

2021

OVERVIEW OF FINAL REPORT

Students with Disability Review



In March 2020 the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) established the Students with Disability Review to identify and recommend improvements to policies, programs and operational arrangements of Catholic Education in South Australia that will strengthen the learning, wellbeing and inclusion of students with disability.

The Review presented its Final Report to SACCS in December 2020.

The Review demonstrates the strong commitment of Catholic Education to meet the needs of students with disability and to work in partnership with parents and carers. It highlights areas where there is much to affirm and celebrate.

The Review also points to important areas where the nature and quality of this service can be strengthened further.

The following paper provides an overview of the Final Report. It outlines the Review's key findings and the directions it recommends for Catholic education to improve the learning, wellbeing and inclusion of students with disability.

The Commission provided in-principle approval of the Report's set of recommendations at its December meeting. It approved Implementation focus areas for immediate action in 2021 outlined in this Overview Report.

During 2021 a full three-year Review Implementation Plan is to be developed based on the Report's recommendations.

The Director Catholic Education is establishing a Students with Disability Review Implementation Steering Committee to oversee this process. Its purpose is to ensure that, through the implementation of the Review's recommendations, all members of Catholic education - in schools, regions and central office - work in partnership with families to best meet the needs of each individual student with disability.



Dr. Paul Kilvert
Independent Lead, Students with Disability Review

1. Review purpose and process

1.1 Review Terms of Reference

The Commission established the following terms of reference for the Students with Disability Review.

1. To engage the perspectives of students with disability, their parents/carers/guardians, school Principals, teachers, other leaders, and support staff in schools, and staff in the Catholic Education Office (CEO) in identifying improvements to policies, programs and processes for students with disability.
2. To recommend immediate and ongoing improvements to policies, programs and processes for the inclusion, learning and wellbeing of students with disability at the school and system levels.
3. To analyse the effectiveness of the relationship between Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) and Students with Disability (SWD) processes at the school and system levels and to recommend immediate and ongoing improvement.
4. To identify and recommend immediate and ongoing improvement to the data management and online systems for the recording of NCCD data and evidence in schools, together with its transfer between schools and between schools and the CEO.
5. To identify and recommend immediate and ongoing improvement to the place of special units at the school and system levels.
6. To apply the outcomes of the Review to inform the conceptual and operational framework of the Partnerships in Inclusive Practice program as a new paradigm for how the Catholic Education SouthAustralia (CESA) system of schools addresses the needs of students with disability.
7. To identify and analyse the human resource, financial/budget and operational implications of the outcomes of the Review.
8. To provide regular progress reports to the Education Standing Committee, the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS), Catholic schools, and key stakeholders.
9. To provide SACCS with a Students with Disability Review Implementation Plan at its November 2020 meeting.
10. To undertake other Review tasks that SACCS identifies.

During the course of the Review, SACCS extended the scope of point 7 to include mainstream settings, special schools, and flexible learning settings in meeting the needs of students with disability.

1.2 Review Methodology

The Review methodology emphasised the following processes:

- engaging the perspectives of key stakeholders, in particular students and their families
- focusing both internally within Catholic Education and externally with other key agencies
- referencing the work of the Review with research and other reviews into education for students with disability
- providing Review papers and updates to track progress.

Student engagement

The Review undertook 122 conversations with students with disability across 24 schools, including female and male students of different ages with different NCCD Levels of Adjustment and Categories of Disability, in country and metropolitan schools, including mainstream settings, special units, special schools and the flexible learning setting. The Students with Disability Conversations Report was posted to the Students with Disability Review webpage.



Stakeholder engagement

The Review contracted the company Square Holes to independently administer surveys with the following groups. Over 1400 responses were received. Synopses of each group's responses were posted to the Review webpage.

- Parents/carers/guardians (343 responses)
- Community members (100 responses)
- Principals of Catholic schools (98 responses)
- School staff (822 responses)
- Catholic Education Office staff (56 responses)

School visits

The Review visited schools in mainstream settings, the five schools with special units, the two special schools and the flexible learning setting (FAME). It interviewed Principals, Inclusion Coordinators and other leadership team members in metropolitan and regional schools to gain insights into each school's SWD programs and structures and to gather relevant documentation.

Catholic Education Leadership

The Review interviewed the leaders and staff in all sections of the Catholic Education Office either individually or in groups.

Review Working Papers

In addition to the Students with Disability Conversations Report and the five Survey Summary Reports, the Review prepared and released the following papers on the Students with Disability Review webpage.

Discussion Paper

The paper was released at the start of the Review to provide information about the context in which the Review operates, introduce key concepts and outline issues to be addressed by the Review.

Profile of Students with Disability Report

The report, released mid-way through the Review, presented a number of key characteristics of students with disability enrolled in South Australian Catholic schools.

Issues and Challenges Paper

Released mid-way through the Review, the paper presents the views of key stakeholders on specific aspects of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* ('Disability Standards') with regards to:

- Learning and wellbeing
- Eliminating harassment
- Enrolment and transition
- School structures
- Support services

For each of the *Disability Standards*, the paper identifies a range of key issues and challenges.

Overview of Review Key Directions

The paper is a working paper used at a Review Solutions Forum held in October. It was subsequently the focus in November at the CESA Directors and Leaders Forum with the Principals and Inclusion Coordinators from each Catholic school in South Australia.

The Review Lead used the paper to present the key directions emerging from the Review for discussion and comment by the Forums. The Director Catholic Education further used the paper as the basis of a briefing session with the Chairs of the Boards of each Catholic school in South Australia.



2. Executive Summary

Profiles of students with disability

Students with disability represent a significant proportion of students enrolled in South Australian Catholic schools.

Students with disability are recorded on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) that Catholic schools submit to the Australian Government at the time of the annual Non-Government Schools Census in August of each year. The data must comply with requirements set out in the Guidelines of the Education Council.

In 2020, students with disability comprise 19.36% of the total school enrolment in Catholic schools in South Australia. The proportion of students increased from 18.99% in 2019.

Students with disability are present in all Catholic schools at both the primary and secondary levels of schooling. They are present in both country and metropolitan locations.

Under the NCCD, there are four Levels of Adjustment that schools can provide to assist students:

- support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice (QDTP): adjustments are provided through usual school processes, without drawing on additional resources
- supplementary adjustments: these are supplementary to the strategies and resources already available for all students within the school: adjustments occur for particular activities at specific times throughout the week.
- substantial adjustments: these involve considerable adult assistance; adjustments to the usual educational program occur at most times on most days.
- extensive adjustments; these are targeted measures and sustained levels of intensive support: these adjustments are highly individualised, comprehensive and ongoing, occurring at all times.

The school also records for each student one of four general Categories of Disability: physical, cognitive, sensory, social-emotional. If a school chooses, it can also enter its own descriptor of a disability.

Schools receive varying levels of additional funding to provide the Supplementary, Substantial or Extensive Levels of Adjustment for students. The students receiving these levels of adjustment comprise 12.71% of student enrolments in Catholic schools in South Australia in 2020.

The Review's analysis highlights a significant difference between boys and girls in the recorded Levels of Adjustment. It is in the order of 2:1.

The gender difference exists for both the Cognitive and Social-emotional general Categories of Disability to the same ratio of 2:1. This is especially significant given the two categories together represent 95% of the students with Levels of Adjustment recorded on the NCCD.

The Review's analysis of NCCD data points to a significant variation in the Levels of Adjustment recorded between schools and between year levels within schools. The variation is present in both 2019 and 2020, even when the increase in the numbers of students with Levels of Adjustment from the one year to the next is taken into account. These variations occur in both primary schools and secondary schools.

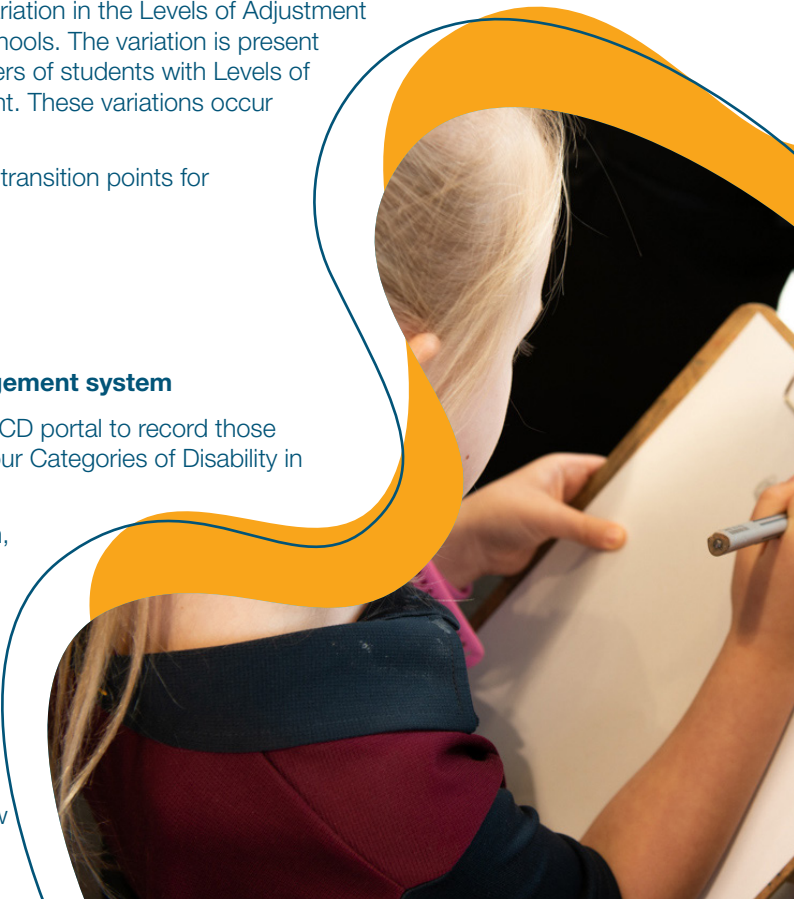
The variation between year levels is particularly evident in the transition points for students:

- from reception into the early primary years
- from Year 6 into Year 7
- from the middle years into SACE.

Relationship between NCCD and SEQTA learner management system

Schools use an application generally known as the CESA NCCD portal to record those students who receive one of four Levels of Adjustment and four Categories of Disability in accordance with the Guidelines.

The Review finds that NCCD data enables Catholic education, both in schools and as a system, to understand the profile of students with disability and to assist in identifying how their needs can best be addressed. The data assists the analysis at both the school and system levels.



The Review further finds the existing CESA NCCD portal currently possesses features that constrain its educational effectiveness.

The Review concludes there is value in establishing a clear and defined connection between the NCCD and SEQTA, CESA's preferred learner management system for schools.

The integration of NCCD records into SEQTA creates the capacity to connect a student's Level of Adjustment, and the related evidence, with the school's other records related to the student's learning and wellbeing. The connection provides the opportunity to analyse the interrelationship and to strengthen each student's learning and wellbeing.

The Review proposes the next step should be to integrate the Personalised Plan for Learning (PPL) into SEQTA.

Connecting NCCD data with other datasets

The Review identifies other databases where connectivity with NCCD data would strengthen the capacity for Catholic Education, both in schools and as a system, to understand and address the educational needs of students with disability. They include:

- Student attendance data
- Pulse Check-In data
- Student Critical Incident reports
- Suspension and exclusion records
- NAPLAN and A-E Grades data (where relevant)
- Student Departures Survey data

The Review identifies establishing a connection between the NCCD and other databases in the People, Leadership and Culture section would also assist the analysis of matters related to staff wellbeing.

Disability Standards for Education

In Australia, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* ('DDA'), and associated *Disability Standards for Education 2005* ('*Disability Standards*') provide the legislative context in which the rights of children with disability are protected. The *Disability Standards* clarify the obligations of education providers, and the rights of students with disability and their families with regards to:

- enrolment
- participation
- curriculum development, accreditation and delivery
- student support services
- harassment and victimisation (elimination of).

The Review used the surveys with parents/carers/guardians, community members, Principals, school staff and Catholic Education Office staff to analyse CESA's performance against the *Disability Standards*.

The five surveys used questions that are grouped around each of the *Disability Standards* and in a number of instances use wording from the *DDA*. The Review asked the company Square Holes to provide an independent analysis of the data and the comments made by each group of respondents.

Enrolment and transition

The Review's research that preceded the surveys identified enrolment issues that go beyond the point of enrolment and extend into issues about student transition. The survey questions on the *Disability Standards* for Enrolment were expanded to focus on enrolment and transition.

Responses to the surveys demonstrate that for the majority of respondents the enrolment and transition processes of Catholic schools are inclusive of students with disability. This is reinforced by the comments that respondents provided about the strengths of the enrolment and transition processes of schools.



The Review finds the survey responses possess a degree of variation between the responses and relative ratings of the different groups. The variation is most apparent between the views of school Principals and staff, and the views of parents/carers/guardians and community members.

The variation in the responses on enrolment and transition points to an underlying difference between the expectations of schools and those of some parents/carers/guardians and community members about how to most effectively serve the needs of students with disability.

The Review concludes that Catholic Education operates in accordance with the *Disability Standards* for Enrolment. It also concludes there are important areas where Catholic Education can fulfil its commitment to the Standards for Enrolment more consistently. The Review identifies areas for strengthening Catholic Education's enrolment and transition processes for students with disability.

Participation and learning

The surveys also combine the *Disability Standards* for Participation and the *Disability Standards* for Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery into the one group with the focus on student participation and learning.

Responses to the survey demonstrate that the majority of respondents consider Catholic schools are inclusive of students with disability with regards to their participation and learning. The survey responses are consistent with the comments provided by students, parents/carers/guardians, Principals and school staff.

The Review finds the survey responses possess a pattern of variation similar to the responses to the questions about enrolment and transition. It is evident that the perspective of approximately 20% of parents/carers/guardians differs from the perspective of Principals and staff about the participation and learning of students with disability.

The Review concludes that Catholic Education operates in accordance with the *Disability Standards* for Participation and for Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery, as they relate to student participation and learning.

The Review also concludes the perspectives and comments identify a range of factors that Catholic Education should address. These include:

- the importance of student agency in the adjustments that address the functional impact of their disability on their learning
- the increasing complexity of the needs of students with disability as they progress through the years of schooling
- the need for greater understanding about the relationship between disability and behaviour, and the importance of teacher understanding of the relationship to best address each student's learning needs
- differences in the expectations of parents/carers/guardians and schools about how a school can or should make reasonable adjustments for an individual student with disability
- the importance of school leaders, teachers and staff understanding and using reports from allied health and multidisciplinary professionals that address the relationship between disability, behaviour and learning
- the differences between the school organisational structures of primary settings and those of secondary settings, and how these impact on the assistance provided to students.

The Review proposes specific strategies that would be beneficial for Catholic Education to address in the following areas:

- emphasising student agency
- strengthening participation and learning of students with disability
- strengthening teacher capability.



Student support services

The Review finds in their survey responses parents/carers/guardians express satisfaction at their school's ability to access appropriate allied health support services and to understand their recommendations. Most acknowledge the efforts of school staff to consult with them and action reports from therapists when implementing a child's Personalised Plan for Learning.

The Review finds that when parents express dissatisfaction, it is often with regards to how familiar teachers are with the reports and how they apply advice in the reports to make adjustments for the student's learning.

The Review finds for Principals there are issues as to how their school liaises with allied health and other multidisciplinary professionals, and the arrangements by which these professionals have access to students. They also point to the assistance that some parents need to understand the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and what they need to do to access its services.

The Review concludes that Catholic Education operates in accordance with the *Disability Standards* for Student support services. It also considers there are areas where Catholic Education can strengthen the use of support services. The Review identifies strategies for Catholic Education to implement relating to:

- Professional relationships with allied health and multidisciplinary professionals
- Partners in Inclusive Practice program.

Elimination of harassment and victimisation

The Review finds parents/carers/guardians and community members agree with Catholic Principals and staff that Catholic schools handle most harassment issues well.

The Review finds the responses of Principals and staff demonstrate their understanding of the importance of effective processes to address harassment. Schools follow a grievance policy that is made known to students and parents.

The Review finds some parents/carers/guardians and other members of the community hold reservations about how well Catholic schools address harassment. The Review's conversations with students with disability also indicate that for a small number of students with disability harassment has been a factor that has affected their need to change schools.

The Review concludes that Catholic Education operates in accordance with the *Disability Standards* for Harassment and victimisation (elimination of).

The Review also concludes the perspectives and comments of stakeholders point to areas where Catholic Education can strengthen its processes for eliminating harassment, victimisation and bullying. It proposes strategies for Catholic Education to implement:

- whole-school programs for inclusion, including anti-harassment, that are preventative rather than reactive
- Positive Behaviour Support professional learning programs
- strategies to empower students to understand their options if and when harassment occurs.

School settings for students with disability

The Review analysed the effectiveness of Catholic Education's current school settings for students with disability in:

- mainstream schools
- special units in four secondary schools and one primary school
- two special schools
- flexible learning settings (FAME)



The Review notes Catholic Education's current arrangement has not changed over the past two decades, while the following changes have taken place during the same period:

- the growth in the number of students with disability and an increase in the complexity of their needs
- the Australian Government introduced the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
- the Australian Government's introduction of the NCCD in 2013 as the model for recording a student with disability
- the Australian Government's introduction of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth) to adopt a needs-based model for funding schools and use of the NCCD to provide differential loadings in the funding formula for students with disability according to their Level of Adjustment
- the Australian Government's establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in 2017.

Mainstream schools

The Review finds the Survey responses from parents/carers/guardians, Principals, school staff and CEO staff strongly affirm the value of mainstream classes in serving the learning and wellbeing needs of students with disability. The response of community members provides moderate agreement.

The Review further finds a significant divergence between Catholic schools in the percentage of students with Levels of Adjustment relative to their total enrolments between

- schools with primary enrolments and secondary enrolments.
- schools across both country and metropolitan locations.
- the CESA 2021 regions.

The Review concludes Catholic Education needs to determine its response to the question as to whether the degree of variation represents the best way for it to fulfil its mission and commitment to the inclusion of students with disability. The Review proposes strategies for Catholic Education to address the challenge.

Special units

The special units in the four secondary schools and in the one primary school are designed to support the learning and wellbeing of students with Substantial and Extensive Levels of Adjustment, primarily with an intellectual disability.

The Review finds the survey responses from parents/carers/guardians, Principals, school staff and CEO staff consistently affirm the value of special units in serving the learning and wellbeing needs of students with disability. They equally affirm the value of the combination of special units with mainstream classes.

The Review also finds a significant number of other Catholic primary and secondary schools include students with Substantial and Extensive Levels of Adjustment. In a number of instances, the number and proportion of these students are greater than those in the schools with the special units.

These mainstream schools support the learning and wellbeing of the students with Substantial and Extensive Levels of Adjustment from the funds received through the Funding Mechanism. They do so without the additional co-responsibility funding allocated to the schools with the special units.

The Review finds that CESA's current model for the operation of schools with special units is not sufficiently aligned with the current presence of students with Substantial and Extensive Levels of Adjustment across the range of Catholic schools in South Australia. Nor is the arrangement sufficiently aligned with the current funding arrangements under which Catholic schools operate.

The Review proposes the adoption of a new model that maintains the success of the existing special units, while introducing new options that maximise benefits for students with disability and that better reflect the current context in which Catholic schools operate.

Special schools

Two special schools have operated in Catholic Education for over 50 years. The Review finds the survey responses from parents/carers/guardians, Principals, school staff and CEO staff affirm the strengths of special schools. The Review concludes there is the place for special schools in Catholic Education in meeting the needs of students with disability.

The Review finds the current special schools possess a number of common features in how they support students with an Extensive Level of Adjustment and complex needs. The Review also finds a number of differences between the operations of the two special schools.

The Review concludes that Catholic Education should retain the existing special schools and reinforce their strengths in addressing the needs of students with complex needs.

To move forward, the Review proposes a new organisational arrangement for the special schools based on the following:

- a) the two existing special schools are combined into the one special school with:
 - a single governing body
 - one principal
 - a leader for each campus
 - a common finance and ICT team.
- b) CESA secures an additional campus to be incorporated into the combined special school that is to cater for secondary age students, with the other two campuses catering for primary age students
- c) the above developments are introduced through a three-year implementation plan and a multi-level communication and engagement strategy.

The intended benefits of the proposal are to provide the most appropriate opportunities for students with disability that match their stage of schooling, to expand the capacity for CESA to offer these opportunities to students and their families, and to ensure that CESA's provision operates in a planned, cohesive and coordinated manner.

The Review emphasises the development of the combined special school must occur through consultation and engagement with students, their families, and school leaders and staff.

Flexible learning settings (FAME)

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) manages the Flexible Schools Network across Australia. These settings provide an educational service for adolescent young people who have either disengaged with their schooling or who are looking to access a different model to mainstream schooling.

The Review proposes that Catholic Education as a system includes EREA's flexible learning settings as an option for students who require a Level of Adjustment under the NCCD, while at the same time finding the appropriate way of describing the nature of the participation and being sensitive to the language used to refer to it.

The Review proposes SACCS enters into discussions with EREA with regards to incorporating flexible learning settings in the Places, Spaces, Approaches model.

Early years

The Review finds that none of the eight preschools in Catholic schools and none of the three Catholic Alive Early Learning Centres provide a focus on disability similar to that which is provided in preschools in the Government sector.

The Review concludes that Catholic Education and Catholic Church Early Years Inc should give consideration as to how Catholic preschools and Alive Early Learning Centres can provide more explicit services and supports for children with disability.

The Review further concludes that Catholic Education and Catholic Church Early Years officers should engage with the Department for Education with the view to strengthening transition arrangements for children with disability between Department preschools and Catholic primary schools.

Towards a new model

The Review concludes that Catholic Education would benefit from the development of a new organisational model through which schools manage the learning, wellbeing and inclusion of students with disability.

The new model should maintain the success of existing organisational arrangements - that is mainstream classes, special units, flexible learning settings and special schools - while introducing new options that maximise benefits for students with disability and that better reflect the current context in which Catholic schools operate.

The new model should more closely align with the CESA funding arrangements for schools to maximise the effective use of the available resources to address the needs of students with disability.

The Review recommends the development of Places, Spaces, Approaches model based on:

- Places: identification of "Hub" schools, including the schools with special units, in regions to focus on the learning and wellbeing of students with complex Substantial and Extensive Levels of Adjustment.
- Spaces: for instance, similar learning areas, calming/self-regulating spaces, amenities, and so on
- Approaches: for instance, consistent approaches to student agency, positive behaviour programs, learning adjustments, analytical uses of data and information, and so on.

The Review emphasises the model should take into account the different circumstances of regional schools.

Culture of inclusion

The Review finds the survey responses from parents/carers/guardians, Principals, school staff and CEO staff indicate that groups consider Catholic schools are committed to the inclusion of students with disability.

The Review finds there is a difference in the degree of agreement between the responses of parents/carers/guardians and community members and the responses of Principals, school and CEO staff. The strongest difference relates to information that Catholic schools provide about the settings in which students with disability learn.

The Review concludes it is imperative for CESA to have a coherent statement of what it means by inclusive education, including specific reference to students with disability, which is communicated clearly and effectively to its leaders, staff and parents/carers/guardians across Catholic Education and the wider community.

The Review concludes Catholic Education should give consideration as to how its governance functions define and deliver the commitment to the culture of inclusion for all students, including students with disability.

The Review recommends the governance functions be delivered through the following:

- a Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Committee that is a Standing Committee of SACCS
- CESA Inclusion Policy
- CESA Students with Disability Strategy
- Liaison with Government in matters relating to disability policy and services
- Quality management
- System reporting

Implementation

The Review recommends that SACCS requests the Director Catholic Education to prepare, in consultation with students, parents/carers/guardians, school Principals, staff in schools and the CEO, and other key stakeholders, an Implementation Plan for the recommendations in the Review Report and to identify the resources required for the Implementation Strategy.

The Review recommends that SACCS requests the Director Catholic Education to take immediate action in 2021 to implement the following key focus areas:

1. Strengthen the learning, wellbeing and inclusion for students with disability through improved adjustments in all classes in all Catholic schools
2. Provide places, spaces and approaches in Catholic schools, and between schools in regions, that best provide for the learning, wellbeing and inclusion of each student with disability
3. Build sustained improvements for students with disability, as a system of Catholic education, through effective governance, policies and programs.



Focus Area 1: Strengthen the learning, wellbeing and inclusion of students with disability in all classes in all Catholic schools

1.1 Relationship between student learning, disability, gender, and behaviour

- Catholic Education Office, in collaboration with schools and regions, students and parents, and allied health and multidisciplinary professionals, develops guidelines and support materials for teachers on the relationship between student learning, disability, gender and behaviour Rec. 1 & Rec. 8

1.2 Relationship between NCCD and SEQTA learner management system

- Catholic Education Office assists schools and regions to integrate NCCD records into the SEQTA learner management system Rec. 2
- Catholic Education Office, in collaboration with school leaders and teachers, plans the integration of the Personalised Plan for Learning into SEQTA Rec. 2
- School leaders, teachers and other staff build their capability to use NCCD data and records to monitor, evaluate and strengthen the learning and wellbeing of students with disability Rec. 4

1.3 Student transition

- Catholic Education Office, in consultation with schools, students and parents/carers/guardians, prepares guidelines, support materials and parent information for strengthening transition processes for students with disability within schools and between schools Rec. 6

1.4 Participation and learning

- Catholic Education Office develops guidelines and information related to the meaning of a "reasonable adjustment" for students with disability Rec. 9

1.5 Student Support and liaison with allied health & multidisciplinary professionals

- Schools strengthen processes for using reports from allied health and multidisciplinary professionals Rec. 13
- Catholic Education Office strengthens protocols for engagement with allied health and multidisciplinary professionals through Partners in Inclusive Practice program Rec. 15

1.6 Eliminating harassment

- Schools implement/strengthen whole-school preventative programs for inclusion, including anti-harassment Rec. 16
- Schools implement strategies to empower students with disability to understand their options if and when harassment occurs. Rec. 17

Focus Area 2:

Provide places, spaces and approaches in Catholic schools, and between schools in regions, that best provide for the learning, wellbeing and inclusion of each student with disability

2.1 Students with disability in mainstream classes

- Schools implement a critical inquiry process to identify the underlying factors for their school's relative percentage of students with Levels of Adjustment. Rec. 21
- Schools Performance Leaders and school Principals analyse whether the degree of variation between schools in each region is an appropriate indicator of the needs of students with disability Rec. 22

2.2 CESA school model for students with disability

- Schools Performance Leaders, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing team, and school Principals begin planning, in consultation with students and parents/carers/guardians, the development of the Students with Disability Places, Spaces and Approaches model Rec. 23

Focus Area 3:

Build sustained improvements for students with disability, as a system of Catholic education, through effective governance, policies and programs.

3.1 Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee

SACCS establishes the Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee Rec. 33

3.2 Implementation Plan

The Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee develops, in consultation with key stakeholders, the Students with Disability Review Implementation Plan and identifies the resources required for the implementation of the Review's recommendations. Rec. 40

3.3 CESA Inclusion Policy

The Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee oversees, in consultation with school Principals, school Boards and parents/carers/guardians, the development of a CESA Inclusion Policy that subsumes and replaces the current Disability Policy. Rec. 34

3.4 CESA Students with Disability Strategy

The Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee oversees, in consultation with school Principals, school Boards and parents/carers/guardians, the development of a CESA Students with Disability Strategy Rec. 35

3.5 Strategic Alliances

CESA continues to liaise with the Disability Advocate, SA Department of Education senior officers and SA Department of Child Protection senior officers to align, as appropriate, CESA developments for students with disability with Government directions. Rec. 36

3. Summary of recommendations

Relationship between disability, behaviour, learning, and wellbeing

1. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing manages the development and provision of a professional learning program on the relationship between gender, disability, behaviour, and student learning and wellbeing, for teachers to use in their teaching of students with disability.

Relationship between NCCD and SEQTA learner management system

2. The current initiative to integrate NCCD data and records into SEQTA be expanded into a full project plan under the sponsorship of the Deputy Director and led by the Manager, Schools Performance Leaders in liaison with the Chief Information Officer, to maximise the connections between the NCCD, SEQTA and the Personalised Plan for Learning related to the learning and wellbeing of students with disability.
3. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders, in liaison with the Chief Information Officer, strengthens the connectivity between NCCD and other datasets related to the learning and wellbeing of students with disability.
4. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, and each Education Advisor in the Learning Diversity and Wellbeing Team, works in partnership with Schools Performance Leaders and school Principals in the respective regions, to build the capability of school leaders, teachers and other staff to use NCCD data and records to monitor, evaluate and strengthen the learning and wellbeing of students with disability.

Student enrolment and transition

5. The proposed Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee oversees the revision of CESA's Enrolment policy, procedures, enrolment contract, and support materials and information material for the use of parents/carers/guardians, school leaders and staff in the enrolment process for students with disability and their families.
6. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders, together with Schools Performance Leaders and Principals in each region, analyse and strengthen school processes for managing the transition of students with disability within schools and between schools.
7. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, with the support of the Manager, Schools Performance Leaders and the Manager, Learning and Wellbeing, develops and implements transition arrangements for students with disability between early learning centres and preschools, and Catholic primary schools.

Participation and learning

8. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, and associated Advisors, liaises with allied health and multidisciplinary professionals to develop support materials for teachers to better understand the impact of disability on behaviour.
9. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, in liaison with the Senior Education Advisor, Learning and Curriculum, develops guidelines and information related to the meaning of a "reasonable adjustment", for school leaders and staff to use with parents/carers/guardians, about how Catholic schools provide adjustments for students with disability.
10. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning and Curriculum, in liaison with the Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, develops guidelines for school leaders and staff to use in constructing teaching and learning programs, with reference to key curriculum frameworks, and together with assessment and reporting arrangements, for students with disability.
11. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning and Curriculum, in liaison with the Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, develops professional learning programs for teachers in curriculum design, differentiation, explicit instruction and assessment adjustments for students with disability.
12. The Assistant Director, People, Leadership and Culture, develops and initiates strategies for teachers to obtain qualifications in disability education via priority in Study Incentive Program (SIP) funding and for the recruitment of specialist teachers and university graduates with qualifications and/or expertise in disability education and inclusive practices.

Student support services

13. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, and associated Advisors, develops and implements guidelines and protocols for the use of reports from allied health and multidisciplinary professionals for schools and regions to strengthen the learning and wellbeing of students with disability in partnership with parents/carers/guardians.

14. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders, in liaison with the Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, negotiates strategic alliances with key NDIS service providers in the provision of support services for students with disability and their families for schools in each region.
15. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders, in liaison with the Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, and under sponsorship of the Deputy Director, establishes the Partners in Inclusive Practice program to strengthen partnerships between schools in each region, with CEO teams, and with allied health and multidisciplinary professionals.

Eliminating harassment and victimisation

16. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders, in liaison with the Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing, and associated Advisors, implements whole-school preventative programs for inclusion, including anti-harassment, such as the Positive Behaviour Support program.
17. Principals implement strategies to empower students with disability to understand their options if and when harassment occurs.

Students with disability in mainstream classes

18. Principals, with the assistance of programs and support material from the Catholic Education Office, implement strategies in their schools to deepen teacher and staff understanding of the relationship between disability, behaviour and learning, together with other wellbeing indicators, so that adjustments for students with disability strengthen their learning and wellbeing.
19. The Senior Education Advisor, with the Learning Diversity and Wellbeing Team, work with school coordinators and teachers to identify students who may benefit from increased targeted supports and adjustments to significantly impact their learning and wellbeing.
20. The Senior Education Advisor, with the Learning Diversity and Wellbeing Team, work with school Inclusion Coordinators and teachers, in NCCD cross-school moderation processes to improve their understanding of the evidence that demonstrates Levels of Adjustment.
21. Principals implement a critical inquiry process with their school leaders and teachers to identify the underlying factors for their school's relative percentage of students with Levels of Adjustment.
22. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders implements a critical inquiry process through which Schools Performance Leaders and Principals analyse whether the degree of variation between schools in each region is an appropriate indicator of the needs of students with disability.

Students with disability in special units

23. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders manages the process to develop a new organisational model for the relationship between the existing special units in the five schools, mainstream schools, special schools and flexible learning settings, including an expanded number of "Hub" schools in each region for students with complex Substantial and Extensive Levels of Adjustment. The process is to occur through consultation and collaboration with students, parents/carers/guardians and the schools involved, and to also take into account the circumstances of regional schools.
24. The Assistant Director Finance and Infrastructure retains the current co-responsibility funding currently allocated to schools with special units for redirection towards infrastructure improvements in "Hub" schools, and in addition acts on the advice of the Manager, Schools Performance Leaders as to whether additional co-responsibility funding is required.
25. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders, in collaboration with the Learning Diversity and Wellbeing team, Schools Performance Leaders and Principals – and in consultation and engagement with parents/carers/guardians of students with disability – develops protocols and communication material for the enrolment and transition of students in the "Hub" schools.
26. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing allocates Education Advisors to assist in the enrolment and transition of students in the "Hub" schools within a region when difficulties arise that cannot be resolved at the school level.

Students with disability in special schools

27. The Assistant Director, Governance, Quality and Assurance manages a strategic project that:

- i. merges the two existing special schools into the one school with:
 - a single governing body
 - one Principal
 - a leader for each campus
 - a common finance and ICT team.
- ii. secures an additional campus for the new combined special school that will cater for secondary age students, with the other two campuses catering for primary age students.

Students with disability in flexible learning settings

28. SACCS enters into discussions with EREA with regards to including flexible learning settings as one of the options CESA provides for students recorded on the NCCD.

29. SACCS enters into discussion with EREA with a view to expanding the Flexible Schools Network from its existing campuses at Christie Downs and Elizabeth into additional locations as part of the Catholic Education system's commitment to the inclusion of all students and young people.

Early years

30. The Deputy Director gives consideration to how Catholic services in the early years can provide more explicit services for children with disability as part of any future development of the closer connection between Catholic preschools and Alive Early Learning Centres.

31. The Senior Education Advisor, Learning Diversity and Wellbeing engages Department for Education senior officers in strengthening the transition arrangements for children with disability between Department preschools and Catholic primary schools.

32. The Manager, Learning and Wellbeing oversees the implementation of materials generated by the Equity and Inclusion Project 2020.

Governance functions for students with disability

33. SACCS establishes a new Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee (name of the Committee to be confirmed) that reframes and integrates the existing functions of the Education Standing Committee and the Inclusion and Learning Sub-Committee.

34. The reframed Standing Committee oversees, in consultation with school Principals, school Boards and parents/carers/guardians, the development of a CESA Inclusion Policy that subsumes and replaces the current Disability Policy.

35. The reframed Standing Committee oversees, in consultation with school Principals, school Boards and parents/carers/guardians, the development of a CESA Students with Disability Strategy.

36. The Deputy Director, together with other senior CESA staff, liaises with the Disability Advocate, SA Department of Education senior officers and SA Department of Child Protection senior officers to align, as appropriate, CESA developments for students with disability with Government directions.

37. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders works with the Manager, Learning and Wellbeing to oversee the quality management of the Students with Disability Strategy.

38. The Manager, Schools Performance Leaders works with the Manager, Learning and Wellbeing to oversee the system reporting arrangements for the Students with Disability Strategy.

Implementation

39. SACCS requests the Director to take immediate steps to implement the Immediate Priorities identified in the Students with Disability Review Report from the start of 2021.

40. SACCS requests the Director to prepare, in consultation with students, parents/carers/guardians, school Principals, staff in schools and the CEO, and other key stakeholders, an Implementation Plan for the recommendations in the Review Report and identifies the resources required for the Implementation Plan.

Appendices

1. Key Terms and Information Sources used in Students with Disability Review

A student with disability:

A student who has a diagnosed or imputed disability and who is included in the Non-Government Schools Census.

Adjustments:

Adjustments are actions taken to enable a student with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments reflect the assessed individual needs of the student. They can be made at the whole-school level, in the classroom and at an individual student level.

Category of Disability:

Under the NCCD, schools enter the broad Category of Disability for each student from one of four categories: physical, cognitive, sensory, social/emotional, for submitting to the Government as part of the Census. If a student has multiple disabilities, schools determine which disability category has the greatest impact on the student's education and is the main driver of adjustments to support the student's access and participation.

<https://www.nccd.edu.au/wider-support-materials/definitions-disability-and-nccd-categories>

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 ('DDA')

An act passed by the Parliament of Australia which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities, in many areas of public life, including employment, education, getting or using services, renting or buying a house or unit, and accessing public places, because of their disability. The *DDA* covers people who have temporary and permanent disabilities; physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, learning and psychosocial disabilities, diseases or illnesses, physical disfigurement, medical conditions, and work-related injuries.

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763>

Disability Standards for Education 2005 ('Disability Standards')

The *Disability Standards* clarify the obligations of education and training providers, and the rights of people with disability, under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 ('DDA')*. The Standards are subordinate legislation made under the *DDA*.

<https://www.dese.gov.au/swd/resources/disability-standards-education-2005-plus-guidance-notes>

Disability Inclusion Act 2018:

An act passed by the Parliament of South Australia. It provides the basis by which a State authority is to develop a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure people with disability can access its mainstream supports and services.

<https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Disability%20Inclusion%20Act%202018.aspx>

Level of Adjustment:

Under the NCCD, there are four levels of adjustment:

- support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice (QDTP): adjustments are provided through usual school processes, without drawing on additional resources
- supplementary adjustments: these are supplementary to the strategies and resources already available for all students within the school; these adjustments occur for particular activities at specific times throughout the week.
- substantial adjustments: these involve considerable adult assistance; adjustments to the usual educational program occur at most times on most days.
- extensive adjustments; these are targeted measures and sustained levels of intensive support: these adjustments are highly individualised, comprehensive and ongoing, occurring at all times.

<https://www.nccd.edu.au>

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability ('NCCD')

The NCCD gives Australian schools, parents, guardians and carers, education authorities and the community information about the number of students with disability in schools and the adjustments they receive. The Australian Education Regulation 2013 requires all schools to report the data collected for the NCCD to the Australian Government on an annual basis.

<https://www.nccd.edu.au>

Non-Government Schools Census:

Census reporting is required under the *Australian Education Act 2013*. Non-government schools provide Census data in August each year. The Non-Government Schools Census (Census) provides the community and government with information about schools and students in Australia. The annual Census collects information including the numbers of students and staff, students on a visa, students with disability, and Indigenous Australian students.

2. List of Papers developed by Students with Disability Review

1. Review Discussion Paper
2. Student Conversations Paper
3. Survey Summary Report: Parents/carers/guardians of students with disability
4. Survey Summary Report: Members of the community
5. Survey Summary Report: Principals of Catholic schools
6. Survey Summary Report: Staff of Catholic schools: teachers, positions of responsibility, deputy principals and support staff
7. Survey Summary Report: Staff in the Catholic Education Office.
8. Profile of Students with Disability Report
9. Issues and Challenges Paper
10. Final Report
11. Overview of Final Report