

Independent Public Schools – Further Information

Curriculum

What are the flexibilities?

- Flexibility to adopt a range of curricula providing the requirements of the Curriculum Framework are met. A school could, for example, decide to adopt the International Baccalaureate up to Year 10.
- Flexibility to choose when and if to access the Department’s Online Teaching and Learning System (OTLS) and ICT-related teaching and learning programs.
- Flexibility in the timing of the six school development days, including the ability to negotiate with staff and the School Council (Board) to ‘trade off’ days for after hours professional learning throughout the year.

Curriculum delivery

Will an Independent Public School be required to implement the Curriculum Framework?

Yes, the Curriculum Council Act requires all schools to implement the Curriculum Framework.

Will an Independent Public School be required to implement the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy?

No. While the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy is flexible in meeting the needs of most schools, Independent Public Schools will not be required to implement the policy and may develop local solutions. Independent Public Schools must, however, adhere to all legislative requirements and Government commitments outlined in the policy.

Will an Independent Public School be required to implement the National Curriculum?

Yes, all schools in Australia will be required to implement the National Curriculum.

Will an Independent Public School be required to ensure all students in Kindergarten to Year 7 receive at least 50% curriculum instruction in literacy and numeracy?

Yes, all schools must ensure that all primary school aged (Kindergarten to Year 7) students receive at least 50% of curriculum instruction in literacy and numeracy.

Will an Independent Public School be required to ensure all students in Years 1 to 10 participate in a minimum of two hours of physical activity?

Yes, all schools must ensure that all students in Years 1 to 10 participate in a minimum of two hours of physical activity each week during the school day as part of student learning programs.

Curriculum support

Will an Independent Public School still receive funding through the School Support Programs Resource Allocation (SSPRA) process?

Independent Public Schools that meets the eligibility criteria used to determine the School Support Resources Program Allocation will continue to be eligible to receive this funding.

What curriculum and student achievement analysis support will a primary Independent Public School be able to access?

Independent Public Schools will continue to have access to specialist advice, support tools and teacher resources from consultants within the Primary Directorate.

Will an Independent Public School still have access to learning, teaching and assessment resources developed by the Department?

Yes, Independent Public Schools will still be able to access learning, teaching and assessment resources accessible via the [Department's portal](#) or in hard copy format.

What will be the senior secondary curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements of an Independent Public School?

Independent Public Schools will continue to deliver a curriculum that complies with the Curriculum Council Act and have student achievement and certification accredited by the Council. They will be able to determine at a school level the senior secondary student achievement details they include on formal reports to parents.

What curriculum and student achievement analysis support will a secondary Independent Public School be able to access?

Independent Public Schools will continue to have access to SSASS consultants through the Secondary Directorate, Teacher Development Centre Coordinators, and the suite of advice, support tools and teacher resources they deliver.

Gifted and Talented Education

Can students in an Independent Public School access Primary Extension and Challenge programs (PEAC)?

Yes, Independent Primary Schools may choose to access the current PEAC model or provide for students by their own means.

Can an Independent Public School establish Gifted and Talented Programs or Specialist Programs?

Secondary Independent Public Schools must apply to be registered to run system-endorsed Specialist Programs. Gifted and Talented Programs remain centrally determined, organised, approved and quality assured. Secondary Independent Public Schools that currently host Gifted and Talented Programs may continue their status in accordance with Gifted and Talented policy and quality assurance processes. This will be included in the Delivery and Performance Agreement.

Secondary Independent Public Schools may develop their own school-based programs to cater for special interest groups and academic extension classes, however they are unable to use the system-endorsed terminology of "Gifted and Talented" or "Specialist" in marketing these programs.

National Assessment Program

Will an Independent Public School be required to administer system assessment and distribute the reports to parents?

Yes, all schools are required to administer system assessments including NAPLAN, WAMSE and random sample tests.

Online Curriculum Services

Independent Public Schools may choose whether and when they access the Department's Online Teaching and Learning System (OTLS). This provides teaching, learning and professional learning services through an authenticated portal that relies on information coming from SIS software and HRMIS. Independent Public Schools will need to use these systems to access the full suite of online services.

Student Support

What are the flexibilities?

Independent Public Schools will have the following flexibilities available to them:

- Flexibility to appoint or contract student support staff including, but not limited to, school psychologists, education assistants, speech pathologists and social workers.
- Funding for students with identified special needs provided in the one-line budget so there is flexibility to use this funding to best meet student needs. The disability diagnosis, needs and age of the student determine the funding provided. This replaces the school funding mechanisms of Schools Plus.
- Capacity to exclude a student for reasons currently permitted under the *School Education Act*. Central support available to help a school manage exclusion processes and find alternative placement for excluded students.

Behaviour Centres

The Behaviour Centres provide specialist support to help public schools manage and engage students with severely challenging behaviours. They provide a continuum of services for students and school staff ranging from intensive withdrawal programs for students to targeted, practical support and professional learning for staff.

Independent Public Schools will continue to have access to the support offered through the Behaviour Centres and negotiate the educational program for each individual student that is responsive to student and school need. Independent Public Schools will be able to continue to negotiate the support offered to students and schools as long as the support remains within the operational and philosophical guidelines for the Behaviour Centre.

Independent Public Schools will not have to pay a fee for service offered through the Behaviour Centre. The Behaviour Centre is funded centrally to ensure maximum support for students with severely challenging behaviour.

Independent Public Schools may establish their own behaviour centres. If schools determine a need for an on-site behaviour support centre they may choose to allocate their resources to set up their own centre. Central office advice will be offered to those schools that set up their own centre.

Critical incidents

All critical incidents in Independent Public Schools will be managed by the principal, however Department staff will respond to calls for support in emergencies. Independent Public Schools will continue to report all incidents online, independent of district offices.

Students with special needs: resource provision

Schools Plus currently provides education assistant and supplementary teacher time for schools with eligible students. Students are eligible if they meet criteria on one of eight disability groups.

Independent Public Schools will continue to access funding for students with identified special needs. However, the school will be allocated a total package based on the actual profile of the student's with disabilities. Teacher and education assistant allocation will be combined and provided to the school through the school grant as a lump sum in the one-line budget.

1. Will Independent Public Schools decide how and when to spend Schools Plus resources?

Yes, the school can make its own decisions as to how the funding will be use (e.g. education assistant time, teacher time, programs, resources). The funding will be allocated in two funding gateways at the start of Semester 1 and Semester 2.

2. Will Independent Public Schools need to make applications for individual students?

No, resources will be allocated based on the profile of students with disabilities enrolled annually at the school. Current students will continue to receive the same current allocation. New students will be allocated funding based on the annual standards formula (median amount for a specific disability) as students are diagnosed.

3. What if a student's condition deteriorates?

Independent Public Schools may apply for above formula resources. The application process is currently under review and will be simplified to a checklist.

4. What if a student enrolls during the year?

Funding will be allocated based on the annual standards formula (median amount for a specific disability) as students are diagnosed.

5. Do independent public schools have to do mandated reviews?

No.

Enrolments

Currently public schools comply with the Enrolment Policy (2009) which reflects Division 2, Sections 16 to 21 of the *School Education Act* and Part 2, Divisions 1 and 2 of the *School Education Act Regulations*. Independent Public Schools will be required to comply with the obligation described in the *School Education Act* and *School Education Act Regulations*, and may choose to use the Enrolment Policy.

Is an Independent Public School required to accept the enrolment of all school age students who complete an enrolment application?

Yes, providing the enrolment is in accordance with the Act.

Is an Independent Public School required to accept the enrolment of overseas students?

No, it is dependent on the visa. Enrolment will be in accordance with the visa type.

Is an Independent Public School with a local intake area required to enrol students not living in the intake area?

No, it is dependent on the available space at the school.

Can an Independent Public School develop its own enrolment policy?

Yes, providing it is consistent with the *School Education Act* and *School Education Act Regulations*, and Independent Public Schools may choose to use the Enrolment Policy.

Can an Independent Public School cancel a student's enrolment?

Yes, there is provision in the *School Education Act* to cancel an enrolment if it is found to be based on inaccurate information on the enrolment form that would make the student ineligible for enrolment at the school.

Can an Independent Public School become a local intake school?

Yes, the *School Education Act* makes provision for local intake schools and outlines the parameters for local intake procedures.

Exclusions

A recommendation for an exclusion order by a principal will arise from either the occurrence of a serious isolated incident or a persistent pattern of behaviour that has not changed despite intervention. An exclusion order is the most extreme sanction that can be applied to a student in a public school and as such should be reserved for the most serious behaviours.

Does a School Discipline Advisory panel or Disability Advisory Panel have to be convened to hear the exclusion?

Yes, this is a legislative requirement.

Who will convene the relevant panel?

The School Discipline Advisory panel or Disability Advisory Panel will be convened by an appropriate person external to the school.

Is an Independent Public School required to find an alternative placement for students who are excluded from attending the school?

The school will be supported to find an alternative placement.

Excursions

Excursions are an important part of the education program for students. Schools are encouraged to organise and run such activities to benefit students.

Can an Independent Public School use the Department's Excursion Policy?

Yes, Independent Public Schools may continue to use the Excursion Policy in its entirety or in part, providing duty of care obligations are met in accordance with the Act.

Can an Independent Public School develop its own excursions policy?

Yes, Independent Public Schools may choose to develop their own policy providing duty of care obligations are met in accordance with the Act.

Will an Independent Public School be covered by Department's Public Liability Insurance (RiskCover).

Yes, providing the school can demonstrate it has met its duty of care obligations.

Can an Independent Public School continue to access advice/support from central office regarding excursions?

Yes, advice and support will be available.

School Attendance Panels

School Attendance Panels are convened when a student's attendance at school has not been restored successfully. The principal, in consultation with the Attendance Officer, may refer a child's case to an Attendance Panel. The panel prepares a written report on a child's case including recommendations for management to be implemented by all parties.

Will an Independent Public School have access to School Attendance Panels?

Yes, Independent Public Schools will still be able to access the support of a School Attendance Panel.

Can the parent of a child attending an Independent Public School be prosecuted for failing to ensure that school attendance requirements are met?

Yes, the *School Education Act* requires students to attend on the days on which the school is open for instruction. Failure to do so can result in a Certificate of Non-Compliance being issued by the School Attendance Panel.

Can an Independent Public School still access the service of a school attendance officer?

Yes.

Can an Independent Public School employ a school attendance officer?

Yes, Independent Public Schools may employ a school attendance officer out of funding in their one-line budget.

School Psychology Service

The School Psychology Service provides specialist support services for all public schools in the areas of behaviour management, learning and mental health and wellbeing (including critical incident response).

Independent Public Schools will be able to appoint staff from the School Psychology Service and also contract private psychology services.

Human Resources

What are the flexibilities?

Staff management

- Flexibility to determine the [staffing profile](#) (administrative staff, teaching staff and school support staff).
- Flexibility to approve leave decisions (including leave without pay) and responsibility to backfill all associated vacancies, with central support provided where required.
- Flexibility to manage all relief costs for staff leave in the one-line budget.

Recruitment and selection

- Flexibility to select all staff, with support to recruit staff where no suitable applications are received.
- Exemption from central placement processes, including central transfer process and placement of redeployees. This does not preclude redeployees from applying for advertised positions in Independent Public Schools.
- Following a transition period, a redeployee generated by an Independent Public School's decision to change its staffing profile is the responsibility of that school to manage and fund until a suitable placement in another location is arranged. Central office supports an Independent Public School to place redeployees generated due to a significant decline in enrolments.
- Flexibility for the principal to appoint new fixed term staff for up to 12 months through a local expression of interest process.
- Flexibility to make an 'early offer' of placement to student teachers and school psychologists on their final year practicum.

Payroll

- Payment of staff salaries remains with ETSSC, however the school approves and enters electronically (HRMIS) information on commencement, termination, leave, variation and movement of staff.

Early offer of placement to graduates

Principals will have the capacity to make early offers to graduates during their final year practicums subject to the graduates satisfying qualification, registration and other criteria required for eligibility to teach.

Fixed term staff appointments up to 12 months

Principals will have the ability to appoint fixed term staff for up to 12 months through a local selection based on an expression of interest when there is not sufficient time to run a full local selection process. Principals in other public schools will not be required to release teachers to take up fixed term appointments in Independent public Schools during the school year or for appointments less than 12 months.

One-line budget and flexible staffing profile

Independent Public Schools will operate with a national [one-line budget](#) and flexible staffing profile. It is intended this model will be refined over time, parallel to human resource and finance systemic reforms.

If the school has a one-line budget and experienced teaching staff will the school be disadvantaged?

No, the notional budget allocation for teaching staff is based on the actual average cost of teachers, currently \$72 035 per teacher. The centre will continue to meet the actual salary costs ranging from \$53 594 for a graduate to \$90 366 for a Level 3 Classroom Teacher. In this way no school is disadvantaged or advantaged because of the composition of its staff. Where a school opts to convert notional staffing dollars for one teacher to contingencies, the trade off will be \$72 035 irrespective of whether a position previously held by a graduate or an experienced teacher is converted.

Will a school's notional salary budget make allowance for promotional positions?

Yes, the notional staffing budget will include the cost of all promotional salaries in accordance with current promotional entitlements to a school. For example a level 5 primary school will receive, as part of the staffing budget, notional funding for a level 5 principal and two level 3 deputy principals. If the school reconfigures and chooses to trade a deputy position for a teaching position the salary difference will be credited on the basis of the actual average cost of a deputy's position.

Leave: approval and replacement of staff

Independent Public School principals will have the capacity to approve all staff leave, including leave without pay. Principals will be responsible for backfilling resultant vacancies, however central support may be provided if required. Principal will have the capacity to approve external part-time work additional to normal teaching duties and to approve leave without pay for full-time external work.

Leave: option to manage payment of relief for staff leave

Independent Public Schools will be able to choose to manage all relief costs for staff leave in the [one-line budget](#). A school which takes up this option will be provided with funds calculated on system average leave-take. It will then pay all relief costs for short term leave (eg sick leave, planned leave, short leave). Where a staff member takes in excess of 20 days leave in a school year, the centre will provide additional funds required to the school.

All relief costs for long service leave, Defence Force leave, workers' compensation, and approved sporting leave will remain centrally funded. The centre will provide funds to the school, on application, for these leave types.

Placement of redeployees

Independent Public Schools will be exempt from central placement processes, including the placement of redeployees. This will not preclude redeployees from applying for advertised positions in Independent Public Schools. Independent Public Schools may elect to consider redeployees as part of their selection processes.

Staff movement

Will Independent Public School staff be able to move to another school in the future?

Independent Public School staff maintain their rights and abilities to transfer to (through the central placement process) or apply for advertised local selection vacancies at Independent Public Schools and other local selection public schools.

Staff may also apply for mobility transfers but, as with all mobility transfers, agreement from all parties is required for the transfer to be enacted. Teachers at Independent Public Schools continue to accrue transfer points as per the current system.

A teacher in a country school has been in an Independent Public School but wants to return to the city after three years. How can this occur?

The teacher can apply for placement in non Independent Public Schools, which constitute the vast majority of schools in the metropolitan area. They can also apply for a position through merit selection at both non Independent Public Schools that are able to locally merit select their staff and Independent Public Schools through the merit selection process.

Public Sector Standards will be adhered to in the selection process and principals of Independent Public Schools are expected to follow due process.

Finance

What are the flexibilities?

- Flexibility to manage staff and contingencies through a [one-line budget](#).
- Flexibility to manage utilities (electricity, water, gas and waste management) and retain savings.
- Flexibility to determine accounting and financial procedures and practices provided they meet compliance and reporting requirements of financial legislative frameworks such as Treasurer's Instructions.
- Flexibility to establish a wider range of reserve accounts (such as Salary, Buildings and Facilities).
- Capacity for the principal to award contracts and dispose of assets with values up to \$150 000 and exercise or decline contract extensions and approve price variations up to \$150 000 for contracts specifically awarded for the school.
- For future Department contracts, potential for the principal to choose to exclude the school from using while of Department contracts based on a value for money decision. This decision would be made at the time the contract is awarded.

What induction will be offered to the school leadership, registrars and business managers to manage the changes to financial management?

Induction for Independent Public Schools in financial management including procurement will be provided during Term 4 2009. All training and support will be coordinated by the Financial Services and Support Directorate.

Can Independent Public Schools use a different chart of accounts?

Independent Public Schools will be required to use the standard chart of accounts to meet all reporting obligations. The Financial Services and Support Directorate will ensure the needs of Independent Public Schools are met in this regard.

What ongoing advice and support can Independent Public Schools expect to receive?

The Finance and Administration Division will provide ongoing support to Independent Public Schools.

Will Independent Public Schools remain in the School Audit Program?

Yes, Independent Public Schools will continue to remain part of the Department's School Audit Program.

Will there be changes to financial reporting obligations?

Independent Public Schools will continue to remain part of the Department's financial reporting consolidations.

For what other purposes will Independent Public Schools be able to establish reserve accounts (eg leases)?

Independent Public Schools will have the flexibility to establish a wide range of reserve funds where the establishment of such funds contribute to the benefit of the school generally. These include, but are not limited to salary, buildings and facilities.

Will Independent Public Schools be able to use reserve funds for other purposes?

Independent Public Schools will have the flexibility to use reserve funds for other purposes where this responds to school needs and priorities, and contributes to the benefit of the school generally.

Can Independent Public Schools open additional operating bank accounts?

There is no change. Independent Public Schools will continue to operate within the *School Education Act*.

Can Independent Public Schools vary the frequency of banking?

There is no change. Independent Public Schools will continue to operate within Treasurer's Instructions.

How will the School Grant Gateway process operate?

The School Grant Gateway process will continue to facilitate payments to school bank accounts. Transfers between the salaries and contingencies (School Grant) components of the Independent Public Schools one-line budget can occur. The school will have the freedom to transfer funds between the salary pool and school bank account regularly.

Can Independent Public Schools choose not to use existing Department contracts?

There may be flexibility for principals to negotiate this depending on the contract conditions. Approval by the Strategic Procurement team would be based on a value for money assessment.

Building and Facilities

What are the flexibilities?

- Flexibility to manage faults (breakdowns and repairs), complying with Government processes and using funds in the one-line budget.
- Flexibility to employ or contract facilities management, maintenance, cleaning and/or gardening staff.
- Capacity to submit requests directly to central office for capital works projects.

- Flexibility to manage property services contracts using funds in one-line budget (for example, cleaning, window cleaning, mowing, fertiliser, grassed area rejuvenation, hygiene, other rates and charges, maintenance of shared facilities).
- Flexibility to manage routine maintenance using funds in one-line budget (for example, RCD testing, fire extinguishers, gutter cleaning).

Building the Education Revolution

The Australian Government's Building the Education Revolution program remains unchanged.

Faults management

Independent Public Schools will be able to choose to manage their own faults (breakdowns and repairs). For 2010, this will be through the [faults management process](#) previously available to schools.

Capital works project requests

Independent Public Schools will work independently of Directors Schools and district offices so they will be required to submit capital works requests directly to the centre. The central process will consider all submissions equitably.

Facilities management, maintenance, cleaning and/or gardening staff

Will an Independent Public School be able to outsource its cleaning and gardening by establishing contracts to deliver these services?

An Independent Public School is bound by Government policy which is to use day labour for both cleaning and gardening. An Independent Public School will be able to consider outsourcing where it can demonstrate that it has been unable to attract day labour staff.

Will an Independent Public School be able to employ a person to oversee facilities management and maintenance?

Yes, an Independent Public School may employ an additional person in a facilities manager role to assist with facilities management and maintenance. A cluster of schools may decide to use this flexibility

Governance, Accountability and Leadership

Selection

1. Can an acting principal submit an expression of interest?

An acting principal may submit (and sign) an expression of interest to become an Independent Public School; alternatively, an acting principal and the substantive principal may co-sign the expression of interest. Each school is best placed to determine who signs/submits the expression of interest however, in the written application; the school is required to address the level of local support for the initiative. Where the substantive principal is on leave and is returning for the start of 2010, it is anticipated he/she will have input into the expression of interest process.

2. Can an acting principal sign a Delivery and Performance Agreement?

Where there is an acting principal at an Independent Public School at the time the Delivery and Performance Agreement is established, the context of the acting appointment will be considered and the most appropriate signatory determined.

What are the parameters?

Independent Public Schools will operate within the following parameters:

- Compliance with all legislation including, but not limited to, *School Education Act*, *Public Sector Management Act*, *Financial Management Act*, *Curriculum Council Act* as well as all industrial instruments.
- Compliance with all agreements between the Australian and WA Governments such as participation in NAPLAN and reporting to parents on student achievement using A–E grades.
- Provision of relevant data to enable the Department to meet Statewide reporting obligations (for example, suspensions, exclusions, attendance, critical incidents and finance).
- Participation in the Department's School Audit program.
- Application of the Plan for public schools.
- Negotiation of a Delivery and Performance Agreement [signed by the principal, Director General and chair of the School Council (Board)] identifying the resources the school will receive, the support it will be provided, the programs it will be contracted to deliver, and improvement targets it will achieve over the life of the agreement (up to five years).
- An independent review in the final year of the Delivery and Performance Agreement, with the report made public, to replace Standards Reviews by Directors Schools. As the focus of the review is on educational performance, the independent review team will be predominantly educators.
- Production of an annual school report signed by the School Council (Board) chair.

- Requirement of the principal to work with the School Council (to become a School Board) to maximise its functions and community and industry representation.
- Endorsement by the School Board of the budget, staffing profile, strategic and business plans, signed by the School Council (Board) chair.
- Signature of the chair of the School Council (Board) on the Delivery and Performance Agreement.
- Participation by the School Council (Board) in the selection of the principal when a vacancy arises.

Communications and marketing

Independent Public Schools will have the flexibility to use the support and expertise of the central Corporate Communications and Marketing Directorate (including the Media Unit) or opt for alternative arrangements.

Complaints and grievances

Independent Public Schools will have greater responsibility to manage and resolve complaints. Misconduct complaints must be referred to the Standards and Integrity Directorate. Unresolved complaints against a principal will be managed by the Director General's delegate.

Independent Public Schools will resolve grievances at the school site. Grievances against staff will continue to be managed by the principal and a grievance committee with union representation. Grievances against the principal will be managed by the Director General's delegate.

Delegations currently to Directors Schools

Many of the current delegations of the *School Education Act and School Education Regulations* currently to Directors Schools will be shifted to the Independent Public School principal. Some will move to the Director General.

Flexibilities

1. If a cluster of schools operates as Independent Public Schools, do all schools in the cluster need to take up the same flexibilities?

No. All Independent Public Schools will be obliged to work within the identified parameters. Each school within the cluster may determine if and how to apply the available flexibilities. For example, some schools in the cluster may choose to manage their own faults while other schools in the cluster may stay within the current system.

2. Can an Independent Public School choose to take up additional flexibilities throughout the five year Delivery and Performance Agreement?

Yes. A school may decide to add flexibilities after the first year. For example it

may decide not to start with the flexibility to manage its own relief costs in the first year and start that in the second year.

3. Will flexibilities be extended to all schools?

In the future, many of these flexibilities will be available to all schools.

4. Does my school need to take up all of the flexibilities?

Independent Public Schools are obligated to work within the identified parameters. They may determine if and how to apply the available flexibilities. For example they may choose to manage their own faults or stay within the current system.

5. If a school joins in future intakes, will the flexibilities and obligations be the same?

Independent Public Schools will have further flexibilities available as the initiative progresses. Amendments to existing legislation or development of new legislation will be considered.

The first intake of Independent Public Schools will assist in refining the initiative and exploring further flexibilities required to deliver the best possible educational experiences to their students.

Ministerials

Independent Public Schools will manage their communication with the Government, including Ministerials which will be forwarded directly to the school, responded to by the principal, and returned to the central Ministerial Services Unit.