



FACT SHEET FOR SPECIALIST LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

- Autism is the fastest growing disability in children. There are well over 4000 students with a diagnosis of ASD in West Australian public schools.
- On 26 August 2016 Education Minister Peter Collier announced that Gosnells Primary School will be the first school to host one of 16 new programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This program commenced in February 2017. By 2020 all 16 Specialist Learning Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder will be operational within existing mainstream schools - eight primary programs and eight secondary programs.
- The programs are for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with a diagnosis of ASD, without accompanying intellectual disability, who are at significant risk of disengagement and underachievement, and who may display complex and challenging behaviour.
- Accommodation will consist of three 'homerooms', catering for 22 to 25 students with ASD in the primary program and 12-18 students with ASD in the secondary program. The staffing profile for each program will consist of a Level 3 program coordinator, three teachers and up to ten Level 3 education assistants.
- The programs will target age-appropriate academic skills whilst also addressing the challenges associated with ASD, such as socialisation (joint attention, social reciprocity, social cognition), emotional regulation, and restricted interests and repetitive behaviour. Students will receive intensive instruction and have regular access to mainstream classes with additional support.
- SSEND has worked collaboratively with Disability Services and Support (DSS) throughout the project development. SSEND support for the programs includes the development of the Operational Framework and educational service delivery model, specification for the ICT requirements and fit out of the homerooms, professional learning for the host school and appointed staff, support to the host school in relation to staff and student selection and overall evaluation of the project.
- SSEND will continue to provide ongoing professional learning and support to host schools and networks where required.