

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) has clearly documented criteria to determine eligibility and outline entry for its all services, support programs and schools. Aspect's individualised services, supports and schools provide a range of programs and services directed at developing participant/student's skills across communication, social, academic, economic, daily living, recreation, employment and leisure domains. Aspect also provides support and information to parents and carers, families and service providers.

Service Entry Principles

The following principles guide decisions about eligibility for service and allocation of service:

- All services, supports and schools within Aspect will have clearly outlined, transparent service entry eligibility criteria that is publicised in a variety of accessible formats and freely available to anyone in the community.
- Entry and access to services are provided on the basis of the individual's eligibility to participate in a funded program or access a program of fee for service, and relative need.
- Services respond appropriately and sensitively to the needs of the entire community, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders within the limit of available resources.
- Access and equity principles are applied in decision making to ensure fairness, and that access to services is without discrimination.
- Individuals and families who are refused service are provided with reasons specific to the eligibility criteria relevant to the service, support or school where the application was made.
- Individuals and families have access to Aspect's complaints process and are encouraged to provide feedback about the service entry process, either positive or negative, including when service entry was refused, to support the organisation's continuous improvement practices.
- Regular reviews regarding service entry eligibility criteria against funding body criteria, anti-discrimination legislation and service capabilities are conducted to support the removal of any barriers to service access.

Each service, support or school within Aspect maintains its service entry eligibility criteria based on a number of factors which may include the:

- age of the individual and residential location;
- goals of the individual's plan or funding arrangement;
- assessed needs and established skills of the individual;
- individual's formal diagnosis;

- relative severity of the individual's need and / or family situation;
- availability of service resources;
- time served on waitlists (where applicable);
- availability of alternatives for the individual;
- requirements to pay for the service if a contribution or fee is sought by Aspect;
- need for vacancies to be available in existing services or schools where numbers are limited;
- program, service, support or school's purpose (e.g. Autism specific services with a goal to support individual's to transition to environments that are not autism specific);
- guidelines and requirements of government or other agencies that fund the program or service;
- individuals (or their person responsible) consent to Aspect making appropriate referrals and releasing appropriate and necessary information to third parties, where required.

Service, Support & Schools Leaving, Transition and Exit

Aspect offers transition support in the event participants / students and their families exit Aspect programs of support, services and schools. Where possible, this is done in a planned manner, in collaboration with the student / participant and their family, as well as any other Aspect service or support, or wider community service as relevant.

Participants / students may exit an Aspect school, support or service for one or more of the following reasons:

- they have completed a program, or achieved the goals and outcomes desired from their participation with Aspect;
- leaving an Aspect program or service is a goal and an indication of skill development;
- they are transitioning to a different program within Aspect or external to Aspect in the wider community;
- eligibility criteria for the service or program have changed;
- funding arrangements for the service or program have changed;
- individualised funding has expired;
- they are relocating to an area outside of the geographical catchment area of the program or service;
- the program of service no longer meets the person we support's needs;
- they no longer wish to use the service or program;
- they have exhausted funding available to pay for the service;
- they have not paid fees in accordance with Aspect's outlined fees and / or service agreement;
- Aspect discontinues the program or service.

Aspect may decide to exit a person we support from a program or service if continuing participation means Aspect is unable to maintain a safe environment for other people we support and staff.

Reasons for discontinuation of service as outlined in this policy will be identified where possible in a service or enrolment agreement. Where this is not possible, a copy of this policy shall be provided to students / participants and their family on service, support or school entry.

External Framework

The Service Access policy upholds the National Standards for Disability Services Standard 5: Service Access requirement that Aspect manages access, commencement and leaving a service in a transparent, fair and equal and responsive way.

Within the Disability Standards for Education, this policy also speaks to Part 4: Standards for Enrolment and Part 7: Standards for Student Support Services, regarding the fairness and equity of the enrolment process, availability of accessible formats for information and access to relevant supports and adjustments, to ensure educational services and schools are accessible to all, without discrimination, including access to specialised services that support individual participation in the educational setting.

Legislation References

National

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Disability Services Act 1993 (Cth)
Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Cth)
National Standards for Disability Services 2013

New South Wales

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
CAMA - Community Services Act 1993 (NSW)
Community services (Complaints, Appeals and Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW)
Education Act 1990 (NSW)
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)

South Australia

Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)
Compulsory Education Legislation (SA)
Education Act 1972 (SA)
Education Regulations 2012 (SA)
Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)
Equal Opportunities Act 1984 (SA)

Victoria

Disability Act 2006 (VIC)
Victoria Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (VIC)