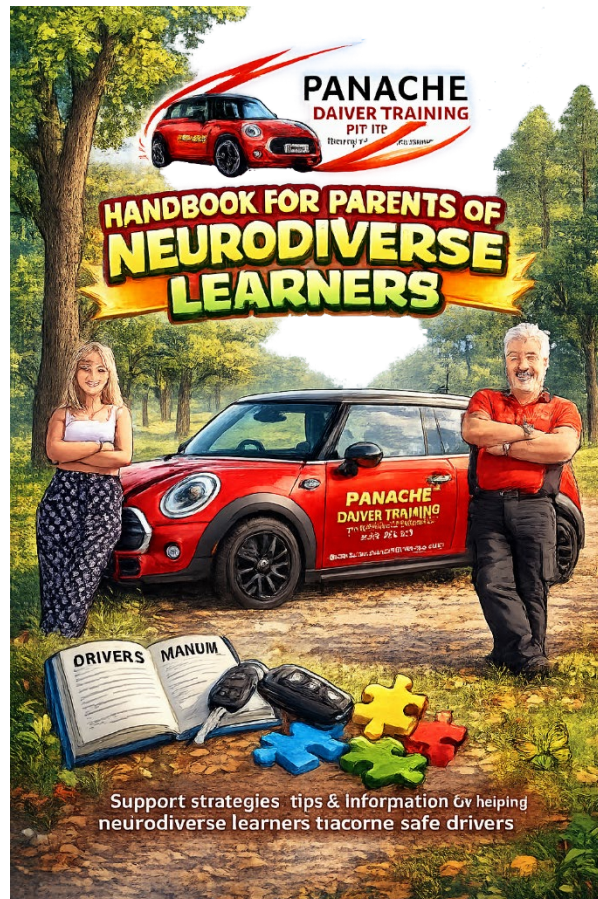


Handbook for Parents of Neurodiverse Learners

Continuing the learning after lessons with Panache Driver Training
(Practical, parent-first strategies to reinforce skills, confidence and safety)



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Introduction — purpose and focus

This handbook helps parents and carers continue and reinforce the work started during Panache Driver Training lessons. It focuses on practical home and in-vehicle strategies tailored to neurodiverse learners (attention, sensory, executive-function, and anxiety differences). Two Panache principles are central throughout: “**Ask the road what it is telling you**” And “**Control your space — minimum 3-second gap.**” These are the guiding rules for drills and homework.

This version explicitly explains how to integrate **MyDriveSchool** (www.mydriveschool.com.au) — an online learning platform Panache has used for learner subscriptions — into a coordinated learning plan.

1. How neurodiversity commonly affects driving learning

Driving is a complex skill that combines perception, information processing, motor skills, and emotional regulation. For neurodiverse learners:

- **Processing & attention:** Information must be chunked and rehearsed.
- **Sensory sensitivities:** Noise, glare, vibration can overwhelm.
- **Executive function:** Planning, sequencing and multitasking are the hardest elements.
- **Emotion & anxiety:** New situations may trigger stress, reducing performance.

The aim of home practice is to reduce cognitive load, create predictable routines and make individual micro-skills automatic before combining them in complex situations.

2. Set the conditions: environment, safety and routine

Create a safe, predictable environment before practising.

Vehicle & safety

- Check tyres, brakes and lights.
- Teach and practise the Panache vehicle setup routine — seat, steering and mirror adjustments — before every drive; this reduces error and improves control.

Routine & timing

- Short, frequent sessions (15–25 minutes) beat long, tiring sessions.
- Practice moving slowly and steering fast in a large empty space.
- Start in a quiet neighbourhood and repeat the same route or practice area to build confidence.

Sensory & comfort

- Minimise noise and visual clutter. Schedule sessions when the learner is rested.
- Use scheduled breaks and an agreed signal that the learner can use to stop.

3. Communication and supports

Use predictable, consistent communication.

Instructions

- Give one instruction at a time and use the same phrasing as the Panache instructor. Short, explicit cues work best.

Visual supports

- Laminated start-up checklist and micro-step cards for manoeuvres keep cognitive load low.

Feedback

- Be specific in praise: say what was done well (“You checked the left mirror before the change”) rather than general praise.
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4. Break skills down — teach micro-steps

Isolate and practise single skills before combining them.

Suggested micro-progression

1. Seat/mirror/hand position (9 & 3 o'clock) and the pull/push steering technique.
2. Straight-line control and slow turns.
3. Progressive braking and feeling weight transfer; practise emergency braking matched to the vehicle (ABS vs non-ABS).
4. Maintaining a **minimum 3-second following distance**, always adjusting to the conditions.
5. Scanning and vision habits (12–15 seconds ahead; mirror checks every 8–10 seconds).
6. Combine steps into lane changes, merges and roundabouts.

Make a micro-task card for each manoeuvre listing every tiny step (e.g., “head check → check mirrors → signal → adjust speed if required → check mirrors → steer → cancel signal”).

5. Behavioural & emotional strategies

Structure and calmness help learning.

Calm plans

- Teach a simple breathing reset and a safe signal for a break.
- Predictability reduces anxiety — give short previews of what the session will include.

Reinforcement

- Use immediate, task-focused rewards and a simple progress chart: date / skill / success / note.

Error handling

- Treat mistakes as learning data. Debrief calmly: if safe, pull over soon after and discuss what was missed and what to practise next, while it's still fresh in mind.
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6. Practical drills aligned to Panache principles

Short, repeatable drills to use each session:

- **Start-up drill (5 min):** Learner performs seat/mirror/seatbelt/hand-position checklist aloud.
- **3-second drill (10–15 min):** Use a marker (a post or sign) to time the following distance. Increase the gap as needed.
- **Progressive braking (10 min):** Straight line braking to marks to feel weight transfer and steady stopping; practice emergency braking consistent with ABS guidance.
- **Scan & plan (15 min):** Learner verbalises hazards 12–15 seconds ahead and suggests two escape routes.
- **Mirror cadence:** Practice looking in left and right mirrors until it becomes a habit.

7. Integrating MyDriveSchool (www.mydriveschool.com.au)

NDIS students can get a MyDriveSchool subscription, meaning the platform is an approved home-learning resource you can—and should—use alongside lessons. The following explains why and how to integrate it.

Why use MyDriveSchool

- It lets the learner practise classroom/theory elements in a predictable, repeatable format at home.

How to use it effectively

1. **Coordinate with Panache.** Ask the instructor which modules to complete before or after a practical lesson so online work reinforces in-car training. This keeps language and cues consistent.
2. **Set up a learner profile.** Use a consistent name and goals so progress aligns with in-car lessons and any NDIS paperwork.
3. **Use it before driving.** Assign short video or interactive modules as “homework” before each practical session so the learner arrives primed.
4. **Hazard perception & scenario practice.** Arrange short hazard or scenario modules to practise scanning and hazard planning; then immediately practise the same scenario in the car. (If a module is sensory-intensive, review it once together first.)
5. **Theory & quizzes:** Use short quizzes to check comprehension of road rules, signage and space management; review incorrect answers together to create micro-tasks to practise.
6. **Logbook & tracking:** If the platform offers a log or progress-tracking feature, use it to record hours and the skills practised — this helps both parents and instructors spot gaps and measure progress. (If you are an NDIS participant, keep records for plan reporting.)
7. **Set time limits:** Keep online sessions short (15–25 minutes). Pause for breaks and debriefs.
8. **Use as a rehearsal tool:** Video and animated scenarios are excellent rehearsal tools for anxious learners because they allow them to repeatedly study the correct response before performing it in real traffic.

Practical weekly plan using MyDriveSchool

- **Day 1 (Prep):** 15 min MyDriveSchool video on scanning + 10 min at home checklist practice.
- **Day 2 (In-car):** 20 min Panache-aligned in-car session focusing on scanning and 3-second gap.
- **Day 3 (Reinforce):** 15 min MyDriveSchool hazard module + 10 min debrief.
- **Day 4 (Practice):** 20 min low-traffic drive focusing on the same skill.
This alternating pattern helps with consolidation.

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8. Progress tracking & goal setting

Use clear, objective measures.

Simple weekly tracker

- Date / Skill / Time practising / Rating (1–5) / Coach note.

Goal examples

- 2 weeks: perform start-up routine and 3-second gap consistently.
- 3 weeks: perform moving slowly and steering fast manoeuvres.
- 4 weeks: perform progressive braking and emergency stop in a low-stress environment.
- 8–12 weeks: combine skills for safe merges and roundabouts.

Short weekly reviews where the learner says what improved and what to practise next build metacognitive skills.

9. Working with professionals & NDIS considerations

Coordinate home practice with Panache and allied professionals.

Consistent cues

- Tell the instructor which visual supports and language you use at home so they can match them.

NDIS

- If you are funded, talk with Panache about including MyDriveSchool subscriptions and driving practice in the plan. Panache's invoice records show they have used MyDriveSchool for students, so discuss whether the cost can be supported under plan funding or whether Panache can supply an agreed subscription.

Occupational therapy

- If executive function or sensory issues significantly affect driving, an OT can create targeted strategies to support motor planning and sensory regulation.

10. Emergency planning and safety-critical scripts

Have a short, rehearsed emergency plan.

Emergency script

- Agree on concise phrases the supervisor will use in a crisis, e.g., “**Brake now. Steer left to the shoulder.**” Practise responses until the learner reacts calmly and correctly.

Escalation

- If the learner becomes overwhelmed, stop the vehicle when safe, follow the calming plan, then return to a simpler skill.

Know the vehicle

- Teach basic vehicle systems—ABS behaviour, tyre condition importance and steering technique—so responses are informed and calmer.
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11. Car checklists and quick references

Prepare laminated one-pagers for the vehicle:

- **Start-up checklist:** Seat, mirrors, belt, gear, hands.
 - **3-second reminder:** How to measure and when to add space.
 - **MyDriveSchool quick card:** Modules assigned for the week and estimated time.
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12. Final recommendations — consistency, patience and coordination

- Keep practice short and consistent. Small wins compound.
- Introduce one new element at a time. Overloading reduces retention.
- Celebrate process more than perfection — predictable, safe driving is the goal.
- Keep Panache involved: share progress and request specific at-home tasks linked to in-car teaching so home practice and lessons are an integrated program.

Disclaimer

The information in this handbook is provided by Panache Driver Training Pty Ltd and is intended for educational purposes only to support at-home practice for neurodiverse learner drivers. It is not a substitute for professional, in-car instruction or for the formal road rules, licensing requirements and legal obligations that apply in your jurisdiction.

Use of third-party services (for example, MyDriveSchool at www.mydriveschool.com.au) is optional and at your own risk. Panache may recommend or supply access to such services but does not control, endorse, or accept liability for third-party content, platforms, availability, or outcomes. Parents and carers must review third-party terms, privacy policies and technical requirements before use.

By using this handbook you accept responsibility for:

- Ensuring that a suitably licensed, insured and competent supervisor is present for any on-road practice.
- Assessing the learner's fitness to drive (including sensory, medical and emotional readiness) and seeking appropriate clinical, occupational therapy or other professional advice where needed.
- Conducting all practice in a safe vehicle that is roadworthy and appropriate for the learner's needs; and
- Complying with all applicable road laws, licensing conditions and insurance requirements.

This handbook provides general guidance — it does not provide clinical, medical, legal or occupational-therapy advice. For individualised strategies for neurodiversity, funding (including NDIS), vehicle adaptation or clinical supports, consult relevant qualified professionals and your Panache instructor. Panache Driver Training Pty Ltd, its officers and agents accept no liability for injury, loss, damage or legal consequences arising from the use, misuse or interpretation of the information contained in this handbook.