

Introducing Inclusive, Engaging and Respectful Schools

P&C Federation NSW Webinar

10 March 2022

Responses from the NSW Department of Education and supporting information to unanswered questions asked during the webinar

Policy

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
<p>I'm concerned that that vision seems to read that inclusion is about behaviour management.</p> <p>Have you considered that this may lead and encourage teachers to focus on adjusting student behaviour and focus on compliance instead of engaging in appropriate training in disability awareness and appropriate accommodations and adjustments for learning.</p>	<p>We have heard that more support is required to meet the diverse learning and wellbeing needs of our students. We want to strengthen our system of effective behaviour support to create inclusive learning environments for our students and safe and respectful working environments for our staff.</p> <p>The Inclusive, Engaging and Respectful policy package aims to do just that by creating system and cultural change so every child is included, engaged and feels safe at school. The three policies included in the reform provide clear guidance to schools on how best to manage the diverse spectrum of student needs to improve outcomes for all students, regardless of where they live and learn. Each of these policies have distinct aims and objectives. By releasing the three policies together the impact of the changes will be realised for students more quickly.</p>
<p>Given behaviour is communication, why is the focus so largely on the behaviour of children rather than trying to listen to students and adjust the learning experience more easily?</p>	<p>All behaviour is a form of communication. School staff should understand the purpose behind the behaviour in order to be able to identify the best way to support and respond to that behaviour. They can do this in several ways, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talking to the student about their behaviour and asking for their input and feedback• Completing an ABC assessment (antecedent, behaviour, consequence) to try to identify patterns or triggers for the behaviour• With the assistance of the Learning and Support team, complete a functional behaviour assessment, or more formal review of the behaviour to identify strategies and replacement behaviours. Students should be talked to as part of this process. <p>Schools can access information, professional development and resources in the behaviour support toolkit.</p>
<p>Some overseas countries put special education teachers into mainstream schools to support students with disabilities. My previous mainstream school principal said the teachers don't have special education training and they don't know how to teach. Is it feasible for NSW to have special education teachers in mainstream schools?</p>	<p>All schools, including mainstream schools, are resourced to be able to access a specialist teacher. For many schools, the learning and support team includes multiple specialist teachers.</p> <p>We continue to expand our scholarships to boost the number of teachers accredited to teach students with disability as well as school staff with expertise in inclusive practice across all settings. In 2021 there were 79 new scholars in our Inclusive Practice in</p>

	<p>Education Scholarship program, which will produce an additional 350 teachers qualified in inclusive or special education by 2025-2026.</p> <p>In addition, the department has mandated that all school principals and leaders complete Disability Standards for Education Leaders training. Teachers are also able to access specialist training in dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, speech language and communication, dyspraxia and motor coordination, hearing loss, personalised learning and support, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and supporting student wellbeing and mental health.</p>
<p>What about the research which shows that the reading and math scores of students WITHOUT unwanted or dangerous behaviours actually go DOWN in fully inclusive classrooms (whether the unwanted behaviours of other students are the result of the concomitants of disability or stem from other causes), and then the scores go back UP when the students with the unwanted and dangerous behaviour are removed from the classroom by whatever means?</p>	<p>All students have a right to learn and feel safe at school. The NSW Government is committed to supporting the learning and wellbeing of every student in NSW public schools. Behaviour support is critical to promoting engaging and effective classrooms and lifting student performance.</p> <p>The evidence shows us that students who feel supported, safe and connected are more likely to be active participants in their learning. Best practice in supporting student behaviour involves a preventive, student-centred and positive approach.</p> <p>Reducing suspension length is about keeping more children engaged in their education, reducing the impact of disadvantage, and making our education system more inclusive.</p> <p>The Student Behaviour Strategy and the new Student Behaviour Policy and Procedures are informed by the findings and recommendations of independent inquiries into student wellbeing, best practice evidence reviews and stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>The NSW Ombudsman Inquiry into behaviour management in schools highlighted that there is no research evidence that the use of suspensions reduces disruptive classroom behaviour. The NSW Ombudsman found the research indicates suspension can have detrimental consequences, including increased recurrence of the problem behaviour, lower scores in academic achievement, lower school retention rates, increased likelihood of involvement with the youth justice system, and poor long-term health and wellbeing outcomes. You can read that report at this link: https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/reports/community-and-disability-services/nsw-ombudsman-inquiry-into-behaviour-management-in-schools-august-2017.</p>
<p>To what extent will the Universal Design for Learning framework play in this package of resources and in policy?</p>	<p>The Inclusive Education Policy for students with disability is supported by a range of new practice resources, including resources which promote the uptake of UDL. Work is underway to expand on the UDL resources currently available to schools. One of these resources is the Inclusive Practice hub which we developed in partnership with Deakin University which includes over 140 evidence-based resources. The hub provides strategies for school staff around supporting student students with disability and additional needs.</p>

Will Dr Ross Greene's collaborative problem-solving techniques be used in reducing suspensions	Schools have access to a variety of evidence-based strategies, professional learning and resources that aim to reduce the use of detention, suspension, restraint and seclusion. These strategies are embedded within a positive behaviour approach along the care continuum.
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Implementation of Policy

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
Will the department of education be sending the Inclusion staff to the Australian Inclusive schooling conference?	<p>We are committed to strengthening inclusive practice across the system and building the capability and confidence of school staff to meet the needs of their students in an inclusive culture. This includes supporting our school staff to access quality professional learning opportunities. Staff are able to participate in professional development opportunities which best support their needs and aligns with their professional goals.</p> <p>We value the knowledge and work of our workforce within mainstream and specialist settings and their commitment to ensuring students with disability receive a high-quality education.</p>
What will be done to educate other children and parents in the school community about real inclusion and the part they can play in making sure that all children are welcomed and included. Are there programs schools will run to achieve this?	There are many great examples of school-based initiatives and programs which aim to foster a school community which embraces all learners, has respect for, and values diversity. The Inclusive Education Statement for students with disability outlines the Department's commitment to inclusive education to the wider school community. The Department will continue to engage with students, parents and carers in our work on Inclusive Education and communicate the benefits of inclusion for all.
Who will deliver this PL to staff? Schools are not able to staff their schools currently. Staff are leaving the profession and saying they have had enough. How will this be addressed?	<p>Staff can self-access a range of PL including 9 professional learning courses on behaviour management through an online, free, self-paced e-learning platform. Courses currently available include classroom management fundamentals, understanding behaviour, functional behaviour assessment and Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Tiers 1, 2 and 3 and PBL in the preschool, with more targeted courses to come.</p> <p>Delivery Support, a team within the Department, provide professional learning for school based and non-school based Delivery Support staff. In addition, professional learning is available to schools which builds on the understanding behaviour course, classroom management fundamentals and functional behaviour assessment courses.</p>
What support are Principals/ schools being given to successfully implement the new policies?	A range of resources have been provided to support Principals/schools to implement the policies. A familiarisation phase is providing principals with information and resources to support implementation from day 1, Term 2.
What mechanisms are in place to hold schools accountable for implementing the policies? How are the outcomes being measured?	The NESA teacher accreditation process will ensure that teacher practice aligns with the new policies. The department will also monitor behaviour, support, inclusion, and engagement metrics to improve our understanding of how schools are implementing these policies and their impact.

	<p>An independent evaluation of the Student Behaviour Strategy is currently being procured and will commence in Semester 2, 2022.</p>
<p>What steps are being taken to ensure teachers are able to enact the policies 'on the ground'?</p>	<p>Schools are being provided with a familiarisation period, including a range of evidence-based resources and activities to assist with implementing the policies. This includes professional learning and ongoing support through a range of specialist staff both within the school and via non-school based staff.</p>
<p>How will it be rolled out?</p>	<p>A range of resources have been provided to support Principals/schools to implement the policies. A familiarisation phase is providing principals with information and resources to support implementation from day 1, Term 2.</p>
<p>I would like to know the strategies that the NSW Behaviour Strategy team will use when implementing the new Behaviour Strategy?</p>	<p>All schools can choose from a range of programs and strategies that best meet their needs to support students along the care continuum. Non-exhaustive examples of prevention, early intervention, targeted and individual programs and strategies are available for schools to use.</p> <p>Extensive evidence-based strategies and resources for all stages are also available through the department's behaviour support toolkit.</p> <p>A multi-disciplinary team comprising of school and non-school based staff will also work together to provide support to any school with students with complex or challenging behaviour. This model forms the holistic approach to supporting our students and schools.</p>
<p>Practice in schools is often vastly different to policy. Is the DOE going to audit the implementation of these strategies?</p>	<p>DoE will monitor a number of behaviour, engagement and support metrics that will reflect in-practice implementation of the policies. An independent evaluation of the Student Behaviour Strategy is currently being procured to ensure we can accurately measure and understand the impact of the Strategy, Policy and Procedures. This evaluation will seek feedback from school staff and stakeholders to improve our understanding of the in-practice implementation of the strategy and its strengths and challenges.</p> <p>The NESAs teacher accreditation process will also ensure that teacher practice aligns with the Inclusive, Engaging and Respectful schools policies.</p>
<p>How is the Department enabling inclusive education in practice?</p>	<p>The Inclusive Education Policy for students with disability clarifies the roles and responsibilities of staff in delivering inclusive education. New practice resources are available to support schools to strengthen inclusive practice. The decision to develop these resources is based on our extensive consultation with school leaders, teachers, unions and other stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An Inclusive Practice Hub with evidence-based resources about different disability types, common strengths and challenges, and teaching strategies. ○ An updated 'Achieving School Excellence in Wellbeing and Inclusion' tool to support

	<p>leaders to understand what excellence in inclusive practice looks like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Optional scenario-based training for school leaders that cover a range of different inclusive education challenges schools commonly face. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These new resources are in addition to existing resources, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A suite of Professional Learning on supporting diverse learners. ○ Disability Standards training available for different positions within schools.
When will the student experience helpline be available, and how will the department respond to complaints?	We will let you know when this service is up and running.

Engagement with parents

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
Is there a protocol or suggested way that schools engage with the P&C/parents re L&S practices/approaches taken at the school?	<p>Under the Student Behaviour Procedures, all schools will be required to develop a School Behaviour Support and Management Plan in consultation with the school community. This is intended to provide the school community an opportunity to shape the behaviour management practices used by the school.</p> <p>Our schools have an obligation to ensure that students with disability and additional learning and support needs can participate in education on the same basis as their peers at every stage of their school life. Parents and carers, teachers and school support staff, allied professionals, the community – and particularly students themselves – all have important roles to play.</p> <p>Refer to the department website for more information about personalised learning and support here: https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/disability-learning-and-support/personalised-support-for-learning</p>
What can P&Cs do to lobby for trauma-informed behaviour supports?	<p>The Department has developed a foundation Trauma-Informed Practice for Improved Wellbeing professional learning course for school staff.</p> <p>The foundation course is designed to be completed by all school staff in a school to ensure consistency of messaging and application of trauma-informed principles. In addition, the Department has worked with Berry Street to co-design and pilot advanced and specialist courses.</p>

Neurodiverse students

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
How have actually disabled and neurodiverse people been involved in the development of these policies?	<p>Feedback and extensive consultation with advocacy organisations including disability peak bodies, school leaders, educators, students, families and education experts informed the development of the policies over the last two years. We also tested resources for students with students with disability.</p> <p>The views of students, staff, parents and carers, community members, stakeholder groups and</p>

	advocacy organisations were critical to the development of the policy package.
How will schools be resourced to cater for those with a neurodivergent disability which is largely invisible?	<p>All mainstream public schools in NSW receive funding as part of their budget to meet the learning and support needs of students with disability. This includes include more than \$300.6 million (in 2021) for more than 1,890 learning and support teachers and flexible funding.</p> <p>In addition, approximately \$260 million (as at the start of 2022) was provided to schools as Integration Funding Support. These funds are supporting more than 12,200 students who are enrolled in mainstream classes and have confirmed disability and moderate-to-high support needs.</p>
How is the department planning to improve inclusiveness and staff that respond appropriately to the neurodiverse child?	<p>New policy guidance and practice resources aim to support staff to plan personalised learning and support. By giving staff access to evidence-based practice resources, we aim to improve the experience of students with disability and their families across the state.</p> <p>Students, parents and carers will have greater confidence that every child is welcomed and included in all parts of school life, and is able to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Schools and school communities will have greater understanding that students with disability have the same right to enroll, access and participate in education as students without disability.</p>

Students with disability

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
Does this mean that we will see schools become more accessible for students with disabilities?	<p>The Inclusive Education Policy for students with disability clarifies the roles of all staff to support the access and participation of students with disability in all aspects of school life.</p> <p>The Department is committed to providing students with an education that best meets their individual needs and supports them to learn to their fullest capability. Our schools work with families every day to identify and support children who require additional support at any stage of their schooling.</p>
How have actually neurodivergent and disabled people been involved in the development of this strategy?	Feedback and extensive consultation with advocacy organisations including disability peak bodies, school leaders, educators, students, families and education experts informed the development of the policies over the last two years. We also tested resources for students with students with disability. The views of students, staff, parents and carers, community members, stakeholder groups and advocacy organisations were critical to the development of the policy package.
Not at this stage but keen to learn if we are talking about inclusivity as it relates to disability only	<p>The Inclusive Education Policy for students with disability is specific to the role of schools to support students with disability. The rest of the policy package is relevant for all students.</p> <p>In NSW, Inclusive education means that all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socio-economic</p>

	status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation or faith, can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs. Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life, and is supported by culture, policies and everyday practices.
We need the understanding to be able to create any cohesion of teachers, students and parents. Yet most Autism parents chose not to.	In NSW, Inclusive education means that all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation or faith, can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs. Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life, and is supported by culture, policies and everyday practices.
What is in the inclusion policy to allow children with complex disabilities to enrol at their local school with their peers in their community and their siblings? Is there a liaison person who can walk families through this process so that starting school for these children is a joyful experience, not another traumatic experience for families who often have also experienced significant trauma through medical interventions and care, as well as accessing NDIS supports?	<p>All parents and carers have a right to enrol their child with disability in their local public school. The overwhelmingly majority of students with disability in NSW public schools, around 97%, learn in a mainstream school</p> <p>For students, parents and carers this policy means greater confidence that every child is welcomed and included in all parts of school life, and is able to reach their full potential.</p> <p>We have developed the Inclusive Education Policy for Students with Disability to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff and the rights of students and families. The school, the team around the school, and the student's support network work together to plan for successful transitions to school.</p>

Support for staff

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
How will staff be supported when in a rural area with a potential 18month waitlist for Paediatric care?	<p>Staff can contact their schools:</p> <p>Wellbeing Nurse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of the nurses is to facilitate contact for students and families with health services which would include telehealth referrals where appropriate. - <p>School Counselling Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All schools have access to a school counselling service. In addition, a new team of senior psychologist education commenced in 2021 to support schools in rural and remote locations through a combination of in person and telepsychology service

Funding

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
Why is the cost of support teachers' superannuation and workers' compensation costs being deducted from the disability support funding allocated to Students?	<p>The cost of support teachers superannuation is not deducted from disability support funding.</p> <p>Workers compensation entitlements are not deducted from disability support funding.</p>

<p>When will NSW public schools be adequately funded to offer inclusive, equitable education that addresses diverse student needs?</p>	<p>All mainstream public schools in NSW receive funding as part of their budget to meet the learning and support needs of students with disability. This includes include more than \$300.6 million (in 2021) for more than 1,890 learning and support teachers and flexible funding.</p> <p>In addition, approximately \$260 million (as at the start of 2022) was provided to schools as Integration Funding Support. These funds are supporting more than 12,200 students who are enrolled in mainstream classes and have confirmed disability and moderate-to-high support needs.</p> <p>The Department is providing \$37 million in supplementary funding for all schools for specific purposes (SSPs) annually until 2024. This funding is providing additional resourcing to alleviate pressures in SSPs and inform future entitlement solutions.</p> <p>The goal is to make a difference to student learning and wellbeing outcomes by enabling principals to allocate additional resourcing to best suit the needs of their individual students and schools overall.</p>
<p>How much extra funding is being allocated to schools to substantively support teachers in implementing these policies?</p>	<p>All mainstream public schools in NSW receive funding as part of their budget to meet the learning and support needs of students with disability. This includes include more than \$300.6 million (in 2021) for more than 1,890 learning and support teachers and flexible funding.</p> <p>In addition, approximately \$260 million (as at the start of 2022) was provided to schools as Integration Funding Support. These funds are supporting more than 12,200 students who are enrolled in mainstream classes and have confirmed disability and moderate-to-high support needs.</p> <p>The Department is providing \$37 million in supplementary funding for all schools for specific purposes (SSPs) annually until 2024. This funding is providing additional resourcing to alleviate pressures in SSPs and inform future entitlement solutions.</p> <p>The goal is to make a difference to student learning and wellbeing outcomes by enabling principals to allocate additional resourcing to best suit the needs of their individual students and schools overall.</p>
<p>why is it so hard to get funding for support for students with disabilities?</p>	<p>Every mainstream public school receives flexible funding to support students with additional learning and support needs. These funds are made available to schools as part of its annual budget and does not require any additional application from funds.</p> <p>Eligible students with a confirmed disability who are enrolled in a mainstream class are able to access funding through Integration Funding Support. The outcomes of the vast majority of applications for Integration Funding Support are determined well within the 28 Day KPI so that schools are provided feedback in a timely manner.</p> <p>Specialist support classes in mainstream schools and schools for specific purposes have their own resourcing arrangements which takes account of the number of classes.</p>

	<p>The Department is providing \$37 million in supplementary funding for all schools for specific purposes (SSPs) annually until 2024. This funding is providing additional resourcing to alleviate pressures in SSPs and inform future entitlement solutions.</p> <p>The goal is to make a difference to student learning and wellbeing outcomes by enabling principals to allocate additional resourcing to best suit the needs of their individual students and schools overall.</p> <p>The Department is currently undertaking work with schools to co-design to a more contemporary, needs-based approach to funding supports for students with disability.</p>
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Inclusive Education

Question from webinar audience	Answer from NSW Department of Education
How does reducing the length of suspensions increase inclusion?	<p>The evidence shows us that students who feel supported, safe and connected are more likely to be active participants in their learning. Best practice in supporting student behaviour involves a preventive, student-centred and positive approach.</p> <p>Reducing suspension length is about keeping more children engaged in their education, reducing the impact of disadvantage, and making our education system more inclusive.</p>
How to achieve inclusiveness in mainstream high school when there are a bigger learning difference?	<p>Schools are well-prepared to support students with disability and additional learning and support needs, and our staff are ready to answer your questions. There is a place for every child at their local public school, and all children have the right to enroll in their local public school.</p> <p>Your local school can give your child support in mainstream classes through personalised planning and adjustments. Schools receive resources to support the learning and wellbeing of all students, including those with disability and additional learning and support needs.</p> <p>All schools are resourced to be able to access a specialist teacher and an allocation of funding that the school can use flexibility to support their students.</p>
What supports will you be providing to children with neurological disorders (including ADHD), history of trauma or Aboriginal?	<p>The Department provides professional learning for principals, teachers and support staff to build their knowledge and skills in meeting the needs of students with additional learning needs.</p> <p>Other specialist courses such supporting student wellbeing and mental health and trauma-informed practice also build teachers' understanding.</p> <p>The Department has partnered with Deakin University to develop an Inclusive Practice Hub. This hub, launched in November 2021, includes more than 140 practical resources for teachers and school staff. The Inclusive Practice hub includes guidance on taking an evidence- and strengths-based approach to supporting the learning and wellbeing of students with disability and additional needs.</p>

