



UNIFIED CHAMPIONS SCHOOLS GUIDEBOOK

**Special
Olympics**
Australia



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools**

with support of

— HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH —
MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

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ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS (SO)

A Global Movement

Special Olympics has grown from a backyard camp into a global movement that has been transforming the lives of people with an intellectual disability for almost 50 years. The global sporting community was pioneered by the late Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister to US President John F Kennedy as well as Rosemary who had an intellectual disability. Today, Special Olympics supports over 5 million athletes in 177 countries.

Local impact

Special Olympics began in Australia in 1976 and continues to provide inclusive training and competition in a variety of sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, enabling opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, improve wellbeing, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with the community.

Special Olympics Australia works with schools, students, and parents across Australia to emphasise inclusion and to unite students of all abilities.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS AUSTRALIA PROGRAMS

Special Olympics Australia improves the health and wellbeing of people with intellectual disability and promotes inclusion through the following pathways:

Schools & Youth

- Young Athletes
- Playing for All
- Sport Partner
- Unified Playing for All
- Teacher Professional Learning



Sports

- Year-Round Weekly Training
- Local Competitions
- Unified Sports
- State, National and World Games Pathway
- Affiliate Program
- National Sporting Organisation Partnerships



Initiatives

- Youth and Athlete Leadership
- Community Engagement
- Education and Public Awareness
- Volunteer Recruitment and Training
- Special Olympics Australia Health



Unified Champion Schools

- Unified Playing for All (Sport)
- Inclusive Youth Leadership
- Whole School Engagement
- Teacher Training



WHAT IS UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS (UCS)?

The Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program is a dedicated inclusion program for schools, aimed at promoting social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities. Designed to be woven into the fabric of the school, it enhances current efforts to engage all learners.

What a Unified Champion School “looks like” can vary greatly from school to school based on the needs, goals, schedules and other factors unique to each school. However, the basic building blocks remain the same: School communities where students of all abilities feel welcome and included in, and feel a part of, all activities and opportunities.

This is accomplished by implementing:



**Unified Playing
for All (Sport)**



**Inclusive Youth
Leadership**



**Whole School
Engagement**

While the components are listed individually, they should be implemented in coordination with each other. Research has proven that when all three components are incorporated, there is a deeper impact on the individual participants as well as the overall culture and climate of the school.

THE 3 PILLARS OF UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS



Unified Playing for All (Sport):

A fully inclusive physical activity program that incorporates students with and without disability and/or autism playing modified sporting games and learning together. Schools select a [Playing for All](#) program and make it Unified by including students with and without disability. Programs can be delivered by a teacher or a Special Olympics Australia funded coach.



Inclusive Youth Leadership:

Young people of all abilities are given opportunities to be leaders in their schools and communities. These leadership activities help students find their voices, engage in learning, and teach them to become leaders in their communities and advocates for inclusion. What Inclusive Youth Leadership looks like is unique to each school.



Whole School Engagement:

School-wide awareness and education activities that foster understanding and respect for all can influence how students think and act within and beyond the school. School-wide opportunities focused on social inclusion raise awareness and create an educational environment where respect and acceptance are the norm, and all students feel included and engaged. Students with and without disabilities are given opportunities to plan and lead activities and put their Youth Leadership skills into action. What these activities look like and how they are implemented can be different from school to school.

At its core, the Unified Champion Schools strategy is not just about including students with disabilities but **unifying all students**; moving from adult-led programming to **student-led learning and action**; and transitioning from sport as recreation to **sport as a catalyst for inclusion** and change.

WHY UNIFIED?

- Students with disabilities are more likely to experience social isolation within school and participate in fewer school-based activities than their peers without disabilities.
- A Unified approach creates a sense of belonging for all students and ensures that students with and without disabilities have frequent opportunities to interact.
- Students with and without disability both benefit from the Unified approach. They make friends, develop social and emotional skills and create inclusive learning experiences for all!

PRINCIPLE OF MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

Indicators of meaningful involvement

- All teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- All teammates participate according to the rules of the game.
- All teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.
- There should be a quality of social interaction and communication among teammates that allows everyone to participate fully and enjoy a positive experience.

Meaningful involvement is not achieved when certain team members:

- Display superior sports skills without involving their teammates.
- Serve predominantly as on-field coaches rather than teammates or mentors.
- Control most aspects of the game, especially during the most critical periods.
- Students are participating without any interaction with their peers.

As long as all students participate in an event, isn't it socially inclusive?

Not necessarily. For example, during a traditional field day, students with special needs might be isolated from their peers and travel through sport and fitness stations in a segregated group. A unified Sports or Game Day is different. It integrates all students. Students with disabilities participate alongside students without disabilities as peers.

HOW DOES UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS SUPPORT EXISTING SCHOOL INITIATIVES?

The Unified Champion Schools program enhances key educational goals which benefit all students. The initiatives below are key components of Unified Champion Schools. **If your school is already focusing on any of these, becoming a Unified Champion School will enhance your focus and objectives.**

Provide a positive school climate free of bullying.

The Unified Champion Schools program promotes **safe and accepting school climates** for all students, providing a clear path to eliminating negative behaviours such as teasing and bullying and builds **authentic relationships** among students with and without disabilities.

Promote a culture of strong engagement.

Students who are highly engaged in school feel connected. They know they are **valued contributors** to the school community. Unified Champion Schools strives to engage **all youth as leaders**, not just the high-achievers and the “doers.”

Support the physical health of all students.

Regular physical activity can increase concentration and problem solving, which can lead to better academic performance, self-esteem, and improved social skills. Unified Champion Schools promotes **students' physical health and fitness** by providing a variety of Unified Sports and physical activities.


Advance the social-emotional development of all students.

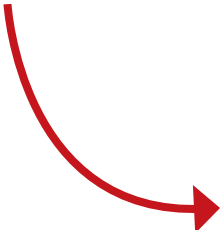
The Unified Champion Schools program increases students' key competencies of social-emotional learning, including **self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management skills, and decision-making skills.**


Cultivate partnerships with parents and the community.

The Unified Champion Schools program engages families and other community members, from implementing activities to celebrating students' successes.

ROADMAP TO UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

- The first step is registration to the UCS program. To register your school, please follow this link: <https://schools.specialolympics.com.au/bookings/>
- 

- Assign a UCS Coordinator.
 - Every school is required to assign a program coordinator. They may be a teacher, PE Coordinator or any other member of staff. This person will be the point of contact responsible for communication with Special Olympics Australia and reporting on program activities.
 - The UCS Coordinator is encouraged to engage across faculties to discuss the program and divide and assign activities to other staff e.g.
 - » - PE teacher to run Unified Playing for All
 - » - Classroom Teachers to help with Youth Leadership activities
 - » - Year Level Coordinators to help with Whole of School activities.
 - The Coordinator is encouraged to actively engage with Special Olympics Australia staff to discuss their UCS plans and how Special Olympics Australia can support these activities with program funding.
- 

- Deliver a minimum 2 terms of Unified Playing for All (sport) programs.
 - Facilitate Inclusive Youth Leadership initiatives.
 - Run a minimum of 2 Whole School Engagement activities.
- 

- Document program activities, record number of students involved in activities, take pictures and celebrate your school's achievements!
- Submit a report template to Special Olympics Australia each term documenting Playing for All, Youth Leadership and Whole School Engagement activities undertaken.



PILLAR 1
UNIFIED PLAYING FOR ALL



WHAT IS UNIFIED PLAYING FOR ALL?

Unified Playing for All is Special Olympics Australia's Unified Sports model.

Each Unified Playing for All program includes a series of *Playing for All Game Cards* that use a games sense approach and provide a strong foundation for fundamental movement skill development.

To make it Unified, simply provide an opportunity for approximately equal number of students with and without disability to participate in the program together.

Unified Playing for All programs are aligned to the Australian Health and Physical Education Curriculum and the Australian Physical Literacy Framework. Playing for All programs are organised into six categories:

- Invasion Games
- Movement Games – Fundamental Movement Skills
- Movement Games – Rhythmic & Expressive
- Net & Court Games
- Striking & Fielding Games
- Target Games

WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE IN YOUR SCHOOL

What a Unified Playing for All program 'looks like' and the participant make-up, will vary from school to school depending on the reason for implementing the program and your school context. The key component is that all participants play together as peers and learn the same skills.

Some methods of implementing a Unified Playing for All program at your schools may include:

- **Matching a support unit class/group with another class of equivalent physical capability.**
- **An opportunity to provide select students with additional opportunities beyond their regularly timetabled PE.**
These could be students who would benefit from further physical activity or students who would benefit from further opportunities to practice their fundamental movement skills.
- **Offering Unified Playing for All sessions as a lunchtime or post school opportunity for all students.**
- **Timetabling PE in a way that provides an opportunity for all students to choose between participating in Unified Playing for All sessions and their existing PE sessions.**
- **Creating Unified PE across the whole school, so all timetabled PE classes include students with and without disability.**
- Don't be limited by these. The options really are endless! Look at what will work for your school and your students and reflect on the outcomes you want to achieve. Discussion and planning across the school faculty will help!

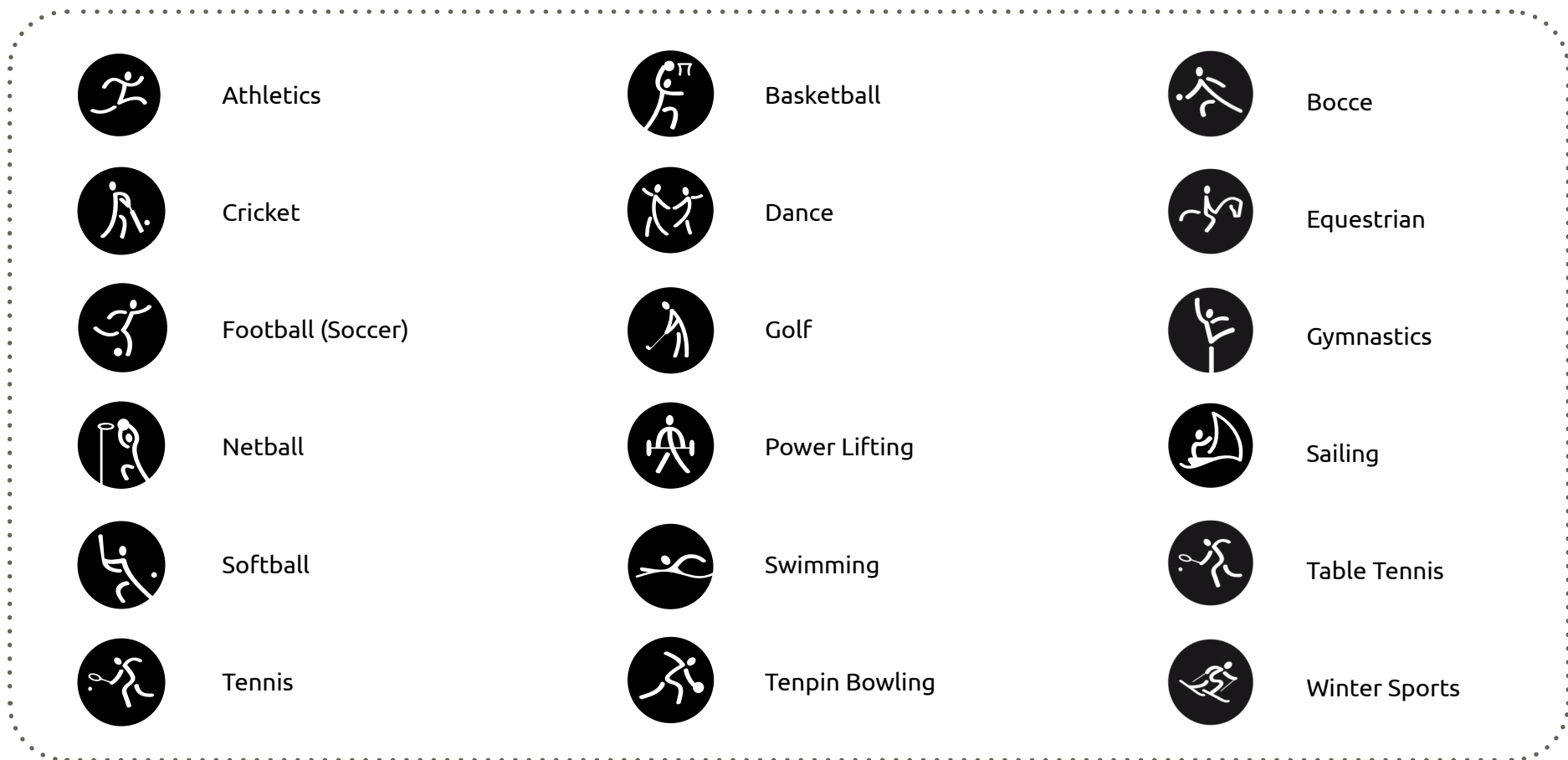
Booking your Unified Playing for All program

To book your Unified Playing for All program, either as a teacher led or external coach delivered program, head to: <https://schools.specialolympics.com.au/bookings/>. Special Olympics Australia will provide you with all the program delivery resources and/or fund an external coach to help deliver the program.

CREATING UNIFIED SPORTS

Unified Sports is an alternative method of enabling students with and without disability to participate in physical activity together. Some examples include:

- Create Unified School teams to play against each other in intra-school competition.
- Create an inter-school Unified competition with neighboring schools which provides an opportunity for students with and without disability to represent their school in a team and sporting environment.
- Unified Sport could include, but is not limited to, one or more of the 18 sports offered by Special Olympics Australia:



UNIFIED PLAYING FOR ALL: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Use people-first language.** Always put the athlete first and the disability behind. For example, say “student with special needs,” not “She’s a special needs student.”
- **Ensure opportunities for socialisation:** Keep in mind that team sports provide more natural opportunities to build social relationships than individual sports.
- **Promote leadership:** Involve students in leadership roles such as setting up stations, designing an obstacle course, or leading warm-up games.
- **Practice!** The more students practice fundamental movement skills, the greater their progress. Encourage families to help their children practice at home.
- **Keep it positive:** Avoid elimination activities and having students pick teams. No one wants to be “out”, or the last player chosen.
- **Generate enthusiasm:** If your school develops a Unified sport team/s and participates in a Unified inter-school competition, include the game dates and team achievements on the school’s morning announcements and school assemblies. Invite students and the school staff to show their support!
- **Periodically encourage reflection:** At the end of Playing for All sessions ask students questions such as “What are the qualities of a good teammate?” and “What is your favourite sports activity and why?”.
- **Share events and accomplishments:** Use the school’s website or social media to post photos, videos, and stories of socially inclusive sports clubs, events, and activities.





PILLAR 2 INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP?

The Unified Champion Schools program offers opportunities for young people of all abilities to be leaders in designing and implementing school activities that promote equality and acceptance and, ultimately, create socially inclusive school climates.

The Inclusive Youth Leadership component intentionally blends opportunities for students with and without disabilities across the Whole School Engagement and Unified Playing for All (Sport) components to advance social inclusion in the school.

Youth as leaders

Youth Leadership means that students with and without disabilities become leaders of lasting change.

Adults serve as allies to youth, rather than managers of youth.

An important part of the Unified Champion Schools strategy is that goals and work are shared by youth and adults. In primary schools, adults help students develop age-appropriate leadership skills that lay a strong foundation for high school years when students take an even more active role in planning and implementing activities.

Why is it important?

Inclusive Youth Leadership:

- Provides student agency and a connection to learning.
- Enables teachers and staff to incorporate the vision and insight of youth into school planning.
- Provides students with and without disabilities the knowledge and skills to take on leadership roles in their school.
- Develops key social and emotional skills that enable students to recognise that all students of varying abilities and backgrounds can lead.

What Are the Goals of Inclusive Youth Leadership?

- **Everyone leads:** Students representing the diversity of the student body will be engaged in leadership roles.
- **Everyone contributes:** All students will have equitable opportunities to contribute to the school community in meaningful ways.
- **Everyone has a voice:** Administrators and teachers will value the insight of all students as they develop a socially inclusive school environment.
- **Everyone is a champion for themselves and others:** Students with and without disabilities will gain the skills, knowledge, and disposition to become advocates for themselves and their peers.

WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE IN YOUR SCHOOL

What Inclusive Youth Leadership 'looks like' will be different for every school. Some methods of implementing Inclusive Youth Leadership at your schools may include, but not limited to:

- **Promoting student leadership during Unified Playing for All / Unified Sport.**
 - » Have students with and without disability:
 - help decide which sports they want to do each term.
 - lead aspects of Unified Playing for All sessions.
 - help coaches/teachers set up stations and games for Unified Playing for All sessions.
 - lead warm-up activities.
 - serve as peer coaches and demonstrators.
 - take leadership in running various activities for younger students.
- **Older students acting as mentors for younger students.**
 - » Including students with and without disability as mentors or peer supports for younger students with and without disability. Provide opportunities for older students to mentor younger students and create meaningful engagement between students with and without disability.
- **Students planning and contributing to Unified Champion School activities.**
 - » As events are planned, invite students with and without intellectual disabilities to share their opinions and preferences. It will lead to the growth of their leadership skills and help ensure that the activities will be embraced by all students. For example, students can take the lead on planning a Respect Campaign.
- **Unified Student Council's and Student Representative bodies.**
 - » Is the school's current student leadership positions representative of all students? Having students with and without disability in student leadership roles creates a more inclusive school environment and helps provide diverse perspectives.
 - » Having co-leaders - one with and one without disability – can be an effective approach.
- **Use Special Olympics Australia Resources to incorporate leadership skills into the curriculum.**
 - » Access the Unified Schools - Primary and Secondary School Lesson Plans and Modules developed by Special Olympics Australia via the Inclusive Sport Academy: <https://www.inclusivesportacademy.com.au/unified-schools-resources/>
 - » Resources are aligned to Australian Curriculum General Capabilities.
 - » Lessons include student led activities that promote inclusion to the whole school, whilst building leadership skills.

CREATING UNIFIED CLUBS

Creating a non-academic school-based club that brings students with and without disability together is a great way for students to develop their leadership skills and meaningfully engage with each other.

Unified Clubs offer multiple opportunities to engage students as active leaders and advocates of inclusion and enable them to lead the movement in their own school. This can be any new or existing student-led club in the school.

Whether you call it a Unified Club, a Respect Club, a Friend Club, or something else, set the goals of promoting acceptance, socially inclusive friendships, and student leadership. The club will become an influential core group of students who promote social inclusion.

Schedule: Establish a schedule that works with the school's structure and timetable. Consider scheduling meetings before school, after school, or during lunch.

Management: As the club gets up and running, gradually hand over more responsibilities to students to help plan meetings or lead parts of them. You might designate a student to be a timekeeper, for example. As students develop leadership abilities, you'll be giving them the 21st Century skills they need to advocate for unity and respect.

Activities: What kinds of activities would the club do? The possibilities are limitless! The goal is for students to help plan and participate in social and community activities that increase understanding, acceptance, and respect of individual differences. For example, club members might help adults plan parts of various whole school engagement activities. Other ideas include a gaming club, chess club, lunchtime sports club, gardening or even a coding club!

Social connections: While students will get to know each other as they plan activities, it's important to ensure that there are other opportunities to develop friendship to. Consider these options:

- **Icebreakers:** Start each meeting with a brief activity that helps students get acquainted.
- **Lunch mates:** On a designated day each month, arrange for club members to sit together at lunchtime.

INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Reach out to atypical leaders: Intentionally involve students who might not immediately come to mind as leaders, including students with disabilities or disengaged learners. This is a critical step in understanding the school experience from multiple perspectives. It also builds students' self-esteem and increases their sense of belonging. When students feel connected to school, they're more likely to attend regularly and become more invested in academic achievement.

Involve diverse students: Spread leadership opportunities to a wide range of students. Be intentional about developing the leadership skills of all students.

Establish equal partnerships: Avoid consistently assigning students without disability the role of "helper".

Generate ideas from all staff: Brainstorm youth leadership opportunities from all areas of the school.

Step back: Always look for times adults can step back and let students lead. Guard against taking control of all decisions simply because it's faster and easier. Try to give only the help that is needed to allow each student to be as independent as possible.

Make social inclusion a lifestyle: Help students learn to model social inclusion throughout their daily interactions at school, not just during a special event or activity. Having co-leaders with and without intellectual disabilities works well to provide leadership opportunities.

Encourage reflection: Provide ongoing opportunities for students to reflect on their leadership skills.

Share accomplishments: Use the school's website or social media to share photos, videos, and stories of social inclusion activities.





PILLAR 3

WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

WHAT IS WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT?

Through whole school engagement opportunities embedded within and between the Inclusive Youth Leadership and Unified Sports components, the school becomes a powerful community that enhances other school-wide efforts. The result is a school where all students feel they play a meaningful part in school activities, sports and even informal interactions that occur in the playground or hallways.

Why is it important?

Whole School Engagement is a unique and important component because it:

- Recognises, supports, and honours the contributions of all students towards building a more inclusive society.
- Creates communities of acceptance where students with disabilities feel welcome and valued as meaningful participants in school activities.
- Expands ownership of the Unified Champion Schools program beyond a passionate few.
- Creates a socially inclusive school environment where students, staff members, and parents feel safe and valued.

Far-reaching influence

Whole school engagement activities not only reach the greatest number of students, but they also have the most direct impact on how students feel about social inclusion. A school climate that promotes respect for everyone can positively impact how students think and act at school, at home, and in the community.

What Are the Goals of Whole School Engagement?

- **Positive interactions:** Students with and without disabilities will interact socially and develop mutually beneficial friendships.
- **Respectful attitudes:** All students will have a greater understanding of each other and will hold more positive attitudes toward each other.
- **Engagement:** The school will be a community of acceptance where students with and without disabilities feel welcome and contribute meaningfully to all school activities.
- **Connections:** The school will be an inviting environment where students, staff members, and community members feel connected. It models inclusion as a community norm.

WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE IN YOUR SCHOOL

There is no limit to how you can involve the entire school community in socially inclusive awareness activities. Opportunities range from giving morning announcements with anti-bullying messages, to providing Unified Physical Education classes, to promoting respect with a weeklong campaign.

Check out the Unified Schools Frameworks in the resources section of this guide to find a wide variety of socially inclusive ideas that are a great fit for your school.

Some idea for Whole School Engagement activities include:

- **A schoolwide Respect Campaign**
 - » Such as the global Spread the Word Campaign: <https://www.spreadtheword.global/>
 - » Incorporate the campaign resources into curriculum time and enable students to be part of global grassroots action to eliminate segregation and advocate for inclusion.
- **Morning Announcements**
 - » Incorporate weekly messages into morning announcements that highlight themes of inclusion such as acceptance, anti-bullying, leadership and teamwork. Classroom teachers can follow up by guiding a group discussion about each announcement.
- **A poster contest promoting acceptance and inclusion**
 - » Students from one class or year level, could be provided time during art lessons to create posters that can be displayed throughout the school that celebrate inclusion.
 - » Students could then vote on the poster that impacted them the most.
- **Unified recess and lunchtime activities**
 - » Students with and without disabilities engage in activities together in the school playground.
- **Hold an Inclusion Assembly**
 - » Have an inclusion themed assembly for the whole school or a specific year level.
 - » Invite a person with disability to speak at the assembly and share their lived experience. This could be a Special Olympics Athlete Leader or community member.

- **Unified Sports Festival**

- » A Unified PE class hosts an event to promote wellness and the importance of physical activity for all students.

- **Fans in the Stands program**

- » Students of all abilities make posters, hold announcement during assemblies, and attend Special Olympics Australia events to clap and cheer all athletes.

- **Use Special Olympics Australia Resources**

- » Access the Unified Schools - Primary and Secondary School Lessons and Modules via the Inclusive Sport Academy: <https://www.inclusivesportacademy.com.au/unified-schools-resources/>
- » Lessons include student led activities that promote inclusion to the whole school.
- » Resources are aligned to Australian Curriculum General Capabilities.



WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT: TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Start small! Make sure your first activity is manageable and then build on that success.



Don't reinvent the wheel: Build on activities that your school already does with a focus on making them more socially inclusive.



Include other staff: Get the support of other teachers and school leaders early in the process. Invite them to participate in visible ways.



Incorporate social inclusion into schoolwide plans: Be intentional about embedding social inclusion in curriculum development and school improvement activities.



Work together: Share the goals of whole school engagement with staff, parents, and students.



Reach out: Provide opportunities for stakeholders throughout the school and community to be involved.



Help students connect: Encourage inclusive relationships in both structured and unstructured settings.



Connect with families: Organise inclusive family events, such as a family bowling night, or a family movie night. While the school might have offered similar events in the past, you might need to make a deliberate effort to ensure that families of students with disability feel welcome.



Share accomplishments: Use the school's website or social media to post photos, videos, and stories of social inclusion activities.



Encourage reflection: Provide opportunities for students to reflect on whole school engagement activities through discussion or journal writing by asking questions such as, "What did you learn from the experience?" or "How did you feel before the activity, during the activity, and after the activity?"



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Special Olympics Australia has developed a suite of Primary School Lesson Plans and Secondary School Modules for use by Unified Champion Schools. These lesson plans and modules have been developed for Foundation to Year 12 and are aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

The suite of Primary School Lesson Plans and Secondary School Modules have been designed to equip students with the tools to be inclusive leaders and focus on the [General Capabilities](#), **Ethical Understanding** and **Personal and Social Capability**. Topics covered in the resources include Social and Emotional Learning, Communication, Leadership, and Diversity.

All supporting resources can be accessed via Special Olympics Australia's online learning platform **Inclusive Sport Academy**: <https://www.inclusivesportacademy.com.au/unified-schools-resources/>



Primary School	Secondary School
<u>Foundation Level:</u>	<u>Year 7 and 8:</u>
<u>Year 1 and 2</u>	<u>Year 9 and 10:</u>
<u>Year 3 and 4:</u>	<u>Year 11 and 12:</u>
<u>Year 5 and 6:</u>	

The resources provide students with opportunities to develop and lead Whole School Engagement activities thereby enabling Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole School Engagement whilst still achieving curriculum required outcomes!

UNIFIED SCHOOLS FRAMEWORKS

The Unified Schools Primary and Secondary Schools Frameworks are designed to provide further ideas on how you can make your school more inclusive.

The Unified Schools Primary and Secondary Schools Frameworks are divided into 3 School Areas:

- Physical Education and Sport
- School Culture
- Family and Community Partnerships.

Each section contains practical suggestions and links to further resources for promoting inclusive practices across the 3 School Areas. All the activities and strategies outlined in the frameworks can be used to help your school become a Unified Champion School!



Unified Schools Framework

Primary Schools

	Health and Physical Education and Sport	School Culture	Family and Community Partnerships
Objective	<i>Provide experiences where all students feel safe, included, and can participate together</i>	<i>Students, teachers, and staff commit to inclusive practices within their school</i>	<i>Create family and community partnerships that promote safe, nurturing, and inclusive environments</i>
what this could look like	<p>Include all students participating together in Physical Education classes and Sport. View this video to see the benefits it can provide for students: https://www.generationunified.org/videos/inclusion-weekly-unified-physical-education/</p>	<p>Display messages of inclusion around your school. Encourage students to create their own messages, e.g. through a poster competition.</p>	<p>Establish relationships with Special Olympics Clubs or other disability organisations to promote students' participation in community sport outside of school hours.</p>
	<p>Ensure play environments within the school are accessible for all students by using ramps and a mix of hard and soft play surfaces.</p>	<p>Promote and celebrate inclusion events within the school. Embed these inclusion days into your curriculum. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Inclusion Day • International Day of People With A Disability • International Day of Friendship 	<p>Partner with neighbouring schools to create a Unified Sports inter-school competition that enables all students to represent their school through sport.</p>
	<p>Utilise support and resources through Special Olympics Australia's Unified Schools program: https://schools.specialolympics.com.au/programs/</p>	<p>Encourage diversity on Student Leadership Councils, e.g. include a representative with a disability.</p>	<p>Invite families to inclusive school events and support all students to engage, e.g. inclusive school assemblies, movie nights or fundraising events.</p>
	<p>Provide a choice of equipment that is usable and safe for all students to achieve success e.g., use balloons instead of balls where appropriate.</p>	<p>Build inclusion into the school's vision, mission, and values statements.</p>	<p>Engage with local sporting clubs that deliver inclusive programs. Invite the clubs to deliver a program at your school and attend your inclusive school events.</p>

what this could look like	Engage with other inclusive Sport programs through Sporting Schools: https:// www.sportaus.gov.au/schools/schools/sports/special-olympics-australia	Provide formal and/or informal opportunities for social interaction between all students, e.g. lunch time clubs.	Explore access to nearby facilities with the local council if space or resources are limited or unsuitable at school.
	<p>Include adaptive events such as walking relays within sport carnivals so all students can participate.</p> <p>Incorporate non-competitive events that focus on fun and participation rather than winning.</p>	<p>Share the school’s inclusive practices and messages through school social media channels, the school website and school newsletter.</p> <p>Share your successes!</p>	Seek family voices on how to include students with disability in the school and encourage the sharing of strategies that work at home.
	Change the structure and rules of games to suit student skill levels and needs, allowing all students to participate and achieve success. You can use the TREE model to help adapt and modify activities to be more inclusive: https:// www.sportaus.gov.au/sports_ability/using_tree	Be intentional about including social inclusion in curriculum development and school plans.	Arrange for a person with lived experience of disability to talk to students, such as a Special Olympics athlete. This will give students with disability a role model to look up to and encourage positive interactions.
	Engage in professional development through Special Olympics Inclusive Sport Academy to enhance skills and understanding of how to deliver inclusive sport programs: https:// www.specialolympics.com.au/inclusive-sport-academy	Acknowledge students who display positive characteristics such as inclusion and respect through specific school awards, e.g. Kindness and Inclusion Awards.	Work with the local council to create a supportive built environment around schools to facilitate safe active travel for all students, e.g. widened footpaths.

Unified Schools Framework

Secondary Schools

	Health and Physical Education and Sport	School Culture	Family and Community Partnerships
Objective	<i>Provide meaningful experiences where all students feel safe, challenged, included, and can participate together</i>	<i>Students, teachers, and staff commit to inclusive practices and high expectations for all students within their school</i>	<i>Create family and community partnerships that promote safe, nurturing, and inclusive environments for all students to be actively and meaningfully involved in school community activities.</i>
what this could look like	All students are timetabled in mainstream physical education classes and are active participants in the activities planned for their class peers. View this video to see the benefits it can provide for students: https://www.generationunified.org/videos/inclusion-weeklyunified-physical-education/	Build inclusion into the school’s vision, mission, and values statements and ensure all staff and students understand and recognise the role they play in living and reflecting these values to the wider school community.	Establish relationships with Special Olympics Clubs or other disability sport organisations to promote students’ participation in sport at school and within the community outside of school hours.
	Ensure all students are accessing and being assessed against age-equivalent curriculum content, outcomes and standards for HPE.	Value movement in all its forms and for all students, ensuring all students have access to regular physical activity opportunities during school time.	Access local networks of disability sports staff/coaches to support the implementation of the school’s inclusive sport program. This could include the loaning of modified or adaptive equipment, access to coaches and delivery of professional learning sessions to upskill school staff in inclusive sporting practices.
	Ensure physical education learning environments and playground spaces are accessible for all students by using ramps and a mix of hard and soft play surfaces.	Any messaging or imagery around the school, or about the school, reflects the diversity of students at the school and represents inclusive practices. For example, school website, news articles, social media feeds, enrolment posters or brochures.	Acknowledge and promote sporting events for people with disability and recognise the successes and achievements of Australian sports people with disability such as Paralympic and Special Olympics athletes.
	Provide all students with opportunities to participate in a range of modified and adaptive sports as part of the school sport program.	Students of all abilities are given opportunities to be leaders in the school. All staff encourage diversity in who represents the school in different leadership roles, for example on Student Leadership Councils, house captains at sport carnivals and representatives in sporting teams.	Advocate within your School Sport Association at the district or regional level to create a Unified Sports inter-school competition or gala day that enables all students to represent their school through sport.

what this could look like	<p>Utilise support and resources through Special Olympics Australia’s Unified Schools program when planning physical education programs and school sport options: https://schools.specialolympics.com.au/programs/</p>	<p>Ensure school policies and procedures reflect inclusive practices and expect all staff to ensure timetabling, class placements and structural processes reflect truly inclusive practices.</p>	<p>Work with students and their families to access sporting pathways to representative opportunities in a range of sports competitions for people with disability.</p>
	<p>Ensure access to adaptive and modified equipment is available for use in physical education classes, sports sessions and during lunch breaks.</p>	<p>Promote and celebrate community or global events that promote inclusion within the school. Embed the key messages around these inclusion events into your HPE programs.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Inclusion Day • International Day of People With A Disability • International Day of Friendship • Special Olympics events • Paralympics 	<p>Explore accessibility of community sport and physical activity spaces within the local council area and advocate for upgrades and improvements if space or resources are limited, unsuitable or inaccessible.</p>
	<p>Engage with other inclusive Sport programs through Sporting Schools: https:// www.sportaus.gov.au/schools/schools/sports/special-olympics-australia</p>	<p>Promote and encourage social interaction between all students by providing formal and/or informal opportunities for e.g., through peer support or mentoring programs, lunch time clubs or home class or pastoral care groups.</p>	<p>Actively seek the input of students and community members with disabilities when designing inclusive sport competitions, HPE learning programs and other school events promoting inclusion.</p>

what this could look like	<p>Include adaptive, modified and/or paralympic-style events within sporting carnivals, representative sports competitions and gala days in which all students can participate.</p>	<p>Share the school’s mission, vision and expectations around inclusive practices and high expectations for all students through school social media channels, the school website and school newsletter.</p>	<p>Use the stories of people with disability that have experienced success in the sporting arena to teach students about the challenges faced, impact of discrimination and the important role sports participation has played in their wellbeing and self-confidence.</p>
	<p>Ensure Health education programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity and the benefits for all members of a community when everyone is valued and included. • challenge false assumptions about what people with disability can achieve. • Resources that include greater representation of students of all abilities and diversity. 	<p>Be intentional about including social inclusion as a school goal within School Improvement Plans and expect all school community members to maintain high expectations for all students in their learning and participation at school.</p>	<p>Include professional development to enhance skills and understanding of how to deliver inclusive sport programs in all staff members professional development plans.</p> <p>Courses could include those available through the Special Olympics Inclusive Sport Academy at https://specialolympics.com.au/inclusive-sport-academy</p>
	<p>Change the structure and rules of games used in physical education lessons to suit student skill levels and needs, allowing all students to participate, learn new skills and understandings and address curriculum standards.</p> <p>You can use the UDL Framework (https://udlguidelines.cast.org/) or TREE model to help adapt and modify activities to be more inclusive: https://www.sportaus.gov.au/sports_ability/using_tree</p>	<p>Acknowledge and recognise students who reflect the school’s values of inclusion and display respect, empathy, compassion through specific school awards.</p>	<p>Work with the local council to create a supportive built environment around schools to facilitate safe active travel for all students, e.g., widened footpaths, accessible bus stops and train stations.</p>



WHERE TO FROM HERE



UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS: SUSTAINABILITY AND RECOGNITION

Schools who achieve Unified Champion School status by completing all program requirements are provided recognition for their achievements by Special Olympics Australia. This recognition piece can be displayed in your school for the whole school community to see and take pride in!

Strategies and plans for sustainability are key to successfully ensuring that the three Unified Champion School components will continue into the future and truly become part of the school culture.

Don't forget to share your achievements! Use the school's website or social media to share photos, videos, and stories of your school's journey to becoming a Unified Champion School!



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
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If you have any questions about the Unified Champion School program, please contact:

Email: schools@specialolympics.com.au

Phone: 1300 225 762

Website: www.schools.specialolympics.com.au