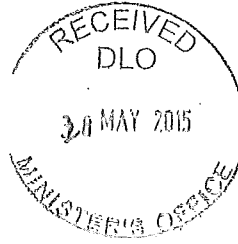




**ACT**  
Government  
Education and Training



BRIEF

Ref: 2013/04203  
Trim No: MIN15/409

**SUBJECT: HEALTHCARE ACCESS AT SCHOOL (HAAS) AND SUPPORT STAFF ROLES**

To: Minister for Education and Training

From: Deputy Director General, Education Strategy

Director: Beth Mitchell  
Branch: Student Engagement

**Recommendation**

That you note the information contained in this brief

*NOTED/PLEASE DISCUSS*

*Joy Burch MLA*

Action Officer: Iain Barr  
Branch: Student Engagement  
Extension: 59391

**Critical date and reason**

Minister's office timeframe.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this brief is to respond to your request for background information on the HAAS model of care – the functions and who responds to those functions, disability support officer (DSO) and learning support assistant (LSA) roles, and the role of LSAs in specialist schools.

**Background**

*Health access at schools*

ACT Health leads the HAAS pilot and the Directorate supports their role in leading responses to healthcare needs of students.

HAAS uses a model of nurse-led care that involves school staff, typically LSAs, undertaking specific routine healthcare tasks to support a student to attend school.

These tasks can also involve management of student feeding through percutaneous endoscopic gastronomy tubes and tracheostomy care.

ACT Health, with parent consent and involvement, develop individual healthcare plans for students while they are at school.

Paediatricians, nurses and parents determine if school staff can implement those healthcare plans.

If it is determined that school staff can undertake those tasks, then three volunteers are sought by the school principal. The volunteer staff are then trained in the specific needs of the student and a registered nurse must sign off on their competence to carry out the tasks. The volunteer staff member must also feel adequately prepared to undertake the role and sign off to that effect. Parents must also agree to the arrangement.

#### *Disability Support Officers*

Historically, the Community Services Directorate, Education and Training Directorate and ACT Health all employed Disability Support Officers (DSOs).

With the commencement of the ACT NDIS trial, and the consequent changes in government service delivery models for disability, the DSO classification was removed from ACT Government employment agreements to avoid confusion regarding delivery of disability support. The last two DSO positions in the Education and Training Directorate were located in the Disability Education Section. The process to transition the final DSO positions to Administrative Service Officer classification is complete. The most recent DSO duty statement is at Attachment A.

The focus in that duty statement is on community access and skill development (including personal care, food preparation, assisting with transportation, and administrative tasks).

ACT Health is the only agency which retains a position similar to the DSO role – Health Support Officers.

#### *Learning Support Assistants*

According to the Directorate's general LSA duty statement Attachment B, their key responsibility is to "Provide high-level personal and educational support to students with special needs and severe disabilities [and] may be responsible for the physical well being of a student or groups of students."

Staff in the LSA role are required to have a knowledge of the educational and social needs for students with disabilities or special needs. They also need to have the

relevant skills and abilities to work and relate to these students, including first aid qualifications and a Certificate III in Disability Study.

*LSA Role in Specialist Schools*

LSAs duty statements are common across the system, but in specialist schools, LSAs undertake a greater range and mix of responsibilities given the more complex needs of students attending those settings. The levels of personal care support provided by LSAs in specialist schools is, typically, higher than in mainstream schools. Some families, however, are choosing mainstream schools for their children with complex needs and thereby reducing the difference between tasks performed in each setting.

**Issues**

As a result of adverse media attention the HAAS pilot has become a topic of attention for the Legislative Assembly, the teaching union and the community.

**Consultation**

Directorate's People and Performance Branch

**Financial implications**

Nil

**Media**

There has been media interest in the HAAS model in specialist schools.



Joanne Garrison  
Deputy Director-General  
Education Strategy

26 May 2015