



Ensuring the well-being of Victorian students with disability

February 2026

The Uniting Church affirms that:

(a) Christ is most fully present when all people in the Body are unconditionally accepted as people of worth. All people are created in the image of God, including people with disability;

(b) along with all members, the faith, gifts, hopes and dreams of people with disability are to be valued and honoured; and

(c) God is a God of justice and peace, who seeks reconciliation amongst all people.

Part of a resolution passed by the 15th Triennial National Assembly meeting of the Uniting Church in 2018.

Approximately a quarter of all students in Victoria require additional supports or adjustments at school due to disability.

In April 2025, we requested that you write letters to the Victorian Minister for Education, urging the Victorian Government to act on the recommendations made by the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee in October 2024. The Committee had released a report on its inquiry into the Victorian school system. The Committee made four recommendations regarding students with disability. In April 2025, after we issued the action, the Victorian Government released its response to the recommendations, as outlined in the following table.

Committee Recommendation	Victorian Government response
22. That the Department of Education work with advocacy groups to devise an outcome framework for the Disability Inclusion program.	The Government did not agree to implement the recommendation fully. It agreed to share findings from an independent evaluation of Disability Inclusion in schools. It stated that the Victorian Department of Education would work with other state governments and peak disability bodies to enhance data capture and report on students with disability.
24. That the Department of Education review provision of resources to schools to ensure that exclusionary practices of students with disabilities are phased out, in addition to providing further professional development for school staff to prevent further instances of exclusion practices from occurring in the future.	The Victorian Government indicated that it would not be undertaking any new actions in response to the recommendation. It stated that its Disability Inclusion program was already introducing initiatives to help build knowledge and skills in inclusive education across the school system.
43. The Victorian Government implement standards consistent with the National Framework for Reducing the Use of Restrictive Practices, including accountability measures for breaching standards.	The Victorian Government indicated that it would not take any new action in response to the recommendation. It stated that it already reviews the data on the use of restraint and seclusion.

44. That the Department of Education review the resources and direction it provides to schools on restraint and seclusion practices to ensure they are always undertaken according to child-centric best practice.	The Victorian Government indicated that it would not undertake any new action in response to the recommendation, as it believed it was already doing what was requested.
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Seclusion means confining students to a space, such as a small room.

The organisation Education Rights publishes a list of Victorian schools where there have been allegations of the mistreatment or discrimination against students with disability:

<https://www.educationrights.com.au/schools-list/>

The list points to complaints by parents being internally investigated by the Department of Education, and usually the school and staff involved are found to have acted acceptably. Often, when parents report concerns about the use of restraints on their children at school to the regional or head office of the Department of Education, they receive a response endorsing the restraint.

With disability services under the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the restraint of a person with disability can be used in an emergency. However, after the first use of restraint, the same or similar behaviour cannot be regarded as an emergency, as it can be predicted to occur. The disability service provider is required to put in place positive behaviour interventions to prevent the need to use restraint. In contrast, the Department of Education allows restraint or seclusion to be used repeatedly on the same student for the same behaviour without requiring psychological assistance or implementing evidence-based behaviour interventions.

Even when schools develop positive behaviour plans for students with disability, in some cases these are not shared with parents or guardians of the child. It is reported that in some instances, behaviour plans can be punitive, using punishments and sanctions as consequences for behaviours of concern.

What you can do

Write polite and respectful letters to:

The Hon Ben Carroll
Minister for Education
Level 3, 1 Treasury Place
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Salutation: Dear Minister

E-mail: reception.carroll@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Points to make in your letter or e-mail:

- Express concern at on-going reports of mistreatment and discrimination against students with disability in Victorian schools.
- Ask what additional actions the Victorian Government has taken on recommendations 22, 24, 43 and 44 of the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee report on the state education system in Victoria, since it made its response to the report in April 2025.
- Ask that the Victorian Government implement an independent inquiry into how the Department of Education has handled responses to complaints about mistreatment and discrimination against students with disability, including allegations of the misuse of restraint and seclusion, to identify areas for improvement and to reassure the Victorian public that such cases are being responded to appropriately.
- Request that schools be supported to be able to develop evidence-based positive behaviour plans where a student with disability displays behaviours that may harm themselves or others. The plans should be designed by qualified behaviour analysts in collaboration with parents or guardians, and a copy provided to them.