

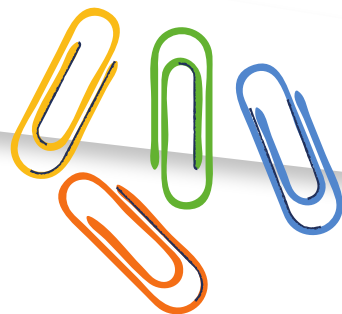
# SCHOOL - THE IMPORTANT STUFF

Children With Additional Needs  
Working Group Presents...

Your 'GO TO' School Resource  
Guide 2022/23



For help navigating the  
Government Schooling System  
for Children with Additional  
Needs in East Gippsland  
2022/23



The members of the Children with Additional Needs Working Group would like to acknowledge the First Custodians of the land, the Gunaikurnai people and the Monero and Bidawal people in the far East, of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire and on which we work and play. We deeply acknowledge their ongoing connection to culture and country and acknowledge that their land was never ceded.

## Why are we talking about it?

The Children with Additional Needs Working Group (CWANWG) have heard clearly that transitions between kinder/school, between grades and between primary and secondary schools can be tricky to navigate for child/ren with additional needs



### What we have heard:

- \*Little to no school transitions (from kinder to school)
- \*Teachers require additional supports to understand children's individual needs
- \*Changes are needed (or reasonable adjustments) for children within the classroom including educational supports, access to consistent allied health professionals, technology (communication and sensory/self regulation aids) and personal toilet needs



# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE...



This document has been developed for you to use the most relevant topic at the time you need it. If you need help with questions to ask, head to that section. If you are interested in the new Department of Education and Training (DET) Reforms, head to that section. If you would like to understand what Reasonable Adjustments are - info is there for you to read. This document is a "point in time" so please check relevant websites for updates.



## Important Info and Acknowledgements

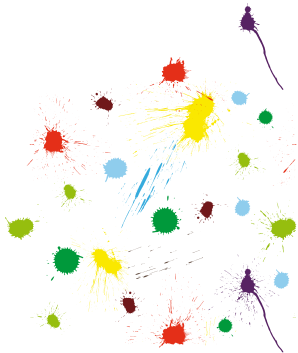
The CWANWG would like to acknowledge that much of the information has been obtained from Association of Children with Disability (ACD), the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD).

Most of the information is relevant for Government Schools only. If your child is attending a Catholic School, there is limited information available in this document. Please have a look at the "websites" section for further information.

The CWANWG would like to acknowledge the work, feedback and ongoing conversations of parents/carers, service providers and educators to help our kids live their best lives. A huge thankyou for your input into this document.

# Topics

- Student Support Group (SSG) Meetings
- Helpful questions to ask your school
- Understanding Reasonable Adjustments
- What is Advocacy?
- What are your child's rights?
- What can the Department of Education and Training help with?
- Information and Resources Available
- Raising a concern
- General Information - websites that will help
- A Child Profile - "About Me"



Gippsland Disability Advocacy have confirmed that East Gippsland has a higher proportion of families needing support and improvements for their children at school compared with other areas in Gippsland.

# Student Support Group (SSG) Meetings

## What are SSG's?

You have a right to ask for a Student Support Group (SSG) meeting with your school. This is usually done within the first month or so of school starting and continues regularly throughout school years for students with additional needs. So, what is a Student Support Group meeting and what does it help with? It is important to note that you are an equal member of an SSG and you have an equal right to have a say in everything including agendas.

These meetings are held with your school to help get the right supports for your child. These meetings are also a great way to check in about decision-making relevant to your child, what your child's goals are, check the progress of their goals and work on any challenges and strategies together as a team. Also important is to ensure that any goals developed are SMART goals, that is "S (Specific), M (Measurable), A (Achievable), R (Realistic) and T (Timeframe). The DET have guidelines to support SSG meetings on their website.



## Who usually attends SSG Meetings?

There are a few people you can ask to attend with you as the child's carer or parent. The school principal and your child's class teacher together with any other specialists (it could be a member of your allied health team like an occupational therapist or speech therapist), an advocate or support person and your child (if you or they would like to join).

# Student Support Group (SSG)

## Meetings - Tips and Tricks

- Check in with your emotions - a SSG meeting is important and some days are better than others to have a conversation
- Acknowledge things that are going well
- Bring along an advocate or support person if you need to
- Ask for a copy of the meeting agenda - remember...you are an equal around the table and help develop the agenda
- Ensure there is a copy of the Individual Education Plan (if there isn't one, ask why)
- Make sure that the meeting has minutes and keep a record
- Share your knowledge of your child - remember, you are the best person to do this
- Make sure you have the right people at the meeting
- Set dates and times for future meetings to help keep on track
- Confirm how you will work together to help your child outside the meetings.
- Write down any questions you would like to ask (included below)
- Take a "child profile" with you to help share important information about your child (keep it to one page!)
- How do you ensure BSP and IEP are considered (living documents) and reviewed at every SSG (parents can request this)



# Helpful questions to ask your school At SSG Meetings

- If you are in a SSG meeting, how do you ensure the goals are "SMART"?
- How and when do you accommodate SSG meetings?
- What is the schools' approach to supporting positive student behaviour (Behaviour Support Plan), including students with behavioural challenges who might need additional support?
- What is your process for Individual Education Plans (IEP's)?
- How do you make sure that the information collected in this document is shared with my child's teachers and support staff?
- What is your commitment to ensuring that SSG Meeting Notes are signed and distributed to all members present at the meeting?
- As a part of the SSG agreement, how frequent are the meetings to ensure my child's goals are being met.
- How will you ensure teachers are accessing the IEP and using the strategies? How is this evidenced?












## **Important to note - transition between primary and secondary schools...**

If your child is transitioning to a secondary school, it is important to note that there will be differences in how your child is supported. It is really important to ask lots of questions of families/carers who have been through the transition about their experiences and what may be useful questions to ask.

The level of communication between your child's school and you as a parent/carer can change significantly and support in class for your child may be non-existent. Your child will also have many different teachers and change classrooms often. Your child may also not wish their disability and support needs to be declared.

To set your child up for success, please keep some of these things in mind and seek support from your child's therapists or from those you know and trust.

## **Helpful questions to ask your school - just in case you need them. Some questions are good for primary school and others for secondary school. Some are both!**

-  How can the school meet my child's medical, personal care or physical access needs?
-  How can the school meet my child's learning needs and what supports can you provide?
-  How has the school supported other students with a disability?
-  What systems does the school have in place for planning, monitoring and adjusting the learning and supports for students with a disability/ or additional needs?
-  Are there school buses or other supports for travel to and from school? How does the school help the child with bus transitions?
-  How do you support the transition between Grade 6 and Year 7? What changes are there that we need to be aware of?
-  Do you allow therapists to work with my child for appointments at the school within school hours?
-  How do you transition between kinder and prep? How do you consider the "Kinder Transition" Statement?
-  Does your school provide things like social stories to help us transition from Kinder to Prep and from Year 6 to Year 7?
-  Can you explain how funding for educational inclusion and supports work for my child? Where are we included in that process? What are the timeframes to trigger that conversation?
-  What lunchtime or recess activities do you have available for children who may not respond well in the playground during these periods? How do you cater for individual interests with redirection activities to support the social and emotional wellbeing of my child?





## Helpful questions to ask your school - just in case you need them. Some questions are good for primary school and others for secondary school. Some are both!

Some schools (particularly secondary schools) may run an 'interview process' for the potential student. What types of things do you do to accommodate the needs of children who may become overwhelmed in a situation like this? Are you able to send the questions out before the "interview". Is there a social story so my child will know what to expect? What other things do we need to know about to set my child up for success?

How will our new school access the information, reports and assessment outcomes about my child from the previous school? What is the process? How will this be evidenced to ensure everything is copied across?

How do you support transitions between grades/year levels? How will I know that the information is shared between teachers?

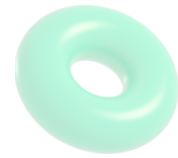
How do you use the Educational Needs Assessments to build my child's Individual Educational Plan. How long do Educational Needs Assessments take to access and what happens in the interim if there is a waitlist?

How do you evidence differentiated learning techniques and their effectiveness for my child?

How does school support my child to attend school activities (including camps and excursions)

What professional development happens at my child's school to help my child with their disability of... (insert your child's disability here to make it relevant to your child)

# Advocacy, rights and reasonable adjustments



## Understanding Reasonable Adjustments

An '**adjustment**' is a measure or action taken to assist all students to participate in education and training on the same basis as their peers who do not have a disability.

A '**reasonable adjustment**' should result in everybody's needs being balanced – your child's needs, other students needs and teacher needs.

## What is Advocacy

Advocacy is promoting and defending a person's rights, needs and interests. As a parent/carer, you can be the best advocate for your child because you have the most experience and best personal knowledge about your child.

## Your child's rights

Your child's rights for education are underpinned by all of areas listed below which are state, national and international laws, guidelines, standards and conventions.

- \*Disability Standards for Education
- \*School Policies and Advisory Guides
- \*Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- \*Victoria's Charter of Human Rights Act 2006
- \*Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- \*Victorian Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- \*United Nations Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- \*United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability
- \*United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child

### Disability Discrimination Act

- \*Its against the law to discriminate due to a person's disability
- \*This applies to many areas of public life including education

### Disability Standards for Education

- \*Provides students with a disability the same rights as other students
- \*The standards require schools make reasonable adjustments to the programs and curriculum

# The Department of Education and Training (DET)



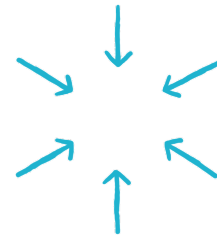
The Department of Education and Training (DET) has announced a Disability Inclusion Reform package to run over the next five years which focusses on extra support for children with a disability.

## Key points of interest

\*Nearly \$1.6 billion investment over 5 years (commencing in July 2021)

\*Ensures that children with a disability can learn on the same basis as a child without a disability in State Government Schools

\*The Reform package includes 3 key focus areas:



1. **Support Resources**

2. **Disability Inclusion Profiles**

3. **Further investment in resources for schools**

## 1. Support Resources

Ensures that teachers have the right skills to meet the needs of our children and includes:

- more professionals in schools with disability experience
- coaching for teaching staff
- evidence-based guidance and resources
- scholarships and professional development for staff so they can increase their skills



## 2. Disability Inclusion Profiles\*

A strengths and functional needs-based approach with a focus on maximising student achievement and independence. Schools and families will work with a facilitator during an SSG to develop a Disability Inclusion Profile highlighting strengths and needs of your child in their school environment and to identify the educational adjustments schools can make to help students with a disability. Additional funding will be provided to the school based on the adjustments required.

\*Disability Inclusion Profiles are due to rollout in East Gippsland in 2025 and will replace the current Program for Students with Disabilities Funding Model



# The Department of Education and Training (DET)

## 3. Further investment in resources for schools\*

To ensure a broader cohort of children's needs can be met, we will see:

- a. **An increase in resources** to support a broader cohort of students with learning difficulties (to commence in 2025 for East Gippsland)
- b. **Professional development** courses and **access** to inclusive education scholarships for teachers
- c. **Outreach Coaching** provided by Specialist Schools to support mainstream school colleagues

**\*Some of these initiatives are accessible now and you can ask your school how they are using the support**

## An important thing for noting

**It is important for all families supporting a child with additional needs to not focus on PSD/DIF funding, but knowing a school has a Duty of Care & responsibilities to ensure every child with additional needs is fully supported to access, participate, be included and appropriately supported with their emotional, social and educational outcomes. Without all appropriate social and emotional supports, its possible educational outcomes may not be achieved. So keep asking!**

# Information and Resources to help

There are many resources out there and available. Let's break it down so you will be able to refer to the websites super easy.

## How it works:

Information has been captured within four different headings. This helps navigate your way around all the information. Each heading has sub-headings and a quick summary of the info you find in the document. The four headings are:

1. Your child's rights and starting school
2. Support students with a disability
3. Raising a concern
4. Advocacy in Gippsland

Also included are more generalised info which may be of interest to you including links to the relevant websites.

## Key things to be really aware of:

- a. 99% of the info in this document is relevant to Government/Public Schools. A small amount of info is relevant to Catholic Schools. Please look carefully through the document to find information relevant to your situation.
- b. All info is done at a point in time - things are likely to change
- c. All info is general in nature and further information to support your needs can be obtained from DET and advocacy groups like ACD and GDAI.

LET'S GO



# Information and Resources to help



## Your child's rights and starting school

Topic	Where to find it	What's it about?
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Children's rights in education	 <a href="https://www.acd.org.au/childrens-rights-in-education/">https://www.acd.org.au/childrens-rights-in-education/</a>	Laws and guidelines to protect your child's rights
--------------------------------	--	--

Choosing a school	 <a href="https://www.acd.org.au/choosing-a-school-2/">https://www.acd.org.au/choosing-a-school-2/</a>	School options and things to look out for
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Starting Primary School	 <a href="https://www.acd.org.au/starting-primary-school/">https://www.acd.org.au/starting-primary-school/</a>	What you can do and what you can expect for a school transition
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Starting Secondary School	 <a href="https://www.acd.org.au/starting-secondary-school/">https://www.acd.org.au/starting-secondary-school/</a>  <a href="https://www.vic.gov.au/moving-primary-secondary-school-information-parents-and-carers">https://www.vic.gov.au/moving-primary-secondary-school-information-parents-and-carers</a>	What you can do and what you can expect for a transition from primary to secondary school
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# Supports for Students with a Disability

## Topic

## Where to find it

## What's it about?

Working in partnership with your child's school



<https://www.acd.org.au/working-in-partnership-with-your-childs-school/>

Building relationships with your school and how to communicate

Funding for students with a disability in Government Schools



<https://www.vic.gov.au/disability-inclusion-extra-support-children-disability>

Funding applications, dates and eligibility criteria



<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psdhandbook.aspx>

Funding for students with a disability in Catholic Schools



<https://www.acd.org.au/funding-for-students-with-disability-in-catholic-schools/>

Funding applications, dates and eligibility criteria.



<https://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/8067c3e8-72f0-402c-9b78-60450b06c689/Parent-Guideto-%20Program-Support-Groups.aspx?ext=.pdf>









<https://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/8067c3e8-72f0-402c-9b78-60450b06c689/Parent-Guideto-%20Program-Support-Groups.aspx?ext=.pdf>  
<https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/Our-Schools/Students-with-Diverse-Learning-Needs/Disability-Funding.aspx#:~:text=The%20NCCD%20is%20an%20annual,students%20that%20'learn%20differently>

# Information and Resources to help



## Supports for Students with a Disability continued...

Topic	Where to find it	What's it about?
SSG Meetings	 <p><a href="https://www.acd.org.au/student-support-groups">https://www.acd.org.au/student-support-groups</a></p>  <p><a href="https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy">https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-groups/policy</a></p>  <p><a href="https://www.vic.gov.au/student-support-groups-children-additional-needs">https://www.vic.gov.au/student-support-groups-children-additional-needs</a></p>	What SSG's are for, suggested members and meetings
10 tips for effective SSG meetings	 <p><a href="https://www.acd.org.au/10-tips-for-effective-student-support-group-meetings/">https://www.acd.org.au/10-tips-for-effective-student-support-group-meetings/</a></p>	How to get the right support at SSG meetings
Reasonable Adjustments	 <p><a href="https://www.acd.org.au/reasonable-adjustments/">https://www.acd.org.au/reasonable-adjustments/</a></p>  <p><a href="https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/disability-and-education/">https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/disability-and-education/</a></p>	What are reasonable adjustments and examples

## Supports for Students with a Disability continued...

### Topic

### Where to find it

### What's it about?

Individual Education Plans



<https://www.acd.org.au/individual-education-plans/>

What are they, how do the work, what to include

Behaviour Support at School



<https://www.acd.org.au/behaviour-support-at-school/>

Communication and behaviour support plans



<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/bspi-interactive.pdf>

Education Support Planner



<https://www.acd.org.au/education-support-planner/>

A template to fill in about your child to help their educators know more about your child

About Me Student Profile



<https://www.acd.org.au/about-me-student-profile/>

A template to fill in about your child to help their educators know more about your child

# Information and Resources to help

Supports for Students with a Disability continued...

Topic

Where to find it

What's it about?

Professional development for educators



<https://www.acd.org.au/professional-development-for-educators/>

Training to help educators

Suspensions and expulsions



<https://www.acd.org.au/suspensions-and-expulsions/>

Help around suspensions and expulsions



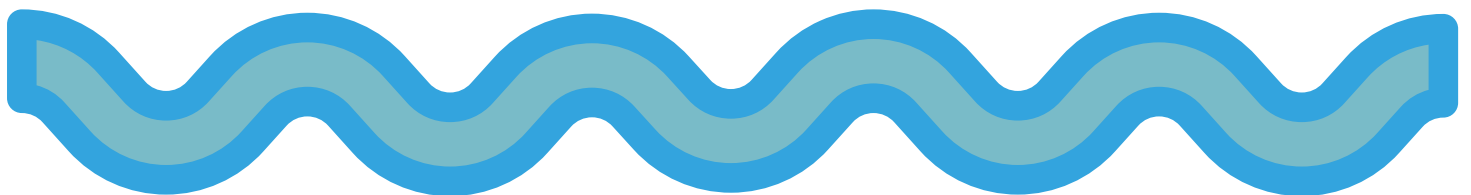
<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>



<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>



<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy>



# Information and Resources to help

## Raising a concern and making a complaint

### Topic

### Where to find it

### What's it about?

Raising a concern  
with the school



<https://www.acd.org.au/raising-a-concern-with-school/>

How to go about  
raising a concern and  
what can be done

Making a complaint  
Government Schools



<https://www.acd.org.au/making-a-complaint-about-your-childs-education/>

Process for making a  
formal complaint



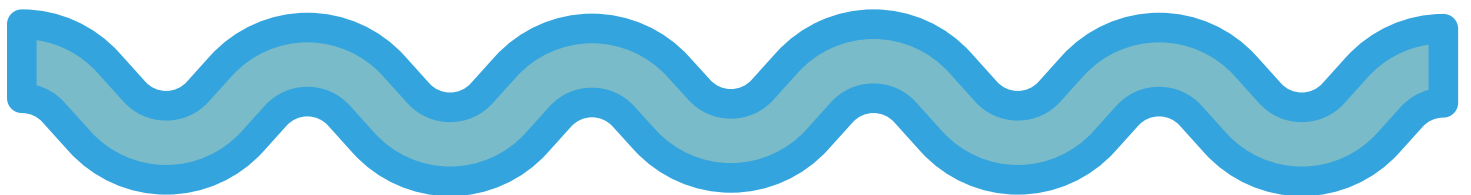
<https://www.vic.gov.au/contact-department-education-and-training?Redirect=1>

Making a complaint  
Catholic Schools



<https://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Parent-Handbook-Primary/Complaints>

Process for making a  
formal complaint



# Information and Resources to help

## Raising a concern and making a complaint - The Steps

### Steps

1.

Contact and discuss your concerns with the school - following guidelines above

2.

If you are still unhappy, contact the Regional Office on 1800 338 663 or email [enquiries@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@education.vic.gov.au). Your concerns will initially be heard by the Community Liaison Officer and other Regional Staff may be consulting if required (Regional Disabilities Coordinator)

3.

If the matter continues to be unresolved, contact the central office using an online form -



<https://fs27.formsite.com/CHgztD/grrdkmmbg1/index.html>

4.

Parents may also seek consultation with the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution.



<https://www.schoolresolution.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>



# Information and Resources to help

## Who

Association for Children  
with a Disability (ACD)

## Contact



[acdsupport@acd.org.au](mailto:acdsupport@acd.org.au)



1800 654 013



0475 577 977 (text only)



[www.acd.org.au/support-line/](http://www.acd.org.au/support-line/)



Gippsland Disability  
Advocacy (GDA)



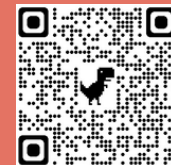
[administration@gdai.com.au](mailto:administration@gdai.com.au)



03 5175 0444



[www.gdai.com.au](http://www.gdai.com.au)



Children with Additional  
Needs Working Group

Through our "Contact Us" page  
on:

[www.cwanwg.com.au](http://www.cwanwg.com.au)

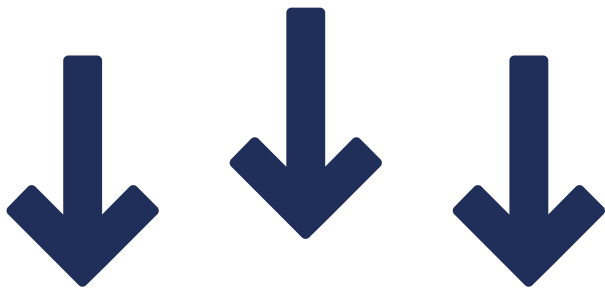


# ● Websites and online training

## Training





To help you better understand how you can help your child, ACD offers online training and webinars. If there is a need in your community to have ACD come along face to face, please direct your enquiry to ACD on [educate@acd.org.au](mailto:educate@acd.org.au)




\*Resources are taken from the Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) and the Department of Education and Training. If you would like a copy sent to you because you can't access the internet or prefer hard copies, please use the "Contact Us" page on our website: [www.cwanwg.com.au](http://www.cwanwg.com.au) Please note that all information is taken at a point in time.

## Really cool Websites for further reading

 **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Information**




● [www.acd.org.au/welcometo-rock-solid](http://www.acd.org.au/welcometo-rock-solid)




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● **Independent Schools**  
[www.is.vic.edu.au/](http://www.is.vic.edu.au/)



● **Catholic Schools**  
[www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/)



● **NCCD**  
[www.nccd.edu.au/](http://www.nccd.edu.au/)



# Extra Websites that may be interesting

A copy of the "Program for Students with Disabilities - Operational Guidelines for schools" has an exceptional list of support websites

Checkout Appendix H and pages 43-45 for a comprehensive list of statewide supports for various disabilities and additional needs.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psdhandbook.aspx>



[www2.education.vic.gov.au/](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/)



[www.acd.org.au/](http://www.acd.org.au/)



<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/mentalhealth/mental-health-menu/Pages/Menu-Item.aspx?queryid=52>



[www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/learningneeds/disability-inclusion-easy-english.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/learningneeds/disability-inclusion-easy-english.pdf)



<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psd.aspx>



[www.raisingchildrennetwork.net.au](http://www.raisingchildrennetwork.net.au)



[www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/disability-and-education/](http://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/disability-and-education/)



[www.allplaylearn.org.au/](http://www.allplaylearn.org.au/)



<https://reimagine.org.au>



<https://reimagine.org.au/families/families-ages-and-stages/>



# About Me

**Photo of me**

**My name:**

**I like to be called:**

**My Age:**

**My likes and interests are:**



**People around me like and admire:**



**I learn best when.....:**

**Some things that may overwhelm me are (changes in teaching staff etc):**

**You can support me best when I am upset by.....**