



Disability Support Unit Parent Guide



What is the Support Unit?

As of 2021, Oran Park High School has 4 specialist classes for students with disability who require additional learning and support for their education. These classes are collectively known as The Support Unit.



Who does the Support unit cater for?

The specialist classes at Oran Park High School currently support students with disability including students with:

- Autism
- Emotional and/or mental health difficulties
- Intellectual disability
- Physical disability.

How do students enrol into the Support Unit?

Placement into specialist classes within NSW Government schools is done with the assistance of a [regional team](#) through an application process known as an 'access request'.

For information about enrolments into the support unit please contact your school counsellor or Learning and Support Team at your local school.

You might like to use the [school locator](#) to research regular and special schools which have specialist classes.

How will the Support Unit help my child?



Each of our classes is staffed by a specialist education teacher and supported by a School Learning Support Officer (SLSO). Class sizes are limited to ensure all students have increased support with their learning.

Our staff receive specialist training to use evidence based practices that support the learning and wellbeing needs of students with disability.

We encourage multi-sensory, hands on learning in a structured yet stimulating and supportive learning environment. Our classes have a strong emphasis on personalised learning goals that encourage students to develop skills needed for independent living.

What will my child learn in the Support Unit?

Students in **Years 7-10** complete the same mandatory curriculum courses as all students in order to achieve their Record of School Achievement (RoSA). This involves the study of:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- History and Geography
- Visual Arts and Music
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- Technology
- Languages



Students may access mainstream outcomes, Life Skills outcomes or a combination of both to achieve their RoSA.

In **Years 11-12** students work towards a Higher School Certificate (HSC) by completing courses that meet the pattern of study requirements. Students often undertake study in courses such as:

- English Life Skills
- Mathematics Life Skills
- Science Life Skills
- Work in the Community Life Skills
- Technology Life Skills
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Life Skills
- Creative Arts Life Skills
- Human Society and Its Environment Life Skills

What are Life Skills courses?

Life Skills courses provide options for students with disability who are unable to access regular courses.

Life Skills courses place emphasis on:

- Communication
- Practical application of skills
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Skills for independent living

Life Skills courses are not awarded an A-E grade.

There are no formal examinations required for Life Skills courses and they cannot be used in the calculation of an ATAR score.

Students studying Life Skills courses are exempt from completing HSC minimum standards tests.

Can students study VET courses in the Support Unit?

Students in Years 11-12 in the Support Unit can enrol in vocational education training (VET) courses offered by the school or through external agencies such as TAFE.

All students enrolling into VET courses are required to complete mandatory work placements and this is an important consideration when choosing to study a VET course.

Will my child have a learning and support plan?

Yes, all students in the Support Unit work towards personalised learning goals that are established through a learning and support plan. This is a formal requirement for students in specialist classes.



Each year students, parents/carers, and any other significant people are invited to participate in a meeting with teachers to collaboratively discuss and plan for the academic, social, emotional and/or health care goals for students.

Student and parental input in this plan is very important and is both welcomed and encouraged.

Will my child's place in the Support Unit be reviewed?

Yes, every year schools are required to review a student's enrolment into specialist classes.

Reviews consider all aspects of a student's personalised learning and support, including whether or not the current placement is best meeting their learning and support needs.

Parental input is welcomed and encouraged for this review.

Can my child still participate in whole school activities if they are in the Support Unit?

Absolutely. Students in the Support Unit are valued members of the school community and participate in the same whole school activities such as assemblies, camps, sporting carnivals, cultural and community celebrations.

Students in the Support Unit follow the same fortnightly timetable as all students and integrate with all students at break times for recess and lunch. Oran Park High School does not have a separate playground facility for students in the Support Unit, but they are able to access a quiet area known as the Sensory Garden.

My child has an NDIS plan. Can NDIS service providers work with my child during school hours?

The NSW Department of Education and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) recommend that therapy services funded through an NDIS support plan are best delivered outside of school time. This allows the school to focus on teaching and ensures your child does not miss out on important learning time. However, the school recognises that sometimes a student may benefit from therapies delivered during school time.

You will need to discuss all requests for NDIS services delivered during school time with the Head Teacher Disability Support. Decisions about requests for NDIS services on school site will be made by the school Principal and will take into consideration access requirements that ensure that the school is able to run to benefit all students and without disrupting learning.

Before starting work, service providers will be asked to show that they comply with certain legal requirements. This includes a Working with Children Check clearance for anyone working in the school.



Can my child access assisted transport to get to school?

All families are responsible for the transport of their children to and from school. Families who have a child with a disability may be eligible for transport through the Assisted School Travel Program (ASTP).

The program supports those eligible students who need transport assistance in order to attend school due to the nature of the student's disability and the circumstances of the family.

Applications for transport are completed jointly by both parents and the school. The school is not responsible for the outcome of the application and enquires relating to this need to be made directly with the ASTP department on 1300 338 278 or parent.astp@det.nsw.edu.au

Eligible families who access this service are required to notify taxi drivers of any student absences. Transport services are not able to be varied to support attendance at school excursions or camps.

How will the Support Unit prepare my child for life after school?

For Students in Year 7-9 there will be opportunities for students to participate in community access excursions throughout the school year. These excursions offer students the opportunity to develop skills in:

- using public transport for travel
- accessing local community spaces
- participating in community events
- moving around the environment with confidence.

The school will make every effort to reduce the cost of any excursions, but some activities may attract a fee for participation and/or travel costs. Where students are accessing public transport, we ask families to provide an Opal card for their child to use.

For students in Years 10-12 there is a strong emphasis on transition that builds on individual strengths and interest areas to encourage community participation and alternative employment pathways.

The school will support students to access one of two optional transition to work programs:

- independent work experience placement
- supported job crew for students requiring higher levels of assistance.

Students accessing independent work experience placements will be required to have skills for independent travel or alternatively supported by parents/carers to access work sites. Families can also choose to access NDIS service providers to help with work experience placements.

Student participation in supported job crew work experience is dependent on the availability of staffing and resources.

The school is also supported by a [Support Teacher Transition](#) who can assist families to access specialist programs and support provided by other government agencies such as the NDIS.

Who can I talk to if I need more information?

For information relating to enrolments in the Support Unit speak to the School Counsellor or Learning and Support Team at your school.

For information relating to your child's learning at Oran Park High School, speak to the key teacher who is coordinating their learning and support plan.

For additional information contact the Head Teacher, Disability Support at the school.

