

CURRIMUNDI SPECIAL SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY & ENROLMENT PROCESS



The process of enrolling in a Queensland Special School is different to enrolling in a State School. There are a number of steps which need to be followed, before the enrolment takes place.

If your child already attends a school (either Special School or State School), and you are considering enrolling in our school, **your first conversation needs to be with your school Guidance Officer**. They are aware of the process of eligibility and enrolling in a Special School and can help you with the process. Guidance Officers will be aware of your child's level of functioning and diagnosis and will be able to determine if Special School is an appropriate path for your child.

If your child is not attending a school or Early Intervention program, then you can ring our school and a Deputy Principal or Guidance Officer can help you.

Come for a visit:

If the Guidance Officer, or psychologist feels that your child would meet the eligibility criteria, please call us and come for a visit.

Sometimes people have never been to a Special School and it is useful to see how we operate, meet some teachers and have a tour around our school. It is also a wonderful opportunity for you to tell us about your child and their educational needs. It is a good opportunity for you, as the parent or carer, to see our school would be the most suitable schooling environment for your child. We can explain how our program works, and explain the next steps in this two part process.

PART A

ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

1. Determine if the child meets the criteria, as determined by the Minister for Education, for enrolment in a Special School

*The Minister's policy for the criteria to decide whether a person is a person with a disability, for the purpose of enrolment in state special schools, is that the person **must meet the following criteria:***

- *The person has a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*
- *The person has a severe disability which includes an intellectual disability*
- *The person is unlikely to attain the levels of development of which the person is capable unless the person receives special education*
- *The person's educational program is best delivered in a special school taking into account the appropriateness of this placement for the individual concerned.*

The decision maker for the purposes of s.166 and s.167 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, will, in their absolute discretion, determine whether a person satisfies the criteria outlined above.

A diagnosis of Intellectual Disability is determined by a psychologist through a cognitive assessment (IQ test). Some students at our school are unable to complete a cognitive assessment. In those cases, the psychologist will write a report and state why the child couldn't complete the assessment. In many cases, the psychologist uses a variety of information to give a determination that the child has an Intellectual Disability.

Another assessment which is used is an Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System (ABAS). This is a questionnaire that can be filled out by a number of people who know the child (parents, teacher). It looks at how the child functions in everyday life. Some areas covered in an ABAS are communication, social skills, leisure and self-care skills.

The results of the ABAS, combined with the cognitive assessment, are used to determine if your child is eligible to enrol in a Special School.

Another factor which is also used is suitability of the environment. There are many students with Intellectual Disability who *don't* attend a Special School. This may be because their parent or carer has felt that a mainstream setting is more suited to their needs. *We always need to consider suitability of the school setting for each child.*

2. Other helpful information

PAERWORK! PAPERWORK! PAPERWORK!

To build a picture of your child, and how they function, both at school, or ECDP/Kindy, and also at home; reports are very helpful. These reports help to paint a broad picture of your 'whole' child, which is what the eligibility process is about.

Some reports you may have and use with your application are:

- Therapy reports (Speech, OT, Physio)
- Reports from educational settings
- Early Intervention reports
- Paediatrician reports

These reports should be passed onto whoever is helping you with your application, either Guidance Officer at your child's current school, or the Guidance Officer at our school.

3. Parent Application and Information notice

All paperwork, once received by the Guidance Officer, will be collated into a report which is then sent to the Senior Guidance Officer in North Coast Region. The decision of eligibility is made at a Regional level. It is not a school based decision.

If your child is not attached to a school, or you are from an independent school or interstate, the Guidance Officer at our school will complete this paperwork for you.

The information notice consists of:

- Parent Application – a form where the parent or carer says they wish for their child to be considered for enrolment in a Special School.
- Information Notice – summarising all the cognitive and adaptive skills information provided to form a comprehensive story about your child, how they function across a wide range of areas, and if they meet criteria for enrolment in a Special School

Once this is collated, it is sent to the Senior Guidance Officer at North Coast Regional Office.

If the Senior Guidance Officer agrees that your child meets the criteria for enrolment, and that Special School would be the best educational setting for them, he/she will sign off on the Information Notice, and send it to the Principal of our school.

If the Principal agrees that the details in the Information Notice show that your child meets the criteria for enrolment, and that Special School would be the best educational setting for them, he/she will sign off on the Information Notice, and ask parents to come to the school and also sign it. It will then be sent to Regional Office.

If the Regional Director (or delegate) agrees that the details in the Information Notice show that your child meets the criteria for enrolment, and that Special School would be the most suitable educational setting for them, he/she will sign off on the Information Notice, and advise the Principal that the enrolment can proceed.

TEMPORARY ATTENDANCE

The enrolment can only be finalised once students have completed the Department of Education verification process for Intellectual Disability. The students most affected by this will be prep students, students enrolling from non-government schools, or from interstate. In all these circumstances paperwork for the Temporary Attendance process will be completed so the student can attend school while the verification process is completed. Once this has happened (within 10 months of starting school), the enrolment process will be finalised. This will require a similar set of documents to be signed and submitted.

Summary of the Eligibility Process:

Although this seems like a very detailed process (which it is!), the majority of this part is completed by school personnel, not you. The things you need to do as a parent/carer are:

- Contact current school and have a conversation about your child's eligibility to Special School
- If you are not at a school, or your child attends a non-government school or you live interstate, contact Currimundi Special School and speak to a Deputy or Guidance Officer
- Complete any assessments needed (a current cognitive assessment and perhaps an ABAS or similar)
- Provide as much paperwork as you can to give a clear picture of your child
- Come for a visit!

PART B

SCHOOL ENROLMENT



4. School enrolment

Once the eligibility process has been completed, you will be contacted by the school to confirm that the enrolment can proceed.

Prior to the end of the current school year (generally during the transition mornings), you will be given an enrolment pack. This consists of information regarding our school, and our processes. The pack also contains a number of forms which need to be completed such as general information, permission and medical forms.

We offer **transition mornings** in Term 4. These two mornings serve several purposes:

- Our school staff can meet your child and get to know them and their needs. This is very helpful so we can place them in the most suitable class for the following year.
- Allows children to see where they will be going to school, what the classroom looks like and perhaps meet some other children who may be in their class.
- Provides an opportunity for parents and carers to pass onto the teacher any specific information such as medication requirements, health managements or toileting issues.
- Our P & C provide morning tea for the parents in our staffroom. This is an opportunity for parents new to our school to meet. During the morning tea, a Deputy Principal will go through the enrolment pack and explain the various forms and permissions. There is plenty of time to ask questions about the following year.
- **It is important that we have the enrolment packs completed, and returned to the school prior to the end of the year.**

It is very important for us to receive information regarding medical needs and health information as early as possible. In cases where Health Plans need to be written by our school nurse, we prefer for these to be completed prior to your child starting school. This is particularly important for children who have seizures and require midazolam to be administered.

5. Final steps

In the last week of the current school year, you will receive information regarding your child's class and teacher, a booklist and uniform order form.

There will also be an invitation for a Welcome Back to School afternoon, which will be one afternoon in the week prior to school commencing. On that afternoon you are encouraged to bring your child in and any of their books or equipment they may have. You will be able to meet your child's teacher and teacher aide, and visit the classroom. This is also a great time to have conversations regarding specific issues for your child such as health information. Bringing books and equipment in prior to school commencing can help with making the first day run a little smoother for you and your child.

If you require any further information regarding the Eligibility and Enrolment process at our school, please contact Carolyn Waugh (Deputy Principal) on 5491 0222 or email cwaug7@eq.edu.au