



# ACTIONING EDUCATION FOR ALL:

*A Guide for a Whole of System Approach to  
Inclusive Practices for Catholic Education Ballarat*



*As partners in  
Catholic education  
and open to God's presence,  
we pursue fullness of life for all.*

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians that have, for thousands of years, walked upon and cared for the lands upon which we are located across the Diocese of Ballarat. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country, and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.*

## Acknowledgement

*This resource is based on ALLWAYS, A Guide To Supporting All Learners in All Ways Always, developed by Learning Diversity Team from the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). The contributions made by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) are gratefully acknowledged.*

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# Catholic Education Ballarat Inclusive Education Statement

***'As partners in Catholic education and open to God's presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.'* (John 10:10)**

To meet the rights of all students, Catholic Education Ballarat schools must continue to have a strong commitment to respecting and valuing student diversity, inclusion 'Education for All', wellbeing and identity formation – spiritually, ethically and cognitively. This commitment that we all share pertains to ability, culture, race, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion/no religion, philosophy of life, gender identity and sexual orientation. Our diverse student population enriches the communal life of Catholic schools and the communities in which we live, 'Based on their identity and experience, others have a contribution to make, and it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a more fruitful public debate.' *Pope Francis, Encyclical Fratelli tutti, s.203.*



The 2019 pandemic has brought to light a marked disparity in educational opportunities for some students. This awareness should lead us to continue to strive to provide educational experiences for all students that are transformative for them and their teachers – as learners together. Pope Francis (October 2020) calls us to, 'ensure that everyone has access to a quality education [which is consistent] with the dignity of the human person and our common vocation to fraternity.' This time of pandemic provides us with a space for reflection, discernment and reassessment in how to meet the learning requirements of all our students with diverse learning needs because these are formative aspects of their emerging identities, opening them to pursue fullness of life within the scope of this Catholic educational landscape (Jn.10:10).


Our learning environments will continue to enable all students to access education that is appropriate, equitable and empowering, such that they can engage with the daily life of the school and curriculum, demonstrate their knowledge and strengths, and maximise participation through quality learning opportunities. We, in Catholic Education Ballarat, have a commitment to creating learning environments where all students are empowered to flourish, both personally and in community.

CEB believes that the principles of inclusion are predicated on the intention to provide an educational environment that promotes the human dignity of each student within a supportive Catholic community. The principles of inclusion recognise:

- practice that is informed by the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the Catholic Tradition, legislative requirements, educational philosophy and societal expectations
- the uniqueness and the diversity of students as children, created in the image of God
- the need for belonging within a Christ-oriented community underpinned by respectful relationships
- a whole school approach to planning, curriculum development and school organisation informed by Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI)
- access to required differentiated resources and learning opportunities, to enable all students to engage purposefully and to experience learning success.

As educating for fullness of life for all (Jn 10:10) is the defining feature we strive for with our diocesan Catholic schools, it must include that, 'We are committed to the rights of people with disability, [in fact] Australia is required under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of people with disability. The eight general principles of the CRPD include the full and effective inclusion of people with disability in society and respect for the individual autonomy and independence of people with disability. These principles inform the rights and obligations in the CRPD.' (Royal Commission- Promoting Inclusion paper 2020)

With the whole of this CEB Statement in mind, together with the energy and commitment, CEB will pursue inclusive education in partnership with our diocesan schools in 2021, and beyond.



**Tom Sexton**  
Executive Director, Catholic Education Ballarat



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# Introduction

**The *Actioning Education for All* guide is a commitment to all students, inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Tradition Catholic teachings.**

Accordingly, Catholic educators seek to adhere to the rights of all students, to enable every student to flourish. *Actioning Education for All* affirms Catholic Education Ballarat's commitment to getting to know students' strengths and differences to actively engage all students while recognising their cultural, academic, behavioural, social/emotional, spiritual and physical attributes.

The '*Actioning Education for All*' guide is our whole of system commitment to all students, inspired by Catholic teachings. The guide is also grounded in students' rights and how this transpires to systemised inclusive practice. Our whole of system approach outlines our commitment to deliver

quality instruction and provide multi-tiered systems of support to actively engage all students in their school life. This guide also corresponds with [The Educational Goals for Young Australians](#): Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity. Goal 2: All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community. ([Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration, 2019](#)).

The '*Actioning Education for All*' guide is an acknowledgement of the factors which influence the way a student learns, as well as a commitment to the moral, legal and theological obligations of our educational system to ensure that all learners are valued and actively engaged in their education. This means, as a system, we need to continue to work together to remove

barriers to learning for all students, identifying those who may need more or different support, and working in partnership to provide creative ways of learning. This guide outlines how the CEB Education Services Team works with schools in a range of different ways and offers the opportunity for schools to engage a variety of educational supports: curriculum, wellbeing, learning diversity, psychologists, speech pathologists, and visiting teachers.

When schools action quality instruction and provide multi-tiered systems of support, in partnership with our Education Services Team, students' learning opportunities expand exponentially. This is true not only in each student's immediate academic context, but across every aspect of their spiritual, personal and social development.

**CATHOLIC EDUCATION BALLARAT SUPPORT STUDENTS' RIGHTS AS A WHOLE OF SYSTEM IN ACTION:**







PART ONE  
**All Students' Rights**



# All Students' Rights

*The Disability Discrimination Act says it's against the law to discriminate against someone because of their disability.*

*The Disability Standards for Education explain what these laws mean for students with disability. The Standards say students with disability have the same right to take part in their education as students without disability.*

*All education providers must meet the Disability Standards for Education.*

*'Diversity' refers to the infinite variety of life experiences and attributes that students and other members of the school community bring with them to school. Students with diverse learning needs have rights under the law. Students' age, gender, religion/no religion, philosophy of life, socioeconomic background, cultural background, physical and emotional attributes and cognitive abilities can all influence the way students learn.*

## **Physical and cognitive abilities**

The attributes of students vary and can affect their ability to participate in education. Almost one in every 10 Australian children (9.6%) are identified as having a disability (ABS 2018). The functional impact students experience may include the need for educational adjustments to address sensory requirements, speech and language needs, intellectual needs, physical restrictions, psychosocial conditions, the impact of head injuries, stroke and/or acquired brain injuries. Educational programs are designed to maximise participation and engagement and outcomes.

## **Gifted and talented**

Gifted and talented students have distinctly above-average intellectual, creative, social or physical abilities (Gagné 2008). The provision of reasonable adjustments optimises their growth in learning (Kronborg & Plunkett 2008).

## **Social/emotional needs**

The social and emotional needs of students – such as those related to autism spectrum disorder, anxiety and selective mutism – should be understood in order to provide opportunities to harness strengths, interests and abilities. Understanding a student's social/emotional needs and their impact on learning and engagement can positively affect a learner's educational outcomes.

Providing reasonable adjustments to support learner participation improves academic performance and skills, while reducing stress and other factors which can negatively affect learning and school engagement. There are also laws to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their race.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander**

Students from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have a rich culture that educators in Catholic schools celebrate. We are inclusive and respectful of all Indigenous Australians throughout their learning journey. Teaching strategies are responsive and equitable and promote the ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in education.

## **Culturally and linguistically diverse background**

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) learners are those who come from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and were either born overseas or have one parent born overseas. CALD students speak one or more languages other than English. Teaching strategies must be responsive to the learning strengths and needs of these learners (AITSL 2018)

# Data on Learning Diversity in Schools

Data shows almost one in every five Australian students (19.9%) are included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD), with 3.2% of students receiving substantial adjustments and 1.6% being provided with extensive adjustments (ACARA 2019).

Schools continue to work with many students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. One in every 11 children aged 0–14 was born overseas, with 66% of those overseas-born children coming from mainly non-English-speaking countries (AIHW 2020). Many more children (25.3% of all children) speak a language other than English at home (AEDC 2018).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, meanwhile, continue to fall behind others in terms of learning outcomes (see Figure 1).

Social/emotional needs are growing. Victoria reported an 11.5% increase in clients of child and adolescent mental health services in 2017–18 (DHHS 2018) and as many as 5.6% of children entering school today are at high risk of clinically significant behavioural and emotional problems (DHHS 2019).

Mental health needs are also on the rise. Between 2013 and 2017, Australian schools saw a 5.4% annual increase in enrolments of students with mental health needs (NSW DET 2020).

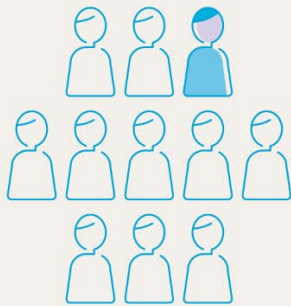
Research shows that 50% of mental disorders develop before the age of 14 (Kessler et al. 2005) and one in seven children aged 4–17 years will experience a mental health condition in any given year (Lawrence et al. 2015).

The prevalence of autism spectrum disorder has been revised upwards (by 40%) in recent years, with one in 70 Australians now believed to experience the disorder (ASA 2018), and 45% of children on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) experiencing autism (Productivity Commission 2017).

**FIGURE 1: LEARNING DIVERSITY NEEDS**



## CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUND



**1 in every 11 children** were born overseas.<sup>3</sup>



**18% of Australian children**

learn English as an additional language.<sup>4</sup>



**25% of children**

come from a refugee and migrant background.<sup>5</sup>

## CECV ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS: NAPLAN DATA 2019

NAPLAN results: students exceeding minimum standard for Year 5 (band 4)

**93.6%**

98.0%

Year 7 reading (mean scale score)

**525.52**

555.85

School attendance (major cities)

**84.2%**

92.3%

School attendance (inner regional)

**89.6%**

91.4%

■ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students  
■ Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Source: CECV NAPLAN data supplied by ACARA

## SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL NEEDS



**1 in 7 Victorian children** have mental health needs.<sup>6</sup>



**5.6% of children entering school** are at high risk of behavioural and emotional problems.<sup>7</sup>

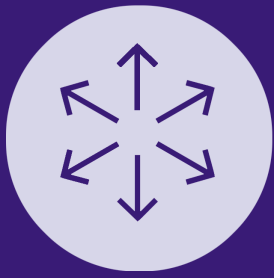


**45% of children** on the National Disability Insurance Scheme have autism.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> AIHW 2020  
<sup>4</sup> AEDC 2018

<sup>5</sup> MYAN 2016  
<sup>6</sup> Lawrence et al. 2015

<sup>7</sup> DHHS 2018  
<sup>8</sup> Productivity Commission 2017



PART TWO  
In Action



# Actioning Education for All

***Diocesan Catholic schools' inclusive pedagogy upholds the rights of all students to be included, valued, and actively engaged in education.***

***This approach is underpinned by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic tradition, educational and professional responsibilities and the well-established benefits of universal education.***

## **Catholic teachings**

Catholic teachings celebrate diversity and see every student as a sacred creation. As such, Catholic schools value the dignity, differences, strengths and infinite possibilities in all students.

'Unity ... involves the joyful recognition and acceptance of the various gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to each one...' Pope Francis has said. 'It means knowing how to listen, to accept differences with complete respect'. (2014)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) echoes this sentiment, stating that every child has a right to education. The human rights model of disability explains that it is the systems and barriers within our communities – rather than an individual impairment– that are responsible for excluding people with disabilities (UNCRPD 2016). Catholic Education Ballarat support this view and therefore commit to working in partnerships with schools and their communities to action systemic change.

## **Educational responsibility**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (the Act), the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth) (the Standards), the *Australian Education Regulation 2013* (Cth) and the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) reporting requirements outline responsibilities for educators.

The Act makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability.

The Standards require that all schools:

- ensure students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as others
- make 'reasonable adjustments' for students to enable their access and participation
- provide 'reasonable adjustments' in consultation with students and/or associates such as parents, guardians or carers.

The Regulation requires that schools report via the NCCD on:

- the number of students with disability
- the level of adjustment they receive.

**With adequate support, all children, irrespective of their different needs, should be able to learn together in mainstream classrooms in their local communities.**

**(UNESCO 2015)**

### Professional responsibility for teachers

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) guides the professional learning and practice of teachers. It explicitly outlines the elements of high-quality, effective teaching required to improve educational outcomes for all students.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching stresses the importance of supporting diverse learners through registration, regulation and the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

Teachers are required to build their capacity to teach learners with diverse needs in order to maintain their registration – professional learning requirements stipulate that all teachers must complete an annual professional development component focused on meeting the diverse needs of students.

### Universal educational benefits

There is clear and consistent evidence that supporting diverse learners through inclusive education practices delivers life-long benefits for all students (Hehir 2016).

Inclusive education systems have been shown to deliver academic (Hehir et al. 2014), social and emotional benefits (Katz and Mirenda 2002), increased post-secondary education placement (Baer et al 2011), improved employment outcomes and greater independence (Wagner et al. 1993).

Research shows that implementing inclusive educational practices also improves teachers' professional satisfaction and reduces workload (Katz 2014). Research also shows that, 'all students who are educated in inclusive classrooms hold less prejudicial views and are more accepting of people who are different from themselves.' (Dickinson, Smith, Yates, Bertuol, 2020)

Ultimately, actioning inclusion together means that as educators we are enabling all students to become interested, participating and flourishing members of their communities.

(CEB 2011)



# Principles

*Educators in our Diocesan Catholic schools are committed to supporting all learners at all times. This does not mean that every student gets the same support, but that every student receives the collective support they require to optimise growth, success, access and participation. Adjustments and support should be dynamic, research and evidence-based and at the point of need.*

## Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is recommended as a set of principles that provide a blueprint for creating inclusive environments, instructional goals, pedagogical practices, materials and assessments that can be customised and adjusted for individual needs. UDL is an approach to

curriculum that minimises barriers and optimises learning for all students.

Adjustments can be designed flexibly to support diverse learning needs inclusive of curriculum design, environmental factors, social and sensory needs. For more information see the *CECV Intervention Framework* listed in the key resources section at the end of this guide.

## Intervention Framework

The CECV has developed an Intervention Framework which articulates the guiding principles, accountability mechanisms, practices and strategies that need to be considered in order to optimise learning outcomes for all students.

Students' requirements sit at the heart of the Intervention Framework, with families, schools, the Catholic education system and the wider community supporting the

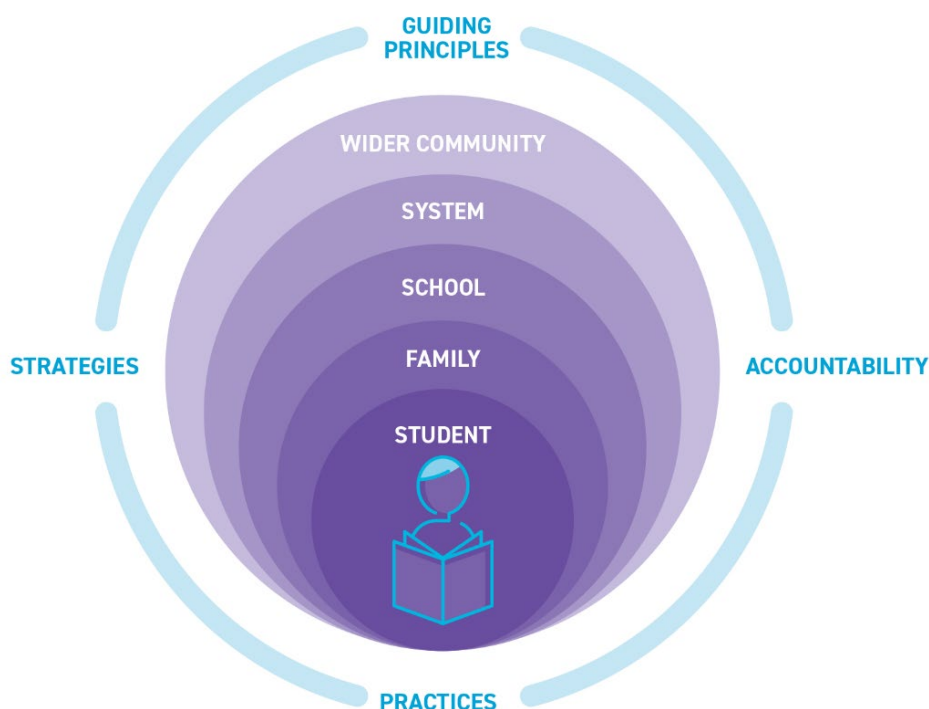
delivery of optimal support.

This approach is outlined in Figure 2 and detailed in the CECV Intervention Framework.

## Professional Learning Communities

The foundational purpose of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is to achieve *high levels of learning for all students*. PLCs place student learning at the centre of both the day to day operations of the school and to the larger vision of school improvement. It requires teams of teachers to work together on common issues of learning and teaching with the clear intention of improving learner outcomes. PLC refers to a school wide system of teacher teams who collaborate on issues of instruction, assessment and other school topics with the goal of improving student learning.

**FIGURE 2:  
INTERVENTION  
FRAMEWORK**







# PART THREE

## Whole of System



# About the Education Services Team

*There are many ways Catholic schools can partner with the CEB Education Services Team to implement the Intervention Framework, deliver high-quality instruction and provide multi-tiered systems of support.*

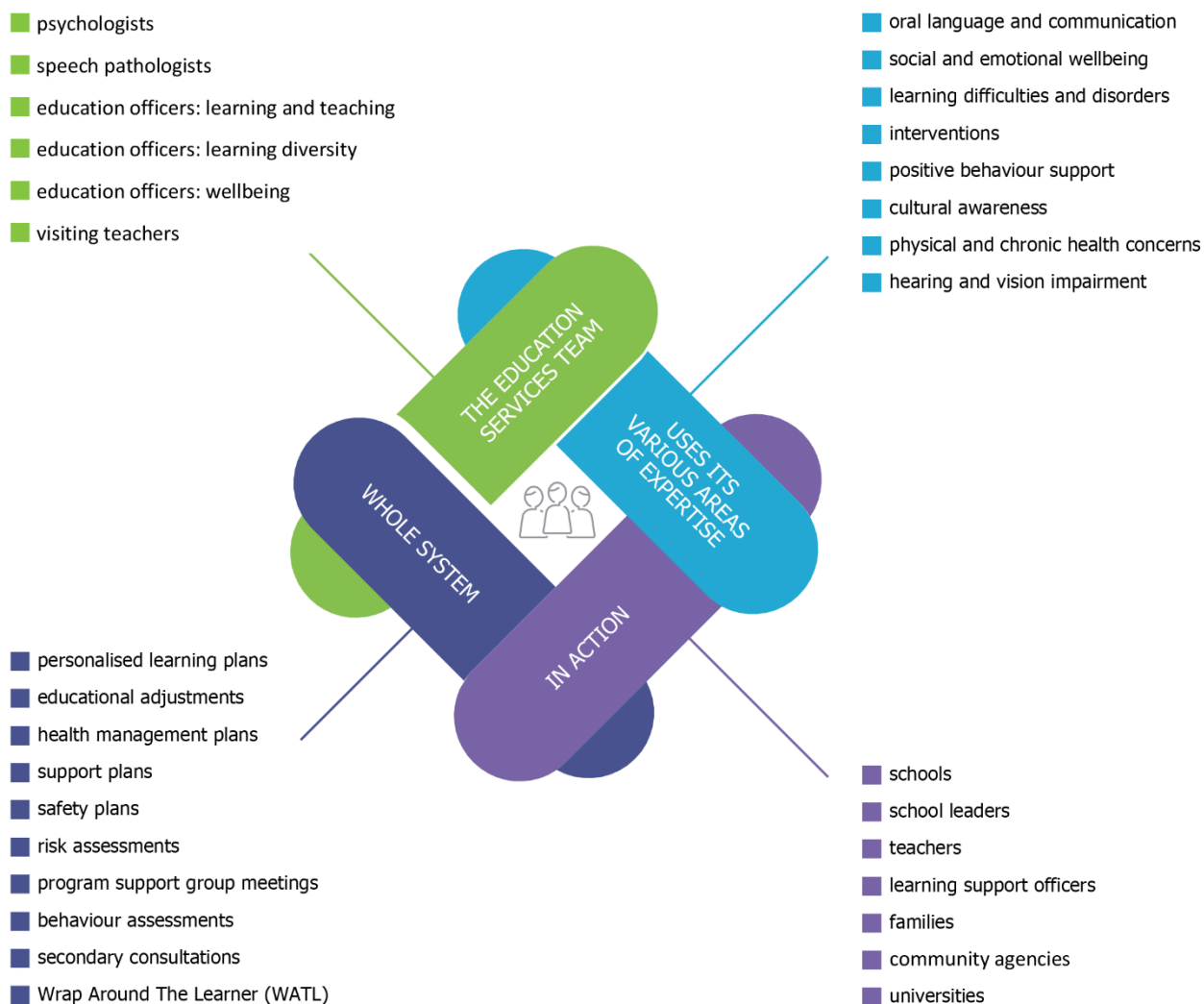
The Catholic Education Ballarat Education Services Team works in partnerships with schools to design school wide systems to support all students.

The team is committed to innovation and evidence-based practice and works with schools to design and inform targeted

interventions and instruction. Schools can draw on the expertise of education officers, psychologists, speech pathologists, and visiting teachers.

The many ways the Education Services Team works closely with schools are outlined in Figure 3.

**FIGURE 3: HOW THE EDUCATION SERVICES TEAM WORKS IN ACTION WITH SCHOOLS**



# Actioning Education for All: A Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

*Diocesan Catholic schools implement multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to ensure the needs of all students are identified and met across the domains of health and wellbeing – (spiritually, ethically, affectively and cognitively), behaviour and learning. Schools consult with families and establish processes that support the implementation of MTSS, informed by data and evidence-based instructional practices.*

**The first tier of support – universal quality instruction for all** – involves the provision of quality teaching and learning for all students with screening of academic and pro-social skills determining appropriate supports.

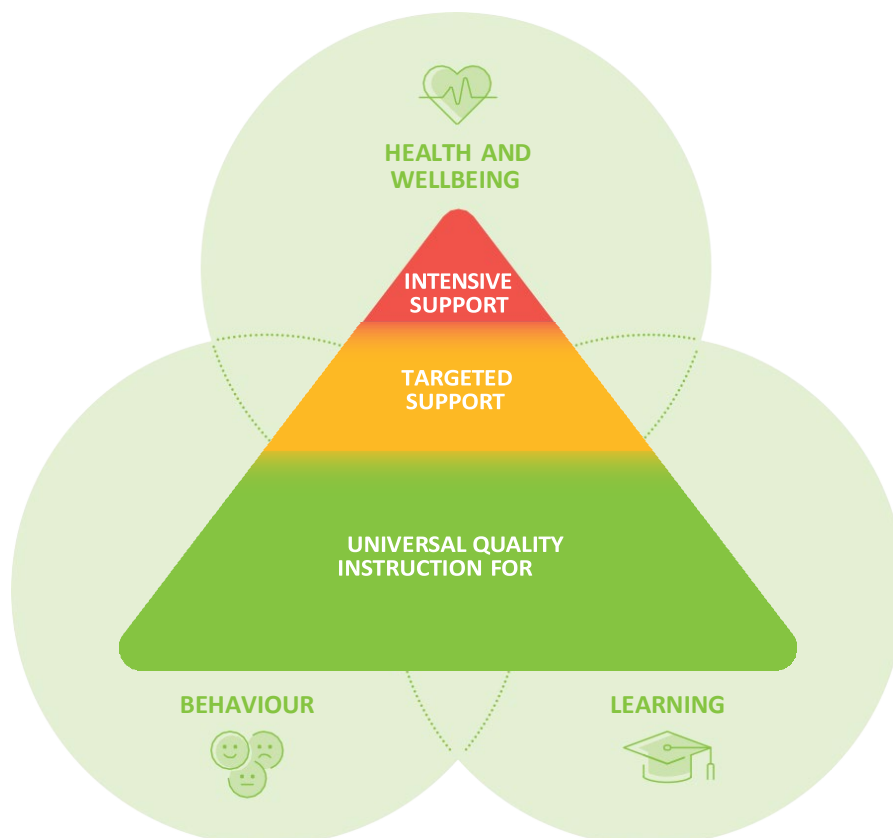
**The second tier – targeted support** – focuses on specific cohorts of students who need more explicit and targeted support. It involves completing targeted assessments and providing additional evidence-based supports.

**The final tier – intensive support** – involves more specialised assessments and individualised, targeted intervention.

As depicted in Figure 4, the three tiers are not discrete and separate, but fluid. Educational adjustments occur across all tiers and teachers can be supported by the Education Services Team.

Multi-tiered systems of support are a continuous improvement framework that links data and instruction. The intervention process, which is described next, provides details to guide the data collection and program planning processes and is informed by the Response to Intervention (RTI) model and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Please see the key resources section of this guide for more information on RTI and UDL.

**FIGURE 4: MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT**



# The Intervention Process

*The intervention process focuses on student outcomes that are embedded in teacher practice. It values research, evidence-based practices, collaboration with families and data-driven instruction that are integrated into the culture and operations of a school. The CEB Education Services Team helps schools implement a five-step intervention process for supporting improved learning.*

**STEP 1: Identification (who is at risk?)**  
Schools collect quality information from a range of sources at enrolment and all points of transition to develop a shared understanding of each and every student. Ongoing comprehensive screening and assessment processes are essential to identify students with diverse needs. The Functional Needs Assessment (FNA) Profile offers schools a process to support students with diverse learning needs. For more information see the key resources section of this guide.

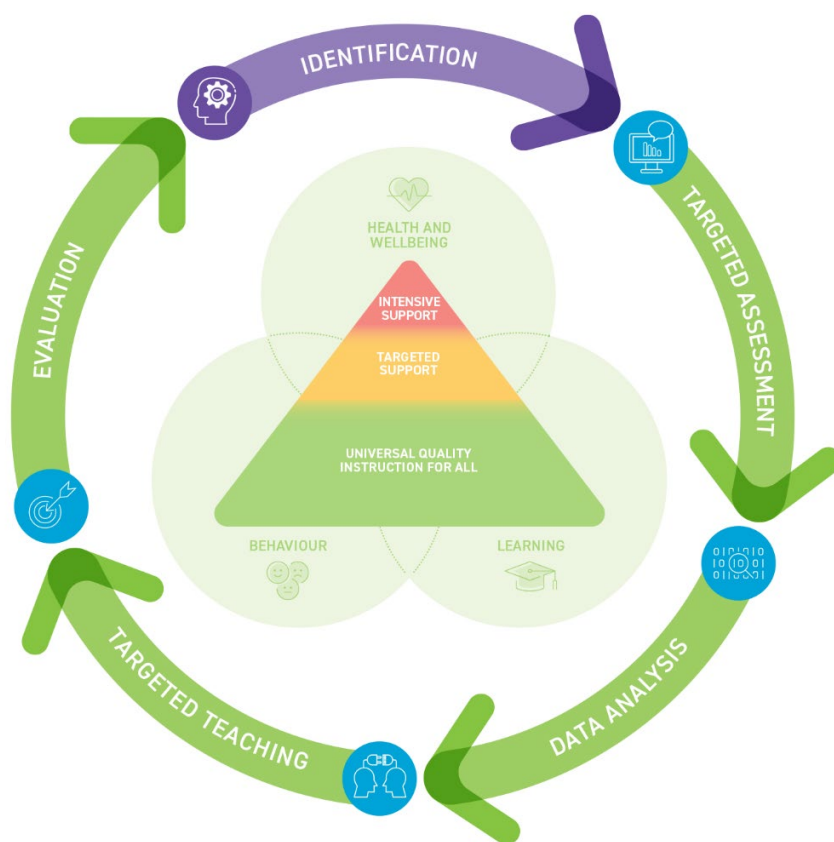
**STEP 2: Targeted assessment (why are they at risk?)**  
Students with diverse learning needs may require more specific targeted assessment data to inform the development and delivery of the most appropriate learning pathway.

**STEP 3: Data analysis (what is the risk?)**  
Data driven, decision-making processes are applied within inclusive school practices to accommodate the learning needs of identified students.

**STEP 4: Targeted teaching (what is the school doing?)**  
With appropriate data-driven decision-making processes, schools design learning interventions and adjustments that are matched to identified needs. Effective access to the curriculum is provided in a way that targets development and progression for every student, individually or as a cohort.

**STEP 5: Evaluation (is it working?)**  
Student progress as a response to an intervention is evaluated, along with the integrity, fidelity and implementation of the intervention or adjustments themselves. The focus is on the rate of student progress over time, regardless of the starting point. Schools rigorously track the progress of all students and adapt targeted instruction and adjustments to ensure growth.

**FIGURE 5: THE INTERVENTION PROCESS AND MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT**



As shown in Figure 5, the intervention process is underpinned by MTSS.

# Key Resources

*An extensive range of materials has been developed to help Catholic schools support the needs of all learners. Below is a list of key resources to help schools get started.*



## READ

### CECV Intervention Framework

The CECV Intervention Framework outlines the guiding principles, accountability, strategies and practices that need to be considered in order to optimise learning outcomes for all students. The framework is available at [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Publications](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Publications)

### Functional Needs Assessment Profile

The Functional Needs Assessment (FNA) Profile offers schools a process to support students with diverse learning needs. It is a tool designed to identify the needs of students and is integral to the intervention process. The functional areas included are: communication, learning (cognitive), literacy, numeracy, gifted, physical/ health, social/emotional, behaviour, vision and hearing. The FNA Profile can be found on the Catholic Education Victoria Network (CEVN) website at <https://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>



## WATCH

### CECV Intervention Framework Professional Learning Modules 1–7

These modules are based on the *CECV Intervention Framework*. Modules 1 and 2 explore the importance of a culture of inclusive practices and the methodologies that underpin the framework. Modules 3–7 deal with the five-step intervention process. Each module is accompanied by an activity book. Access to modules is available at <https://mtss.education/professionallearningmodules/> when schools undertake CECV Intervention Framework professional learning.

### CECV Intervention Framework Illustrations of Practice

These videos illustrate the principles explored in the seven professional learning modules. They feature practical advice and insights from Catholic Education Schools Victoria educators with experience in implementing the Intervention Framework. Access to the modules is available here: <https://mtss.education/professionallearningmodules/> when schools undertake CECV Intervention Framework professional learning.



## VISIT

### CEM Multi-Tiered Systems of Support website

This CEM website provides educators with extensive tools and resources for supporting oral language, literacy, numeracy, behaviour and cultural diversity. Visit <https://mtss.education/>

### Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) website

This is the basis of the CECV's disability funding model. More information about the NCCD can be found at [www.nccd.edu.au](http://www.nccd.edu.au)

### CAST website

Visit [www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org) to explore the Universal Design for Learning framework.

### RTI Action Network website

For an overview of the Response to Intervention model, visit [www.rtinetwork.org](http://www.rtinetwork.org)



## CONTACT

For more information, please contact your Catholic Education Ballarat Education Services Team members.

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