

Specialist Disability Support in Schools (SDSS) Program Protocols for SDSS Program Services

These protocols have been developed to assist SDSS funded organisations to establish and maintain professional working relationships and clear communication processes with state and non-state schools.

All approved SDSS organisations have a current service agreement with the Department of Education and receive funding to support schools and students with disability.

SDSS organisations may approach a school to offer a service, however, SDSS Program services are only delivered at the written request of the school, based on the needs of the student to access and participate in the curriculum. The Principal, or delegate of the Principal, decides if assistance is required and requests the services from SDSS organisations.

These services operate as complementary services to those offered by the education sectors and are not a duplication of those services available in schools.

Purpose of the SDSS Program

The SDSS Program supports schools by providing funding to approved organisations to deliver services to improve access to and participation in the curriculum and the educational outcomes of eligible school-aged students with disability.

SDSS Services may provide services under the following three categories to support eligible students with disability:

1. School Support Services - provision of a range of professional services and consultation in schools;
2. Resource Centre Services - provision of equipment and resources to schools; and
3. Specialised Equipment – provision of approved specialised equipment.

Responsibilities of SDSS Organisations

SDSS Organisations must:

- a) obtain a current School Request for Support Form (inclusive of parent/guardian consent and evidence of student eligibility) signed by the Principal or the Principal's delegate. Forms are valid for the current school year and must be renewed annually;
- b) consult and liaise with schools following receipt of a School Request for Support Form to determine service provision requirements for the school. SDSS services are to be provided in collaboration with education professionals;
- c) not disclose Personal Information without the Department of Education's prior written consent. In accordance with the terms of their service agreement with the Department of Education, SDSS organisations are required to adhere to strict Disclosure of Confidential Information and Protection of Personal Information requirements when delivering a service.
- d) liaise with the school to obtain copies of all relevant and current school policies and procedures, including policies and procedures about student safety and wellbeing and all mandatory reporting requirements;

- e) ensure each representative of a SDSS organisation completes student protection training prior to a service being provided at the school;
- f) provide services at school, or as negotiated and agreed to by the SDSS organisation and the school;
- g) provide advice and support for the development and implementation of the student's education program, as developed by the student's educational support team;
- h) liaise with the case manager/educational support team on a regular basis;
- i) provide written reports to the school in relation to service provision;
- j) consult and liaise with other locally based SDSS service providers in the region where relevant when delivering outreach services; and
- k) contact the appropriate Education Authority in writing, at least annually, regarding service provision to schools. Education Authority refers to:
 - o State schools – Regional Office, Principal Education Officer - Student Services (PEOSS)
 - o Catholic schools – Diocesan Office, Director e.g. Student Services
 - o Independent schools – Principal of the school

At the school each representative of a SDSS Organisation must:

- a) follow all school policies, procedures and protocols for visitors, including reporting to administration on arrival and departure;
- b) wear a badge that identifies the SDSS organisation that is providing the service and the name of the individual providing the service;
- c) exchange information with the identified staff at the school and, as appropriate, at the regional level to co-ordinate SDSS visits;
- d) negotiate a schedule of proposed visits along with a list of the key personnel involved. The list should be provided to the case manager/school support team at least two weeks in advance and a copy for the class teacher must be included; and
- e) advise the school administration office as soon as possible if a change in the appointment is necessary and request that the information be conveyed as a matter of urgency to the teachers/staff involved.

Responsibilities of Schools

- a) Prior to requesting a SDSS service, schools should consider the needs of students in conjunction with any services already available to the school i.e. check what supports and/or school-based therapies are already available. The SDSS services are intended to be a complementary service and not a duplication of a service that is already available.
- b) Should it be established that a complementary service is needed to improve the student's access to and participation in the curriculum, then a SDSS service can be requested.
- c) The Principal of the school, or delegate, decides if assistance is required and requests the service from an SDSS organisation by completing and signing a School Request for Support Form. This includes confirmation of current and informed parent/guardian consent and evidence of student eligibility.
- d) Schools must liaise with SDSS organisations to provide copies of all relevant school policies and procedures, including policies and procedures about student safety and wellbeing and all mandatory reporting requirements.

- e) The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate student protection training is completed by SDSS organisations prior to services being provided at the school.
- f) The school ensures that the student's educational team, including therapists and advisory visiting teachers, are aware of the services being provided.
- g) Schools must liaise with SDSS organisations regarding significant changes to a student's education program.

For further information regarding the SDSS Program, please visit:

<https://education.qld.gov.au/about-us/budgets-funding-grants/grants/other-organisations/sdss>

SDSS program contacts

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