

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Tuesday, 24 October 2023

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Allan Labor Government is giving hundreds of Victorian families more support, with access to High Intensity Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) specifically designed and staffed for students with disability set to roll out to more government specialist schools from next year.

OSHC services will get underway for the first time at 15 more specialist schools in 2024, delivering on the Labor Government's promise to Victorians at last year's election to build on a pilot program established in 2018.

Parents have told us one of their biggest challenges is finding care that suits their kids' need outside hours or in school holidays – and if they can find a service at all, it's rarely affordable.

The pilot of OSHC in five specialist schools across Victoria made a profound difference to kids – they showed improvements in their educational and emotional outcomes, parents reported improved wellbeing, and 92 per cent of mums and dads had either taken up, or were planning to, extra work or training.

Part of a \$235 million investment in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* to support students with disability and their families, the five pilot schools will continue to provide OSHC alongside the 15 new sites – with a further ten schools to follow in 2025 and 2026.

The services will be completely free for families to use, with high educator-to-child ratios and activities, excursions and school holiday programs tailored to the needs of children with disability.

Services at pilot schools Bendigo Special Developmental School, Jackson School, Kalianna Special School, Officer Specialist School and Yarrabah School will continue, while OSHC will get underway for the first time in 2024 at:

- Ballarat Specialist School
- Diamond Valley Special Development School
- Lake Colac School
- Melton Specialist School
- Nelson Park School
- Sunbury & Macedon Ranges Specialist School
- Wayi School
- Yarraville Special Developmental School
- Concord School
- Emerson School
- Marnebek School Cranbourne
- Monash Special Developmental School
- South Gippsland Specialist School
- Warringa Park School
- Western Autistic School

Of the 20 schools, six are located across regional Victoria – with two services in Bendigo and one each in Ballarat, Geelong, Colac and Leongatha.

This builds on \$3 billion the Labor Government has already delivered for inclusive education – an upgrade to every single specialist school in our state, more support for students in the classroom and facilities so every child gets the chance to play, learn and grow, no matter their needs.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Parents and carers of children at specialist schools have told us finding care outside school hours is one of the biggest challenges they face. We're giving families the support they need so they spend less time juggling caring with work or study, and more time with their loved ones."

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Quote attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

“We owe it to every Victorian child to give them the very best opportunities in life – this will make sure families of children with disability get the tailored care they deserve in the familiar environment of their own schools.”