INCLUSION BOOST
FUNDING FOR YOUR SCHOOL

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

9 May 2019
Inclusive education means that all students feel welcome, accepted and engaged so that they can participate, achieve and thrive in school life.

In 2018, the Victorian Government gave schools extra resources, guidance, access to specialist expertise and support to embed inclusive education for students with disabilities.1

As part of this reform agenda, in Term 3, 2018 all Victorian government schools received $4,800 in ‘Inclusion Boost’ funding to undertake a refresh of school-level inclusive education policies and practices.

The Inclusion Boost will help schools embed the Department’s Education for All Policy (the policy) which was released in December 2017, and articulates the Department’s expectations and vision for inclusive education for students with disabilities and additional needs. The Education for All policy and Inclusion Boost address recommendations from the Review of the Program for Students with Disabilities. The Review found that it has been difficult for schools to develop a consistent culture of inclusion in the absence of a coherent and visible policy framework.

This guidance:
- Outlines the process to use the Inclusion Boost funding
- Links schools with key resources and information on inclusive education.

**FUNDING ALLOCATION**

The Department provided a $4,800 cash allocation to all Victorian government schools under the Student Resource Package Targeted Initiative’s line ‘Inclusion Boost’ in Term 3, 2018. Your school can view this funding in your Budget Details Report and Budget Management Report.

School Business Managers are advised to use the new ‘Inclusive Education’ Sub Program code 5220 in the Chart of Accounts to manage their Inclusion Boost financial transactions in CASES21.

Expenditure of Inclusion Boost funding must be in line with the three steps outlined below.

**A THREE STEP BOOST**

The Boost provides schools with a streamlined process to understand how they are currently supporting students with disabilities, in line with their legal obligations and as part of a system-wide inclusive education reform agenda that will ensure that students with disabilities, and all students and their families, feel welcome and thrive at school.

Schools are required to complete a simple three-step process to strengthen and refresh their inclusive education policies and identify opportunities for practice improvements.

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1 ‘Students with disabilities’ refers to all students who require reasonable adjustments in order to participate in education on the same basis as their peers. This is consistent with the definition used by all schools to identify students in the annual Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD).
Step 1: REVIEW
Review legal obligations awareness See Page 3

Step 2: REFRESH
Develop or Refresh your school’s public policy for inclusion and diversity See Page 4

Step 3: USE
Use a suite of resources (Appendix 1) to put Victoria’s SHARE principles for inclusive education into practice See Page 5

HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE THE FUNDING?

Funding will support school planning and implementation of the Boost and may be used for:

- special payment to a staff member to lead the three-step process
- Casual Relief Teaching (CRT) release for planning or implementation time
- CRT release to complete professional learning offered at a local and regional level (including Department-delivered professional development)
- costs incurred for consultation on and promotion of your school’s inclusive education policies and practices.

Practical suggestions for completing each step are provided in this guidance.

SUPPORT

These steps are designed to be completed by your school leadership team in consultation with your school council and community (where relevant).

For information on the Department’s Education for All policy and inclusive education initiatives, you can contact the Department at education.for.all@edumail.vic.gov.au.

For information and contacts on the specific supports and resources available to support inclusive policies and practices at your school refer to the suite of resources provided in Appendix 1.

TIMING

Where your school’s refresh identifies significant opportunities for improvement, your school should consider how these improvements can be addressed through your school’s annual implementation planning process – for instance, such as part of the ‘Positive climate for learning’ dimension of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes.
STEP 1

REVIEW: LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AWARENESS

Meeting your legal obligations to all students with disabilities, not just those eligible for targeted funding is fundamental to enabling inclusion. The Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) clarify schools’ legal obligations.

Under both State and Commonwealth laws schools must make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to accommodate students with disabilities or additional needs. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist all students to participate in education and training on the same basis as their peers.

The Department recommends all school staff complete the ‘Disability Standards for Education eLearning’ to understand their legal obligations in regards to teaching and learning practices.

This training is also important to understanding the model applied to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (the NCCD), which all schools are required to complete in August each year.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS STEP

1. Survey school staff to identify who has completed the Disability Standards for Education eLearning.
2. Enable all staff to complete the eLearning course (takes approximately 2 hours to complete).
3. Refer to Appendix 1 for key links to support this step.

When all staff have completed the eLearning course you have completed Step 1 and are ready for Step 2.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- Reflect as a whole school community on how you’re practising the Standards.
- Contact the Department’s Legal Division on (03) 9637 3146 or via email at legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au for potential training opportunities and other resources for your school (e.g. training on Legal Obligations: Students with Disabilities).
- Enrol principal class staff in the Department’s ‘Law and Order’ training.
STEP 2

REFRESH — SCHOOL POLICY FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

A public, school-wide policy for inclusion signals commitment to an inclusive school community, and ensures that current or prospective students and their families feel welcome and supported at your school. This step provides an opportunity for your school to develop or refresh broader inclusion planning – not just for students with disabilities but for all students and families that may be subject to discrimination.

The Department has developed an Inclusion and Diversity Policy Template to guide schools in creating a policy. The policy reflects school commitment to inclusive education and is consistent with inclusive education obligations and principles articulated in the Department’s Education for All inclusive education policy.

This policy provides an opportunity to celebrate the diversity in your school community, and reference positive and supportive programs that you may have in place to promote inclusion.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS STEP

1. Develop your school inclusion policy by reviewing the Inclusion and Diversity Policy Template on the School Policy Templates Portal and considering your student population and families in your school community.
2. Consult with your school community and council on the different needs and views of students and their families and to add to and refine the template to tailor it for your school community.
3. Finalise the policy and publish it on your website. Circulate the policy to staff and students; and include it in your staff manual/handbook, induction processes for both teaching staff and non-teaching staff.
4. If your school already has a strong and public inclusion and diversity policy, you may wish to refresh it, promote it further in your community, or proceed to Step 3.
5. Refer to Appendix 1 for key links to support this step.

When you have developed and promoted your school inclusion and diversity policy you have finished Step 2 and are ready for Step 3.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

☐ Engage with schools in your network or Professional Learning Community to co-develop a school inclusion policy or learn from their examples.
☐ Invite past or present students or parents to talk to the school community about their experiences living with a disability.

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2 This template is part of a series that the Department produced as part of its Principal Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework.
STEP 3

USE — RESOURCES TO PUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

This step gives you access to all the current and upcoming inclusive education tools, resources and initiatives which give you the opportunity to put inclusive education ‘SHARE’ principles (see Fig. 1 at overleaf) and policies into practice.

At a whole school level, good practices include adjustment to cultures, policies, and practices, development of support structures, and the provision of and access to equitable learning opportunities. At the classroom level, good practices include differentiating or modifying curriculum, the application of universal design principles, individual and personalised planning and support, and a focus on quality teaching for all students.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS STEP

1. This step is an opportunity to plan and implement changes to address the gaps or areas for improvement identified in Steps 1 and 2.
2. Review Appendix 1 and identify opportunities to build expertise in inclusive education.
3. Many of these supports are freely available. Where costs are involved, this can be done using existing school resources supplemented by the Inclusion Boost payment.

When you have completed these actions you have completed the Inclusion Boost. You can embed your inclusive education practices further through your Strategic Planning process.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- Review your school’s Attitudes to School Survey, School Staff Survey and Parent Opinion Survey and scan for feedback on how inclusive, safe and welcoming your school environment is.
- Enable staff to complete inclusive education professional learning.
- Seek Regional Office support to identify other schools that have outstanding inclusive education practices for you to get in touch and share ideas with.
- Invite guest speakers (e.g. existing or past parents or students) to talk to the school community about their experiences living with a disability to promote a more inclusive culture at your school.
- Read about the practices of the 2018 Outstanding Inclusive Education Award Finalists and/or invite a school representative to visit or present at your school.
- Review your NCCD data and collection processes to identify opportunities for improved practice.
**Student centred**
Inclusive education involves students, in collaboration with their peers and/or carers, in decision-making processes as respected partners in education.

**Human Rights focused**
Inclusive education is supported by and is the realisation of a human rights based approach to education. International human rights principles and Victoria’s Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 provide a framework for every Victorian to be treated with dignity and respect and to enjoy their human rights without discrimination.

**Acknowledges Strengths**
Inclusive education recognises that each child and young person is unique. It focuses on a strengths-based, personalised approach to education that celebrates and welcomes difference to maximize learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

**Respects legal obligations**
Inclusive education enables schools to uphold legal obligations to make reasonable adjustments for all students with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments assist all students to participate in education on the same basis as their peers without a disability.

**Evidence-based**
Inclusive education uses contemporary evidence-based practices known to be effective in responding to individual student needs and improving student outcomes.
**APPENDIX 1: TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES* IN YOUR SCHOOL**

This resource has been developed by the Inclusive Education Reform Unit to support your school’s implementation of the Inclusion Boost initiative. This information is current as at May 2019. For any enquiries on the Inclusion Boost initiative or this resource please email education.for.all@edumail.vic.gov.au

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<tr>
<th>Personnel: core support</th>
<th>Personnel: specialist support</th>
<th>Policies, guidance and standards</th>
<th>Programs</th>
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<td><strong>Regional office staff:</strong> Inclusion, Access and Participation Managers, Health Wellbeing and Specialist Services Managers and area level Disability Coordinators. Also see the Regional Organisational Structure to see all support roles. <strong>Student Support Services (SSS) Officers</strong> assist students facing learning barriers with strategies and specialised educational and developmental support at individual, group, school and network levels. See the SSS Handbook for information on how schools can engage with the work of the SSS. <strong>Visiting Teachers</strong> are part of the Department’s Student Support Services program and provide leadership for teachers and schools in the provision of effective curriculum and pedagogy to support student engagement, access and inclusion for students with physical, health, hearing or vision impairments. Contact your regional office for more information. <strong>Legal Division</strong> offer free training sessions for staff on Legal Obligations: Students with Disabilities, targeted to the day-to-day situations that arise in schools. The Legal Division can be contacted on 9637 3140 or via email at <a href="mailto:legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au">legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>.</td>
<td><strong>New</strong> Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBAs) are increasing the capability of Student Support Services to conduct function-based assessments and implement function-based interventions for students with behaviours of concern in a 2018 pilot. BCBAs are training selected educational teams from across the state on conducting functional behavioural assessments and the development of behavioural support plans. For further information email <a href="mailto:bcba.support@edumail.vic.gov.au">bcba.support@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>. <strong>New</strong> Regional Autism and Inclusion Consultants (RAICs) will be available in every region from Term 3 2018 to support schools to proactively create whole-school approaches to inclusion for students with disabilities. RAICs responsibilities do not include crisis management. For more information contact your regional office. <strong>School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)</strong> is a whole-school framework to promote positive behaviour and academic outcomes. There are 17 SWPBS coaches across the state to support schools to implement the framework with fidelity. For more information contact 7022 1383 or via email <a href="mailto:positive.behaviour@edumail.vic.gov.au">positive.behaviour@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>. <strong>Principal Practice Leader</strong> - works with schools to build understanding and expertise in protecting the safety of students and all those who work in our schools.</td>
<td><strong>Disability Standards for Education 2005</strong> clarify the obligations of education providers, and the rights of people with disability, under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Resources include: exemplars of practice, guidance, fact sheets for students, parents and schools and a practical guide for individuals, families and communities, including advice on reasonable adjustments. <strong>Legal obligations - Schools Policy Advisory Guide</strong> provides information on the provision of educational opportunities, duty of care, occupational health and safety, human rights and discrimination obligations. The Legal Division can be contacted on 9637 3146 or via email at <a href="mailto:legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au">legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>. <strong>Education for All - Schools Policy Advisory Guide</strong> gives schools a clear definition of inclusive education and what the legal obligations are for supporting students with disabilities. <strong>The Inclusion and Diversity Policy Template</strong> has been developed by the Department’s Legal Division as a school-wide policy for inclusion. <strong>Guidance to reduce and eliminate restraint and seclusion</strong> supports staff to prevent the occurrence of behaviours of concern and use effective, ethical and evidence-based responses where a student may be at risk of restraint or seclusion. <strong>An Inclusive Schooling Index tool</strong> will support school leaders to assess the inclusiveness of their school, including areas of strength and areas that require strengthening. <strong>Personalised Learning and Support Planning Guidelines</strong> will lead schools through a dynamic, collaborative and student-centred process that recognises and accommodates the learning differences of all students through tailored teaching and learning strategies. <strong>Student Support Group Guidelines</strong> provide schools with an operational process for meeting their obligations to students funded under the Program for Students with Disabilities. <strong>Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability</strong> provides training developed by Education Services Australia and a suite of resources and fact sheets to support your school’s data collection. Contact the Help Desk on 9057 1049 or at <a href="mailto:disability.datacollection@edumail.vic.gov.au">disability.datacollection@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>. <strong>The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</strong> makes explicit the elements of high quality teaching, including standard 1.6 which requires teachers to use strategies to support full participation of students with disability.</td>
<td><strong>Program for Students with Disabilities</strong> is available to provide supplementary funding for students with disabilities through the Department’s Student Resource Package. <strong>Transition Resource and Funding</strong> for students transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7 who are no longer eligible for Program for Students with Disabilities funding. <strong>Language and Learning Disabilities Support Program</strong> provides schools with resources to support the delivery of teaching and learning programs for students with autism, dyslexia, language or other learning disabilities. <strong>Inclusive Schools Fund</strong> helps schools implement innovative projects that promote best practice inclusive school environments and support the educational and social needs of children and young people with disabilities. <strong>Home Based Educational Support Program</strong> provides supplementary assistance to schools providing home-based programs to students with severe disabilities and comorbid fragile health. Applications for schools to be reimbursed when providing outreach education programs are open 1 November until 31 December each year. <strong>Victorian Education Excellence Awards</strong> - Outstanding Inclusive Education Awards recognise exceptional education staff who have demonstrated outstanding system improvements with regard to the achievement, engagement and wellbeing of students with additional needs. <strong>National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)</strong> - Departmental fact sheets and FAQs explain how the NDIS will impact schools. Visit the website for your regional NDIS contacts.</td>
<td><strong>AllPlay Learn</strong> - Deakin University is developing a suite of resources for teachers, students and parents to address a child’s functional needs in order to facilitate enhanced inclusion within the school community. This resource is based on the successful AllPlay program developed for AFL Auskick. <strong>Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES)</strong> is a curriculum, assessment and reporting tool hosted on the Insight Platform. Advice is available on how to integrate ABLES into the teaching and learning cycle, a free online professional learning course for teachers and support staff, and contact details for your regional ABLES expert. For general (non-technical) support email <a href="mailto:ables@edumail.vic.gov.au">ables@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>. <strong>Insight Assessment platform</strong> provides a collection of quality online assessment instruments. Students’ assessment data can be reviewed by teachers for diagnostic, formative and summative assessments. <strong>VCAA On Demand Testing</strong> is a series of adaptive, reliable and standardised online assessments in English and Mathematics, aligned with the Victorian Curriculum, covering levels 2-10. <strong>Behavioural Support Plans</strong> are a school-based document to assist individual students who have experienced harm, are at risk of harm, or have caused harm to others. <strong>The Positive Education Planning Toolkit</strong> describes positive planning for children with disabilities attending Victorian primary schools. <strong>Planning for Personalised Learning and Support</strong> is a national resource that supports personalised planning and learning for students with disabilities.</td>
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Tools and resources

Learning Difficulties and Dyslexia - provides advice, guidelines and tools to help primary and secondary school teachers meet the unique needs of students with learning difficulties and dyslexia.

SPEDL Victoria is the peak body for specific learning difficulties including dyslexia in Victoria. SPEDL provides information and offers workshops for parents, teachers and allied health professionals on supporting students with specific learning difficulties. It also provides information, advocacy and awareness raising services.

AUSPELD is the national peak body for specific learning difficulties and has published two comprehensive Understanding Learning Difficulties guides – one for parents and one for teachers. The teacher guide is available as a free download to teachers in government schools via FUSE.

Amaze provides information and practical strategies for school staff supporting students on the autism spectrum.

Autism Supports provides supports for the learning and development of students on the autism spectrum.

Positive Partnerships provides professional learning to school and families to help them support improved educational outcomes for students with autism.

Autism Teaching Institute delivers professional learning to build the capacity of mainstream teachers to proactively create whole-school inclusive education policies and practices, with a focus on autism.

I CAN Network works with students, parents and teachers to create inclusive schools that celebrate the individual strengths of people on the autism spectrum. ‘I Can Schools’ provide peer-to-peer support to students, motivational talks to students and parents and professional development to teachers.

Yellow Ladybugs has produced practical school-based strategies for identifying and providing for the needs of girls with autism, contact Ladybugs at info@yellowwadladybugs.com.au.

Autism Spectrum Disorder specialist schools provide specialist support for students with autism.

Statewide Vision Resource Centre supports students with vision impairments in schools through providing specialised and professional assistance and resources, including the provision of learning materials in alternative format.

Victorian Deaf Education Institute provides professional development opportunities for teachers to improve learning outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Tools and resources: specific needs

Disability Standards for Education eLearning 2005 offers free interactive and scenario-based modules on your legal obligations.

Law and Order – a module developed by the Department’s Legal Division supports schools to manage legal risks and to understand key legal concepts and obligations.

Master of Education scholarships - available for teachers and regional allied health staff to specialise in inclusive education or applied behaviour analysis.

Graduate Diploma of Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder scholarships - for further information contact Mary Thomson at the Autism Teaching Institute: mthomson.mary@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Learning Difficulties including Dyslexia Professional Learning is available for teachers, visiting teachers, school leaders and student support service officers from March to September 2018.

Behaviour Support offers a range of free online courses for educators to complete independently at their own pace, including two new courses in 2018: Prevent-Teach Reinforce and Behaviour Response Planning.

Current Effective use of Education Support staff - in 2019 the Department will provide clearer role descriptions and targeted training for both teachers and support staff to ensure greater awareness of how and when to most effectively use support staff.

Professional Development Options is a comprehensive list of professional learning options to support students with disabilities collated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Inclusion Online offers a ten week course to school staff on understanding, assessing and supporting students with disabilities and learning difficulties. The course is provided through digital and face-to-face learning and is made up of modules on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia, Speech and Language, and Hearing Loss. For further information email vdei@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Learning the Law provides a suite of online teaching tools about legal rights and responsibilities around sexting, consent, fines and driving for teachers of students with a mild intellectual disability in years 8 to 12.

Professional learning

Steps The Disability Standards for Education 2005: Practical Guide for Individuals, Families and Communities unpacks the standards in an engaging and interactive format.

Understanding Learning Difficulties - A Guide for Parents developed by AUSPELD.

Student Engagement provides advice, resources and strategies for schools on developing a Student Engagement Policy, promoting positive student behaviour and responding to challenging behaviour.

Abilities Awareness is an hour-long disability awareness student workshop, delivered by Jim Asimakopoulos O.A.M. Contact Jim at asimakopoulos.jim.a@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Guidance for managing challenging behaviour from Parents provides a toolkit for working effectively with parents to prioritise student learning.

Hearing Impairment Kit provides the collection of resources providing information for families at the time their child is diagnosed with a hearing impairment.

Working with families of ASD students provides factsheets and advice on how schools can help families understand how Autism Spectrum Disorder affects their child’s learning.

Students and families

The Medical and Accessibility Support - Accessible Buildings program provides funding for facilities that will enable students, parents and teachers with disabilities to access mainstream schools. Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

Medical and Accessibility Support - Equipment Grants for students with vision impairments helps schools to purchase major items of essential, specialised equipment for students with vision impairments who do not meet the eligibility requirements for the Program for Students with Disabilities.

The Medical and Accessibility Support - Special provision for VCE exams ensure that the most appropriate, fair and reasonable arrangements and options are available for students to demonstrate their capabilities if their learning and assessment programs are affected by illness, impairment or personal circumstances. The Medical and Accessibility Support - SchoolCare Program provides specialist training to school staff who deliver interventional medical care to students with complex medical needs while they are attending school.

Medical and Accessibility Support - Medical Intervention Support funding for schools enables trained educational support staff to assist students who require regular, complex medical support at school.

Medical and accessibility

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