UNDERSTORY SUPPORT · FREE GUIDE

Extra support at a Catholic school in SA

How it works, who to ask, and what to do if you feel the school isn't listening.

Who's who

Classroom teacher	Day-to-day learning and adjustments in class.
ESO education support officer	Works with students in and out of class, directed by the teacher or ISO.
ISO inclusion support officer	Coordinates support for students with disability. Usually your main contact for your child's Personal Learning Plan (PLP).
Principal	Responsible for the school's decisions. You can ask for the principal to be at meetings.
CILAH team CESA Improved Learning through Allied Health	Occupational therapists, speech pathologists and psychologists from Catholic Education SA (CESA). They can observe your child, advise the school and come to meetings. School referral only.
Catholic Education Office intake team	Contact them if the school won't refer to CILAH, or for a complaint the school hasn't resolved.

How support is funded

Commonwealth and state funding goes to Catholic Education SA, not to the schools. CESA gives each school a needs-based allocation, using reports the school sends in Term 1 and Term 4.

Students with the highest needs get the most support. That's why schools usually won't give you an hours figure.

Timing matters

Schools report in Term 1 and Term 4. Make sure the school has your child's latest therapy and paediatrician reports before then. Ask the ISO when their reports are due.

Ask this instead of hours

- What support will my child get, and when in the day?
- Who will give it: the teacher, an ESO, the ISO?
- How often?
- How will we know it's working?
- When will we review it?
- What NCCD level is my child recorded at, and what adjustments is that based on?

The NCCD is the yearly national record of the adjustments your child gets. It's linked to funding.

Bringing in CESA's allied health team

If you feel the school isn't listening, or isn't being fully inclusive, you can ask for the CILAH team from Catholic Education SA (CESA) to be involved. This isn't a complaint. It's asking for more support for the school and your child.

1. **Email the ISO.** Ask them to make a referral to CILAH, and say you'd like someone from CILAH at a meeting.
2. **Ask for a classroom observation.** CILAH can observe your child in class before the meeting.
3. **Bring someone with you.** A support person or advocate (see below).
4. **Put it in writing afterwards.** Email a summary of what was agreed. Once you have the CILAH practitioner's details, copy them into all relevant emails if the ISO doesn't.

If the ISO won't make the referral

CILAH is school referral only, so you can't refer your child yourself. Go around the school and contact the Catholic Education Office intake team. They can review your child's situation and direct the ISO to act.

(08) 8301 6600 **intake@cesa.catholic.edu.au**

Who can come to meetings

You can ask for any of these people to be there:

- the principal
- someone from the CILAH team
- a partner, friend or family member
- your child's NDIS support worker or support coordinator
- an advocate who understands the school system

Starting school next year?

Ask for a meeting in Term 4, before your child starts. Invite the kindy director, and your child's therapists if they have them.

The PLP often isn't finished until around week 6 of Term 1. This meeting means the teacher has a plan from day one.

Free help: DACSSA (Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of SA) offers free, independent advocacy for SA families: 08 7122 6030.

Want the full School Meeting Pack (Catholic schools edition)? Understory Support · 0480 440 435 · trish@understory-support.com · understorysupport.com.au

General information for families at Catholic schools in South Australia. It isn't legal advice. Process and contacts checked October 2026.