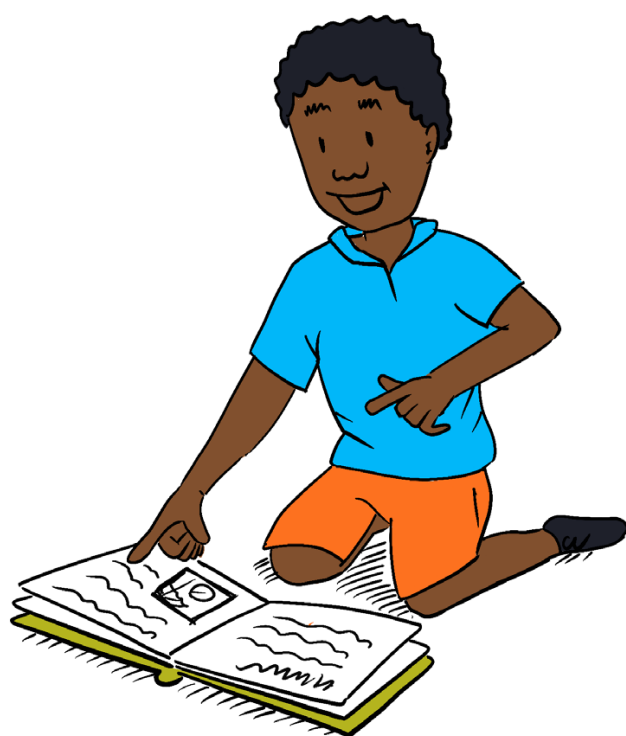




DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

2024 - 2028





Department of Education

Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Guide for Schools

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This Policy can be used by stakeholders, development partners, state actors, non-state actors, church education agencies, and private education agencies, public and private organizations and individuals to support the growth and expansion of inclusive education in Papua New Guinea.

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INTRODUCTION

In order to support schools and Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERCs) to implement the ***Inclusive Education Policy*** document, the National Department of Education (NDoE) is providing this guidance document.

This guide provides advice, strategies, and examples for implementing the ***Inclusive Education Policy***. It is designed for use by teachers, head teachers and school boards and can be used by other stakeholders who support schools in the national education system.

This guide recommends good practices that schools can use to support an inclusive education experience for all students, including learners with disabilities and additional learning needs. Inclusive education supports everyone to access quality educational opportunities, thereby fostering holistic development, and maximizing all students' potential for success.

The Inclusive Education Policy sits alongside the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy, and the GESI in Schools Implementation Guide can also be used to support inclusive education in schools.

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Policy Reference: Section A: Policy, 8. Definitions

It is important to first be clear about what we mean by inclusive education. The following definitions explain some of the important terms.

Inclusive Education: A process to ensure all students in the community, whatever their background, their ability or their disability, have equitable access to quality teaching and learning in education institutions which is adapted to their learning needs. All students are welcomed, valued and supported to reach their full potential.

Disability: Long-term physical, sensory, cognitive or social/emotional impairment that affects the functioning of a person and which interacts with environmental and social barriers that hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Additional Learning Needs: Students with additional learning needs may require additional support in areas including schoolwork, expressing themselves or understanding what other people are saying, making friends or relating to adults, behaving appropriately at school, or have medical, physical or sensory needs (long or short term). Additional learning needs include: dyslexia, attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADD/ADHD), gifted students (students who give evidence of high performance capability), students with behavioural and emotional difficulties, students with speech and language difficulties.

Special Needs: Any of various difficulties (such as a physical, emotional, behavioural, or learning disability or impairment) that causes an individual to require additional or specialised services or accommodations (such as in education or recreation). In the Inclusive Education Policy, the more inclusive term 'students with disabilities and additional learning needs' has been used in place of 'students with special needs'.

Individual Education Plan: A written plan that describes the adjustments, goals and strategies to meet a student's individual needs so they can reach their full potential.

Differentiated Learning: An approach where teachers adjust their curriculum and instruction to match the learning needs of all students.

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Policy Pointers: Section B: Implementation Procedures, 4. Principles and Values

The Inclusive Education Policy shares core principles and values embedded within the 1975 Constitution and the Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, and also recognises and aligns with the principles in the **National Department of Education, Behavior Management Policy** and **Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Schools Policy**. The following core principles and values underpin the Inclusive Education Policy:

- 1.** All students can learn well in a friendly and caring school with accessible infrastructure, the right tools, knowledgeable teachers, and help from their parents.
- 2.** Students with disabilities and additional learning needs have the right to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity at all levels of the education system and throughout their life.
- 3.** The National Education System can support all students, including students with disabilities and additional learning needs, to transition successfully through all levels of schooling and into adult life.
- 4.** School structures, teaching and student learning systems, assessment and teaching methodologies can be flexible and designed to meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities and additional learning needs.
- 5.** School systems have a responsibility to ensure their policies, procedures and practices prevent students with disabilities and additional learning needs from being harmed as well as steps to respond and investigate reports of harm when they happen.
- 6.** An inclusive education system is the foundation to building communities in which every child and adult experiences a sense of identity and belonging.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (IE) POLICY RULES

Policy Pointers: Section A: Policy, 5: Policy Rules

The IE Policy has rules that all stakeholders must follow.

- 1.** The Inclusive Education (IE) Policy must be effectively implemented in the Papua New Guinea school system.
- 2.** SLIPs must include activities to improve access and learning for students with disabilities and additional learning needs.
- 3.** All stakeholders and partners must support the implementation of the IE Policy through the fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities.
- 4.** All stakeholders must collaborate to develop referral pathways, child-friendly services, and coordination mechanisms.
- 5.** All students with disabilities and additional learning needs must have equal access to all sectors of education for quality teaching and learning in line with the National Education Plan (2020-2029).
- 6.** Students with disabilities and additional learning needs should receive education services in their local school whenever possible with the IERC providing support to both the child's school, teacher and parent/s.
- 7.** Some students may experience barriers preventing them from accessing mainstream education and will require enrollment at the IERC for support from a specialist teacher. Every effort must be made to transition these students into mainstream schools.
- 8.** All students with disabilities or additional learning needs must receive an assessment screening using the "Whole Child Checklist" by specialist IERC teachers, or trained teachers in the school system.
- 9.** All mainstream schools must register their students with disabilities and additional learning needs with the nearest IERC, maintain a record of screening assessments and Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and report disaggregated disability and additional learning needs data in the annual school census.
- 10.** All schools and IERCs must develop, implement, and review Individual Education Plans (IEP) on an annual basis for all students with disabilities and additional learning needs in consultation with the child's parents.
- 11.** Equal access to the curriculum must be provided to all students through the provision of reasonable adjustments and adjustments, as indicated with that student's IEP.
- 12.** Leaders of schools must receive training in the IE Policy and implementation procedures.
- 13.** All teachers must receive quality and specialised training on inclusive education through pre- and in-service training.
- 14.** School inspections will include an assessment of the school's inclusive education planning, practices, and records in line with the National Quality Schools Standards Framework (NQSSF) and the IE Policy.
- 15.** Guidance officers must provide guidance and counselling for all teachers and students
- 16.** Transition pathways must be developed to make education accessible for all learners across all sectors of education.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

Section 1 of the guide contains information to support the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy. It recommends good practice that schools can use to improve access, participation, and learning for students with disabilities and additional learning needs. There are policy references which highlight the most relevant part of the IE Policy, and examples to illustrate how the good practices described can be put into action.

Under the policy rules, schools have a responsibility to include activities to improve access and learning for students with disabilities and additional learning needs in the School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP).

Section 2 provides guidance on how to develop a School Learning Improvement Plan IE Policy action plan. IE Policy action plans must be included under the relevant focus areas of the School Learning Improvement Plan.

Working with the Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERCs)

To help schools develop an inclusive approach, the Department of Education has a network of Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERCs). The IE Policy emphasises the central role of IERCs in ensuring children with disabilities and additional learning needs can participate and learn in schools alongside their peers. IERCs support schools and communities to assess and enrol students with disabilities, develop individual education plans (IEPs), improve inclusive teaching practices, and raise awareness and understanding about disabilities. The IE Policy also identifies the importance of connecting schools with outreach programs conducted by many IERCs to help schools to screen, identify and support children with disabilities.

In each section of this guide, you will find tips on how to work with your local IERC.

SECTION 1:

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS TO ACCESS EDUCATION



SECTION 1: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS TO ACCESS EDUCATION

Inclusive Learning Environments

Policy Reference: Section A: Policy, 4: Policy Intended Outcomes, Objective 1: Inclusive Learning Environments

Policy Standards:

Standard 1: Inclusive and Accessible Infrastructure

Standard 2: Strong Leadership and Positive Attitudes

Standard 3: Inclusive Communities

In this section, you will learn about actions a school can take to support children with a disability or additional learning need to access school.

Accessing school begins by ensuring that school premises are inclusive and child-friendly environments. This means thinking about **school infrastructure, leadership, attitudes, and partnerships with family and community.**

Here are some ways to support students with disabilities and additional learning needs to feel included at school.

What to do	How – Good Practices	Who should do it
Make sure school buildings and grounds are accessible to all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the checklist in Annex A to identify any accessibility issues within the school. • Make a plan and address the issues identified. For example, corridors or pathways should be kept free of obstacles or protruding objects that could make it hard for people with mobility impairments to move through them. • Include activities to improve access in the SLIP (See Section 2) 	<p>School Boards of Management</p> <p>Head Teachers, Consult with IERC Staff</p> <p>Local Organisation of People with Disabilities (OPD) where possible</p>
Be a strong leader who supports inclusion and equitable educational practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and value all students. • Model positive language and attitudes towards students with disabilities and additional learning needs • Use ‘person first’ language - ‘student with disability’ rather than ‘disabled student’. • Have high expectations for all students. 	<p>Head Teachers</p> <p>Teachers</p>

Develop a 'whole school approach' to inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise a school-wide education session on the Inclusive Education Policy. • Provide professional development to support all staff to understand disability and additional learning needs. • Share teaching strategies and resources. • Work collaboratively with other teachers, parents, and support services. 	Head Teachers Teachers Children / Students
Promote inclusive practice in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite families to share their knowledge and perspectives on their child's learning. • Celebrate the achievements of all students. 	Head Teachers Teachers Parents Students

Examples of actions you can take

Develop a school culture and community that values inclusion. You can do this by:

1. Having regular meetings with parents and students to discuss their progress.
2. Screening students in your school for disabilities and additional learning difficulties to see what areas they might need help with.
3. Make sure staff have opportunities for professional development so they know how to help all the students in their class.

Working with the IERC on developing Inclusive Learning Environments

The IERC can help your school by:

1. Showing you how to conduct a simple accessibility check of the school environment, and providing guidance on low resources modifications that can be made to address common issues.
2. Conducting disability awareness sessions for the school (staff and students) and community.
3. Providing teachers with guidance and support to strengthen their disability inclusive teaching practices in their classrooms.

Learning Support

Policy Reference: Section A: Policy, 4: Policy Intended Outcomes, Objective 2: Learning Support

Policy Standards:

Standard 4: Inclusive Screening and Assessment Practices

Standard 5: Inclusive Teaching Pedagogy and Assessment

Standard 6: Inclusive Learning Support

Successful inclusive education needs a holistic approach to learning support. This involves developing better processes for screening, registration and referral of students with disabilities and additional learning needs to specialised support services such as the IERCs. Schools can help meet the individual learning needs of their students by understanding how to write individual education plans (IEPs). Flexible approaches to teaching pedagogy using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can help to support all learners in the classroom in the areas of assessment, teaching, and monitoring progress.

Here are some ways to strengthen learning support at your school.

What to do	How – Good Practices	Who should do it
Develop a clear process to identify and support students with disabilities and additional learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any students you are concerned about should be screened using the Whole Child Checklist (follow the process in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Teacher’s Guide). Ensure all students with disabilities and additional learning needs are referred to and registered with your local Inclusive Education Resource Centre (IERC). Build relationships with and access support from the IERC. 	Head Teachers/ Teachers IERC - staff
Develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and additional learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the process in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Guide. Schedule time for IEP meetings and regular follow-ups. 	Head teachers/ Teachers/Families/ Students / Family members
Develop lessons that encourage the participation of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Connect curriculum content to student’s personal experiences. Use both large and small groups when you are teaching. Let students write down or verbally answer questions. Include activities to support inclusive learning in the SLIP. 	Head teachers/ Teachers IERC - staff
Create a ‘Learning Support Team’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a team to support students with disabilities and additional learning needs in your school. 	Head teachers Teachers

Example of an action you can take.

As a teacher, think about how you can be flexible in lesson design. This can help all students to participate more fully in class. For example,

1. When teachers are writing on the board, they can also talk about what they are writing. This helps students who might not be able to see or read the board clearly.
2. Teachers can provide a visual schedule of the day so students know what is coming next. This helps students feel calm and understand the daily routine.
3. Teachers can find out about what the children in their class are interested in, and design lessons around those interests. This helps students to engage and want to learn.

Working with the IERC on Learning Support

The IERC can help your school by:

1. Helping teachers to understand and feel confident in using the Whole Child Checklist to screen students in their class.
2. Working with teachers to develop and regularly review Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and additional learning needs.
3. Providing assistive devices to help students with disabilities to access learning, such as mobility aids or learning materials in alternative formats (e.g. braille).

Inclusive Educators

Policy Reference: Section A: Policy, 4: Policy Intended Outcomes, Objective 3: Inclusive Educators

Policy Standards:

Standard 7: Knowledgeable and Skilled Teacher Workforce

It is important for teachers to have the knowledge and skills to create inclusive classrooms.

Research has shown that well trained teachers feel more positively about inclusion. Building a knowledgeable and skilled teacher workforce means making sure teachers have opportunities **for both pre-service and in-service training** that develops their knowledge and confidence around inclusive education. It's also important that teachers have opportunities to learn about the students in their school who have disabilities or additional learning needs through **ongoing professional development**.

What to do	How – Good Practices	Who should do it
Provide teachers with professional development opportunities to build their inclusive teaching practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify priority training areas in the SLIP.• Provide school based in-service inclusive education training opportunities.	Head Teachers
Communicate within the school and keep records about any learning and/or behavioural concerns for students with disabilities and additional learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to the Head Teacher about organising professional development about areas you are concerned about.	Teachers

Examples of actions you can take.

The 'whole school approach' to inclusive education is very important. Teachers in schools will have different knowledge and experience, and can support each other to learn about how best to support students with disabilities and additional learning needs:

1. Create a resource hub in your school with materials and information about disabilities and additional learning needs.
2. Conduct a regular discussion group where teachers can share experiences, ideas, and strategies.
3. Develop and share within the school real-life case studies of successful programs that include students with disabilities and additional learning needs in the classroom.

Working with the IERC on developing Inclusive Educators

The IERC can help your school by:

1. Ensuring specialist teacher support is available for students with disabilities and additional learning needs.
2. Running in-service and professional development sessions in the school on topics that teachers would like more information on.
3. Conducting disability awareness sessions for the whole school during school outreach visits.

Planning and Management

Policy Reference: Section A: Policy, 4: Policy Intended Outcomes, Objective 4: Planning and Management

Policy Standards:

Standard 8: Strengthening Data and Evidence

Standard 9: Management

Good planning and management at the school level helps make sure that inclusive education programs can be successfully implemented and evaluated. It's important that detailed records are kept so that enough funding is provided to support students with disabilities and additional learning needs.

What to do	How – Good Practices	Who should do it
Keep accurate and detailed records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect and record information on enrolment, retention and progress of students with disabilities and additional learning needs.• Break down student data into specific details such as type of disability, age, gender etc.	School Management Head Teachers Teachers
Make specific recommendations for inclusive education practices to be implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include these recommendations in the SLIP.	School Boards Head Teachers

Example of an action you can take.

Set up a clear record keeping system within your classroom or school. This could be a digital or manual keeping record system.

1. Check with school management what data and information needs to be collected.
2. Ask for training on how to keep the right types of records for students with disabilities and additional learning needs in your class/school.

Working with the IERC on Planning and Management

Ask your IERC for advice on what forms you can use to collect and retain information. For example:

1. The Whole Child Checklist for screening of students.
2. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) document.
3. Forms to help you record the progress students are making toward their goals.

SECTION 2:

DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE SLIP ACTION PLAN



SECTION 2: DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE (iSLIP) ACTION PLAN

Rule 2 of the IE Policy states “iSLIPs must include activities to improve access and learning for students with disabilities and additional learning needs”. This section will help you include priorities for implementing inclusive education (IE) at your school.

The SLIP IE action plan should address key issues identified through consultation meetings with students, teachers, the BOM, parents, and community.

Step 1: Form the iSLIP Committee

Head teachers have a responsibility to form a iSLIP Committee in cooperation with the BoM and to lead the development and implementation of the iSLIP. The iSLIP Committee should include students, teachers, BOM members, parents and community representatives.

Step 2: Include IE in SLIP planning meetings.

The specifics of every iSLIP action plan will be different, depending on the issues that have been chosen and the school context. Therefore, it is not possible to provide in-depth guidance on exactly what your action plan should include. The good practices described in Section 1 can help address issues you may have identified, or you can develop your own.

At the iSLIP planning meeting, review the issues and problems that were raised during the consultation meetings and prioritise them using the below criteria.

Criteria for choosing an issue.

- How does this issue impact on student learning outcomes?
- Will addressing the issue result in real improvement?
- Is addressing the issue possible?

Step 3: Include IE action plans in the SLIP.

Once you have prioritised the issues, select at least the top 3 issues to include in your SLIP annual action plan. IE issues and actions should be included under the relevant SLIP focus areas. Below are some examples of SLIP focus area IE action plans.

SLIP Focus Area	Specific Outcome	Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Person/s responsible	Indicators of success	Review
	What is the activity or outcome to be achieved?	How - or way in which it will be done.	When will it be done – start and finish date.	What resources will be used – kina, people etc.	Name of Person/s	Observable or measurable indicator	Process to gather data to make the judgement and decisions
Curriculum student learning and assessment	Students with disabilities and additional learning needs can access the curriculum.	Teachers receive in-service training on differentiated learning and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Term 1	IERC staff	Head teacher Teachers	PIST Records	Annually
Student needs and welfare	Students with disabilities and additional learning needs are not bullied at school.	Teacher roster to monitor the playground during lunch time and breaks.	Daily	Nil	Head teacher / teachers	Teacher roster	Quarterly
Staff professional development and training	Teachers complete inclusive education in-service training	PIST on inclusive education	Term 1	IERC staff	Head teacher Teachers	PIST records	End of Term 1
Good governance and community relationships	Students with disabilities and additional learning needs are attending school regularly.	School to work with IERC to support students to attend school, and keep daily attendance record.	Daily	IERC staff	Head teacher Teachers	Students with disabilities and additional learning needs are attending consistently.	Quarterly
Infrastructure maintenance and development	School premises are accessible for students with disabilities.	Pathways in the school are kept clear of obstacles so they accessible to all students.	Daily	Nil	Headteacher	100% of pathways provide clear access.	Quarterly

A note on budget

Not all actions will require a budget. If a budget is needed, it is important that it is realistic and that it is allocated according to school budget processes. Budget for IE priorities can be:

- Applied for using an AQEFA Grant (See “AQEFA Grant Guidelines for Schools” booklet).
- Allocated in the school budget using GTSF funding.
- Sourced through advocating to your District Development Authority.
- Raised through P&C fundraising activities.

Step 4: Review

The SLIP IE action plan should be reviewed as part of the annual SLIP internal review process. The review will assess the level of success and achievement measured against the intended outcomes. This will help inform the need for further improvement in the next plan.

Schools should follow the internal review process outlined in the SLIP policy guidance and provided below.

Review period: The internal review for the school is conducted in a week during the last quarter of each year with ample time for follow up activities.

Review team: The internal review team will be from the school. It will comprise of the school's head teacher, Chairperson of the BOM and one person each from P&C, teachers, students.

Methodology: To be fair and accurate, the review should be based on interviews with relevant stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, parents etc.) and spot checks and class visitations if relevant.

Documents: The internal review team should document findings from the review and include evidence and photos where relevant. Recommendations for improvement should be included to help inform the next plan.

ANNEX A: BASIC ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS

Use this checklist to look at the school environment and see if any changes need to be made.

If you identify changes to be made, the school inspectors (mainstream and IERC) and school administration are responsible.

Environment	Questions to ask	YES	NO	Not sure	Any improvement plans?
Entrance and Exits	Are there ramps or elevators available for children with mobility challenges?				
	Are doorways wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs or other mobility aids?				
Hallways and Corridors	Are pathways clear of obstacles for children with visual impairments or mobility issues?				
	Are there handrails or support bars along hallways for children who may need assistance?				
Classrooms	Is the classroom layout flexible to accommodate different learning needs and mobility aids?				
	Are desks and chairs adjustable to suit children of varying heights and physical abilities?				
Toilets	Are there accessible toilets equipped with grab bars, raised toilet seats, and adequate space for manoeuvring?				
Playgrounds and Outdoor Areas	Are outdoor play areas accessible with ramps, soft surfaces, and inclusive play equipment?				
	Are there designated spaces for children with sensory sensitivities or disabilities?				
Emergency Procedures	Are emergency evacuation plans inclusive of children with disabilities?				
	Are staff trained in assisting children with disabilities during emergency situations?				

This checklist can help teachers assess the accessibility of their school premises and ensure a more inclusive learning environment.



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