



NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION

PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY IN REGULAR CLASSES IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Federation receives inquiries about the programming requirements for students with disability in regular classes in mainstream schools. Members continually report being asked to develop a separate programming document for individual students with disability, using various labels including: Individual Education Plans, Individual Learning Plans, Personalised Learning Plans and Student Profiles. The following advice clarifies what is required of teachers in this instance and where to seek further information and support.

When programming for students with disability in regular classes in mainstream schools teachers are required to:

- know their students and how they learn
- exercise professional judgement
- consult with the student and/or their associate* to determine, implement and evaluate adjustments
- engage in collaborative planning to make curriculum decisions and personalise learning and support
- follow the Department's policies, which comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education 2005
- implement NESA syllabuses and make adjustments where necessary and reasonable**
- record evidence of adjustments made (this can be done within your whole class program)
- seek information and support as necessary from the student, parents/carers, colleagues, specialist teachers, Learning and Support Team, Educational Services and/or Disability, Learning and Wellbeing Directorate.

When programming for students with disability in regular classes in mainstream schools teachers **are not** required to:

- develop a separate individual programming document for each student with disability in their class***
- take sole responsibility for programming and making adjustments for students with disability
- implement adjustments that are not deemed reasonable and/or that pose unjustifiable hardship.

*Associate, in relation to a person, includes:

- a) a relative of the person; and
- b) a carer of the person.

Also, see Disability Standards for Education 2005, Section 1.4.

**An adjustment is reasonable in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. See Disability Standards for Education 2005, Section 3.4.

Note: Judgements about what is reasonable for a particular student or a group of students with a particular disability can change over time.

***The only exceptions are for Aboriginal students for whom a Personalised Learning Plan is required and for students in Out of Home Care for whom an Education Plan is required. In both instances, Federation advises that time should be provided to collaboratively develop such plans.

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Key guidance

The most recent Department memorandum on this issue, Memo DN/03/00030, states:

“[T]he learning program for a regular class should be inclusive of all students and specific individual learning programs are not required for students with disability”.

The Department’s Policy Standards for Curriculum Planning and Programming, Assessing and Reporting to Parents K–12 states:

“Curriculum planning and programming will account for the needs of all students.

“This includes students with disabilities enrolled in regular classes, special classes and special schools.

“For students with an intellectual disability, where the learning program does not follow age/stage curriculum expectations of Board of Studies syllabuses, consultation on curriculum outcomes and content occurs with parents/carers.”

NESA’s NSW Syllabuses: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs information states:

“Syllabuses developed by BOSTES NSW for each stage of learning, Early Stage 1 to Stage 5, are inclusive of the full range of learners. Most students with special education needs will meet curriculum requirements by participating fully in learning experiences based on the regular syllabus outcomes and content. Collaborative curriculum planning will determine the most appropriate curriculum options for all students with special education needs in keeping with their learning needs, strengths, goals and interests. Some students may require additional support, including adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment activities.”

The Disability Standards for Education 2005, which education providers (i.e. including schools in the public sector) must comply with by law, states:

“A person with a disability is able to participate in courses or programs provided by an educational institution, and use the facilities and services provided by it, on the same basis as a student without a disability if the person has opportunities and choices in the courses or programs and in the use of the facilities and services that are comparable with those offered to other students without disabilities.”



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Further information

Personalising teaching and learning for students with disability — Department's Disability, Learning and Support website education.nsw.gov.au/disability-learning-and-support/personalised-support-for-learning

Supporting students with disability — Department's Wellbeing for Schools – Succeed website det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/succeed/supporting-students-with-disability

Collaborative planning and making adjustments — NESA's Special Education section educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/diversity-in-learning/special-education

How to guide discussions on personalised learning with the student, their family or carer, school personnel, professionals and other relevant people — federal Department of Education and Training's *Planning for Personalised Learning and Support: A National Resource* docs.education.gov.au/node/38065

Personalised learning and meeting diverse learning needs — Australian Curriculum, Student Diversity section australiancurriculum.edu.au/studentdiversity/student-diversity-advice

If you have been asked to develop a separate programming document for a student with a disability in a regular class, use this advice to raise the matter with the relevant colleague (e.g. supervisor, principal), your Federation Workplace Committee or Organiser.

All references to BOSTES refer now to the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA). The Department stands for the NSW Department of Education.