Definition of the target group(s)

Special Education constitutes a number of educational services for students with disabilities and special educational needs followed by a medical diagnosis and students with special educational needs. The State ensures and continually improves the compulsory nature of Special Education emphasizing on the fact that it constitutes an integral part of compulsory and free of charge public education, provided to disabled individuals of all ages and all grades and levels of education.

Pursuant to Law 3699/2008 (1), pupils with disabilities and special educational needs include pupils manifesting significant learning difficulties during an entire or limited period of their school life due to sensory, mental, cognitive, developmental, psychological and neuropsychological disorders, affecting school adaptation and school learning process, based on an interdisciplinary evaluation. This category of pupils includes individuals presenting mental disabilities, sensory impairments in vision and hearing, mobility disabilities, chronic incurable diseases, speech disorders, special learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia), attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity, diffuse developmental disorders (autism spectrum) and multiple disabilities. This category also includes pupils with complex cognitive emotional and social difficulties, delinquent behavior due to abuse, parental neglect and abandonment or due to domestic violence. The category of pupils with special educational needs may also include pupils with one or more special mental skills and talents. Pupils with low school performance associated with external factors, such as linguistic or cultural particularities do not fall under the category of pupils with special educational needs.

Specific support measures

The educational policy on Special Education supports the inclusion of pupils with disability and special educational needs within mainstream schools by providing suitable supporting structures and services.

The special Educational needs of pupils with disabilities and special needs are ascertained and diagnosed by the Educational and Counselling Centres (KESYs), the Interdisciplinary Educational, Evaluation and Support Committees (EDEAYs) and the validated by the Ministry of Education Community Centers for the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents of other Ministries. KESYs recommend the registration, placement and attendance of pupils in the appropriate learning environment, or whenever necessary the changing of learning environments and the proper psychopaedagogical and educational support, as well as the appropriate equipment and educational material which will facilitate the process of teaching and communication with the pupil. As regards the time of re-evaluation, this is determined by KESYs according to the type and degree of the pupil’s identified educational needs and learning difficulties. If the re-evaluation time is not specified, the reports of the committee are permanently valid.
Based on the individual evaluation and the recommendation of KESYs, the education of individuals with disabilities and special educational needs may take place in a mainstream school, where the following schooling options are available.

Specifically, pupils may attend:

- **An ordinary mainstream school classroom**, in case of pupils with mild learning difficulties, supported by the classroom teacher.
- **A mainstream school classroom, with concurrent support-inclusive education by Special Education teachers**, when this is imperative by the type and degree of the special educational needs.
- **Specially organised and suitably staffed Integration Classes**, operating in the general and vocational education schools, offering two types of programmes:

  1. Combined mainstream and specialised programme (up to 15 teaching hours weekly), as determined by the competent KESY for pupils with milder special educational needs.
  2. Specialised group or individualised programme of extended hours, as determined by the competent KESY for pupils with more severe special educational needs, not accounted for by separate special education schools corresponding to the kind and degree of needs. The specialised programme may be independent from the common one, in accordance with pupils’ needs.

Additionally, co-education programmes require that Inclusion Departments create a fully inclusive school environment for students with special educational needs. Inclusion Department teachers shall support students inside their school environment whilst working closely with classroom teachers to differentiate activities and teaching practices and introduce adjustments into the learning content and teaching environment ([Law 4368/2016](#)). This is achieved through implementation of special education and rehabilitation programmes, teaching and learning content adjustments and the use of special equipment, including e-equipment, software, logistics and other solutions provided for by the Educational and Counselling Centres (KESY).

Integration Classes and concurrent support programmes are staffed with primary and secondary education teachers having studied Special Education. In cases that Integration Classes are understaffed, non-Special Education teachers are employed, under the condition that they compulsorily attend training courses on Special Education implemented by competent educational authorities responsible for organizing teachers’ training courses.

Not self-served pupils attending general education schools or Integration Classes are offered support by Specialised Auxiliary Personnel depending on their disability and their special educational needs or by a school nurse following an opinion by a state hospital.

In cases of co-housed or neighboring schools, Integration classes are conjoined with a maximum of 12 pupils per integration class.

By virtue of [Law 4547/2018](#), the primary aim of the Educational and Counselling Centres is to support school units and the Special Vocation Education and Training Workshops of the areas falling under their competency in order to ensure equal access to education to all pupils independently and to defend their psychosocial development and progress. KESYs, as bodies with an educational direction are competent on the following levels:

a) the level of exploring and evaluating educational and psychosocial needs,

b) that of focused educational and psychosocial interventions and actions of vocational guidance,
c) that of supporting school work in total,

d) of informing and developing and

e) the level of raising social awareness

KESYs conduct individual evaluations and issue assessment reports - diagnoses on the following situation:

a) when relevant needs are made obvious after actions undertaken to explore educational and psychosocial needs. In these cases, pupils for whom there is evidence for special educational needs or pupils facing other kinds of psychosocial difficulties undergo further evaluation from KESYs. Especially when after the completion of a short supporting program it is found necessary,

b) after a recommendation of Interdisciplinary Educational, Evaluation and Support Committees, when it is found that pupils need further evaluating and diagnosing, despite the short supporting programme they had at school,

c) at the recommendation of the pupils’ educational support team, in school units where there are no Interdisciplinary Educational, Evaluation and Support Committees (EDEAYs), proposed after an applied short support programme,

d) at the request of a parent

KESYs, besides individual evaluation and support, also examine requests made by school teachers’ boards, when it is part of their duty. Educational evaluation and support of pupils and the school community, within the school’s premises is undertaken by the Interdisciplinary Educational, Evaluation and Support Committee which operates in every school unit belonging to the School Network of Educational Support (SDEYs).

SDEYs are founded by decision of the Regional Educational Director and they are constituted by school units and training workshops of primary and secondary general, special and vocational education with the purpose to promote co-operation, as well as to coordinate the work of school units, so as to ensure equal access to education of all pupils and to promote their psychosocial health in total. A Special Education School Unit (SMEAE) is the Support Center of every School Network of Educational Support.

The Interdisciplinary Educational, Evaluation and Support Committee consists of the following members: a) a school head, as coordinator, b) a primary or secondary education teacher, specializing in Special Education and placed in the school unit or the Support Center of the Network (SDEY), c) a psychologist placed in the Support Center of the Network (SDEY), d) a social worker placed in the Support Center of the School Network and e) the teachers responsible of the pupil or pupils in need of support. The Interdisciplinary Educational, Evaluation and Support Committees also support the teachers in issues like paedagogical response to the diversity of the student population and support the school community in issues of equal access to education and in tackling phenomena like early school leaving and school violence.