

Queensland state special schools — parent/carer factsheet

Making a decision about which school you should enrol your child in is very important. This factsheet provides information about the options parents have, eligibility and requirements for enrolment in a state special school.

What do state special schools do?

State special schools support children and young people with intellectual disability, which alone or in combination with other disabilities, severely affects the student's ability to attend and learn at school.

Should I enrol my child in a state special school?

All state schools make reasonable adjustments to enable students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

The Department of Education (the department) is committed to providing inclusive education and ensuring that children and young people of all abilities can:

- attend their local state school or education centre and be welcomed;
- access and participate in a high-quality education and fully engage in the curriculum alongside their similar-aged peers;
- learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination or harassment; and
- achieve academically and socially with reasonable adjustments and supports tailored to meet their learning needs.

More information about the department's commitment to inclusive education is outlined in our [Inclusive education policy](#).

Parents/carers may choose to apply to enrol their child in their local state primary or secondary school or a state special school. For advice and information about enrolment options you may speak to your [local state school](#), your [local departmental regional office](#) or, the Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) your child is currently attending.

Is my child eligible to enrol in a state special school?

Two requirements must be met before a child or young person can be enrolled in a state special school:

1. your child meets the criteria set out in the [Special school eligibility \("person with a disability" criteria\)](#) policy (the policy); and
2. the special school must be able to cater for your child's educational needs.

What are the policy's criteria?

To be eligible for enrolment in a state special school, your child must meet all four of the following criteria set out in the policy that:

- they have a disability as defined by the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cwth\)](#);
- they have a severe disability which includes an intellectual disability;
- they are unlikely to attain the levels of development of which they are capable unless they receive special education; and



- their educational program is best delivered in a special school taking into account the appropriateness of this placement for them.

Before deciding if you would like to enrol your child in a state special school, you may wish to talk to your local state school or your closest departmental regional office regarding your child's needs and their eligibility for enrolment in a state special school.

You can also ask to visit your preferred school and talk to the school principal about your child's needs.

What do we mean by intellectual disability?

To be eligible for enrolment in a state special school your child must have an intellectual disability.

To decide whether a child or young person has an intellectual disability for the purpose of enrolment in a state special school we consider their:

- intellectual functioning;
- adaptive behaviours; and
- need for significant educational adjustments as verified through the department's Education Adjustment Program (EAP).

The department does not rely on an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) score alone. We consider the way that a child's intellectual functioning affects their ability to access and participate in education.

A departmental officer may talk to you about your child's intellectual functioning and ask for your consent to do a further assessment.

A departmental officer will decide if your child is verified through the department's EAP.

What is a severe disability?

A person has a severe disability where the impact of the intellectual disability, alone or in combination with other disabilities, has a severe impact on their ability to attend school and learn.

The department will consider the impact of the disability and how it affects your child day-to-day such as their mobility, ability to communicate and learn.

How do I apply to enrol my child in a state special school?

You can apply to enrol your child in a state special school by completing an [Application for student enrolment](#) and a [State special school enrolment parent consent and information](#) form.

The completed forms need to be provided to your local departmental regional office, an Early Childhood Development Program (if your child is attending the ECDP), the school your child is currently enrolled in (if a Queensland state school or Queensland state special school), or your preferred state special school.

What information can I provide with my application?

You can provide any information you think might help the decision-maker to understand your child's educational needs such as doctors' reports or reports from other service providers.

You only need to provide information and reports you already have. We will contact you if more information is needed.

The department's [State special school enrolment decision-making guidelines](#) outline the type of information that will be considered when making a decision about whether to approve enrolment at a state special school.



If you have any questions or need help filling in the forms, please contact your local departmental regional office, the state school your child is currently enrolled in, the ECDP your child is attending or your preferred state special school.

When can I apply to enrol my child in a state special school?

You can apply at any time during the year.

If you are making an application for enrolment during the school holidays, especially over the longer holiday periods, please contact your departmental regional office to ensure that your application is processed as quickly as possible.

How long will it take for a decision to be made?

The department aims to ensure that decisions about applications for enrolment for children and young people not enrolled in any school are made as soon as possible.

However, making sure the right decision is made takes time. Usually the process takes an average of 22 school days, from the date we receive your application.

Sometimes more information is needed and it may take longer to finalise the application. We will stay in touch with you to let you know our progress, or if there are any delays in assessing your application.

What happens if my application for enrolment is approved?

If your application for enrolment is approved, the state special school principal will contact you to finalise your child's enrolment and ensure that supports are in place so your child can start school as soon as possible.

What happens if my application for enrolment is not successful?

The decision-maker will write to you and let you know if your application has been unsuccessful and will provide you with the reasons for their decision. They will also advise you about your right to apply for an internal review.

The department will work with you regarding the other options to enrol your child in a state school.

Can my child transfer from one state special school to another state special school?

You can apply to enrol in a new state special school at any time.

You will need to complete a new [Application for student enrolment](#) form, as required for all Queensland state schools. If your child is already enrolled in a Queensland state special school, you do not need to complete the [Special school enrolment parent consent and information](#) form as we already have this information

Your application will be assessed based on the information and evidence available at your child's current Queensland state special school, but if you do have any additional information that can support your application, you may choose to include this also.

Does my child need to stay enrolled in a state special school?

Your child does not need to stay enrolled in a state special school. You can apply to enrol your child in your local state primary or secondary school at any time.

Before making your decision, you may wish to talk to your child's current and future schools about how they can support your child's educational and other needs, and their move to their new school.

Where can I get more information?

The following documents provide further information regarding Queensland state special schools, including eligibility and enrolment processes.

- [Inclusive Education policy](#)
- [State special school eligibility \('person with a disability' criteria\) policy](#)
- [State special school enrolment decision-making guidelines](#)
- [Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools procedure](#)
- [State special school enrolment \(additional requirements\) procedure](#)

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's enrolment options, please contact your local departmental regional office.

Contact details for the department's regional offices are located at <https://education.qld.gov.au/contact-us/state-schools-regional-contacts>.