

Register of Students with Severe Disabilities

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I. Eligibility Criteria and Guidelines

Eligibility on the basis of:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Intellectual Disability
- Physical Disability or Health Impairment
- Multiple Disability
- Psychiatric Disability
- Vision Impairment
- Deaf or Hearing Impaired

2. Eligibility on the basis of Autism Spectrum Disorder

To be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on the basis of Autism Spectrum Disorder a student must have:

- a confirmed diagnosis of autism in the upper moderate/severe range from a multi-disciplinary team of professionals with expertise in this area, including supporting documentation from an appropriate medical specialist. e.g. Paediatrician or Psychiatrist.
- demonstrated functional abilities consistent with this diagnosis, particularly in relation to DSM-IV- TR criteria and the associated educational implications (see below).

It is recognised that Autism Spectrum Disorder forms a continuum:

- from mild to severe, and
- from low to high functioning.

The social and functional implications and the educational impact of Autism Spectrum Disorder varies depending on the relationship between these two dimensions.

A diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder alone is not sufficient to ensure eligibility for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities. The register identifies students for whom the learning/educational implications resulting from Autism Spectrum Disorder are the most severe.

Complex cases should be referred to TADS (Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service), after consultation with a Senior School Psychologist.

3. What information is needed?

To assist the Moderation Committee in making an informed decision the following information is necessary:

- I. **School psychologists/psychologist's report including:**
 - a) social and developmental case history;
 - b) a comprehensive cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. Wechsler test, Griffiths).

(N.B. The school psychologist/psychologist's report must include individual subtest scaled scores; these can be provided as an Appendix to the report. Alternatively this information must be provided to the Senior

School Psychologist representative on the Moderation Committee one week prior to the Moderation Committee meeting.)

2. Behavioural observation - The CARS (Childhood Autism Rating Scale)

- I. In completing the CARS the Moderation Committee requires the ratings and detailed qualitative descriptors/examples for each of the 14 categories. Individual ratings for each of the categories may be included as an Appendix or provided to the School psychologist representative (as above).
- II. The CARS should be completed by observation in the school environment but may be by report in other contexts. It should be noted whether evidence is based on observation or report.
- III. For moderation purposes it is expected that the CARS be completed by a practitioner with demonstrated experience in working with students across the autism spectrum or that it be completed collaboratively between two disciplines.

3. A photocopy of the current, working IEP;

4. A language assessment including test profiles and descriptive interpretation, especially in relation to social communication skills, with reference to the DSM-IV-TR; and

5. A copy of the diagnosis and/or medical information from an appropriate specialist.

6. Any other relevant documentation e.g. Functional Behavioural Assessment; annotated work samples.

The documentation should be submitted with a Nomination Cover Sheet. All information should be current and relevant.

4. Diagnostic Criteria

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V (describes the following diagnostic criteria:

A

I. Qualitative impairments in social interaction as manifested by at least two of the following:

- marked impairment in the use of multiple non-verbal behaviours such as eye to eye gaze, facial expression, body postures and gestures to regulate social interaction;
- failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level;
- lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people (e.g. by a lack of showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest);
- lack of social or emotional reciprocity.

2. Qualitative impairments in communication as manifested by at least one of the following:

- delay in, or total lack of, the development of spoken language (not accompanied by an attempt to compensate through alternative modes of communication such as gesture or mime);
- in individuals with adequate speech, marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others;
- stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language;
- lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level.

3. Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities, as manifested by at least one of the following:
 - encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus;
 - apparently inflexible adherence to specific, non-functional routines or rituals;
 - stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g. hand or finger flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements);
 - persistent preoccupation with parts of objects.

B

Delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of the following areas, with onset prior to age 3 years:

1. social interaction;
2. language as used in social communication; or
3. symbolic or imaginative play.

C

The disturbance is not better accounted for by Rett's Disorder or Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.

Eligibility on the basis of Intellectual Disability

To be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on the basis of intellectual disability a student must:

- display functional skills and adaptive behaviours consistent with a moderate to severe/profound intellectual disability; and
- have a measured intelligence greater than three standard deviations below the mean.

Performance on psychological assessment alone is not sufficient to determine eligibility for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities. It is recognised that the level of competence and functional abilities of all students depends on their experience, their teaching and learning history and their age. A student with a diagnosis of mild intellectual disability during primary school years is unlikely to be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities in later adolescence unless there is a constitutional or organic reason for loss of previously acquired functional skills.

Intellectual disability is a continuum with no fixed cut off points between levels. The Register of Students with Severe Disabilities identifies those students with the most severe level of intellectual disability.

These students often have an organic, genetic or constitutional impairment that is identified at a very early age. It is probable that they would have participated in an Early Childhood Intervention Service program and be known to the education system before school age.

What information is needed?

To assist the Moderation Committee in making an informed decision the following information is necessary:

1. A recent educational psychological assessment investigating both cognitive and adaptive behaviours. It is recommended that assessment with a WISC-IV be undertaken, wherever possible. An ABAS should also be included. A developmental assessment (e.g. Griffiths) may be more appropriate for a young child with a severe intellectual disability.
2. (N.B. The School Psychologists/psychologist's report must include individual subtest scaled scores, which can be presented as an Appendix to the report.).

3. A photocopy of the current, working IEP;
4. A language assessment including test profiles for individual tests used and descriptive interpretation; and
5. Any other relevant documentation, such as annotated work samples.
6. The documentation should be submitted with a Nomination Cover Sheet. All information must be current and relevant.

Eligibility on the basis of Physical Disability or Health Impairment

To be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on the basis of physical disability or health impairment a student must have:

1. An identifiable, severe physical disability which has highly significant implications for a student's learning outcomes, or
2. An identifiable, severe medical condition or health impairment which has highly significant learning/educational implications e.g. severe uncontrolled epilepsy, severe head injury etc.

The high level of educational need characterising these students is based on their physical dependence relating to:

- movement (e.g. requires a wheelchair) and positioning (e.g. requires assistance to transfer between a range of seating and positioning equipment throughout the day, consistent with therapy recommendations.)
- communication (e.g. requires augmentative or alternative means of communication)
- eating and drinking (e.g. has an individual meal management plan, developed by a speech and language pathologist to address support needs in relation to chewing or swallowing or requires full physical assistance)
- toileting (e.g. requires physical assistance to participate in toileting procedures), and
- their ability to perform or participate in basic educational tasks and activities (e.g. requiring a scribe or technology so they can record information)

Epilepsy

Eligibility on the basis of epilepsy is determined by the frequency and severity of seizures at school and their subsequent educational impact.

A diary of seizures at school is required to substantiate a nomination for inclusion on the Register of Students with Severe Disability.

What information is needed?

To assist the Moderation Committee in making an informed decision the following information is necessary:

1. A recent physiotherapy, occupational therapy and/or speech pathology report as appropriate;
2. A medical report if being nominated on the basis of a medical condition or health impairment;
3. A photocopy of the current, working IEP if appropriate. (This is not necessary if nomination is on the basis of a medical condition not requiring curriculum modification); and
4. Any other relevant documentation (e.g. seizure diary if applicable, toileting diary, medical management plan, if applicable).

5. The documentation should be submitted with a Nomination Cover Sheet. All information must be current and relevant.

Eligibility on the basis of Multiple Disability

To be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on the basis of multiple disability a student must:

- meet the eligibility criteria described in relation to physical disability (above); and
- meet the eligibility criteria described in relation to either intellectual disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder (above).

What information is needed?

To assist the Moderation Committee in making an informed decision the following information is necessary:

1. A recent physiotherapy and/or occupational report as appropriate;
2. A speech and language assessment including test profiles for individual tests used and descriptive interpretation.
3. A medical report if being nominated on the basis of a medical condition or health impairment;
4. A recent educational psychological assessment investigating both cognitive and adaptive behaviours. The test profiles for individual tests used must be provided. (A developmental assessment eg Griffiths, Bayley Scales, Battelle may be more appropriate for a young child with a severe intellectual disability.)
 - a. (N.B. The Guidance/psychologist's report must include individual subtest scaled scores; these can be provided as an Appendix to the report.)
5. A photocopy of the current, working IEP; and
6. Any other relevant documentation (eg annotated work samples, seizure diary if applicable).
7. The documentation should be submitted with a Nomination Cover Sheet. All information must be current and relevant.

Eligibility on the basis of Psychiatric Disability

To be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on the basis of psychiatric disability a student must:

- have a confirmed psychiatric diagnosis from a qualified psychiatrist;
- have highly significant educational implications resulting from the psychiatric disorder. These implications must be identifiable and precisely described in functional terms;
- be receiving ongoing psychiatric treatment.

Students diagnosed with disabling psychiatric disorders may be considered for nomination e.g. Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, Severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Severe Anxiety Disorder.

Disruptive Behaviour Disorders e.g. Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder do not qualify for consideration for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities.

What information is needed?

To assist the Moderation Committee in making an informed decision the following information is necessary:

1. A recent report from the treating psychiatrist about the psychiatric condition, its implications, treatment requirements and potential prognosis;

2. A current guidance/psychological report indicating cognitive functioning and adaptive/social behaviour;
3. A photocopy of the current, working IEP; and
4. Any other relevant documentation.
5. The documentation should be submitted with a Nomination Cover Sheet. All information must be current and relevant.

Eligibility on the basis of Vision Impairment

To be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on the basis of vision impairment a student must:

- have severe vision impairment as measured through appropriate assessment by an ophthalmologist, optometrist or orthoptist. This means a visual acuity of less than 6/48; visual field of 20 degrees or less (after best possible correction and surgical intervention)
- a student's functioning and needs in the following areas are also considered:
 - literacy
 - curriculum adaptation and methodology
 - low vision aids
 - orientation, mobility and safety, and
 - interplay of vision impairment with other disabilities.

These students are usually identified at an early age.

All students eligible for placement on the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on grounds of vision impairment require the involvement of a Resource Teacher: Vision Impairment for appropriate material presentation, teaching methodology and specialised curriculum. Some of the students are totally blind. Most students use technology/low vision aids to access learning.

What information is needed?

To assist the Moderation Committee in making an informed decision the following information is necessary:

1. Medical assessment;
2. Profile of the student's competencies and needs written by a Resource Teacher: Vision Impairment in consultation with the parents/carers and the school;
3. Other relevant documentation.
4. The documentation should be submitted with a Nomination Cover Sheet. All information must be current and relevant.

Eligibility on the basis of being Deaf or Hearing Impaired

(April 2009)

To be eligible for the Register of Students with Severe Disabilities on the basis of being Deaf or Hearing Impaired a student must have:

- a hearing loss of greater than 60 dB in their better ear as measured by an audiologist at 500, 1000 and 2000 hertz.

A student's functioning in the following areas is also considered:

- audition
- language

- literacy
- academics
- social/emotional.

What information is needed?

To assist the Moderation Committee in making an informed decision the following information is necessary:

1. A recent audiological assessment;
2. A profile of the student written by a Teacher of the Deaf in consultation with parents/carers and the school, as appropriate; and
3. Any other relevant documentation.
4. The documentation should be submitted with a Nomination Cover Sheet. All information must be current and relevant.

Year 13 Nominations

A very small number of students on the register who are enrolled in year 12 may be eligible for a year 13 entitlement. Discussion around these students needs to take place with Colleen Crawford and relevant documentation would be required within the timeframes listed.

The eligibility criteria for Year 13 entitlement are:

- The student has not received their schooling entitlement (completed year 12 or for a period not exceeding 2 years full-time study, after the age of 16) due to significant breaks – of at least one term duration – in school attendance during the previous 2 years, as a direct consequence of their disability; and
- The student is on a pathway to a further qualification and in order to achieve this, additional time is required, as a direct consequence of their disability.

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