

# Schools and the NDIS

## Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL

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#### **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 will provide 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.

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#### **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.

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#### **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](#)

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

The NDIA and partner organisations 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 [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) 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.

## How did the NDIS Barwon Trial work?

The NDIA conducted a trial of the NDIS in the Barwon area from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2016. Following the introduction of the NDIS in Barwon, people eligible for the scheme have received individualised support and services. The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments subsequently agreed to the implementation of the NDIS in the remaining areas of the State between July 2016 and June 2019 (the 'transition period').

## How will the roll out of the NDIS work?

The transition to the full scheme of the NDIS will occur gradually, area by area, between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2019. By July 2019, it is estimated that 105,000 people will transition to the NDIS in Victoria and 460,000 nationally. People currently receiving supports through the Victorian or Commonwealth governments will be moving to the NDIS at different times depending on the type of support they are receiving and where they live, not where they attend school. This means that schools will have students transitioning at different times.

Area commencement date	Area	Local Government Areas
1 July 2016	North Eastern Melbourne	Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra
1 Jan 2017	Central Highlands	Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool, Pyrenees
1 May 2017	Loddon	Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander
1 Oct 2017	Ovens Murray	Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga
1 Oct 2017	Wimmera South (formerly Western District)	Corangamite, Glenelg, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians, Warrnambool, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack
1 Oct 2017	Inner Gippsland	Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Latrobe, South Gippsland
1 Nov 2017	Inner Eastern Melbourne	Boroondara, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse
1 Nov 2017	Outer Eastern Melbourne	Knox, Maroondah, Yarra Ranges
1 March 2018	Hume Moreland	Hume, Moreland
1 April 2018	Bayside Peninsula	Bayside, Frankston, Glen Eira, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, Stonnington
1 September 2018	Southern Melbourne	Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong
1 October 2018	Brimbank Melton	Brimbank, Melton
1 October 2018	Western Melbourne	Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Wyndham

1 January 2019	Mallee	Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura, Swan Hill
1 January 2019	Goulburn	Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogrie
1 January 2019	Outer Gippsland	East Gippsland, Wellington

More information about area transitions can be found on the NDIS website: <https://ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/VIC.html#tran>

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### How will schools be informed about the NDIS as it comes to our area?

Approximately six months prior to an Area rollout, the NDIA and partners, such as NDIA Local Area Coordinators (LAC) will commence general information sessions in the Area. The NDIA and LACs will have an increasing presence in the Areas as they approach Area start date. To find out when general information sessions in your area are occurring, refer to the NDIS website: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/events/all>

The DET NDIS Reform Branch will be working with regional staff, the NDIA and LACs to provide targeted information sessions for:

- principals
- student services teams (i.e. Visiting Teachers, Student Support Services, School Nurses etc.)
- school staff and school families.

If your school is approached by external providers offering to run information sessions or to provide advice about the NDIS, please note that these sessions are not required as the NDIA and LAC sessions will provide the most current and accurate information.

### NDIA LOCAL AREA COORDINATORS, ECEI PARTNERS AND SUPPORT COORDINATORS

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#### What are Local Area Coordinators (LACs)?

Local Area Coordination will be delivered by NDIA ‘Partners’ in the community. Partners are organisations with strong community connections, local knowledge and expertise. In Victoria these are:

- [Brotherhood of St Laurence](#) in the service area of North East Melbourne
- [Latrobe Community Health Service](#) in the service areas of Central Highlands, Ovens Murray, Wimmera South West, Barwon, Inner East Melbourne, Inner Gippsland, and Outer East Melbourne
- [Intereach](#) in the service area of Loddon.

The NDIA Partners for the remaining Areas will be announced nearer to the time of roll out.

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#### What are Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Partners?

The ECEI approach will be delivered by ECEI Partners with specific early childhood skills, ECEI will be available to all children aged 0-6 with developmental delay or disability in line with the scheduled roll out of the NDIS. Once rolled out in your area, you can contact the ECEI Partner directly.

The Early Childhood 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

For more information about the ECEI approach, visit <https://www.ndis.gov.au/ecei.html>

### What is the role of LAC and ECEI Partners?

NDIA LAC 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.

### 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. The support coordinator’s role can include activities such as:

- support implementation of all supports in the plan, including informal, mainstream and community, as well as funded supports:
  - negotiate services to be provided and their prices, develop service agreements and create service bookings with preferred providers
  - negotiate services and prices as part of any quotable supports
- coordinate assessments, reports and service proposals
- strengthen and enhance their capacity to coordinate supports, self-direct and manage supports and participate in the community, including providing participants with assistance to:
  - resolve problems or issues that arise
  - understand their responsibilities under service agreements
  - change or end a service agreement.

### Why do some students receive more NDIS funding compared to other students?

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 type of support participants could 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

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.

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

- Students, with their parent(s), create a participant statement with broad goals they want to achieve to increase their independence, inclusion, and social and economic participation.
- Once goals have been developed, students meet with NDIA planners or LAC partners to determine reasonable and necessary supports to help them achieve these goals. These supports may include therapy to build a participant's capacity in areas such as mobility or speech and language development.
- Supports that are deemed reasonable and necessary are funded under the NDIS.

## GAINING ACCESS TO THE NDIS

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### How can students access the NDIS?

People currently receiving support through the Commonwealth and Victorian Government will be transitioning to the NDIS at different times depending on the type of support they are receiving and where they live. It is important to note that people will enter the NDIS in different ways. There are four pathways for students with disabilities in Victorian government schools to enter the scheme:

#### 1. Students in 'defined' programs

The NDIA recognises some groups of students as meeting NDIS disability requirements without the need for additional evidence. In Victorian government schools these are referred to as 'defined' programs and include:

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

Schools must ensure CASES21 and PSDMS data is current and accurate for these students.

The Victorian Government and the NDIA have agreed arrangements for these students to transition smoothly into the scheme. The NDIA National Access Team will contact them prior to coming into the scheme to undertake the access process.

#### 2. Students in 'non-defined' programs

There are two supports in schools that are 'in scope' for the NDIS:

- personal care in schools
- transport to and from school.

These supports will continue to be provided 'in-kind' (business as usual) by schools during the transition years.

The contact details of 'non-defined' students receiving the following supports will be provided to the NDIA to streamline their phasing into the scheme:

- students receiving assistance under the Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP)
- students receiving PSD Levels 4,5,6
- students in receipt of Medical Intervention Support payment.

Schools must ensure CASES21, SDTP and PSDMS data is current and accurate for these students. The NDIA National Access Team will contact these students prior to their Area rollout date. Please note that these students are 'non-defined' meaning the NDIA will request additional evidence from families to confirm disability eligibility requirements for the NDIS are met.

### 3. Students receiving other 'phasing' government programs

Students may be receiving Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) programs which are also transitioning to the NDIS, such as:

- State-Wide Equipment Program
- Respite
- Early Choices
- Continence.

Commonwealth Programs also phasing include: Helping Children with Autism and Better Start, Outside School Hours Care.

Students who receive both DET and other government programs will transition to the NDIS with the program that is phasing first. The NDIA National Access Team will contact them prior to their Area rollout date. The NDIA may request additional evidence from families to confirm eligibility for the scheme

### 4. 'New' participants

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

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

Students can apply to the NDIS to see if they meet the access requirements up to six months prior to their Area start date. The NDIA National Access Team review all access requests and make decisions regarding a person's eligibility for the NDIS.

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### 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 for the purpose of providing evidence to support a student's access to the NDIS.

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

Children who attend an EEP can approach the ECEI partner or the NDIA up to six months before their area start date as a new participant. They will need to provide evidence of disability or developmental delay to the NDIA. If a child is 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.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NDIS VERSUS THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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### Which supports will be funded by the NDIS and which will stay 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 remain 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.
- NDIS will fund 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 and transport to and from school have not yet been finalised. Until these new arrangements are established, there will be no changes to how these supports are funded and delivered.

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)

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### How will student transport be funded under the NDIS?

Student transport is in scope of the NDIS. During the rollout of the NDIS (July 2016 to July 2019), student transport will be provided by state governments as an in-kind service. In Victoria, this means the State will continue to fund and provide student transport assistance through the SDTP.

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### What does this mean for students?

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

Once a student 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.

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### What does this mean for schools?

As nothing is changing in the way student transport is delivered during the NDIS rollout, nothing should change for specialist schools in regards to their SDTP bus and/or taxi services before 2020. 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 Local Area Coordinators (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 [In-Kind FAQs](#).

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### 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 2020. 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's transition. Schools will be informed of any developments in this work.

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### Where can I find more information about student transport?

- DET NDIS and Student Transport [fact sheet](#)
- student transport information on the DET website:  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/transport.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/transport.aspx)
- DET Student Transport email: [student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- DET Student Transport phone number: 03 9637 2200

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## PERSONAL CARE IN SCHOOLS

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### What is Personal Care in Schools?

Personal Care in Schools 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.

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### **How is Personal Care in Schools funded under the NDIS?**

Personal Care in Schools is in scope of the NDIS. During the rollout of the NDIS (1 July 2016 to 30 June 2019), Personal Care in Schools will be provided by state governments as an in-kind service. In Victoria, this means the State will continue to fund and provide personal care supports through the Student Resource Package, Program for Students with Disabilities and Medical Intervention Service payment.

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

For the period of transition, Personal Care in Schools is in-kind. This means 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.

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### **What will happen to Personal Care in Schools in the longer term?**

The in-kind arrangements for Personal Care in Schools will stay in place in Victoria during the transition years. It is currently not determined how personal care will be delivered under the NDIS at full scheme. Victoria is currently leading a national project to determine operational arrangements at full scheme. Schools will be informed of any developments in this work.

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## **SCHOOL LEAVER AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS**

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### **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.

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### **What is School Leaver Employment Support (SLES)?**

School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) is an NDIA funded support. It is a new approach that 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.

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### **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 following DET resource provides information about the full range of post-school options for students with disabilities:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/Pages/disabilitypathways.aspx>

Another resource is the Area Senior Transition Officer.

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### **Can students with disabilities in their last year of school still apply for Futures for Young Adults?**

Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) is a phasing DHHS program. Existing FFYA clients will transition to the NDIS when their Area rolls out.

FFYA will not be available to students with disabilities who live in Areas that have transitioned to the NDIS, or Areas that are transitioning to the NDIS in the student's final year of school. These students may access post-school supports through the NDIA or via universal post-school services.

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

- NDIS website: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)
- DET [2017 School Leavers and the NDIS – Factsheet for Students](#)

## NDIS FUNDED THERAPY IN SCHOOLS

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

Principals may receive parent requests to allow NDIS funded therapists to:

- observe a student in the classroom or in the school environment
- attend a Student Support Group meeting, to monitor and tailor the support provided to the student.

These requests can generally be accommodated by schools and complement holistic student planning and support processes.

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

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### 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.

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### 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.

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**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**

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**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.

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**Which students will have their contact information provided to the NDIA?**

Under Section 55 of the *NDIS Act 2013*, contact details of people in receipt of state funded programs can be provided to the NDIA to support their transition into the scheme.

Contact information for students receiving the following defined and non-defined programs will be provided to the NDIA prior to an Area's rollout:

- students receiving Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) funding for Vision Impairment
- students enrolled at a Specialist School for students with Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability
- students receiving assistance under the Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP)
- students receiving PSD Levels 4,5,6
- students in receipt of Medical Intervention Support payment.

It is important that your student data in CASES21 and PSDMS is current and accurate to support streamlined access to the scheme for these students.

DHHS also has a range of programs which students with disabilities may be accessing outside of school. DHHS will also be providing their client's contact details to the NDIA.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

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**Where can I find out more information?**

For general information about the NDIS:

- [www.ndis.gov.au](http://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](mailto:ndis@edumail.vic.gov.au)