

Att: Principal

I am writing to express my deep concern about the lack of appropriate support for my daughter, who has been diagnosed with inattentive ADHD. It appears her condition is not being properly understood or accommodated, and she continues to be punished for behaviours directly related to her neurological condition.

My daughter has been disciplined for fidgeting, struggling to sit still, and not being able to pay attention or properly follow directions. These are not acts of misbehaviour in children with ADHD, but rather signs of a dysregulated nervous system. Stimming and other repetitive movements such as tapping or fidgeting are natural coping mechanisms that help children regulate their nervous system and maintain focus in overstimulating environments. She keeps being punished by receiving numerous blue slips for not following directions properly and has had things confiscated like erasers, when she was using them for stimulating.

To support her ability to self-regulate, my daughter should be allowed to use small fidgeting devices during class. This enables her to channel her energy in a more controlled way and improve her attention. The paediatrician's recommendation also clearly states that she should be permitted to move around the classroom when needed, as movement and sensory activity help her manage her nervous system (I have attached her Letter of Recommendations for your reference). I understand that this may occasionally distract other students, but there must be a way for her to meet her needs without being punished for it. Expecting children with ADHD to remain still for so many hours per day is unrealistic and detrimental to both their wellbeing and learning.

As a Building and Interior Designer specialising in neuro-inclusive environments, and as someone who also lives with a neurological disability, I have personally experienced how overstimulating her classroom is. While volunteering, my condition was triggered within minutes due to the bright lighting and poor acoustic control. Bright fluorescent lighting, although not visibly flickering to the human eye, produces a subtle and constant flicker that overstimulates the nervous system. Research has shown that this type of lighting disrupts brainwave regulation, heightens stress responses, and can trigger symptoms in people with neurological conditions. Under the Queensland Inclusive Education Guidelines, classroom lighting must minimise glare and flicker to support all students, particularly those with neurological conditions. Replacing the existing fluorescent lights with warm, non-flickering LED lighting, preferably at a colour temperature of no more than 2700K, would be a reasonable adjustment that aligns with these guidelines and creates a more supportive learning environment for everyone.

My daughter has told me that other students in her class with ADHD sometimes receive help from another teacher, but she has not received any help yet. There should always be a supporting teacher or person trained in ADHD and neurodivergent management and self-regulation techniques in classrooms where children have neurological conditions, as

well as designated quiet zones within each building where students can go to calm and reset when needed. When a child shows signs of distress or overstimulation, a support teacher should be able to recognise the signs and gently guide them to these areas to help them regulate their nervous system instead of punishing them. They should also assist them in breaking tasks into smaller, more manageable steps to help them better understand the lesson content. These quiet zones could include soft lighting, soothing sounds, comfortable seating, posters with self-regulating techniques such as breathing and meditation exercises, and calming tools such as earmuffs, weighted blankets, and sensory toys to help children calm down and refocus.

My daughter frequently comes home in tears, feeling that she is 'always in trouble' and not good enough despite trying her best. Her confidence is being affected, and she has also come home on multiple occasions having wet herself after being denied permission to use the toilet during class time. This is deeply distressing and unacceptable.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1982, ADHD is recognised as a neurological disability. Children are entitled to reasonable adjustments within their learning environment. At present, I feel my daughter is being discriminated against for her condition through repeated punishment for ADHD-related behaviours and the absence of appropriate environmental and emotional supports.

Last week marked Invisible Disabilities Awareness Week, which highlights the millions of people (over 4 million in Australia, and around 90 per cent of all disabilities) living with conditions that are not immediately visible but can be just as challenging and debilitating as physical disabilities. I believe it would be valuable for the school to promote greater understanding of invisible disabilities through education for teachers, students, and parents alike. Creating awareness and strict policies would go a long way in creating a more inclusive and understanding school community.

I would sincerely appreciate it if these concerns could be reviewed and appropriate action taken promptly to ensure my daughter and other students with neurological conditions receive the understanding and support they need. I would also appreciate clarification on what actions or guidelines the school currently has in place to include and support students with neurological conditions, and how these are being implemented in classrooms. If no such measures currently exist, I would like to know how the school intends to address this moving forward. Thank you for your understanding and willingness to help create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.