

Specialist Disability Support in Schools (SDSS) Program

Fact Sheet for Schools

Purpose of the SDSS Program

The Department of Education provides funding to approved organisations under the SDSS Program to support schools by delivering 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.

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.

Student Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive a SDSS service, a student must be enrolled in a Queensland school (state or non-state) and be identified in one of the following ways:

- Students who were recorded in the latest submission of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) as receiving supplementary, substantial or extensive adjustments; **or**
- the school requires assistance to address a barrier to the student's physical access to the school environment; **or**

Students new to a school (including Prep students)

- School has evidence of a diagnosed disability and has confirmed by the end of Term 1 that the adjustments provided are consistent with the descriptors for either supplementary, substantial or extensive in the NCCD Guidelines (please refer to the NCCD Selecting the level of adjustment matrix):
 - Supplementary: Student receives adjustments supplementary to the strategies and resources already available for all students within the school for particular activities **at specific times throughout the week.**
 - Substantial: Student has substantial support needs and receive essential adjustments and require considerable assistance to the usual educational program **at most times, on most days.**
 - Extensive: Student has very high support needs and are provided with extensive targeted measures and sustained levels of intensive support **at all times.**

It is recognised that a small number of students with disability require support to access and participate in education, on the same basis as their peers without disability, as soon as they commence school.

For Prep students or new students to a school, where the student has a diagnosed disability and documented ongoing complex needs, schools can apply for SDSS program services to commence at the start of the school year if the student requires immediate support to access and participate in learning, and/or for their safe attendance at school.

Types of SDSS 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.

School Support Services	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.
Resource Centre Services	Funding to provide equipment, materials and resources to schools for the support of eligible students.
Specialised Equipment	<p>Funding for specialised equipment is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To improve the equipment loan pools of organisations providing support services to students with disability to enhance access and participation in school; 2) For equipment that is complementary to the equipment that is available from the regionalised loan service; 3) For trial purposes at school; and/or 4) For short term equipment loans up to six months. <p>Note: This funding may not be used for equipment for individuals or minor equipment and materials.</p>

Student Privacy and Confidentiality

All SDSS organisations have a legally binding service agreement with the Department of Education, which requires the organisations to adhere to strict Disclosure of Confidential Information and Protection of Personal Information requirements when delivering a service. SDSS organisations must not disclose Personal Information without the Department of Education's prior written consent.

The collection of some student information is required on the SDSS School Request for Support Form, which is provided to schools by the relevant SDSS organisation. The request forms ask for certain student details and the school's confirmation of eligibility because there are student eligibility requirements that must be met to receive a service under this program.

SDSS funding is government funding, administered by the Department of Education, to SDSS organisations to deliver specialist education services. Therefore, confirmation of eligibility is required from the school to ensure the funds are being used appropriately to deliver supports to schools and students.

Under the terms of their service agreement with the Department of Education, SDSS organisations are required to report data and outcomes annually to the Department regarding where and how they have delivered services to schools. The organisations, must be able to demonstrate they are

using the grant funding correctly and compliance requirements are being met. Any personal data collected by SDSS organisations must be retained within Australia to ensure that the data is protected under Australian privacy laws.

It is also common practice for SDSS organisations to conduct classroom observations, so they can observe the learning needs of the students and provide advice to schools regarding how strategies, adjustments and supports can work within the dynamics of the classroom.

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>.

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.

How to request support from a SDSS organisation

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

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 focused 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>

SDSS program contacts

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