



There are many types of school that consider deaf or heard of hearing children in education. Every child has specific needs and there are varied education environment options for you to choose from to help provide the best education outcomes.

A school for the deaf

- A school for the deaf provides small classes and students are taught by a teacher of the deaf.
- Most of the children in the school are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Children may receive audiological services by Australian Hearing at the school.
- The children follow the usual school curriculum.
- The school will provide events such as camps, sports, and other activities outside the classroom.

A primary school with a deaf facility or unit

- A deaf facility/unit operates within a mainstream school.
- A deaf facility/unit has its own rooms within the school.
- A primary school deaf facility/unit employs teachers of the deaf. Auslan interpreters may be employed, depending on individual student needs.
- Deaf students are part of the mainstream school and attend all activities provided to children who are not deaf, including sports, camps and other events.
- Deaf students usually attend the majority of the day in the same classroom as their hearing peers. The teacher of the deaf will provide assistance. The teacher of the deaf or an Auslan interpreter will provide signing support.
- The amount of time each deaf student spends in the classroom with their peers depends on each individual deaf student
- The teacher of the deaf will provide language enrichment activities, tutorial support for class subjects or other activities, which are needed.
- Some students will receive audiological services by Australian Hearing who usually visit the school.
- Facilities/units may provide all communication methods, or they may only cater for students who communicate through speaking.
- An Integration coordinator who coordinates all services provided to students with disabilities within the school.
- Integration aides
- A visiting or itinerant teacher of the deaf

Secondary school with deaf facility/ unit?

A secondary school deaf facility/unit is the same as a primary school deaf facility/unit with the exception that:

- A secondary school deaf facility/unit will be staffed by teachers of the deaf and Auslan interpreters. Interpreters are preferably qualified in interpreting.
- Teachers of the deaf will also sign for the deaf student in the class when an interpreter is not available or attend a class if a deaf student requires more assistance from a teacher of the deaf.
- All government secondary school facilities/units cater for both students who sign and those who are oral.
- Some Independent school deaf facilities/units only cater for students who are oral.

What education support will be available to my child? (In a mainstream school)

The educational support offered depends on the student's needs and the support available within the school or from the region. Check with the school to see what support is available if the school is private.

Depending on the school you child may have access to:

- An Integration coordinator who coordinates all services provided to students with disabilities within the school.
- Integration aides
- A visiting or itinerant teacher of the deaf

Questions to ask when choosing a school

The school you send your child to will vary based on various factors. It is important to find out if the school will be able to meet your child's needs. To make the best decision for your child and family you should go to the school, talk to teachers and ask other parents. **Below is a guide for questions to ask.**

Staff and support services in a school

- Does the teacher have experience with deaf and hard of hearing children?
- Who will work with my child? (integration aide or visiting/ itinerant teacher of the deaf?)
- For integration aides, what qualifications and experience have they had in working with deaf students?
- Will my child have to share the support person with other students? Or will my child receive individual support?
- Will my child remain in the mainstream class?
- Will my child be taken out of class for extra tuition with the visiting or itinerant teacher of the deaf? How often?
- Do staff receive deaf awareness training? How often is this provided?
- What deaf awareness training do the other students receive?

Staff and support services in a deaf school

- Does the school have teachers of the deaf?
- Are all teachers of the deaf qualified in deaf education?
- How many of the students use sign language?
- How many interpreters work in the school and are they qualified?
- If my child uses a different communication mode to what is offered in the school, can my child be enrolled? How will the school meet my child's needs?

What should you look for in a school?

- Friendliness of the staff and their attitude towards your child
- Atmosphere - is it welcoming and inclusive?
- Are all students valued at the school?

Curriculum

- What are the school's strategies for supporting core areas of the curriculum?
- How will my child's skills be assessed?
- Will my child be able to sit any nation-wide testing of reading and writing skills?
- Does the school teach Deaf Studies?

School policy

- What is the school's policy on bullying?
- Does the school have regular Student Support Meetings and how involved will I be in my child's education?
- What communication methods does the school use (Oral and or Auslan?)
- What is the school's policy on communication with deaf students?
- What are the outcomes of previous students who have graduated?

Sign Specific Needs

- How fluent are teachers of the deaf in sign language?
- How many teachers of the deaf in the facility/unit can sign?
- How well can they understand what the students are signing?
- Will staff supervising students in the yard be able to communicate with my child?
- Is training in sign language offered to parents?

Auditory Verbal Specific

- Are teachers skilled and experienced in oral education for deaf students?
- Does the school have a speech pathologist or an occupational therapist?

Classroom

- How many students are in a class?
- Have any classrooms been adapted for deaf students to reduce echoing and background noise?
- Are there any classrooms fitted with a sound field system or interactive smartboard?

Social needs

- What activities does the school have? (Excursions, camps, after school program, music or sports) How will your child be included and supported? Will other deaf students be involved?
- How will your child communicate with other students?
- How does the school promote independence in deaf students?
- How will school assemblies be made accessible?

Travel

- Is there any transport provision for my child to get to and from the school?

Technology

- Does Australian Hearing visit the school?
- Do teachers check hearing aids and cochlear implants each day?
- Are teachers trained in the use of FM devices?
- Are teachers skilled in monitoring and undertaking small repairs to hearing aids and cochlear implants?
- Are spare hearing aids available if my child's is broken? Are spare parts for my child's cochlear implant available?
- Is the school aware of the need to provide captions when showing videos?
- How will my child hear announcements over the Public Address System?
- Does the school have any visual emergency alarms?

If you are a deaf parent and use an interpreter

Will the school provide an interpreter for:

- Parent/teacher interviews?
- Student Support Group meetings?
- School concerts, sporting or drama events?
- Christmas concerts?
- Awards nights?
- How does the school communicate with parents?

For further information about Deaf Children Australia.

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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.

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