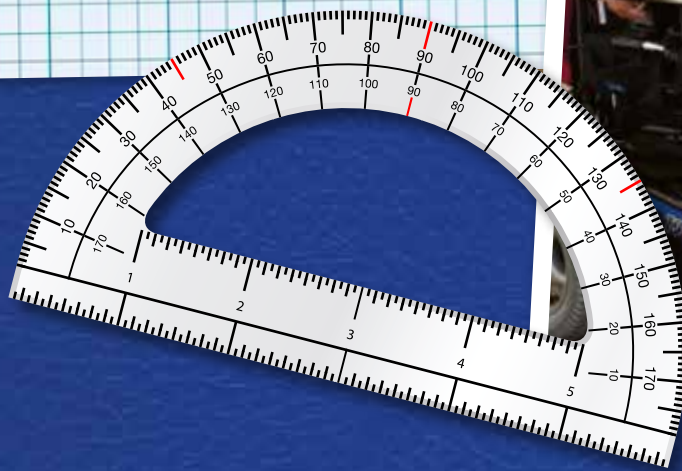


Information for parents and
caregivers of young people
with special education needs

Going to secondary school

TE HAERE KI TE KURA TUARUA



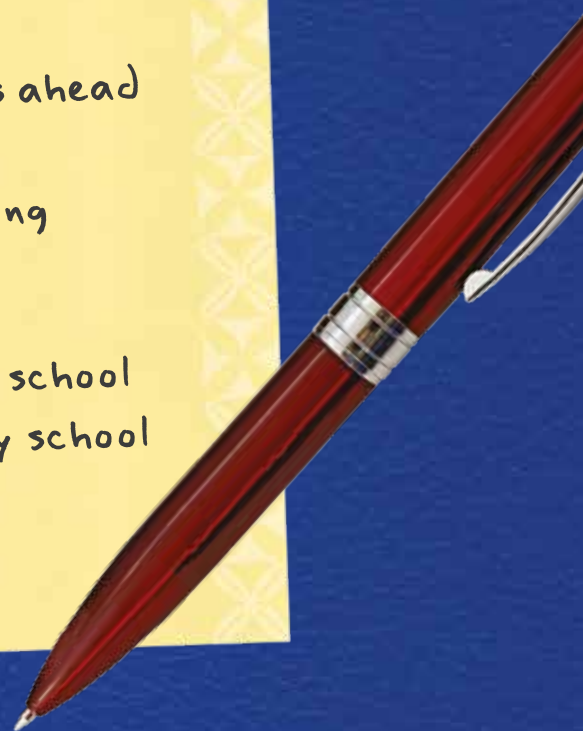
For James, I think he might be quite bright and I'm hopeful, I believe in him. I want him to go to university and be a scientist.”

Annabel



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What happens to the services and support your child currently receives?

In most cases, the support your child receives at primary/intermediate school will carry over to secondary school if it's still needed, though the people supporting your child and the way they work might change. We've outlined below any changes to specific services, funding or support.

Ongoing Resourcing Schemes (ORS)

Your child's ORS support will move with them to secondary school.

School High Health Needs Fund

Your child's support will not change, though check with the school about their systems for managing medical needs.

Teachers' aides and additional teachers

There might be different teachers' aides and additional teachers at your child's secondary school, though this depends on where you are – sometimes the same teachers' aides and additional teachers work at both primary, intermediate and secondary schools in their area. You can check this out with the school.

Teachers' aides and additional teachers might work differently because at secondary school students

move classes throughout the day. So they might have particular classes for individual or groups of students with special education needs.

Resource teachers (behaviour, vision, deaf)

If your child is currently receiving support from a resource teacher, this support will carry over to secondary school but the resource teacher might change.

Severe Behaviour Service

If your child is currently receiving a behaviour service, a transition plan will be developed with you and your child's school. When your child moves to the new school their needs might change with the educational setting. In most cases, your child will continue to receive a behaviour service.

Communication Service

The Ministry's Communication Service is usually for children under

eight years old. If your child isn't receiving support through ORS, you will need to talk with your child's chosen secondary school about what support they can provide for meeting your child's communication and learning needs. They might need to refer your child to the Ministry if they've developed a new and significant speech-language difficulty (eg, they're stuttering or their speech quality has deteriorated).

Assistive technology and consumables

If your child uses any assistive technology at their current school, or has consumables funded through ORS, these will move with them to secondary school. Please complete a transfer form from your local Special Education office so that we have a record of where the equipment is.

Starting secondary school – what to expect

Your child will find secondary school very different from their primary or intermediate school.

They'll need to get used to new routines, new teachers, new support people and a new school system. Some of the things they might find different about secondary school include:

- ▶ a new and wider set of classmates to get used to
- ▶ having a form teacher and different teachers for each subject (instead of one main teacher for all lessons)
- ▶ different support people from those who worked with them at primary school
- ▶ getting used to a timetable where lessons for different subjects are held in different classrooms
- ▶ finding their way to the next class and getting there on time

- ▶ remembering to bring the right textbooks and gear to each class
- ▶ having to wear a new uniform, possibly for the first time
- ▶ a longer school day
- ▶ new sounds, stimulants and potentially stressors
- ▶ learning unfamiliar subjects, such as languages
- ▶ more homework.

The school day

Most secondary schools have a longer school day than primary/intermediate schools. Students often start at 8.40am and end at 3.20pm. The day normally starts in a form, home or whānau class with a roll call and daily notices.

Students then break into subject classes, moving to different classrooms and different teachers for each subject. In larger schools, teachers teach only their specialist subject(s) and teach hundreds of students each week.

Lessons (called periods) can be 50 minutes to an hour long, and in an average day students will have five or six periods.

Each school has a different timetable system. Schools change their timetables each term and some schools have several different timetables that might rotate weekly throughout the year. Your school will let you know about any changes you need to know about.



Start planning for the changes 12–18 months ahead

Much of what will be familiar to your child and to you is about to change.

- ▶ Even if you haven't yet chosen a secondary school, your child's team will need to start planning around 12–18 months ahead to make sure the practical and emotional supports are well in place when your child starts secondary school.
- ▶ This can be part of your child's regular Individual Education Plan (IEP) process.
- ▶ The Transition Plan needs to look at:
 - transferring funding and other support they receive at primary/intermediate school
 - any property modifications that might be needed (when you've decided on a school, these need to be planned for well before your child starts. For example, some secondary schools have blocks that need lifts to be accessed by a wheelchair)
 - any equipment they need to take with them
 - any support your child needs from peers or a teacher's aide to get around the school and change classes every hour
 - familiarising your child with the new environment and new routines
 - emotional and practical support needed to manage the change of environment
 - preparing the new school.



“I think easily the greatest thing I've achieved is being head boy. Here I am today and I've done what I thought I couldn't do. If I could go back in time and talk to myself when I first started high school I'd probably say to myself, 'If you think you can't do something just think the complete opposite'.”

Zane, student previously receiving ORS

Choices of school

Local schools

Schools are expected to be open and welcoming to every child whatever their ability. Every child stands to benefit from the experience of learning alongside a child with special education needs, just as children with special education needs will learn a great deal from their peers.

The Education Act 1989 makes it clear that every child from the age of five has the right to go to their local school and that this right applies equally to children with special education needs.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also support children with special education needs having the same right to go to school as every child.

Most children with special education needs will be in regular classes and have extra help provided by the school.

If your child has high needs, the school will approach Special

Education to provide direct help for them.

You and your child should be made to feel welcome when approaching any school to enrol. If your local school has an enrolment scheme, then your child usually has to live within the school's enrolment zone.

If you feel a school is being unwelcoming or is reluctant to enrol your child because they have special education needs then this is of concern to the Ministry – please contact a district manager at Special Education if this happens to you.

Schools must make sure children have a safe physical and emotional environment. If this involves making changes to buildings, the school will work with your local Ministry of Education office to provide this support.

Special schools, satellite classes, and special units within regular schools

If your child has high needs, they might be able to go to a day special school, a residential school or a

health school, each helping children with different needs.

Children with high needs might also be able to go to a special class, sometimes known as a satellite class. These are run by a special school but sit on the grounds of a regular school. Some special schools also offer a special education mobile teaching service where children with high needs can be enrolled in their local school but are taught by specialist teachers from the special school.

If you're interested in enrolling your child in a special school you will need to have what is known as a Section 9 Agreement – Section 9 of the Education Act covers enrolment at special schools.

Some regular schools also have units that provide specialist support for children with special education needs. Your child can move between regular classes and the unit.

Special Education staff will give you the information you need to help you work out the best option for your child.

“I love my son to bits and I'd have him no other way and I sometimes think that he's got it all together and we're the ones who haven't!”

Tony



What to look for when choosing a secondary school

Gather information

Your child's key worker can talk with you about your options and help you work out what you need to know and think about and who to talk to at prospective schools.

Get as much information as you can about the schools you're interested in:

- ▶ search the School Directory at www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/SchoolSearch
- ▶ read the information on the school's own website. You might be able to read their charter and their special education policies online – otherwise request copies of these
- ▶ read the school's Education Review Office (ERO) reports (www.ero.govt.nz)
- ▶ talk to other parents who have children at these schools
- ▶ ask to meet with the deans, school guidance counsellors or whoever is responsible for special education needs in the school
- ▶ take a walk around the grounds during the weekend. You'll get to see what facilities are available, the layout of the school, the sort of things on classroom walls and maybe a school noticeboard.

Using this information, make a shortlist and arrange to visit each school and meet the principal. Make a list of questions to take with you. It's also a good idea to take someone else along – your spouse/partner, a friend, whānau or a support person from a disability group.

Things to consider

- ▶ The school's academic record.
- ▶ Are there other children with special education needs in the school and what have their experiences been?
- ▶ How far is the school from home and what travel arrangements will need to be made?
- ▶ Are there any noise distractions, such as an airport or main road?
- ▶ How suitable and adaptable is the school's physical environment?
- ▶ Is there suitable access to classrooms and toilet facilities?
- ▶ The balance between social and academic opportunities provided by the school.
- ▶ What the grounds are like – level or steep and uneven, what fencing and off-street parking is there?
- ▶ Does the school reflect the values and customs of its families, and of your family?

- ▶ What friends from your child's current school might be going there?
- ▶ Where do your other children go to school?

Visiting and getting a feel for the school

It's a good idea to visit a number of schools and get a feel for whether your child would like it there.

- ▶ Do you like the school and does your son or daughter like the school?
- ▶ Does the school have a welcoming attitude?
- ▶ How well would your son or daughter fit in there?
- ▶ How would you describe the culture of the school?
- ▶ Observe and listen to the sounds in the grounds and classrooms to get a feel for how the students are within the school.
- ▶ How are the students playing and getting on with each other?
- ▶ What level of supervision is there?
- ▶ Is it a comfortable place for people of all cultures?

Principals and teachers are used to parents asking questions about what their schools offer. They're keen for you to be involved in your child's learning because they know that the more involved you are, the more successful your child's learning is likely to be.

All schools should be welcoming to your child but they are all different in the ways they are run and provide support. The following questions will help you work out which school best suits your child and the way you want them to be taught. They are meant as a general guide. You know your child and you will know which questions apply to them. Think about anything else that has not been included that you think is important.

Questions to ask

about the learning environment...

- Q:**What additional learning support can the school provide for my son or daughter?
- Q:**What experience do the staff have in supporting children with similar needs?
- Q:**How will the school identify and work with the things my child is interested in and good at?
- Q:**Will my child's teacher's aide or resource teacher change?
- Q:**What will the school do to make sure my child is included in the same activities as all the other students?
- Q:**If there's a school uniform, will we need to make adaptations?
- Q:**What is the classroom layout like and how many students are likely to be in classes?
- Q:**What kind of professional development is there for teachers to teach children with my child's disability?

Other questions I'd like to ask...

Q:

Q:

Q:

Q:

about the school environment...

- Q:**What will the school do to ensure my child feels safe, welcome and accepted?
 - Q:**What sports, clubs and other activities are available for my child?
 - Q:**What are the school's policies on bullying and how do they prevent and respond to bullying?
 - Q:**Is there a 'buddy' system?
 - Q:**Is there wheelchair access at the school and if not what needs to be done to put this in place?
 - Q:**What equipment is currently available to help my child or what equipment will the school need to get (eg, technology, handrails, note-takers, FM systems, etc)?
 - Q:**Is there somewhere my child can go if they need to be in a quiet place for a while?
 - Q:**Are there suitable toileting and showering facilities if my child requires these?
 - Q:**How does the school deal with difficult behaviour?
-

Q:

Q:

about the way the school works...

- Q:**How does the school involve us as parents and families/whānau in our child's schooling and in helping them settle into the new school?
- Q:**How does the school keep in touch with parents and families/whānau?
- Q:**How will the school keep me up-to-date with information about my child's progress?
- Q:**What is the process for giving students medicines and how does it manage medical needs?
- Q:**Does the school have a careers advisor?
- Q:**Will I be able to come to school to help or be with my child in the classroom?
- Q:**Does the school have work experience/ community-based work opportunities in place if we want to access these later?

Q:

Q:

Preparing your child

School visits

School visits should be more than just a one-off if your child is to feel well prepared before they start secondary school.

- ▶ Discuss with the school how many visits your child should have – how often and for how long – so that your child will have a good introduction to the people, routines and environment that will soon be part of their daily life.
- ▶ Identify someone (or a group of children) from your child's existing school who might also be going to the same secondary school. Suggest they visit the school together – they will all benefit and your child might feel less conspicuous in a group.
- ▶ If your secondary school has an orientation day for new students, encourage your child and others from their current school to go.

Schools usually provide a list of everything new students need, which includes stationery.

Most secondary schools have a compulsory uniform, which in many schools includes PE gear. If the uniform cost is an issue check with the school as school parent groups often run second-hand clothing schemes.

Try to have everything ready for your child's first day so the process is smooth and stress is reduced.

How to prepare your child

- ▶ Before your child starts secondary school talk with them about what changes they should expect. Remember the positives as well as the challenges:
 - they'll have an exciting choice of subjects, they'll travel to a new location and might be wearing a uniform for the first time
 - as well as getting the chance to make new friends, it's quite likely they'll be moving to their new school with some friends from their current school who may be feeling just as nervous and excited as they are.

- ▶ Listen to their fears and talk with them about how you can address their concerns.
- ▶ Explain how things like toileting, break time and quiet time will work for your child.
- ▶ To help your child feel confident, make a checklist (using words or pictures) of things they need to take to school each day and the things they need to remember to bring home.

If you show your child that you believe they can manage well at secondary school then this will help them believe in themselves. Try not to let them know about any worries you might have as they may pick up on this and also begin to worry.

What to expect in the early days

Most children take a while to adjust to the longer day, longer classes and variety of classes. Because there is so much to take in, your child might be unsettled at first and more tired than usual.

Ask Special Education staff for a copy of our *Family File* briefing that you can fill out and give to your child's secondary school or take to team meetings.

As happens with many children, they might be moody after school and need more sleep. They might also be hungry when they get home and snack often. This is normal and should settle down after a few months.

How to prepare the school

The school will need to decide on the best way to help your child thrive at secondary school. School staff will want to liaise with other professionals involved in supporting your child, such as their previous teachers, specialists and support people.

The school will need to know:

- ▶ specific information about your child's needs
- ▶ details of any medicines your child takes
- ▶ the names of parents, caregivers, family/whānau and other significant people involved with your child and who to contact in an emergency
- ▶ information about your child's ethnicity and the language you speak at home.

“Well I can say that my mum, she even admitted this to me, she was petrified about me going to high school because she thought, oh I wasn't going to cope and I wouldn't achieve well and I'd get bullied and yeah. I wasn't scared at all 'cos well before I actually went to high school, one of the teachers from high school used to actually come to primary school and do science lessons with us. Yeah I think just sort of having that involvement with the high school before actually going was good.”

Zane, student previously receiving ORS



Support people at secondary school

Your child's lead worker can help you work out what you need to know and think about. The key people who help support students' needs at secondary school are:

Form teacher

Gives out daily notices and takes the roll. Often the first point of contact if your child has any problems or issues they need help with.

Subject teachers

Often teach only certain curriculum areas, such as Mathematics, Science or Languages.

Dean

Provides support and academic guidance to students. A good person to talk to if you have questions or concerns about your child that can't be addressed by the form teacher.

HOD (Head of Department) or HOF (Head of Faculty)

Oversees subject teachers eg, HOD English.

Careers advisor

Helps students with career information, tertiary course requirements, scholarships, etc.

Guidance counsellor

Helps parents and students with personal matters eg, stress, bullying.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher

Supports students for whom English is a second or other language.

Learning support teacher

Supports students with particular learning difficulties or special abilities.

NCEA liaison teacher

Has an overview of NCEA results and can help with questions about missing assessments, financial assistance, credits not being recorded accurately, etc.

“The hardest thing I found was my son moving to high school/college. There were more issues there than any other time. More kids, more different people, more staff, those sorts of things.”

Tony

Choosing school subjects

A key time when your child needs help is when they're choosing the subjects they want to study in Year 11. In most schools this happens midway through Year 10. This is when they need to start looking into the qualifications they'll need when they leave school.

Tertiary courses have differing requirements, so your child needs to make sure they keep their options open as long as possible, especially if they're not sure what they want to do.

In addition to the traditional subject areas, many schools offer courses that lead to trades or vocations, such as travel and tourism, engineering and hospitality. These courses may be assessed by unit standards and credited to the NCEA.

Careers advisors

The school's careers advisor should be involved as soon as a transition plan is being prepared. They will be able to provide advice on subject choices and how they might affect

your child's future options. In many cases they might be able to help your child to develop an individual learning plan. They can also advise on whether there are some subjects, like English and Mathematics, that are compulsory.

The Careers Services website, www.careers.govt.nz has useful information to help your son or daughter work out their best subject choices.



Preparing to leave secondary school

Leaving school is an important step for all young people. It can be an exciting time and also a stressful time.

- ▶ Starting to think and plan early is the key to making the transition from school to adult life as easy as possible.
- ▶ Most young people will need a transition plan in place by the time they're 14 but some might have one earlier, depending on when they plan to leave school.
- ▶ Planning for your son or daughter to leave secondary school should involve the full team of people who have been supporting them, including:
 - your son or daughter
 - their friends and family friends
 - you and your family/whānau
 - the school
 - representatives from community service providers or Government organisations.
- ▶ An Individual Transition Plan (sometimes called a Career Plan) is usually developed by the team of people who will be supporting your son or daughter, including you, and outlines:
 - your son's or daughter's goals
 - how they will achieve those goals
 - what support your son or daughter will need for employment, study, financial independence, taking part in community activities and groups, cultural support, leisure activities, living arrangements, mobility, transport, peer relationships, sexuality and self-esteem
 - what happens with any equipment your son or daughter uses at school and what equipment they'll need when they leave school.

See our booklet
*Preparing to leave
school* for more
details and the support
available for moving
into tertiary education,
employment, and living
in the community.



Information available to teachers

In the same way that there's support for you and your child, there's a wealth of information, training and support available for teachers. Knowing what's available can help you work in partnership with your child's teachers as you share ideas and learn about new approaches.

The educator's section of the Ministry of Education's website provides access to research, resources and information on processes, training opportunities, guidelines and more. Find out more by visiting the special education section.

Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI – the learning basket) is a bilingual portal and web community that provides educational material for New Zealand teachers, school managers and the wider education community – visit www.tki.org.nz.

ĒTAHI ATU ĀWHINA KA HIAHIA PEA KOE

Other support you might need

It's important to form a circle of supporters/friends around your child who are focused and committed to them. The combined energies of a group of people can become a powerful force in your child's life. They can also give you as parents energy, and help you remain connected and supported within your whānau and community. Check out our information sheet *Support organisations and useful contacts* to connect with other organisations in your community.



How to contact us

Below are the contact details for Special Education offices around New Zealand.

For special education information or advice you can also call the free Special Education information line on 0800 622 222 or email us at **special.education@minedu.govt.nz**.

If you are deaf or have a hearing impairment, you can also contact us through the New Zealand Relay Service on 0800 4 711 711 or go to www.nzrelay.co.nz.

Select the area that's closest to you:

Tai Tokerau District Office

10 Awaroa River Road
PO Box 911
Whangarei 0140
Ph: 09 436 8900
Fax: 09 436 8902

Northwest District Office

Level 1, 102 Rosedale Road
Albany, North Shore City
PO Box 305160
Triton Plaza
North Shore City 0757
Ph: 09 487 1100
Fax: 09 487 1187

Manukau District Office

Unit I, 16 Bishop Dunn Place
Botany South
PO Box 217046
Botany Junction
Manukau 2164
Ph: 09 265 3000
Fax: 09 265 3199

Auckland City District Office

Level 3, Eden 5 Building
12–18 Normanby Road
Mt Eden
Private Bag 92 644
Symonds St
Auckland 1150
Ph: 09 632 9400
Fax: 09 632 9401

Waikato District Office

19 Home Straight
Te Rapa
PO Box 774
Hamilton 3240
Ph: 07 850 8880
Fax: 07 850 8998

Bay of Plenty East District Office

Level 3, Regional House
1 Elizabeth Street
Tauranga 3110
Ph: 07 571 7800
Fax: 07 571 7864

Bay of Plenty West District Office

Level 3, 1144 Pukaki Street
PO Box 701
Rotorua 3040
Ph: 07 343 1371
Fax: 07 349 2560

Gisborne District Office

39 Gladstone Road
PO Box 658
Gisborne 4040
Ph: 06 869 1520
Fax: 06 869 1521
Free ph: 0508 656 565

Hawke's Bay District Office

8 A Lever Street, Ahuriri
PO Box 147
Napier 4110
Ph: 06 833 6730
Fax: 06 833 6731

Taranaki District Office

Level 4, PWC Centre
54 Gill Street
PO Box 8158
New Plymouth 4342
Ph: 06 757 6400
Fax: 06 758 4135

Central District Office

1–3 Oxford Street
(cnr of Ferguson and Oxford Street)
PO Box 1154, Palmerston North 4440
Ph: 06 357 9245
Fax: 06 355 0503

Greater Wellington District Office

Level 2, 19 Market Grove
PO Box 30 177, Lower Hutt 5040
Ph: 04 439 4600
Fax: 04 570 3667

Marlborough/Nelson/West Coast District Office

19 Haven Road
PO Box 282, Nelson 7040
Ph: 03 546 3470
Fax: 03 539 1501

Canterbury District Office

39 Princess Street
PO Box 2522, Christchurch 8140
Ph: 03 378 7300
Fax: 03 378 7302

Otago District Office

414 Moray Place
Private Bag 1971, Dunedin 9054
Ph: 03 471 5200
Fax: 03 479 0541

Southland District Office

190 Forth Street
PO Box 887, Invercargill 9840
Ph: 03 211 8000
Fax: 03 211 8001