

Our context

The Government recognises that autistic children have strengths, interests and abilities and make a valuable contribution to an educational community. This Strategy **celebrates** the diversity that autistic students bring to schools and **recognises** that they have different lived experiences.

Autistic students

<p>We know autistic students face barriers to their education and that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are less likely to finish year 12 than other students • Often change schools to get their needs met • Can be more likely to disengage from school 	<p>Autistic students are also more likely than other students to experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and socialisation differences • Mental health challenges • Learning difficulties • Other conditions (e.g. intellectual disability, motor difficulties, epilepsy) 	<p>They may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be female • Be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander • Be culturally and linguistically diverse • Live in a regional or remote area • Be LGBTIQ+
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Disability Inclusion is part of the Government's approach to inclusive education. It'll help make sure children and young people with disability, including autistic students, are welcomed and engaged so that they can participate and achieve their full potential at school and in life. We will do this by:

- Focussing on what a child can achieve, rather than what they can't.
- Providing more opportunities and supports for students to promote their own strengths, interests and learning needs.
- Providing more targeted funding and resources to schools so they can better plan and adjust for the learning needs of all students.



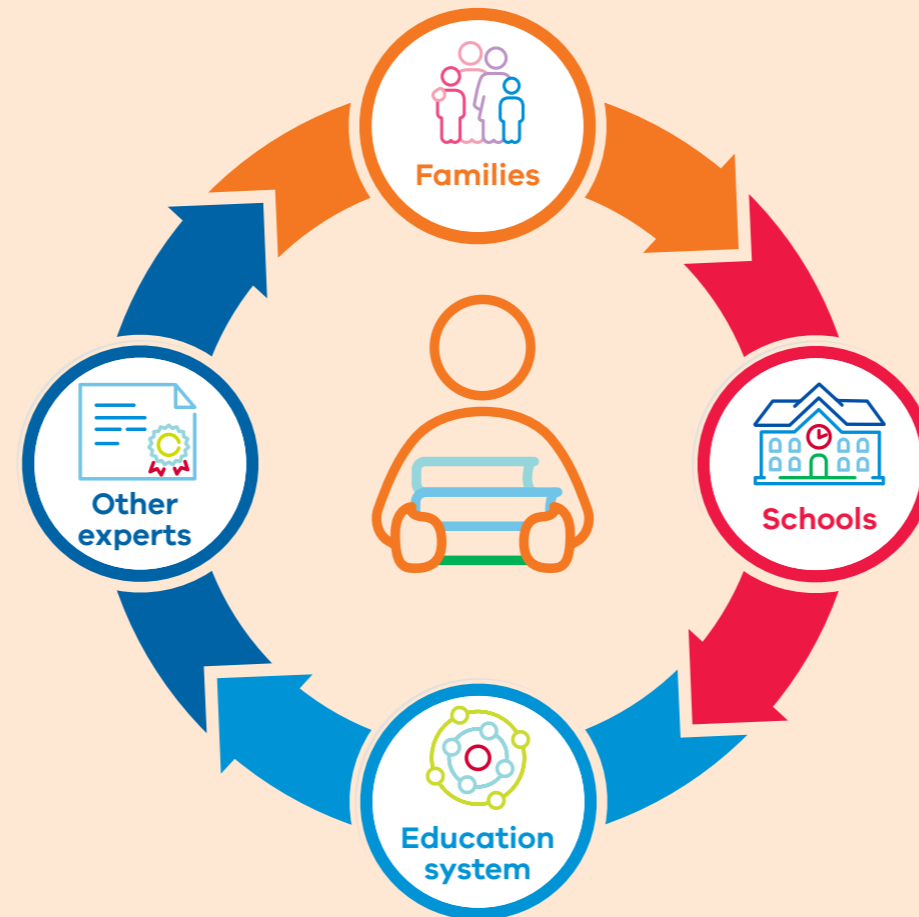
We want every student to succeed and reach their goals and aspirations.

The strategy complements and aligns with the revised [Framework for Improving Student Outcomes](#) (FISO 2.0) which is the framework for all Victorian government schools to focus on student learning and wellbeing outcomes. The strategy pillars and supporting initiatives each support one or more of the FISO 2.0 core elements of Leadership, Teaching and learning, Assessment, Engagement, and Support and resources.



Our vision

To improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for autistic students and foster inclusive school communities that welcome them and their families, and value their contribution.



This means placing autistic students at the centre of decisions, celebrating autism inclusion and fostering awareness of the diverse learning and wellbeing needs of autistic students.

It also means embedding autism inclusion at all levels so that:

- **Autistic students** feel connected with and valued by their teachers and school community, and receive tailored educational support to meet their own needs and aspirations
- **Families** feel confident in the educational support being provided by their child's school, and are actively engaged and involved in important decisions about their education
- **Teachers and school staff** feel supported to provide tailored teaching and support to autistic students and foster an inclusive and positive environment at school
- **The education system** is accountable for improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for autistic students by supporting schools to provide differentiated teaching and learning supports.

Pillars of our strategy

The strategic pillars represent priority areas of focus for schools and the education system to direct effort to address the issues facing autistic students and meet their educational aspirations.

Promote and celebrate autism inclusion and diversity at the whole school level

FISO 2.0: Support and resources, Leadership

Build the capability of school leaders and staff to meet the educational needs of autistic students

FISO 2.0: Leadership, Teaching and learning

Involve the student, families and experts in collaboratively planning for students' education

FISO 2.0: Engagement, Support and resources

Support autistic students' health and wellbeing

FISO 2.0: Engagement, Support and resources







Support autistic students' individual education needs

FISO 2.0: Teaching and learning, Engagement, Support and resources

Strengthen accountability and transparency for students with disability

FISO 2.0: Assessment

The Autism Education Strategy aims to address issues facing autistic students through six strategic pillars. The Diverse Learners' Hub and supporting programs provide resources and professional learning to schools to support them to deliver the strategy.

The strategy will address issues facing autistic students and implement best practice through six strategic pillars...	 Promote and celebrate autism inclusion and diversity at the whole school level FISO 2.0: Support and resources, Leadership	 Build the capability of school leaders and staff to meet the educational needs of autistic students FISO 2.0: Leadership, Teaching and learning	 Involve the student, families and experts in collaboratively planning for students' education FISO 2.0: Engagement, Support and resources	 Support autistic students' health and wellbeing FISO 2.0: Engagement, Support and resources	 Support autistic students' individual education needs FISO 2.0: Teaching and learning, Engagement, Support and resources	 Strengthen accountability and transparency for students with disability FISO 2.0: Assessment
Which we will achieve through...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping school leaders and teachers create inclusive and welcoming environments for autistic students Supporting school communities to increase their knowledge of, and appreciation for, autism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering coordinated, system-wide capability building for school leaders and staff in inclusive education, autism inclusion and legal obligations related to autistic students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting schools, students, their families and professionals to plan in partnership for autistic students' education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing specialist programs and resources to support autistic students' social and emotional development, positive behaviour and mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopting a strengths-based approach to identify and meet autistic students' needs and support their transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving data collection and information management to better understand the outcomes of students with disability, including autistic students
We will know we have succeeded in doing this when...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students feel more connected with their teachers and school community Families are more confident their child is welcome, valued and supported at school Schools are better equipped to provide an inclusive and positive environment for autistic students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have improved learning outcomes through better educational support that suits their needs Families are more confident that school leaders and staff are meeting their child's needs and aspirations School staff are more capable of providing inclusive education for autistic students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and families are more engaged in planning decisions about education and support There is increased connectedness between schools, students, families and experts School staff have increased knowledge and resources to undertake education and support planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are engaged and feel a stronger sense of belonging at school Families are more confident that their child's health and wellbeing needs are being met School staff are more capable and confident in tailoring teaching methods and support to meet student needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive better tailored programs and supports Families are more involved in strengths-based discussions with teachers School staff are more knowledgeable and supported to meet the educational needs of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have improved learning outcomes through educational programs informed by data and evidence Families feel more confident that evidence informs planning for their children School staff are more informed through better collection and tracking of data and outcomes for autistic students
...with the Diverse Learners' Hub supporting the implementation of every strategic pillar.	<p>The Diverse Learners' Hub (DLH) is a major part of the strategy. It supports all six of the strategy's areas of focus. The DLH is a centre of excellence that supports schools to better support and teach diverse learners, with a focus on autistic students. The DLH will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide evidence-based advice, resources and guidance to meet the learning and wellbeing needs and aspirations of diverse learners partner with experts in learning diversity to access and share up-to-date and reliable research on learning diversity coach and support school leaders and middle leaders on whole-school changes to better support, welcome and include diverse learners develop resources, tools and guidance on diverse learning for schools, parents and families 					
We will measure success through...	<p>We're committed to measuring success. The delivery of the strategy will be monitored to make sure it continues to meet the learning and wellbeing needs and aspirations of autistic students. The strategy will continually evolve to include new initiatives to support its strategic pillars. We will monitor progress against each of the pillars and continuously improve by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> building and tracking key datasets to measure progress for students with disability regularly reviewing the impact of the supporting initiatives, including how the Diverse Learners' Hub is delivering against the objectives of the strategy staying up-to-date with the latest research and best practice listening to autistic students and their families to ensure the strategy implementation meets their needs 					