Toolkit for Supporting Students with Physical Disability in Ordinary Schools

Foreword

Physical disability (PD) refers to the disability caused by diseases of the central and peripheral neurological systems, traumas, or other congenital diseases of the musculoskeletal system. It often leads to hindrance or limitations in one or more aspects of daily living. Some common categories of PD include cerebral palsy, spina bifida, spinal muscular atrophy, muscular dystrophy, amputation, osteogenesis imperfecta, and juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Students with PD may have diverse educational needs and may find it challenging to participate in regular school learning and group activities due to limitations in mobility and dexterity. Their medical conditions and differences in physical abilities may also affect their social, emotional, and self-concept development.

This toolkit consists of three sections: Needs Assessment Questionnaire, Support Strategies, and Support Plan. The Needs Assessment Questionnaire is designed to assist school personnel in assessing students' physical and mental needs across multiple aspects (including learning, social and emotional adaptation, transition/life planning, and self-concept). The Support Strategies section sets out recommended actions tailored to these aspects to facilitate the integration of students with PD into school life. The Support Plan, to be completed by school personnel, helps determine the specific implementation details of the support strategies, and review and document the progress and effectiveness of the support provided. School personnel can use this toolkit by following the steps below:

Needs Assessment Questionnaire: Assessing the student's support needs
- This section should be **completed collaboratively by members of the Student Support Team and teachers who are familiar with the student's circumstances**.
- School personnel are advised to conduct **ongoing observations** of the student for one to two months, **gather information from the parents** about the student's disabling conditions and needs, and **consolidate the views of all stakeholders** before completing the questionnaire.
- Since **Part (B): Student's Self-Concept** involves the student's self-evaluation, **it is recommended that it be completed by school personnel who are familiar with the student and have developed a thorough understanding of the student's circumstances through observation and daily communication**.

Support Strategies: Drawing up the support strategies
- School personnel may **refer to the results of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire**, which include **the student's strengths and weaknesses** in terms of learning, social, emotional and transitional adaptation, as well as **the student's self-perception and evaluation**. **Based on these insights, the actual needs, and the school context**, they can then draw up the school-based support strategies by **selecting suitable items from this section**.

Support Plan: Formulating the support plan
- Having drawn up the school-based support strategies, school personnel may **collaboratively determine the specific implementation details of these strategies** by completing the Support Plan. The school-based educational psychologist may be consulted as needed.
- If the student is receiving support under an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the support strategies can be incorporated into the IEP without the need to complete a separate Support Plan.
- As the student's condition may change over time, the school should assess the student's needs every school term or every school year **as necessary**, and review the progress and effectiveness of the support provided, thereby adjusting the support strategies accordingly.

References

The Education Bureau's SENSE website: Link
Information on special schools, including schools for children with PD: Link

Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Name of school:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

Name of student:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female Class level:⎯⎯⎯(⎯⎯ /⎯⎯school year)

Date of birth:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ Age:⎯⎯⎯⎯

Type(s) of physical disability:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ (Date of diagnosis:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯)

Other identified special educational needs (Please put a tick in the appropriate box(es)):

☐ Specific Leaning Difficulties   ☐ Intellectual Developmental Disorder

☐ Autism Spectrum Disorder   ☐ Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder

☐ Visual Impairment   ☐ Hearing Impairment

☐ Speech and Language Impairment   ☐ Mental Illness

☐ Others (please specify:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯) ☐ Not applicable

Tier of current support: ☐ Tier-1   ☐ Tier-2   ☐ Tier-3   ☐ Not applicable

Current medication:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ ☐ Not applicable

Current medical services/ out-of-school professional support:

☐ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯Hospital, the specialist service(s) includes:

⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

☐ Child Assessment Centre of the Department of Health, the service receiving includes:

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☐ Others:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
☐ Not applicable

Information provided by:
☐ Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)
☐ Special Educational Needs Support Teacher (SENST)
☐ Guidance officer/guidance personnel/school social worker
☐ Class teacher, subject teacher (please specify the subject:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯)
☐ Teaching assistant providing support for students with special educational needs
☐ Parent
☐ Others (please specify:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯)

Date of completion:⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

(A) Student's General Performance

For aspects (1) to (4), with respect to the student's physical fitness and health condition, please put a tick in the appropriate box to indicate the frequency with which the student exhibits the specified behaviours. Supplementary information, if any, should be entered in the Remarks column.

(1) Learning Adaptation	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Remarks
1.1 Operates tools related to learning activities (e.g. stationery, laboratory apparatus) independently	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
1.2 Operates necessary assistive aids (e.g. writing, reading and/or mobility aids, computers) independently	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
1.3 Navigates to different locations within a classroom or across campus venues independently	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
1.4 Participates in regular classes and other routine learning activities (e.g. taking notes, responding to teachers' questions, engaging in group discussions, conducting experiments) without assistance	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
1.5 Participates in all classes and routine learning activities without requiring special arrangements from the school (e.g. taking breaks or leaving early, receiving additional time to complete assignments)	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
1.6 Engages in various types of assessment activities without the need for special examination arrangements (e.g. extra time allowance, modifications to assessment formats)	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
1.7 Assumes roles or responsibilities in class (e.g. speaking in group activities, serving as a group leader or a peer tutor)	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	

(2) **Social Adaptation**	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	**Remarks**
2.1 Interacts with peers in a manner similar to typical classmates	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
2.2 Maintains a good relationship with teachers	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
2.3 Takes the initiative to make friends	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
2.4 Takes the initiative to seek help when necessary	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
2.5 Demonstrates adequate problem-solving skills to handle peer-relationship challenges (e.g. rejection, exploitation, criticism, conflicts, bullying)	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
2.6 Participates in group activities at school (e.g. picnics, Christmas celebrations)	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
2.7 Is able to arrange or organise activities (e.g. birthday parties, leisure activities) for peers or the groups he/she belongs to	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	

(3) **Emotional Adaptation**	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	**Remarks**
3.1 Is emotionally stable	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
3.2 Shows positive emotions more frequently than negative ones	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
3.3 Is aware of his/her own emotions	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
3.4 Is able to express his/her emotional needs appropriately	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
3.5 Is able to appropriately regulate his/her emotions to avoid emotional imbalance	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	

(4) Transition/Life Planning (Only applicable to students transferring schools, transitioning to secondary school, or completing secondary education.)	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Remarks
4.1 Knows his/her own strengths, interests, and abilities	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
4.2 Understands the pathways available for further study, employment, or training	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
4.3 Is able to make appropriate choices for further study or employment	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
4.4 Is able to set specific goals and plans for his/her life paths	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
4.5 Engages in self-development or talent development programmes and experiential activities	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	

(B) Student's Self-Concept

Since this part involves the student's self-evaluation, it should be completed by school personnel who are familiar with the student and have developed a thorough understanding of the student's circumstances through observation and daily communication. Please put a tick in the appropriate box. Supplementary information, if any, should be entered in the Remarks column.

(5) Self-Concept	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Remarks
5.1 The student accepts his/her physical disability and the limitations it entails	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.2 The student is not bothered about his/her physical disability or appearance	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.3 The student feels welcomed within his/her social circles	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.4 The student enjoys interacting with his/her schoolmates	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.5 The student does not see himself/herself as a bother to others	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.6 The student believes he/she can manage schoolwork and other learning tasks properly	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.7 The student believes he/she experiences more positive emotions than negative ones	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.8 The student believes he/she can make contributions	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	
5.9 The student is satisfied with his/her current self	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐	

(C) Other information

(1) Further observations and concerns regarding the student's adaptation in school:
For example, are there any other adaptation difficulties?

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(2) Factors facilitating the student's adaptation in school:
For example, what are the student's personality characteristics, personal strengths, or skills?

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(3) Supplementary information from parents:
For example, what concerns do parents have about the student's adaptation to school life? How can parents facilitate the student to adapt to school?

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(D) Conclusions

Based on the information of Parts (A), (B) and (C):

(1) Generally, the student's adaptation in school is:

☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Below average ☐ Poor

(2) Aspects warranting attention and support from the school (select one or more aspects):

☐ (1) Learning Adaptation
☐ (2) Social Adaptation
☐ (3) Emotional Adaptation
☐ (4) Transition/Life Planning
☐ (5) Self-Concept

Support Strategies

Completed by: _____ Post: _____ Date: _____

> Guidelines: • School personnel **may refer to the results of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire**, which include the **student's strengths and weaknesses** in terms of learning, social, emotional and transitional adaptation, as well as **the student's self-perception and evaluation. Based on these insights, the actual needs, and the school context**, they can then draw up the school-based support strategies by **selecting suitable items from this section**.

Schools can provide the following support measures to assist the student in adapting to school life (Select one or more options by putting a tick in the appropriate boxes):

(1) Learning Adaptation

Accessible and barrier-free learning environment	☐ Provide special seating arrangements (e.g. seating near entrances/aisles/locations that facilitate the use of learning tools, with ample space for crutches, wheelchairs, or walking aids)
	☐ Ensure accessibility of campus facilities (e.g. installing entrance ramps and allowing the use of lifts)
	☐ Assess suitability of off-campus learning activities (e.g. field trips) for the student's abilities and provide alternative learning activities where necessary
Learning activity accommodations - **Lesson arrangements** - **Activity design** - **Classroom instructions** - **Assistive devices**	☐ Adopt flexible school hours or alternative timetables (e.g. tailoring class participation according to the student's rehabilitation progress and allowing rest periods at the rest area if needed)
	☐ Provide peer support (e.g. note-taking assistance, pairing with suitable peers for group activities)
	☐ Adapt the requirements of learning activities (e.g. physical education and science experiments) to the student's physical capabilities
	☐ Provide classwork accommodations (e.g. providing handouts and reducing the need for copying)
	☐ Give clear, concise instructions or highlight key points of the lessons
	☐ Allow the use of assistive learning devices (e.g. voice recorders and writing aids) in class
Assignment accommodations - **Completion time** - **Flexible response formats** - **Quantity adjustment** - **Difficulty adjustment** - **Marking**	☐ Allow alternative/diverse formats (e.g. computer input methods instead of writing) for submission of assignments
	☐ Allow flexible due dates or extensions of deadlines
	☐ Reduce the number of assignments and/or copying tasks
	☐ Adjust the difficulty levels of assignments
	☐ Exercise discretion in marking (e.g. making allowances for students who have difficulties using drawing instruments due to impaired motor co-ordination)

Assessment accommodations - Question paper design - Special examination arrangements - Mode of assessment	☐ Allow assessments in special examination rooms
	☐ Grant a (　　　) % extra time allowance
	☐ Allow a supervised break of (　　　) minutes during assessments
	☐ Provide an amanuensis to write down the answers/allow the student to input answers using a computer
Additional learning support	☐ Provide remedial support (e.g. arranging after-class remedial support groups)
	☐ Provide learning skills training (e.g. arranging learning skills training groups)
Others (if applicable)	☐ _____

(2) Social Adaptation

Teacher-student inclusion	☐ Teachers/social workers take the initiative to understand the student's background
	☐ Teachers/social workers proactively attend to the student's physical and mental development and adaptation outside of class hours
	☐ Facilitate regular meetings between teachers/social workers and the student
Peer inclusion	☐ Enhance peer understanding of physical disabilities
	☐ Encourage mutual peer support and appreciation
	☐ Organise peer-mediated group activities to strengthen the student's social support network
	☐ Organise class team-building activities to foster peer relationships
	☐ Provide social skills training (e.g. friendship-building, play skills, social problem-solving, or assertive communications)
Others (if applicable)	☐ _____

(3) Emotional Adaptation

Emotional awareness	☐ Equip the student with emotional awareness skills (e.g. understanding one's own emotional cues from bodily responses)
Emotional management	☐ Equip the student with emotional regulation skills (e.g. recognising and understanding emotions, expressing emotions appropriately, strategies to cope with stress)
Others (if applicable)	☐ _____

(4) Transition/Life Planning (only applicable to students transferring school, transitioning to secondary school or completing secondary education)

Self-understanding	☐ Guide the student to examine his/her personality characteristics, abilities, and interests
	☐ Guide the student to objectively evaluate his/her strengths and weaknesses (e.g. past learning experiences, feedback from others)
Personal development	☐ Encourage the student to participate in diverse activities/courses to develop talents and interests
Further study or employment	☐ Offer opportunities to explore options for further study or employment (e.g. providing information, occupational assessments, and visits to institutions/workplaces)
	☐ Guide the student in setting goals and reviewing progress regarding further studies or employment (e.g. helping with collecting, analysing and comparing information, arranging training in interview techniques)
Adaptation to new school/work environment	☐ Liaise in advance with support units at the new school/workplace regarding the student's transition
	☐ Arrange a pre-transition visit to the school/workplace to familiarise the parents and the student with the new environment
Others (if applicable)	☐ _____

(5) Self-Concept

Understanding and accepting the limitations entailed by physical disabilities	☐ Help the student accept his/her physical disability and the limitations it entails
	☐ Understand the student's abilities and limitations, respect his/her independence, and avoid being overly sympathetic and over-caring
Enhancement of self-image	☐ Give more positive feedback and encouragement to boost the student's confidence (e.g. acknowledging the student's effort)
	☐ Foster a growth mindset to help the student recognise that continuous improvement and development are achievable through effort and learning
	☐ Encourage the student to take up roles in class or school activities (e.g. serving as a peer mentor)
	☐ Provide training tailored to the student's abilities and limitations to enhance his/her ability to complete tasks independently
	☐ Arrange individual or group counselling
Others (if applicable)	☐ _____

(6) Home-school Co-operation and Multi-disciplinary Collaboration

☐ Maintain regular contact with parents to stay informed about the student's recovery progress and ensure that the student attends medical follow-up consultations as instructed.

☐ Convene regular meetings (approximately＿＿＿＿times per year) to review the progress and effectiveness of the support provided.

☐ Maintain regular contact with relevant professionals (☐ doctors ☐ clinical psychologists ☐ educational psychologists ☐ physiotherapists ☐ occupational therapists ☐ others:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿), enabling the multi-disciplinary team to stay informed about the student's circumstances.

Support Plan

2024/25 School Year

Name of student: XXX

Gender: ☐Male ☑Female   Grade: P.4

Type of physical disability: Spinal muscular atrophy   Assistive aids required: Wheelchair   Implementation period: Oct to Dec 2024

Completed by: XX Lam   Post: SENCO   Date: 2 Oct 2024

Guidelines:	• Having drawn up the school-based support strategies, school personnel **may collaboratively determine the specific implementation details of these strategies** by completing this Support Plan. The school-based educational psychologist may be consulted as needed.
	• If the student is receiving support under an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the support strategies can be incorporated into the IEP without the need to complete a separate Support Plan.
	• As the student's condition may change over time, the schools should assess the student's needs every school term or every school year **as necessary**, and review the progress and effectiveness of the support provided, thereby adjusting the support strategies accordingly.

Support Need	Support Strategy	Specific Implementation Detail	Responsible Person	Date of Review	Effectiveness
1.3 Is able to navigate to different locations within a classroom or across campus venues independently	➢ Provide special seating arrangements ➢ Ensure the accessibility of campus facilities	➢ Seat the student near the classroom entrance or the aisle ➢ Arrange for the installation of ramps in classrooms and learning venues frequently accessed by the student ➢ Ensure that the student is accompanied by other students when using the lift	➢ Subject teachers ➢ Student support officers ➢ Class teachers ➢ Janitors		
5.3 The student feels welcomed within his/her social circles	➢ Organise peer-mediated group activities to strengthen the student's social support network ➢ Enhance peer understanding of physical disabilities ➢ Encourage mutual peer support and appreciation	➢ Organise a Physical Disability Inclusion Week to familiarise all students with the characteristics and needs of people with physical disabilities ➢ Facilitate the student's participation in lunchtime peer-mediated activities to enhance opportunities for interaction and communication with classmates ➢ Invite the student to serve as a mentor, guiding lower-form students in solving arithmetic problems ➢ Require subject teachers to consider the student's abilities and limitations when designing classroom activities, and to encourage mutual assistance among peers to complete tasks	➢ Subject teachers ➢ Co-ordinators of Civic/Moral activities ➢ School social workers ➢ Student support officers		

Support Plan

_____/_____School Year

Name of student: _____ Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Grade: _____

Type of physical disability: _____ Assistive aids required: _____ Implementation period: _____

Completed by: _____ Post: _____ Date: _____

Support Need	Support Strategy	Specific Implementation Detail	Responsible Person	Date of Review	Effectiveness