

Schools and the NDIS

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

This document is available at: <https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/NDIS/Pages/Homepage.aspx>

What is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the new way of providing support to Australians with disability, their families and carers.

The NDIS provides all Australians under the age of 65 with a permanent and significant disability with the reasonable and necessary supports they need to enjoy an ordinary life.

The NDIS will help people with disability achieve their goals, including independence, community involvement, education, employment and health and wellbeing.

As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach, investing in people with disability early to improve their outcomes later in life.

The NDIS also provides people with disability, their family and carers with information and referrals to existing support services in the community.

The NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) approach has been designed specifically for children aged 0-6 with disability or developmental delay.

What is the role of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)?

The [National Disability Insurance Agency](#) (NDIA) is the organisation responsible for administering the NDIS.

What are the NDIS eligibility requirements?

To become a participant in the NDIS, a person must meet a number of legislated residency, age and disability criteria. The person must:

- live in Australia
- be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident, or hold a Protected Special Category Visa
- be under 65 years of age
- have an impairment or condition that is likely to be permanent (lifelong) and that stops the person from doing everyday things for themselves, or be a child under 6 years of age with a developmental delay and the delay means the child usually needs more help with self-care, communication, learning or motor skills than another child of the same age.

Please note that Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) eligibility criteria does not directly align with NDIS eligibility criteria. More NDIS eligibility information is available on the [NDIS Access Checklist](#).

What if a person does not meet the access requirements for the NDIS?

The NDIA Local Area Coordinators (LACs) and Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Partners can still provide advice. The NDIS will also connect people with disability, their families and carers, including people who are not NDIS participants, to disability and mainstream supports in their community.

To find out more about information, links and referrals to community and mainstream support services visit the [NDIS website](#) or call 1800 800 110.

Does NDIS eligibility affect a student's Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) funding?

No. PSD funding is not affected by a student's eligibility for supports under the NDIS.

PSD funding provides support for eligible students with disabilities in Victorian Government schools to access a school's school-based educational programs.

What is NDIS funding used for?

As the NDIS aims to give people with disability better access to personalised, high quality and innovative supports and services, the NDIS will fund reasonable and necessary supports that assist participants to reach their goals and aspirations and are related to their functional impairment. The type of support participants could receive depends on what their goals are and the areas of their life they need help with.

A participant's supports take into account any informal supports already available to the individual (informal arrangements that are part of family life or natural connections with friends and community services) as well as other formal supports, such as health and education.

More information on the types of supports the NDIS will fund can be found at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/reasonable-and-necessary-supports.html>

Why do some students receive more NDIS funding than others?

The NDIS funds **reasonable and necessary** supports that help a participant to reach their goals and aspirations and to undertake activities to enable the participant's social and economic participation. A participant's reasonable and necessary supports take into account any informal supports already available to the individual (informal arrangements that are part of family life or natural connections with friends and community services) as well as other formal supports, such as health and education.

As the NDIS aims to give people with disability better access to personalised, high quality and innovative supports and services, the NDIS will pay for different supports for different people. The types of supports participants receive depends on what their goals are and the areas of their life they need help with. Funded supports may include:

- help with household tasks and personal care
- vehicle and home modifications
- mobility equipment and assistive technology
- transport to be involved in community, social and employment activities
- therapies related to the disability
- support coordination of NDIS supports.

NDIA LOCAL AREA COORDINATORS (LACS), EARLY CHILDHOOD EARLY INTERVENTION (ECEI) PARTNERS AND SUPPORT COORDINATORS

What are LACs and ECEI Partners?

LACs and ECEI Partners are organisations with strong community connections, local knowledge and expertise. ECEI Partners have specific early childhood skills and support children aged 0-6 years. LACs and ECEI Partners assist people to understand the NDIS and gain access to appropriate supports.

LACs and ECEI Partners work with participants to build their plans and support them to identify their goals and aspirations. Planners submit all the information about the participants plan and goals to the NDIA for approval. LAC and ECEI Partner responsibilities include:

- working with participants and their carers to identify options to achieve their goals by drawing on informal, mainstream and community supports as well as reasonable and necessary supports funded by the NDIS
- undertaking plan reviews. A participant's plan is usually an annual plan, however if a participant's circumstances significantly change, they can request a review before this.

The **LACs** in Victoria are:

- North East Melbourne: [Brotherhood of St Laurence](#)
- Bayside Peninsula: [Brotherhood of St Laurence](#)
- Hume Moreland: [Brotherhood of St Laurence](#)
- Central Highlands: [Latrobe Community Health Service](#)
- Ovens Murray: [Latrobe Community Health Service](#)
- Wimmera South West: [Latrobe Community Health Service](#)
- Barwon: [Latrobe Community Health Service](#)
- Inner East Melbourne: [Latrobe Community Health Service](#)
- Inner Gippsland: [Latrobe Community Health Service](#)
- Outer East Melbourne: [Latrobe Community Health Service](#)
- Loddon: [Intereach](#)

The **ECEI Partners** in Victoria are:

- Barwon: Barwon Child, Youth and Family
- Central Highlands: Latrobe Community Health Service
- Inner East Melbourne: Link Health and Community
- Inner Gippsland: Link Health and Community
- Loddon: Intereach
- North East Melbourne: Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Outer East Melbourne: Link Health and Community
- Ovens Murray: Merri Community Health Service
- Wimmera South West (formerly Western District): Latrobe Community Health Service
- Hume Moreland: Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Bayside Peninsula: Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Goulburn: Intereach
- Mallee: Intereach
- Southern Melbourne: Link
- Outer Gippsland: Link
- Western Melbourne: Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Brimbank Melton: Brotherhood of St Laurence

For more information about the ECEI approach, visit the [NDIS Website](#).

What is support coordination?

Support coordination is available to assist participants who have a plan but may need help understanding how to best navigate and coordinate the supports in their plan. The type of support coordination funded varies depending on the complexity of the participant's needs and supports in their plan. A support coordinator must be a person or provider who is registered with the NDIA to provide this service.

GAINING ACCESS TO THE NDIS

How can students access the NDIS?

There are four pathways for students with disabilities in Victorian government schools to enter the NDIS:

1. Students in 'defined' DET programs

Some groups of students meet NDIS disability requirements without the need for additional evidence. These 'defined' programs, include students:

- receiving Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) funding for Vision Impairment
- enrolled at a Specialist School exclusively for students with Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability
- in receipt of Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) in the 12 months prior to Area rollout.

The NDIS will contact you by phone or letter to advise on next steps. The Department of Education and Training will monitor the transition of these students to the NDIS.

2. Students in 'non-defined' DET programs

Students may be identified as potentially eligible for NDIS support if they receive personal care in schools (students receiving PSD Levels 4-6 or Medical Intervention Support) or the Students with Disabilities Transport Program. If a student is accessing any of these supports, the Department of Education and Training will provide their contact details to the NDIA. The NDIA will contact the family to let them know the next steps, including additional information they may need to provide to determine eligibility. The Department of Education and Training will monitor the transition of these students to the NDIS.

3. Students receiving other defined or non-defined government programs

Students may be receiving Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) programs which are also transitioning to the NDIS, such as Disability Support Register, Respite or Early Choices. Commonwealth Programs also phasing include Helping Children with Autism, Better Start and Outside School Hours Care funding.

If a student receives support from more than one government program, they will transition to the NDIS with the program that is phasing first.

The NDIA will contact the family prior to the Area rollout date and may request additional evidence from them to determine eligibility. For children aged 0-6 years an ECEI Partner in their local area will contact them to commence information gathering and initial supports

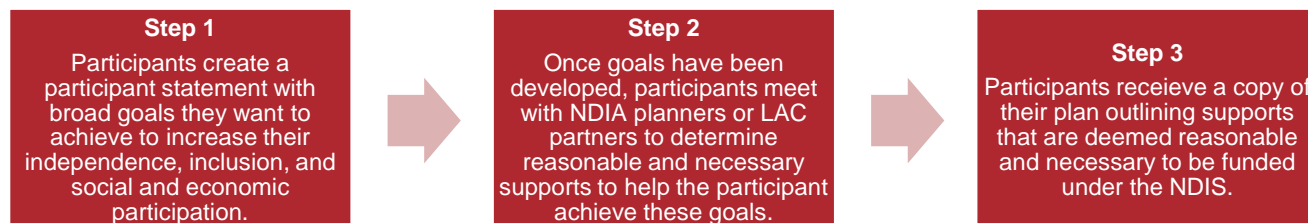
4. 'New' participants

If a student does not receive any DET, DHHS or Commonwealth 'defined' or 'non-defined' programs, they can apply as a 'new' participant by contacting 1800 800 110 or by attending the offices or the websites of the:

- Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) partner – 0-6 years
- Local Area Coordinator (LAC) partner – 6 years and over
- NDIA local office (from their Area start date).

A student can apply to the NDIS to see if they meet the access requirements. The NDIA review all access requests and make decisions regarding a person's eligibility for the NDIS

Once eligible for the NDIS, the pathway for a school-aged participant to build their NDIS plan typically involves the following stages:



How can schools help students access the NDIS?

Schools can play a significant role helping students to access the scheme. Some important actions schools can take to assist families include:

- providing information about the NDIS to parents of students with disabilities either directly or via the school newsletter
- providing families with copies of student records and reports to assist them in submitting access documentation to the NDIA. Relevant information that schools hold may include:
 - copies of previous or current Program for Students with Disabilities applications
 - Individual Learning Plans
 - Student Support Service reports or allied health reports.

Although the provision of these existing school documents is recommended, please note that schools are not required to arrange new assessments or provide evidence of disability to support a student's access to the NDIS.

How do children who attend an Early Education Program (EEP) transition into the NDIS?

Children who attend an EEP can approach their local ECEI Partner or the NDIA. They will need to provide evidence of disability or developmental delay to the NDIA. If a child has been in receipt of a phasing program such as Early Childhood Intervention Support Flexible Support Packages, DHHS Early Choices program, or Respite, then they would transition into the NDIS with that program.

Will a student's eligibility for the NDIS change over time?

If a child has become an NDIS participant under the NDIS's ECEI approach (for children under 7 years of age), the NDIA will reassess their circumstances when reviewing their plan.

If a participant is no longer benefiting from the early intervention supports, the NDIA will consider whether the participant can continue to access the NDIS under the disability requirements.

Eligibility for the NDIS is also reviewed when a child reaches seven years of age. At this point in time, the NDIA will assess whether an ECEI participant should transition to the mainstream NDIS under the disability requirements.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NDIS VERSUS THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Which supports are funded by the NDIS and which are the responsibility of the education system?

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has developed a framework of Applied Principles and Tables of Support to determine which supports will be funded by the NDIS. The general rules are that:

- schools are responsible for personalising learning and support for students that **primarily relate to their educational attainment** (including teaching, learning assistance and aids, school building modifications and transport between school activities) in accordance with relevant anti-discrimination laws.
- the NDIS funds supports that the student would require which are associated with the **functional impact of the student's disability on their activities of daily living** (those not primarily relating to education attainment) including personal care and support and transport to and from school and specialist transition supports to and from school to further education, training or employment.

Importantly, the funding and operational arrangements for Personal Care in Schools (PCIS) and the Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP) have not yet been finalised. Until 2023, there will be no changes to how these supports are funded and delivered whilst future arrangements are decided.

Individuals and families also have a role in funding education-related supports, such as purchasing school uniforms and paying course fees. The NDIS will not fund these costs.

Should school employed staff or Student Support Services provide assessments or reports to support applications for NDIS-funded supports?

The provision of existing school reports and documents is recommended to assist families engaging with the NDIS, and it is ultimately a local school decision whether or not DET staff have capacity to support students with additional requests. However it is important to note that DET employed staff are not required to arrange new assessments or reports for the primary purpose of supporting a student's eligibility or access to funded supports under the NDIS.

Can schools register as NDIS providers?

No. The NDIS does not fund supports relating to education attainment, and therefore the supports and services delivered by schools cannot be funded by the NDIS.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY TRANSPORT PROGRAM (SDTP)

How will student transport be funded under the NDIS?

SDTP is in scope of the NDIS, however arrangements for the delivery of this program are still being finalised. The Department will continue to deliver SDTP in-kind until 2023, whilst future arrangements are decided. This means that there will be no changes to the way SDTP is funded and delivered until 2023.

What does this mean for students?

Until 2023, nothing will change in the way transport is delivered for students attending specialist schools and receiving assistance under the SDTP.

Once a student is in receipt of transport assistance through SDTP, and meets the NDIS access requirements and has a plan, student transport will appear in their plan as an in-kind item. The NDIA has advised that all Victorian students will see the same dollar amount in their plan for this item. Importantly, this amount does not reflect the actual value of the service the student is receiving and does not affect their other NDIS supports and services. Families do not need to pay anyone for this service nor can they use the funds for a different transport provider.

What does this mean for schools?

Nothing should change for specialist schools in regards to their SDTP bus and/or taxi services before 2023. This includes the eligibility criteria for the SDTP: In order to access DET student transport support, all students must meet the SDTP eligibility criteria. If an NDIS participant does not meet these criteria, the family will need to talk to the NDIA about options to get to and from school.

If schools have any queries about their SDTP services, they can continue to contact the Student Transport Unit in DET (see contact details below).

Families, NDIS planners and/or LACs may contact schools with queries about the in-kind student transport item in a student's plan. The information provided in this Frequently Asked Questions sheet may assist schools in responding to these queries. Alternatively, schools can direct families, planners and LACs to the NDIS website, particularly to the [student transport in kind information](#).

What will happen to student transport in the longer term?

The in-kind arrangements for student transport will stay in place in Victoria at least until 2023. It is currently not determined how student transport will be delivered under the NDIS, however, DET will continue to work with the NDIA to sort through arrangements for the SDTP transition. Schools will be informed of any developments in this work.

Where can I find more information about student transport?

- DET NDIS and Student Transport [fact sheet](#)
- Student transport information on the [DET website](#)
- DET Student Transport email: student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au
- DET Student Transport phone number: 03 9637 2200

PERSONAL CARE IN SCHOOLS (PCIS)

What is PCIS?

PCIS broadly refers to one to one assistance provided to students with disability to support their activities of daily living. Supports may include assistance with toileting, eating and drinking, dressing, mobility, and complex health or medical support. These supports are usually provided by school Education Support (ES) staff.

How is PCIS funded under the NDIS?

PCIS is in scope of the NDIS, however arrangements for the delivery of this program are still being finalised. The Department will continue to deliver PCIS in-kind until 2023, whilst future arrangements are decided. This means that there will be no changes to the way PCIS is funded and delivered until 2023. Victoria will continue to fund and provide personal care supports through the Student Resource Package, PSD and Medical Intervention Service payment.

Can NDIS participants choose their own personal carer(s) at school?

Until 2023, schools will continue to employ and allocate staff with responsibilities for providing personal care.

Students and their parents should continue to be consulted regarding personal care supports through the Student Support Group. Parents may also recommend applicants for teacher aide positions to be considered for employment under merit and equity principles.

What will happen to PCIS in the longer term?

The in-kind arrangements for PCIS will stay in place in Victoria until 2023. It is currently not determined how PCIS will be delivered under the NDIS at full scheme. Victoria is currently participating in a national working group to determine future arrangements.

SCHOOL LEAVER AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

What school leaver supports or programs are available for NDIS participants?

The NDIS funds a range of post-school supports to assist young people with disabilities to move into employment or other options. NDIS supports may include assistance across a range of life areas such as social and community participation, building life skills, mobility or communication technology, further study or finding and maintaining a job. Some NDIS participants are able to access the Disability Employment Service (DES) to receive assistance to find work.

What is School Leaver Employment Support (SLES)?

SLES is a funded support for NDIS eligible Year 12 school leavers, who are ineligible, or unlikely to be eligible, for Disability Employment Services (DES). SLES builds on and strengthens the skills that students have gained at school. SLES is not the only post school support the NDIS funds and it is not for everyone. NDIS participants may be eligible to receive SLES in addition to other supports that are deemed reasonable and necessary.

What post school options are available for students who are not NDIS eligible?

Schools are responsible for preparing students for transition to post-school options. The [Pathways Planning for Young People with Disabilities](#) page on the DET website provides information about the full range of post-school options for students with disabilities.

Another resource is the Area Senior Transition Officer.

Where can I find more information about school leaver and employment supports?

- [NDIS website](#)
- DET [2019 School Leavers and the NDIS – Factsheet for Students](#)

NDIS FUNDED THERAPY IN SCHOOLS

What types of requests are schools receiving in relation to NDIS funded therapists?

Victorian Government schools are encouraged to accommodate students and their parent(s) in exercising a level of choice and control with their NDIS supports at school where it is safe and practical to do so. For example, a family may request that an NDIS funded therapist:

- observes their child in the classroom or in the school environment; or
- attends a Student Support Group meeting, to monitor and tailor the support they provided to the student.

In most cases, both these requests can be accommodated, and complement holistic student planning processes.

Principals may also receive requests for NDIS funded therapists to deliver therapy on school grounds.

How should principals respond to requests for NDIS funded therapists to provide services at school?

Victorian Government schools are encouraged to accommodate students and their parents exercising choice and control in relation to NDIS supports, where practical to do so.

In some circumstances, requests for NDIS school based therapy may raise some practical and/or legal issues for principals that make the approval of the request unfeasible.

The NDIS does not fund therapy for the purpose of educational attainment. Therefore, principals are unlikely to be in breach of anti-discrimination obligations if they decline a request for NDIS funded therapy to occur on school grounds, in circumstances where all 'reasonable adjustments' are in place for a student at the school.

Ultimately, the decision rests with the school principal.

Is there any guidance available for principals responding to these requests?

DET has prepared guidelines to assist principals to respond to these requests by:

- recommending a consistent three step process to follow
- highlighting key considerations that a principal should take into account when making a decision
- providing templates for liaising with all relevant parties.

These guidelines are available at the [NDIS Information for Schools](#) Intranet site.

Is there any guidance available for parents and NDIS therapists making these requests?

DET has prepared guidelines to assist parents and therapists to understand the issues a school must consider when responding to these requests, and the process for making a request.

These guidelines are available at the [NDIS funded therapy in schools](#) Intranet site.

If a student is receiving NDIS funded therapy, can they still access the Visiting Teacher Service and Student Support Services?

Yes. Schools remain responsible for personalising learning and support for students with disabilities that primarily relate to their educational attainment. This includes providing access to DET funded Visiting Teacher Service and Student Support Services.

STUDENT DATA

How do schools know if any of their students are NDIS participants?

NDIS participants are not compelled to disclose their participation in the scheme. If a student is an NDIS participant, they may choose to self-report their status to schools.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Where can I find out more information?

For general information about the NDIS:

- www.ndis.gov.au
- 1800 800 110*, From 8am to 11pm (local time) Monday to Friday
- Follow on Twitter @NDIS

- Find on Facebook: Facebook/NDISAus.

Please contact your regional office in the first instance for specific queries about the NDIS and your school.

DET's NDIS Reform Branch: ndis@edumail.vic.gov.au