

Reasonable adjustments

To make sure your child has the same learning opportunities as children without disability or additional learning needs, their school must make reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments may include changes to the way your child is supported in their learning, the school environment, and providing additional supports.

What is a reasonable adjustment?

A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to help your child with disability take part in school, on the same basis as a child without disability.

Schools can make reasonable adjustments:

- in the classroom
- in the playground
- to excursions and camps
- to the premises.

Examples of adjustments include:

- changing activities or work in line with your child's needs
- different ways to access information – for example, adaptive or assistive technology, sign language, multimedia, braille or illustrated text
- using assistive technology like voice recognition software, screen readers and adjustable desks
- changing class schedules or locations
- accessing school support services like psychologists, speech pathologists and visiting teachers
- changing the premises – for example, installing ramps or a lift
- offering different assessment options – for example, oral assessments instead of written, or multiple choice questions
- extra time to finish class work or projects
- modified activities and excursions – for example, if your child cannot take part in an activity, the school can offer an alternative
- specialised professional development or training for your child's teachers and other staff as needed.

How does a school decide what is reasonable?

If an adjustment is not considered reasonable, the school does not have to make the adjustment. To help a school determine if an adjustment is reasonable, they will:

- consider how your child's disability affects their ability to take part in education
- talk to you and your child about the type of assistance they need
- review any relevant reports from your child's allied health and/or medical practitioners about their needs and the support that can help them
- consider if the adjustment will allow your child to:
 - achieve their learning outcomes
 - take part in programs
 - increase their independence
- consider how the adjustment might affect the school, their staff and other children or students
- the cost and benefit of making the adjustment.

How to speak to a school about reasonable adjustments

You can speak to your child's school about adjustments at any time during your child's education.

The principal, or someone who represents them, will meet with you and your child to talk about what type of adjustments will best meet your child's needs. This is called consultation.

If your child is already attending school, their student support group is involved in consultation about their needs. If your child does not have one of these groups, speak to the principal about creating one.

When talking about what adjustments are best for your child, you may discuss:

- how your child's disability might affect the way they learn
- what support and adjustments might meet your child's needs
- how the adjustments might affect the school, their staff and other students.

You may also need to give information about your child's disability, like medical reports or assessments from their allied health practitioners.

An assessment by a doctor or other health professional may be needed to help decide the best reasonable adjustment for your child. The principal makes the final decision about what adjustments will be made, based on all available information.

As your child's needs change, reasonable adjustments should be reviewed regularly.

Assistance for tests and exams

If your child has a disability they may be able to have special arrangements to complete tests and exams.

This might include:

- extra time
- rest breaks
- providing one question at a time
- using computers and assistive technology
- using a reader or scribe
- changing the format such as oral or typed assessment instead of written
- holding tests in quiet areas
- material in accessible formats.

More information and advice

It is important to know your child's rights and what the school can do. For information about your child's rights, visit:

- the Victorian Department of Education webpage about disability rights and responsibilities – www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/additional-needs/Pages/disability-rights.aspx
- the Victorian School Building Authority – www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/additional-needs/pages/disability-accessible-buildings-equipment.aspx
- the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission - www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au
- the Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au

Reference: Victorian Department of Education and Training (education.vic.gov.au)