

# GUIDELINES

## ENROLMENT IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL CENTRES

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Target Audience:	Corporate and school staff, parents and students		

This document should be read in conjunction with the Enrolment policy and the associated guidelines.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The department operates a number of Special Schools and Special Centres to cater for students with intellectual disability and/or additional complex needs. A list of current Special Schools and Special Centres is provided at Appendix A.

These guidelines provide clear and consistent eligibility criteria and verification processes for the enrolment of students in Special Schools and Special Centres through the provision of:

- Special School and Special Centre placements
- Special School and Special Centre functional placements.

The eligibility criteria and verification processes ensure that the wellbeing and educational needs of each student are carefully considered and assessed prior to the student's placement or functional placement in a Special School or Special Centre.

A parent has the right to appeal a decision where a student has been deemed ineligible for a placement or functional placement in a Special School or Special Centre.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Appeal** is a review process that can be undertaken in the event that a student has not met the eligibility criteria, and is unsuccessful in obtaining verification for a Special School or Special Centre placement or functional placement.

**Capacity/expertise** for the purpose of this document refers to a Special School or Special Centre's ability to provide specialised support and educational programs to meet the student's specific needs.

**Complex needs** are where a student with an identified disability and without an intellectual disability may require intensive support and a highly individualised program to enable access to, and participate in, the curriculum. The student may meet the eligibility criteria for a functional placement in a Special School or Special Centre.

**Daily care and control of a child (in regards to the definition of parent)** refers to a person who is entitled to exercise all the powers and rights, and has all the responsibilities, in relation to the day-to-day care and control of the child.

**Disability**, in relation to a person, means:

- (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- (h) presently exists; or
- (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- (j) may exist in the future; or
- (k) is imputed to a person.

(Extract from section 4(1) of the [Disability Discrimination Act](#))

**Functional placement in a Special School or Special Centre** is where a student with complex needs with an identified disability, and without an intellectual disability, meets the eligibility criteria outlined in section 4.1(b) of these guidelines.

**Parent** signifies the child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal customary law or Aboriginal tradition.

**Parental responsibility (in regards to the definition of parent)** refers to a person who has:

- (a) daily care and control of the child, or
  - (b) is entitled to exercise all the powers and rights, and has all the responsibilities, in relation to the long-term care and development of the child, or
  - (c) has daily care and control of the child and the entitlement and responsibilities at (b)
- and includes a person who has been given the above responsibilities under another state or territory law.

**Placement in a Special School or Special Centre** is provided to students with a diagnosed intellectual disability, where the student's disability is consistent with the eligibility criteria outlined in section 4.1(a) of these guidelines.

**Special Centre** refers to a special education setting attached to a mainstream school for students with an intellectual disability as approved by the Chief Executive.

**Special School** refers to a special education setting for students with an intellectual disability as approved by the Chief Executive.

**Special School or Special Centre placement** is where a student has been identified as eligible and is enrolled in a Special School or Special Centre in line with these guidelines.

**Transition planning** is the process of developing short- and long-term goals and strategies to prepare students to transition through their schooling and into their chosen post-school pathway.

**Verification** is the process undertaken by Regional Managers Student Support in consultation with school psychologists to ensure that each student enrolled in a Special School or Special Centre has met the eligibility criteria required for the enrolment.

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Executive Director Schools (North and South)** have the responsibility to:

- monitor the implementation and application of the Enrolment in Special Schools and Special Centres guidelines
- convene and make determinations in case conferences to determine the outcome of an appeal.

**Regional Director** has the responsibility to:

- verify the student's educational needs upon recommendations from the Regional Manager Student Support and sign verification notices to support decisions
- engage in case conferences to assist in determining the outcome of an appeal.

**Executive Director School Support Services**, in relation to independent public schools, is responsible for:

- verify the educational needs of students, based on the recommendations of the Regional Manager Student Support and sign verification notices to support decisions
- engage in case conferences to assist in determining the outcome of an appeal.

**Director Student Support** has the responsibility to:

- arrange timely advice to departmental stakeholders on changes in policy and legislation that affects the enrolment of students with disabilities in Special Schools and Special Centres
- engage in case conferences to assist in determining the outcome of an appeal.

**Principal** has the responsibility to:

- ensure compliance with the Enrolment in Special Schools and Special Centres Guidelines
- explain the enrolment process to parents and ensure they are kept informed
- collect relevant documentation and provide information to Regional Manager Student Support to enable verification of eligibility
- enrol students that meet the eligibility criteria and have an approved verification notice in accordance with the [Enrolment Policy and associated guidelines](#)
- engage in case conferences to assist in determining the outcome of an appeal
- ensure student diagnostic assessments are current at transitioning points (see 4.3)
- maintain a schedule of review for all students.

**Regional Manager Student Support** has the responsibility to:

- liaise with the principal about appropriate placement
- liaise with school psychologists and ensure specialist assessments are carried out in a timely manner
- consult with the Regional Director and principal to assist in determining the outcome for

Special School and Special Centre placements

- participate in the case consultation process for determining an appeal as required
- ensure student diagnostic assessments are current at transitioning points (see 4.3)
- conduct reviews in consultation with principals and school psychologists
- ensure that all documentation is recorded in TRIM and student details are entered into the Support Services Information Database (SSID).

**School Psychologist** has the responsibility to:

- complete assessments in accordance with the Australian Psychology Society guidelines
- liaise with parents, school staff, Regional Manager Student Support and the senior school psychologist as required on results of assessments
- provide advice on the eligibility for enrolment
- ensure student support processes are carried out in a timely manner
- consult with senior school psychologist on complex issues
- assist with scheduled reviews.

## **4. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 Eligibility**

Criteria for assessing a student's eligibility for enrolment in a Special School or Special Centre is aligned with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2013) (DSM-V).

#### **(a) Placement criteria**

A student may be enrolled in a Special School or Special Centre if each of the following entry criteria is met:

Year of entry	Entry criteria
Early years (P-3)	<p>1. Global Developmental Delay confirmed through comprehensive assessment by a paediatrician, and/or psychologist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deficits in intellectual functions (at or below 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile) confirmed by both clinical assessment and individualised, standardised intelligence testing, or</li> <li>• other evidence of failure to meet developmental milestones in several areas of intellectual functioning when individual's disabilities prevent standardised assessment, or</li> <li>• deficits in adaptive functioning that result in failure to meet developmental milestones, below 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile across majority of functioning, and</li> <li>• adaptive functioning deficits indicate significant impairment in several domains - communication, social participation, early learning and development.</li> </ul> <p>2. Requiring extensive adjustments that are highly individualised, comprehensive and ongoing to allow access to, and participation in the curriculum.</p> <p>By age 8, sufficient valid and reliable assessment evidence must be compiled to confirm diagnosis, identify education needs and program development options.</p>
Primary, middle and senior years	<p>1. Intellectual Disability confirmed through comprehensive assessment by a psychologist that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deficits in intellectual functions, confirmed by both clinical assessment and individualised, standardised intelligence testing (IQ at or below 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile)</li> <li>b. deficits in general adaptive functioning (standard score at or below 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile) that result in failure to meet developmental and socio-cultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility. Those deficits limit functioning in a wide range of activities of daily life.</li> </ul> <p>2. Extensive adjustments that are highly individualised, comprehensive and ongoing to allow access to and participation in the curriculum are required.</p>

**(b) Functional placement criteria**

A student may be enrolled in a Special School or Special Centre if each of the following entry criteria is met:

Year of entry	Entry criteria
Preschool to year 12	<p>1. Evidence of complex needs accompanying a diagnosed disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deficits in general adaptive functioning (standard score at or below 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile) that result in failure to meet developmental and socio-cultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility. Those deficits limit functioning in a wide range of</li> </ul>

	<p>activities of daily life.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Extensive adjustments that are highly individualised, comprehensive and ongoing to allow access to and participation in the curriculum are required.</li><li>3. Long documented history of adjustments and support with analysis of progress, and</li><li>4. history of advice and support from multidisciplinary professionals over an extended period of time (ie counsellor, therapists, psychologist, psychiatrist, Student Support Advisors).</li></ol>
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## 4.2 Process for student enrolment

All enrolments must be processed in accordance with the [Enrolment Policy and its associated enrolment guidelines and procedures](#). For enrolments in a Special School or Special Centre the following steps must also be followed.

1. A parent or school initiates a request for enrolment of a student in a Special School or Special Centre. This may be for:
  - (a) a student who has not previously been enrolled in a Northern Territory Government school
  - (b) a student who is currently enrolled in a mainstream Northern Territory Government school
  - (c) a student who is already verified as eligible to enrol in a Special School or Special Centre.
2. A meeting between the parents and the principal is required to review the student's diagnostic reports and any other relevant documentation.
  - (a) where it is believed that a Special School or Special Centre is an appropriate educational setting for the student, copies of all documentation are provided to the Special School or Special Centre principal
  - (b) where the student is transferring between a Special School or Special Centre, it is not necessary to request verification at the enrolling school if a current verification notice is in place.
3. The Special School or Special Centre principal:
  - (a) may, where a student clearly meets the eligibility criteria outlined in section 4.1, deem the student as eligible and enrol the student in the school (Note: Where the principal makes a decision to enrol a student prior to verification, it must be acknowledged by all parties that the enrolment is temporary until such time as a verification notice is received by the school and/or parents.)
  - (b) may choose not to make a determination and forward all documentation to the Regional Manager Student Support for verification
  - (c) ensures a [Parent Permission – request for verification to enrol form](#) will be completed by the parents and the Special School or Special Centre principal and submitted to the Regional Manager Student Support with documentation for verification.
4. The Regional Manager Student Support will verify the student's eligibility with the school psychologist against the criteria outlined in section 4.1.
  - (a) Where a student is verified for a placement or functional placement, the Regional Manager Student Support will prepare the relevant **Successful Verification Notice** for approval by the Regional Director.

- (b) Where a student is found ineligible for a placement or functional placement, the Regional Manager Student Support will prepare an **Unsuccessful Verification Notice** to be signed by the Regional Director. The notice will include reasons for the decision and recommendations for alternative enrolment and support options.
- (c) Where the principal has enrolled the student in a Special School or Special Centre prior to verification and the student is then found ineligible for a placement or functional placement, the Regional Manager Student Support will prepare a temporary placement notice for approval by the Regional Director. A **Temporary Placement Notice** will allow the student to remain enrolled in the Special School or Special Centre for up to one semester to allow adequate time for transitioning into a mainstream school setting. The student must be enrolled within a mainstream school or classroom setting by the date specified on the notice.

In some cases, particularly where a functional placement is being verified, a student may need to be placed in their local school until the verification process is complete.

- 5. The Regional Director will approve and sign off on the relevant notice based on the Regional Manager Student Support’s recommendation. For independent public schools this will be the Executive Director School Support Services.

Recommendation	Documentation
Placement approved	Successful Verification Notice – Special School or Centre Placement
Functional placement approved	Successful Verification Notice – Special School or Centre Functional Placement
Placement not approved	Unsuccessful Verification Notice (must include reasons for decision and recommendations for alternative enrolment and support options)
Temporary placement	Temporary Placement Notice (must specify date by which the student must be transferred to a mainstream school or classroom)

Copies of the relevant signed notice will be forwarded to the principal, parent and Regional Manager Student Support.

- 6. Enrolment is to take place in accordance with the documentation issued by the Regional Director.
- 7. The Regional Manager Student Support is to ensure that all records are placed in TRIM and the student details are entered into SSID.

Where a student has been deemed ineligible for a placement, the student may receive support from a Special Education Teacher, Special Education Assistant and/or specialised programs. The student may also be eligible for support from the Special Education Support Program.

A workflow diagram for the Enrolment Process for Special Schools and Special Centres is provided in Appendix B.

### **4.3 Updated diagnostic assessments**

Student diagnostic assessments should be reviewed and updated as required, at key transition points:

- primary to middle school
- middle school to senior secondary.

The school psychologist will ensure that psychological assessments are current.

The disability advisor will ensure that the educational adjustments being implemented for the student continue to meet the student's developmental needs.

Principals and Regional Managers Students Support must ensure that assessments are current at these transitioning points.

### **4.4 Functional placement review**

Functional placements in Special Schools and Special Centres are required to be reviewed by the date specified in the Successful Verification Notice. The review is to determine if the functional placement is to continue or if the student will begin the transition into a mainstream classroom setting. The school will need to provide a [Summary Report for Functional Placement Review](#) that incorporates the following information:

- reasons and evidence for functional placement
- any updated diagnosis assessments and additional reports
- adaptive assessment behavior
- synopsis of student history/background information
- information pertaining to adjustments in current Educational Adjustment Plan that allow access to and participation in the curriculum
- history & analysis of previous adjustments
- history of advice and support from multidisciplinary professionals
- information pertaining to student's ability to socialise
- evidence of meeting to obtain [informed consent](#) with parent.

The principal is responsible for maintaining a schedule of reviews and initiating the review process for each student.

Each review is undertaken in consultation with the parents, principal, relevant student support advisor, school psychologist and Regional Manager School Support. Recommendations will be outlined in a new verification notice prepared by the Regional Manager Student Support and forwarded to the Regional Director for approval and sign off as outlined in section 4.2(5). Where a review determines that a student should be transitioned into a mainstream classroom setting, a Temporary Placement Notice will be issued to provide adequate time for the transition to occur.

Where a student in a functional placement is transferring from primary to middle school or middle to senior school, the verification notice should be checked to confirm the review date.

#### **4.5 Right of appeal**

A parent has the right to appeal a decision not to approve a student for a placement or functional placement in a Special School or Special Centre.

The parent should submit their appeal in writing to the Regional Director within 10 working days of receiving the ineligibility notice. The appeal should outline the parent's concerns regarding the department's decision not to verify the child's eligibility for enrolment in a Special School or Special Centre.

The Regional Director will convene a case conference with the appropriate stakeholders. Depending on the complexity of the case, the case conference may involve the following stakeholders:

- Executive Director
- Regional Director
- Director Student Support
- Regional Manager Student Support
- Senior Psychologist
- School Principal.

Attendees of the case conference will review the student's diagnostic reports and other supporting documentation. Based on the outcomes of the case conference, the Regional Director will make a determination and advise the student's parents in writing of the final decision.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix A — Approved Special Schools and Special Centres

Appendix B — Enrolment Process for Special Schools and Special Centres

## APPROVED SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL CENTRES

These Special Schools and Special Centres are approved by the Department of Education as settings for students with high support needs arising from an intellectual disability.

### Special Schools

- Namarluk School Darwin (P-6)
- Henbury School Darwin (7-12)
- Palmerston Special School Palmerston (P-12) – in operation from 2017
- Kintore School Katherine (P-12)
- Acacia Hill School Alice Springs (P-12)

### Special Centres

Special Centres are located at the following schools:

- Humpty Doo Primary School (P-6)
- Nhulunbuy Primary School (P-6)
- Woodroffe Primary School (P-6)
- Centralian Middle School (7-9)
- Katherine High School (7-12)
- Nhulunbuy High School (7-12)
- Palmerston Senior College (7-12)
- Taminmin College (10-12)
- Centralian Senior College (10-12)

## ENROLMENT PROCESS FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL CENTRES

