



Students With Disabilities In South Australian Independent Schools

Introduction

The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) is committed to improving access and educational outcomes for children and students with disabilities and to working with governments in order to reduce inequality and build communities. Numbers of students with disabilities in the South Australian Independent school sector have increased by 229% over the last decade. The sector has also experienced an increase in the numbers of students with severe or profound disabilities and a significant increase in the numbers of students with learning difficulties. Over 15% of students in Independent schools are classified as having a learning difficulty.

The AISSA recognises that the costs associated with the education of some students with disabilities can impose a significant burden on Independent schools. The AISSA is committed to working towards equitable funding arrangements for children and students with disabilities.

The AISSA considers that additional government funds for students with disabilities should 'follow' the students regardless of the school sector they attend and should reflect the level of disability and support needs of each student.



A I S S A



ASSOCIATION of
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS of SA

Policy Statement

301 Unley Road, Malvern SA 5061
P [08] 8179 1400 F [08] 8373 1116
E office@ais.sa.edu.au W www.ais.sa.edu.au



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The AISSA:

- > believes there are significant social and economic benefits for school communities and the wider community arising from the inclusion of young people with disabilities
- > recognises its social responsibilities in eliminating discrimination against children and students with disabilities, their families and carers and its legislative obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and the accompanying Standards for Education, and the State Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
- > acknowledges that reasonable adjustments for children and students with disabilities should be made unless these adjustments impose an unjustifiable hardship on the school
- > is committed to providing relevant and high quality advice to assist member schools to support the needs of children and students with disabilities
- > is committed to transparent processes in assessing the educational needs of children and students with disabilities, whilst acknowledging and respecting confidentiality and complying with privacy legislation
- > is committed to efficient, equitable and effective accountability measures which focus on improving the educational outcomes for all children and students with disabilities.



Principles underpinning this policy

- > All children and students are entitled to receive a high quality education.
- > All children and students are entitled to an adequate level of government funding to improve their access to education regardless of the pre-school, school or school sector they attend.
- > Families with children and students with disabilities should have the opportunity to select the school of their choice.
- > The associated costs of enabling children and students with disabilities to attend the school of their choice should be borne equitably by the whole community.
- > Government funding and services, which support the additional educational needs of children and students with disabilities, should be allocated at the same level regardless of the school sector attended and reflect the level of disability and support needs of each child or student.
- > Government funding and services should be inclusive of significant factors such as cultural background and geographical location.
- > Government funding and services should be coordinated across government portfolios in order to meet the health and education needs of children and students with disabilities.
- > The allocation of funds should be based on the principles of sufficiency, efficiency, equity and transparency.
- > Governments should ensure that students with disabilities have equitable access to a range of post-school pathways and support services to meet their long-term needs, regardless of the school sector they attend.

This statement provides a set of principles to be used to evaluate government policy and legislation and to assist Independent schools and the AISSA in making representations to governments with regard to children and students with disabilities.

Additional government funds to support the needs of students with disabilities should 'follow' the students regardless of the school or school sector they attend.

