



Rationale

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Parents/carers and their advocates are recognised as significant participants in negotiating and planning their child's education. Consultation is vital and must occur.

Transitioning from one school or setting to another, or from school to post-school options, is a significant event for children, young people, and their families. It is a time when parents/carers want to ensure that their child will be welcomed, understood, and supported in their new environment. This is particularly important for parents/carers of children with additional needs.

It is also a time when parents/carers and their children seek to gather information so that they can fully explore the options available and make informed decisions about what will be the best for their child.

This resource package aims to assist parents/carers and their children as they explore options, make decisions, and plan and prepare for a smooth and supportive transition process, and to build strong relationships with key personnel in their child's new setting. It also aligns with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards – standard 3.1

"Families and carers participate in decisions affecting their child."



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Decisions about the best schools for children requiring additional support can seem daunting. Visiting schools you're interested in and talking with principals about how schools can meet your child's needs will help you find the right school for your child.

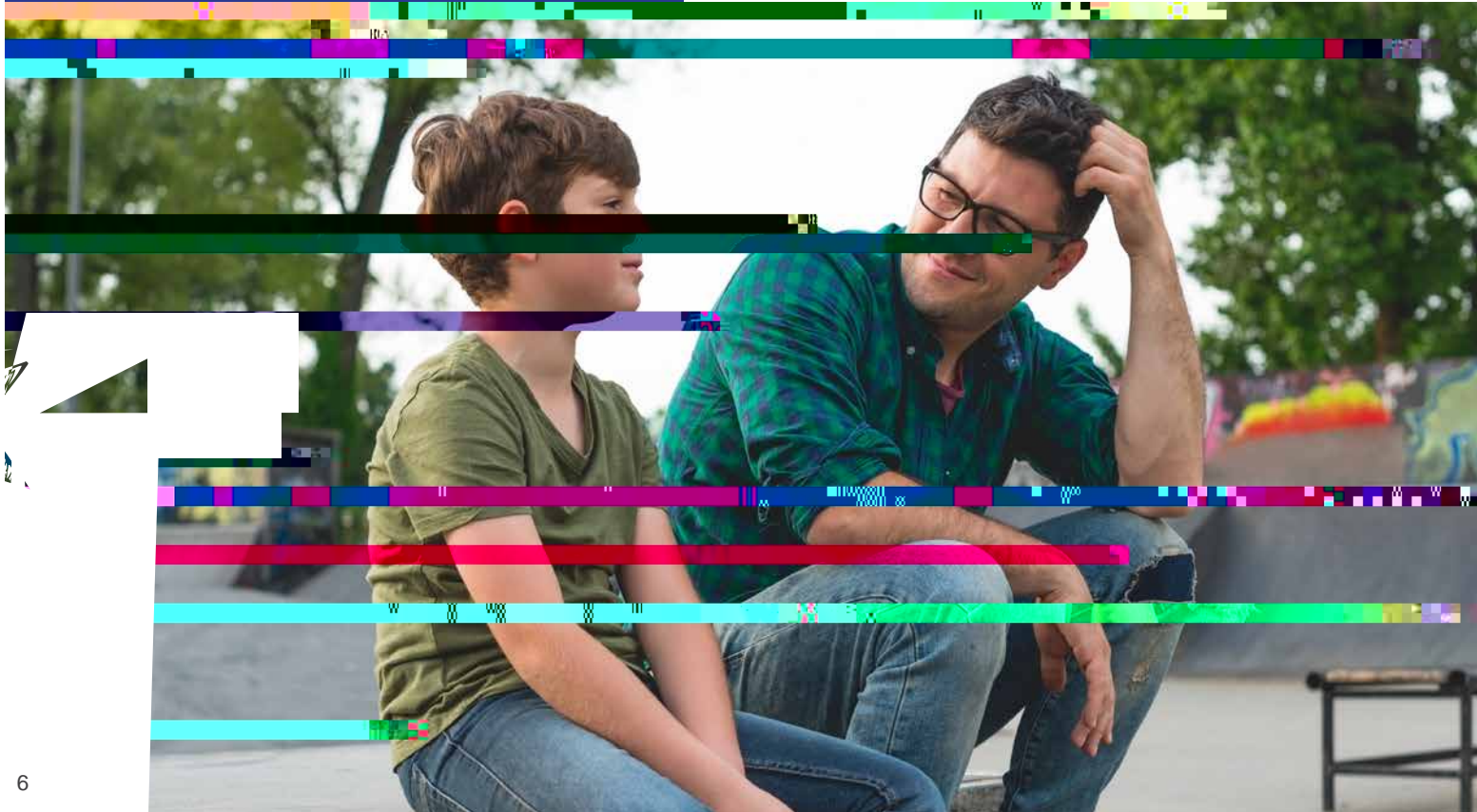
Decisions about where your child goes to school are very personal and can be difficult. It's common and normal to feel anxious about getting this decision right.

All families have a lot to think about when they're choosing schools, including distance, finances, and availability of before and after school care. When your child has a disability, you're likely to have extra considerations – for example, accessibility or learning support.

School open days and tours will give you a general feel for a school. It can help to take a friend or a disability advocate with you, so you can both gather information and discuss it afterwards.

When you're researching a school or when you go to an open day or on a tour, it can help to think about the school's physical environment, transport options, attitude to diversity and difference, approach to additional needs, and policies.

Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Schools have a range of policies to ensure the wellbeing of students and staff and to keep schools running smoothly. These include policies on emergency procedures, management of medical conditions, bullying, attendance, student engagement and many other things. You can ask for copies of these documents.



## Physical access

You could ask the principal to tour the school with you to talk about accessibility, if this is a concern for your child. For example:

- f How would you adjust the environment, so all areas of the school are accessible for my child?
- f How long will the adjustments take to be implemented?
- f How will any changes be funded?

## Safety

If your child tends to wander or has particular safety issues, you could ask some questions like these:

- f What kind of school security do you have during school hours?
- f How do staff keep track of children?
- f How often is the roll taken?
- f What happens if a student is missing?
- f What happens if there are strangers at or near the school?

## Learning

Your child might need adjustments to tasks and activities in some or all areas of the curriculum. You could ask about changes relevant to your child's needs. For example:

- f How will my child who uses a wheelchair be included in outdoor physical games?
- f How will my child with limited hand movement be included in table activities?
- f How will my child using a communication device be included in the literacy program?
- f How will my child be included in school camps and excursions?
- f How will my child have the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths?
- f Will my child have a targeted resilience program to support her emotional health and wellbeing?
- f What adjustments can be made to ensure that my child's learning needs are met?

## Communication

You might ask about communication within the school. For example:

- f Who will get the information about my child's needs and strategies to support him?
- f How will information about how best to teach my child be passed on to teachers and other relevant staff from one year to the next?
- f How will the school ensure that the strategies in my child's Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. plan or behaviour support plan are put into practice by all staff who work with my child, and who will monitor their progress ?

And you can also ask how school staff will communicate with you. For example:

- f How will you let me know about everyday things?
- f How often will we have a personalised planning meeting?
- f Who should I talk to if I have concerns?

## Complex care needs

If your child has complex medical or personal care needs, you might want to ask questions like the following:

- f How can the school meet my child's needs so s/he is cared for safely and with dignity, privacy and respect?
- f Who is the school's first aid officer?
- f Who will be managing my child's medical and/or personal care needs?
- f How many staff will be trained in managing my child's needs? Will there always be someone available to cover staff absences?

## Social interaction

Here are some examples of questions to ask about social interaction for your child:

- f How does the school encourage and support social interaction generally?
- f Is help available in the playground to encourage, supervise and support social interaction?

- f Is there a supervised room available at lunchtime for students to play board games and other activities?
- f Is there a supervised space that my child can access to rest for a short period during the day if needed?
- f Where can my child go if s/he needs some quiet time?
- f My child experiences social anxiety, how will they be supported?
- f How does the school manage the interactions between older and younger students?

## Transport

It's worth checking out practical things like transport. For example:

- f Does the school have a bus (or other transport) service for students?
- f What areas does the bus service go to?
- f Do we have to pay for this?
- f How will the bus service accommodate my child who uses a wheelchair?
- f Will my child be eligible for the Assisted School Travel Program ?

## Outside school hours care

If you need out of school hours (OOSH) care, here are some questions to ask:

- f Does the school provide an OOSH program, or is there an arrangement with a school nearby that provides one?
- f How will the program look after my child's needs?

(Adapted from Raising Children Australian Parenting Website (n.d.). Choosing primary schools: Children with disability.)

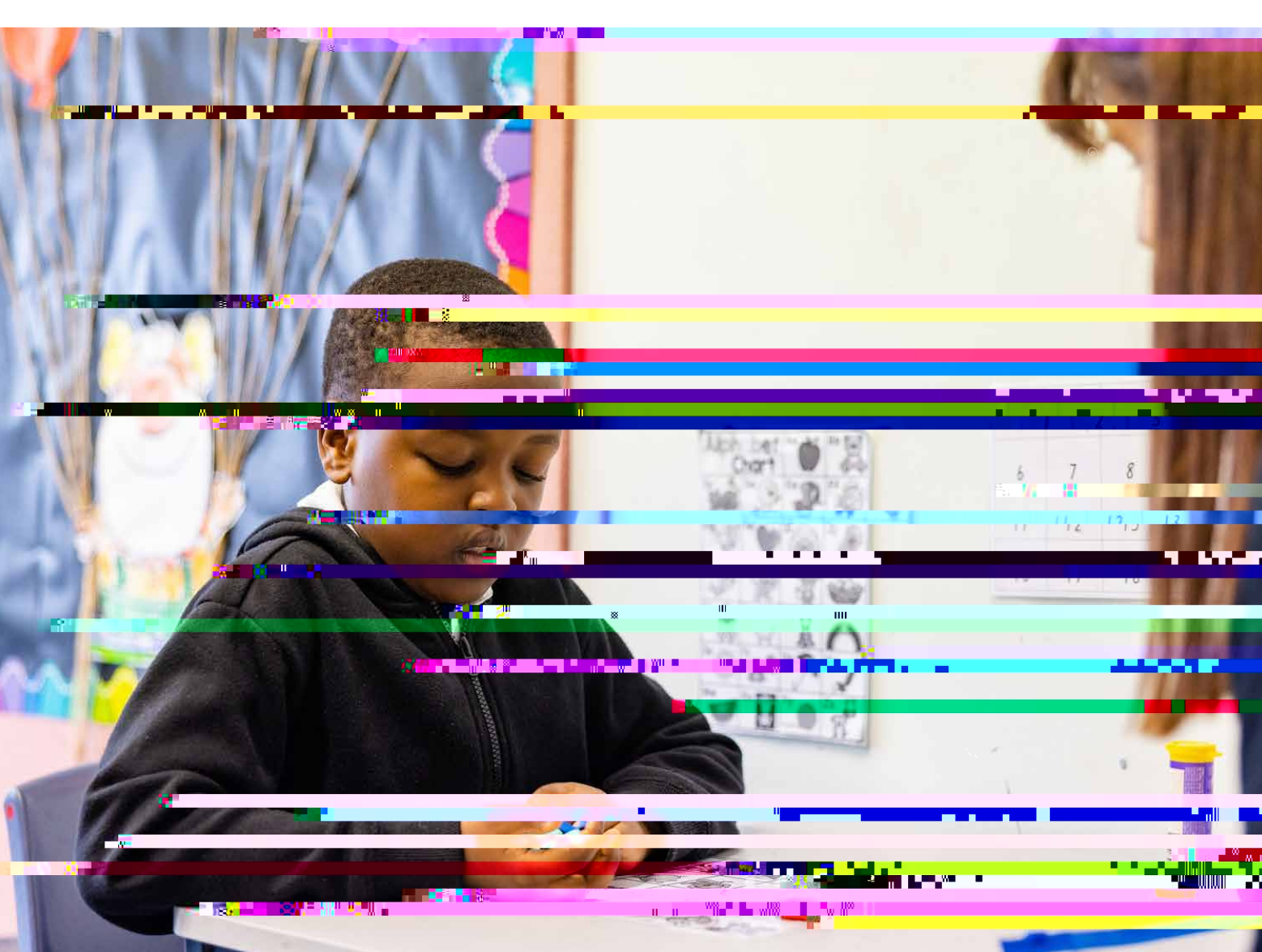
For further suggestions, you may wish to refer to Supporting Diverse Learning Needs in Catholic Schools - A Guide for Parents by Parents

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Catholic Schools







### Independent Schools

ALESCO: This is a senior college, established by ATWEA, for vulnerable students whose circumstances have previously prohibited them from succeeding in mainstream education. It provides an adult learning environment that is designed specifically to support inclusion and individual needs, catering for students in Year 9 and older. There are currently 6 campuses across the diocese.

Note: Further information please contact Alesco Senior College on 02 4925 4200, or visit [www.asc.nsw.edu.au](http://www.asc.nsw.edu.au) or download a brochure from <https://atwea.edu.au/high-school-at-alesco/>

Arise Christian College: is a school of Specific Purpose which caters for students with a diagnosed disability. Our core focus is as a learning facility which engages students in remedial literacy and numeracy while also speaking into critical life-skills and independent living skills. <https://www.arisecc.nsw.edu.au/>

Autism Spectrum Australia: Aspect Hunter School provides education for students on the autism spectrum across nine sites, including main school site at Thornton (primary and high school) and in satellite classes in a mainstream school. Aspect Hunter School also offers a

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- f To be eligible for Kindergarten enrolment in diocesan schools, pupils must celebrate their fifth birthday on or before 31 May of the year in which their parents seek enrolment for them.

(This varies from NSW government advice which states that the minimum starting age for a child to be enrolled in a NSW school is four years and six



1. Provide information about the school and comparisons about other educational settings to enquiring parents

2. Send application forms to parents

4. Pre-enrolment interview and school tour with staff member (complete requested documentation as per Enrolment Checklist Pg 13)

For those identified as requiring significant support at school, school to send information to Catholic Schools Office for an Education Officer, Support and Wellbeing to observe student in current school/preschool setting and support and confirm enrolment or suggest an alternative educational setting that would better meet the student needs

4. Process application

For those identified as requiring significant support at school, school to send information to Catholic Schools Office for an Education Officer, Support and Wellbeing to observe student in current school/preschool setting and support and confirm enrolment or suggest an alternative educational setting that would better meet the student needs

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## Required for Enrolment

- Completed Enrolment Application for Catholic Schools
- Signed Pre-enrolment – Parent Permission – Release of Information Form
- Pre-enrolment Questionnaire (This may be completed during a pre-enrolment interview)
- Reports from medical or allied health professions (if available), preferably within last 12 months including:
  - Letter of diagnosis (from medical specialists)
  - Assessment reports (e.g. from paediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, audiologist, ophthalmologist).
  - Therapy reports

## If Applicable

- Educational reports from current school (semester reports, NAPLAN results, standardised test results)
- NDIS plan and/or progress report
- Permanency Support Plan
- Signed Parent Permission Form – Referral to Education Officer (if your child requires significant support)
- Copy of court orders for care arrangements

## Additional documents and information that may be useful for transition

### Beginning Kindergarten

Transitioning from another school

- Contact details of key personnel from current setting
- Photo of your child
- Transition To School/Secondary School Student Profile (Completed by/with your child)

Year 11- to Year 12

- Documentation to support application to NESA for Disability Provisions for HSC exams. This may include medical reports, letters of diagnosis, therapist assessment reports, health care management plans, etc.

Note: Applications for disability provisions open in Term 4 of the year prior to the HSC exam.

Further information about Disability Provisions is provided in this document, contact the school's Learning Support Coordinator or click on the link below: [Disability Provisions Guide for Teachers and Parents](#)

Post School

['Let's Talk About Work'](#) or ['Get Ready for Study or Work'](#) booklet

Areas of interest for work, study or community participation

List of strengths and skills, and areas for support

Discuss the School Leaver Individual Transition Plan at a collaborative planning meeting with your child's school.

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(Enrolment Procedure Page 6 of 10 Issue Date:  
October 2021)







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Whether they are planning to enter the workforce (paid, supported or voluntary), pursue further study, focus on community participation and/or independent living goals, or a combination of these, there are many things to take into account, and plenty of practical steps that be can taken to ensure that they are the best prepared they can be when they take the big step in their life.

It is really important to remember that parental involvement in transition planning and activities is vital and makes a crucial difference to a young person's outcomes in their after school pathway. Research shows that when parents/carers are involved in transition, their young person has an easier transition and achieves more after school.

The school's Learning Support Coordinator or Teacher will work with you and your child to develop a post-school transition plan. This process should begin as early as possible, but no later than term 1 of the year your child is finishing school.

The following are examples of the types of positive roles you can play during the transition planning period:

- f participate directly in meetings at school where transition plans and goals are discussed and agreed
- f maintain an open and constructive relationship with the professionals involved in school-based transition planning and seek their advice
- f help your son or daughter gather information about and understand their options
- f initiate and encourage your young person to give substantial consideration to their goals and which options suit them best
- f assist your young person to develop the skills, independence and resilience they will need in life after school
- f get involved in practical activities with your daughter or son, such as work experience, visiting potential future education/training or work settings and/or practicing travelling independently
- f guide your young person to work out what supports they will need, how to get them and who to speak to, perhaps make the first contact with a disability service that could help in the post-school setting



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## General

National Disability Coordination Of cer (NDCO) Program

The Australian Government's NDCO Program works strategically to assist people with disability access and participate in tertiary education and subsequent employment, through a national network of regionally based NDCOs.

To find your nearest NDCO, go to [Website link here](#)

NDIS – School Leaver information

[Website link here.](#)

NDIS – Service Provider Finder

[Website link here.](#)

## Transition to community participation

NDIS

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School contact details can be found on the  
websites below.

Primary Schools: [https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/  
primary-schools/](https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/primary-schools/)

Secondary schools [https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/  
secondary-schools/](https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/schools/secondary-schools/)

If further information is required, a secondary point of contact may  
be the Professional Of cer, Family Engagement at the Catholic  
Schools Of ce, who supports the role of parents and carers to  
engage with their child's education.

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You can also find information on the Catholic Schools Office website that may further assist you.



02 4979 1200  
841 Hunter Street  
Newcastle West 2300  
NSW Australia  
[www.mn.catholic.edu.au](http://www.mn.catholic.edu.au)