

School Support Overview for Functional Neurological Disorder

This overview is designed to support shared understanding of Functional Neurological Disorder in school settings. It provides clear, practical context to help schools support student participation while respecting variability, capacity, and educational structures.

What Is Functional Neurological Disorder (FND)

Functional Neurological Disorder is a condition that affects how the brain and body send and receive signals. The symptoms are real and involuntary. They are not explained by structural damage that would account for them, and they may change over time.

FND symptoms are not intentional, exaggerated, or under voluntary control.

How FND May Affect Students at School

FND can affect students differently depending on symptoms and capacity. In educational settings, this may include:

- variable stamina or attendance
- difficulty with movement, speech, or coordination
- challenges with concentration or processing during symptom flares
- increased fatigue following cognitive or sensory demands

FND symptoms may change from day to day or during the day. These changes do not mean that the student is choosing the symptoms or not trying.

Key Principles for School Support

Effective school support for students with FND is based on:

- understanding that symptoms are real and involuntary
- focusing on access and participation rather than symptom elimination
- allowing flexibility when capacity changes

- maintaining clear, predictable expectations

Support works best when it is consistent, realistic, and reviewable.

Accommodations and Educational Support

Accommodations are tools to support access to learning. They may include adjustments to pacing, workload, participation expectations, or scheduling.

Because FND symptoms can fluctuate, accommodations often need to be flexible and reviewed over time.

Communication and Collaboration

Support is most effective when communication is clear and collaborative.

This may involve:

- shared understanding between students, families, and school staff
- clear documentation of agreed-upon supports
- regular review rather than crisis-driven changes

Clear roles and expectations help reduce misunderstanding.

What This Overview Is and Is Not

This overview:

- provides general educational context for FND
- supports shared understanding in school settings

This overview does not:

- provide medical advice or diagnosis
- prescribe specific accommodations
- replace school or clinical decision-making

Supporting Students in Educational Settings

Students with FND can participate in education when support is informed, flexible, and sustainable. Understanding variability and respecting limits helps create safer and more supportive learning environments over time.



Explore more FND resources.

