

## Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools

Recommended Funding Pathway

### Inclusive Schools Fund (ISF)

**Grant Information:** <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/inclusive-schools-fund>

The **Inclusive Schools Fund** is the **Recommended** pathway for Victorian government schools. It was established to help schools go beyond standard facilities and create world-class inclusive environments. In 2026, the fund continues to support the **Disability Inclusion** reform, which is transitioning Victorian schools to a tiered funding model based on student need. Schools can apply for significant grants (typically ranging from **\$50,000 to \$200,000+**) for permanent infrastructure, including sensory hubs and acoustically engineered play spaces.

### Project Positioning

For this recommended pathway, the project should be positioned as an **Innovative Inclusive Environment**. Frame the project as a direct response to your school's **Disability Inclusion Profile** data, highlighting how a dedicated sensory zone will support students with sensory processing sensitivities. Emphasize that these instruments provide **Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports** by offering a self-directed space for emotional regulation, reducing the need for teacher-led crisis intervention.

### Avoid positioning the project as:

A standard playground upgrade or a "nice-to-have" music program. Avoid focusing on "fun" or "leisure"; instead, focus on **functional impact, de-escalation, and inclusive pedagogy**. The VSBA looks for projects that demonstrate "universal design" principles where the environment itself acts as a support tool.

## Project Title

[Insert School Name] Sensory Sanctuary: A Universal Design Approach to Student Regulation

## Service Overview

[Insert School Name] is a Victorian government school dedicated to the **Education State** vision of excellence and equity. We are currently implementing the **Disability Inclusion** reform and are committed to ensuring our physical environment reflects our inclusive values. This application, supported by our School Council and Wellbeing Team, seeks to address the architectural and sensory barriers currently present in our outdoor play areas.

## Project Description

This project involves the construction of a permanent "**Sensory Sanctuary**" featuring professional-grade, acoustically engineered instruments. These instruments are precision-tuned to provide a low-decibel, high-tactile experience that facilitates "**Active Resets.**" The Sanctuary will be a low-arousal zone within the school grounds, allowing students to proactively manage sensory overload. The equipment is vandal-resistant, permanently post-mounted, and requires no specialized surfacing, making it a high-durability asset for the school.

## Community Need

As our school transitions to the **Disability Inclusion** model, our data shows a rising cohort of students who require sensory adjustments to remain engaged in the classroom. Current high-stimulus playground environments often lead to "sensory fatigue," resulting in behavioral escalations and disengagement. This project addresses the lack of "quiet, regulated spaces" on our campus, providing a vital tool for students who struggle with traditional break-time environments.

## Community Benefit

The Sensory Sanctuary provides a visible commitment to inclusive education for the [Insert Suburb/Region] community. It directly supports students with Autism, ADHD, and anxiety-related conditions by providing a safe, predictable space for regulation. This project fosters a culture of **belonging and agency**, where students are empowered to recognize their own sensory needs. Furthermore, it creates a unique resource for our local **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** providers and families who use the school facilities after hours.

## Outcomes

The project aims to achieve a reduction in the number of "sensory-based" playground incidents and an increase in students returning to the classroom in a "ready to learn" state. We expect to see a documented improvement in student wellbeing scores (AtoSS) and a more effective implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) through the use of the Sanctuary as a Tier 2 support tool.

## Project Delivery

The project will be managed by the School Council and delivered in alignment with VSBA Building Quality Standards. We will procure three specialized "Zero-Surfacing" instruments (2x Explorer, 1x Composer). Professional installation will occur on a strategically selected underutilised site, such as an existing garden or hard-stand area. We will also integrate the use of the Sanctuary into our Whole-School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing.

## Budget

Item	Quantity	Total (Ex. GST)
Explorer Outdoor Musical Instrument	2	\$7,900
Composer Outdoor Musical Instrument	1	\$4,150
In-ground Post Mounts	3	\$900
Freight (indicative to VIC)	1	\$550
Professional Installation & Site Prep	1	\$1,800
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		<b>\$15,300</b>
<b>Funding Requested (ISF)</b>		<b>\$10,300</b>
<b>School/Community Contribution</b>		<b>\$5,000</b>

## Pricing Note

*Costs provided are indicative to support funding applications. Final pricing, including freight and installation, may vary depending on location and site requirements. Schools are encouraged to obtain a formal quote to confirm project costs.*

## Budget Justification

The budget prioritises high-durability assets with a 25-year structural warranty. By selecting "**Zero-Surfacing**" instruments, we avoid the prohibitive costs associated with rubber soft-fall or specialized drainage (often exceeding \$15,000). This ensures that the Grant funding is focused entirely on the therapeutic instruments, providing the highest possible return on investment for the VSBA.

## Sustainability

The instruments are crafted from 316L marine-grade stainless steel, making them immune to the Victorian climate and requiring zero ongoing maintenance. This is a "once-in-a-generation" infrastructure investment that does not require recurrent funding for repairs or surfacing replacement, ensuring the Sanctuary remains a permanent asset for the school.

## Evaluation

Success will be evaluated through our Disability Inclusion Profile reviews and staff feedback on playground regulation. We will monitor the Sanctuary's impact on student de-escalation rates and use the data to refine our school-wide inclusion strategies.

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## Application Considerations

The ISF is highly competitive. Ensure your application references **universal design** and how this space supports your school's transition to the **Disability Inclusion** funding model. Highlighting the specific sensory needs of your student cohort is essential.