

# Specialist Disability Support in Schools Program Fact Sheet

The Department of Education provides funding through the Specialist Disability Support in Schools (SDSS) Program to specialist service providers to support students with disability in Queensland state and non-state 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 curriculum and the educational outcomes for eligible school-aged students with disability through:

- a) identification of barriers to access, participation and achievement; and
- b) provision of supports to enhance student attendance, participation and achievement in schooling.

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

Services provided by organisations under the SDSS Program are complementary services to those offered by the education sectors and are not intended to be a duplication of those services available in schools.

While SDSS organisations may approach a school to offer a service, 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 of a SDSS organisation.

Many of the supporting services are state-wide services, which means that all schools, including those in rural and remote locations, have the opportunity to access services from funded organisations to engage a specialist education support service.

## Types of Service Provision

SDSS organisations are funded under service agreements with the Department of Education for three types of funding categories – School Support Services, Resource Centre Services and Specialised Equipment.

| Category                        | Description   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>School Support Services</b>  | Funding for the provision of a range of professional services and consultation in schools for eligible students with disability. Services may include support services from educators, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, orientation and mobility specialists, and psychologists.  |
| <b>Resource Centre Services</b> | Funding to provide equipment, materials and resources to schools for the support of eligible students.  |
| <b>Specialised Equipment</b>    | <p>Funding for specialised equipment is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To improve the equipment loan pools of organisations providing support services to students with disability to enhance access and participation in school;</li> <li>2) For equipment that is complementary to the equipment that is available from the regionalised loan service;</li> <li>3) For trial purposes at school; and/or</li> <li>4) For short term equipment loans up to six months.</li> </ol> <p>This funding may not be used for equipment for individuals or minor equipment and materials.</p> |

## Eligibility Requirements

A student enrolled in a Queensland school who has been identified under the Education Adjustment Program as requiring significant educational adjustment related to the specific impairment areas of:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Physical Impairment
- Speech-Language Impairment
- Vision Impairment
- Social Emotional Disorder –
  - Non-state schools – students with a verification of Social Emotional Disorder
  - State schools – students who:
    - (i) are recorded as receiving substantial or extensive adjustments to address a Social Emotional Disorder in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for School Students with Disability; and
    - (ii) have been formally reported as being subject to abuse or harm or are at risk of harm.

## SDSS organisations

The list of *SDSS Program funded organisations* provides details of the SDSS organisations and an overview of their services. The list can be located at:

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

## How to request support for a student with disability from a SDSS provider

Prior to requesting a SDSS service, schools should consider the needs of students in conjunction with any services already available to the school, such as school based therapies. 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.

Schools should make direct contact with a SDSS organisation to discuss service provision at their respective school and are encouraged to only request support from one SDSS organisation at a time for each impairment to minimise duplication of services and potential confusion.

The Principal of the school, or delegate, decides if assistance is required and requests the service from a SDSS organisation by completing and signing a School Request for Support Form.

## Difference between SDSS and NDIS

The SDSS program and the NDIS have two distinct purposes.

The SDSS program supports schools to enhance the learning outcomes for eligible students who require significant educational adjustments. The SDSS organisations are funded by the Department of Education and their services are engaged by schools.

NDIS services are focussed on supporting people with disability in their daily lives and do not include supports within schools to access the curriculum. NDIS funding is allocated to parents of students with disability under a NDIS Participant Plan, with parents directly engaging a provider.

**For further information regarding the SDSS Program, please visit:**

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