principal leads your child's student support group.



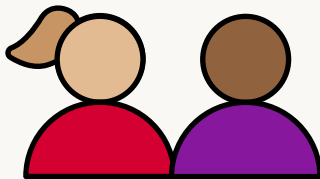
You can ask for a student support group meeting to talk about your child at any time.

Who is in a student support group

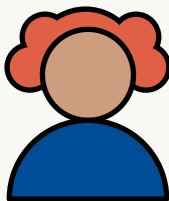
The people in your child's student support group are:



- you



- your child's teachers



- the school principal or another school leader.

Other people who might be in your child's student support group are:

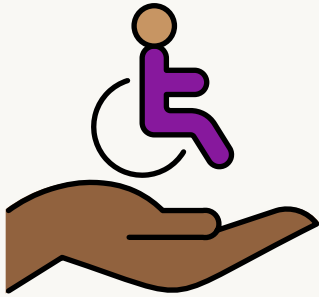


- an advocate or support person

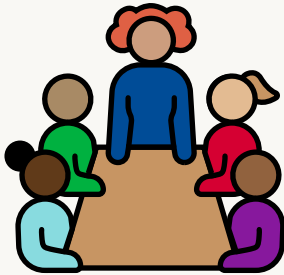


- experts that work with your child, for example speech therapists.

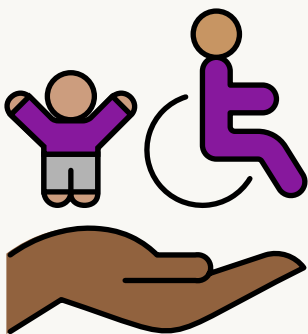
Student support groups for children with disability



If your child has a disability, a student support group can help them get the right support at school.



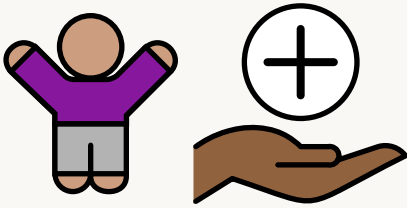
Student support groups are for students who are supported by:



- Disability Inclusion
- the Program for Students with Disability or PSD.



All students who are in out-of-home care must have a student support group.

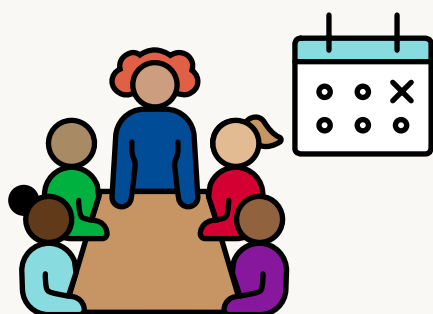


We strongly suggest that any student with additional needs has a student support group.

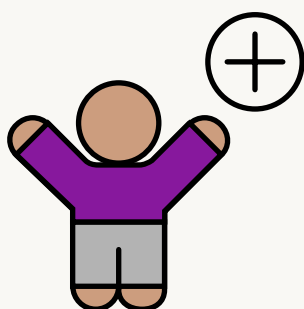
What happens at a student support group meeting



The student support group has meetings to talk about your child.

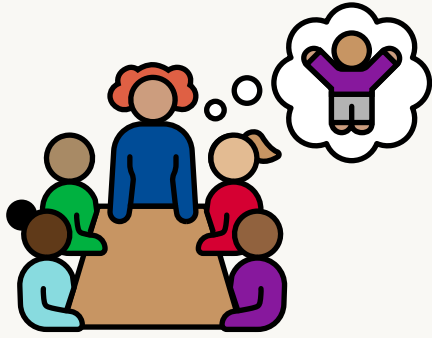


The student support group will meet at least one time every school term.



Sometimes your child will be at the student support group meeting.

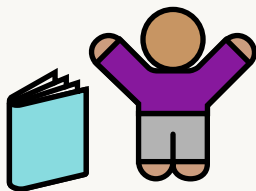
Sometimes your child will not be able to come to the meeting.



If your child is not at the meeting the people that are there still think about what your child might want.



At a student support group meeting, people might talk about:



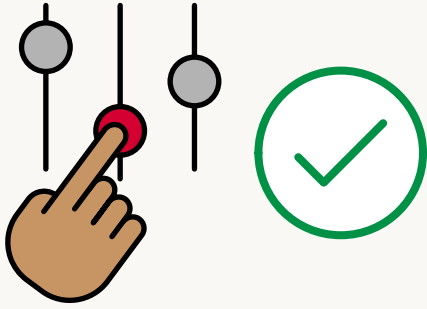
- your child's learning needs



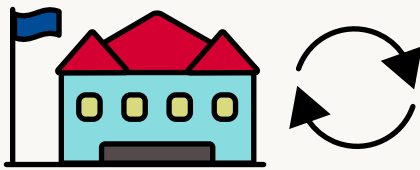
- how your child's learning can be supported



- their medical and personal care when they are at school



- reasonable adjustments that may help your child to learn.



- if they need supports because they are about to change schools.
For example, going from primary school to secondary school.

Getting help for school meetings



You can bring an advocate to help you at school meetings, including student support group meetings.



An advocate is also called a support person.

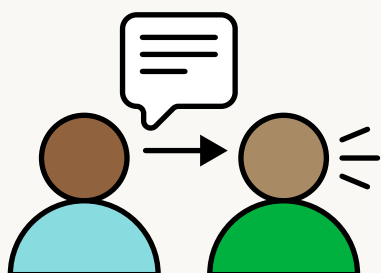
An advocate can be a:

- close friend
- family member
- volunteer or unpaid helper.

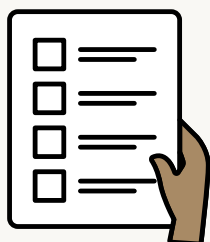
An advocate can help you:



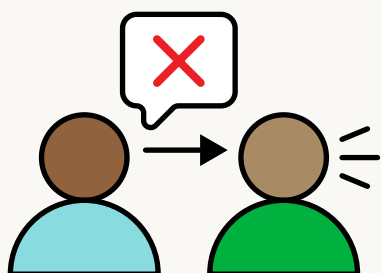
- know what people are talking about at the meeting



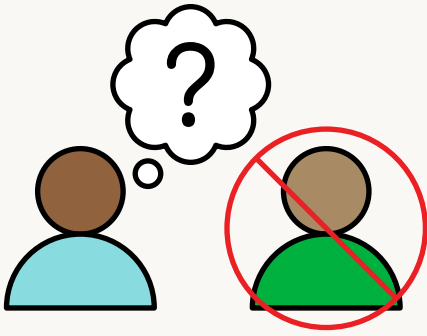
- say what you want to say about your child



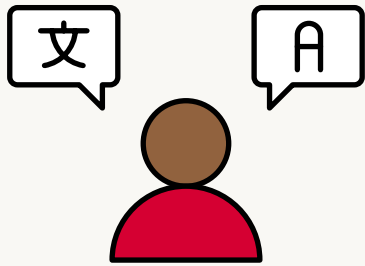
- plan what happens next with your child.



An advocate can help you make a complaint if you are not happy about how a student support group meeting went.



An advocate cannot make decisions about your child for you.

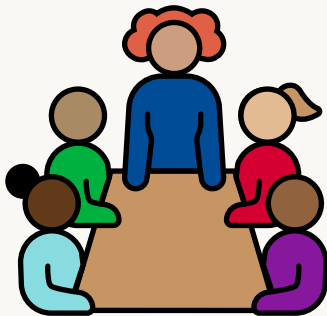


If you need a translator to help you at a meeting, ask the school to arrange one. Remember to tell them what language you speak.

How to get ready for a school meeting

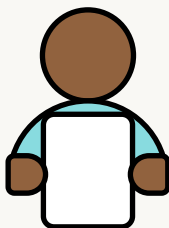


Getting ready for a school meeting can help you focus on the things that are important for your child.

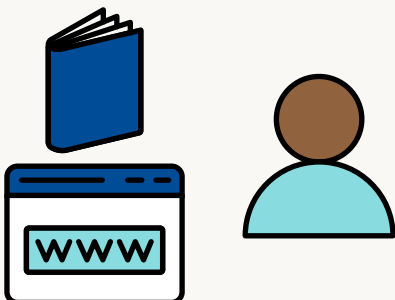


When we say school meeting we also mean a student support group meeting.

You can get ready for a school meeting by learning about things that might help your child at school. For example:



- reading reports from your child's doctor or therapist



- reading books or websites for parents of a child with disability.

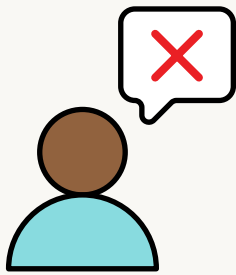


You can get ready by thinking about ways the school can help your child.



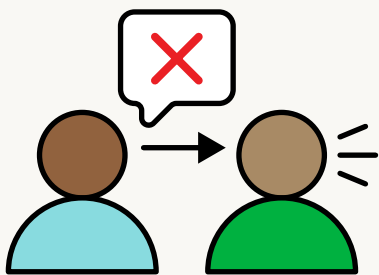
Then you can make a list of questions and ideas to talk about at the school meeting.

If you are not happy with your child's support at school

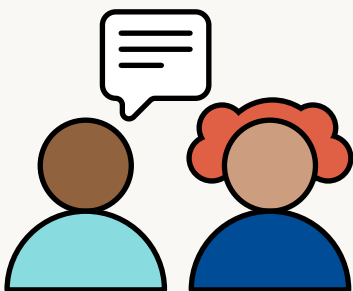


You can complain if you are not happy with the support your child gets at school.

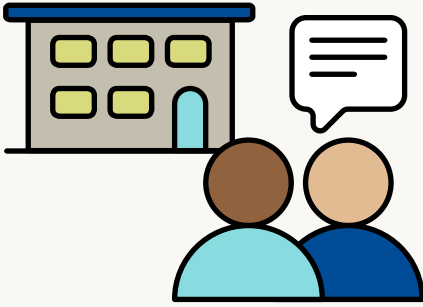
This includes decisions made by your child's student support group.



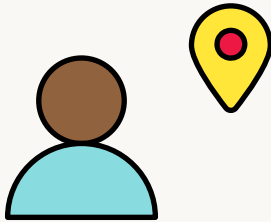
An advocate can help you make a complaint.



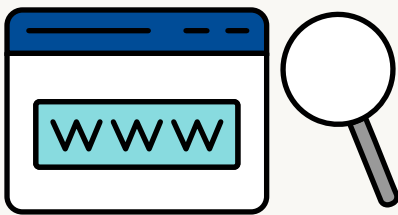
You should talk to the school principal first if you have a complaint.



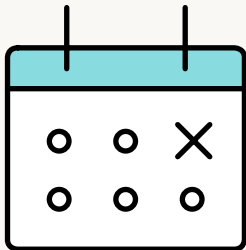
If talking to the principal does not fix the problem, you can talk to our staff at one of our regional offices.



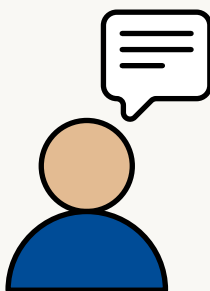
You should speak to the regional office that is closest to you.



You can [find the regional office](#) you need to contact on our website.

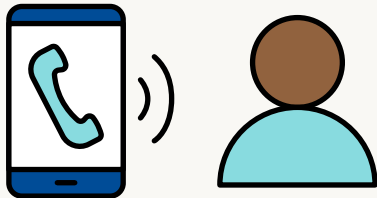


After you have spoken to staff at one of our regional offices, we will need time to:

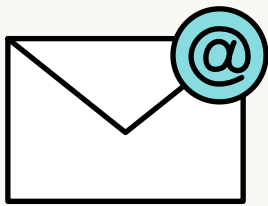


- talk with the school principal about the issues you have raised
- get back to you about what will happen next.

Contact information



You can contact the
Department of Education for more
information.



Email

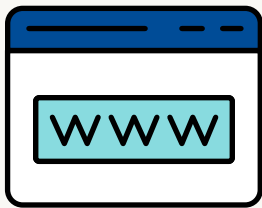
disability.inclusion@education.vic.gov.au



Call

1800 338 663

Resources

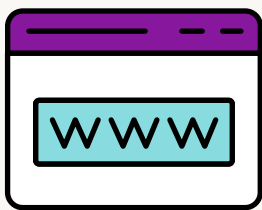


Visit our website

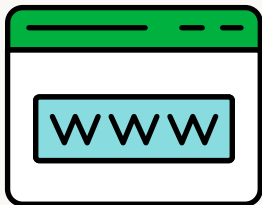
The Victorian government website has information about:

- [disability rights in schools](#)
- [student support groups for students with additional needs](#)
- [reasonable adjustments](#)
- [Disability Inclusion](#)
- [out-of-home care program support](#)

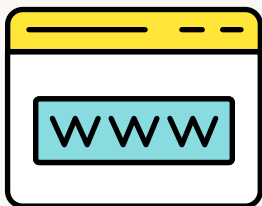
- [making a complaint about your child's school](#)
- [regional office locations.](#)



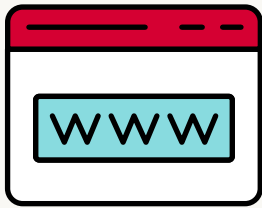
For more information about student support groups and getting ready for student support group meetings, go to the website for [Advocating for Children with Disabilities](#) known as ACD.



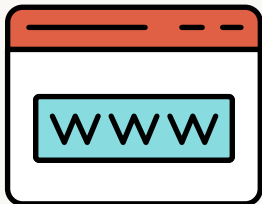
For more information about reasonable adjustments in schools, go to the website for the [Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.](#)



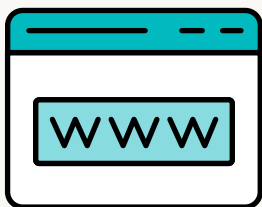
For general information about disability rights, go to the [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission website.](#)



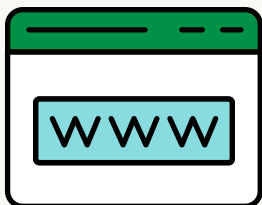
For information about school buildings, go to the [Victorian School Building Authority website.](#)



For information about disability standards in schools, go the [Disability Standards for Education website.](#)



For information about the Disability Inclusion Profile, go to the [Disability Inclusion website.](#)



For the information about the Disability Inclusion Profile in Easy English, go to the [Disability Inclusion Easy English document.](#)

You can view the full version of this information on our website
[Student support groups for children with additional needs](#)

You can view the full version of this information on our website
[Working with education providers if your child has additional needs](#)

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