



Specialised Learning Programs for Students with ASD: Frequently asked questions for parents

Q. What is the Specialised Learning Program for students with ASD?

A. Specialised Learning Programs (SLP) for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) support the individual needs of students with ASD from Kindergarten to Year 12. The programs target students who do not have an intellectual disability with a focus on year level or near year level academic engagement and achievement, organisational skills, social cognition development, positive peer relationships and emotional self-regulation.

Q. Is it just a school for autistic students? Is it an Autism Unit/Centre? Do students attend only classes with other autistic students?

A. The Specialised Learning Programs are fully inclusive programs within mainstream public schools. Specialist program teachers and education assistants provide support in the homerooms and in mainstream classrooms to assist the students to achieve academic, behavioural, social and emotional outcomes. Staff work collaboratively throughout the school and community to promote learning for each student. The aim of the program is to support students to eventually transition back into mainstream classes full-time.

Q. Can I enrol directly into the program? How will students be selected for the programs?

A. Parents apply for enrolment in the program directly to the host school. The programs have a limited number of places. Students are assessed on eligibility and suitability for the program. This includes:

- eligibility for enrolment in Western Australian public schools in Kindergarten to Year 12;
- a multi-disciplinary diagnosis of ASD without accompanying intellectual impairment;
- an anticipated ability to work at, or near, year level academic standard with support;
- difficulties with social, emotional and/or behavioural issues and challenges directly related and attributable to the impact of ASD;
- independent self-management of personal care requirements;
- transport to be facilitated by families (bus services are not provided to the program); and
- exemption from local intake zones.

Q. Are students with comorbid diagnoses (e.g. Anxiety) excluded from the program?

A. Students with comorbid diagnoses who meet eligibility criteria are able to apply to enrol in the Specialised Learning Programs.

Q. How many places are there in the program?

A. Within the Primary program 22 – 25 students can enroll. Secondary programs that enroll 15-18 students will attract sufficient funding to be able to offer a flexible and responsive program.

Q. When does a position within the program start?

A. Commencement within SLPs may occur throughout the year as vacancies arise.

Q. When does a student exit from the SLP?

A. Students may exit the SLP at any time if a parent chooses to remove them. A student is deemed ready to exit the program when they are integrating successfully in mainstream for a sustained period of time. The Program Coordinator will discuss this with the parents and a thorough transition process will be developed. The parents may choose for the student to remain at the school, or return to their local public school.

Q. How much time do students spend in the homeroom?

A. The amount of time each student spends within the homeroom will vary according to age and individual need. Within the homeroom, explicit teaching is utilised with the aim of ensuring that students maintain academic output, ensuring a smooth transition back into mainstream when the student is ready.