



**Approved by School Council:**

March 2024

**Review:**

March 2027

## Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to set out the eligibility criteria and procedural requirements for enrolment in Victorian government schools.

## Summary

- This policy supports all types of enrolment, including Foundation enrolment, Year 7 placement and transfers between schools.
- Schools must consider the 3 core principles when making enrolment decisions.
- Schools must follow the mandatory guidelines and advice set out in the Enrolment Policy. An overview of each chapter is detailed below.
- Schools must collect and maintain mandatory student information and follow statewide enrolment timelines.
- Unless otherwise stated, the guidance in this policy applies to all Victorian government schools.

## Details

### Principles

The core principles of the Enrolment policy are:

- Every eligible child has the right to be enrolled at a Victorian government school.
  - All students that reside within the area of a designated neighbourhood school (school zone) must be offered a place when seeking enrolment.
  - Students who hold a subclass 500 student visa (a student visa in their own name) may only attend government schools accredited to accept international students.
- Parents/carers have the right to seek enrolment for their child at a Victorian government school of their choice.
  - Designated neighbourhood schools with sufficient accommodation should offer enrolment to students who reside outside of their school zone.
  - Schools with special entry criteria (for example, specialist schools) are not designated neighbourhood schools. These schools offer enrolment to students who meet the requirements of their local enrolment policy.
- School enrollment practices must be fair, equitable and comply with state and federal laws.
  - Factors such as ability, history of behaviour, or level of engagement with education are irrelevant for enrolment decisions at designated neighbourhood schools.

- Schools must ensure enrolment practices do not disadvantage children in out-of-home care, those experiencing homelessness or family violence, recently arrived immigrants or refugees.

## Eligibility to enrol in a Victorian government school

To enrol in a Victorian government school, an applicant must:

- be an Australian citizen, or a student with relevant specified visas or [Immicard](#). Refer to: [International Student Program \(ISP\)](#)
- meet the age eligibility requirements set out in these Guidelines (based on the requirements set out in the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) and Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).

For information on school age requirements, including exceptions and exemptions, see the chapter in these guidelines on [School age requirements](#).

## Fairness and equity

School enrolment practices must be fair, equitable and comply with state and federal laws. Factors such as ability, history of behaviour or level of engagement with education are irrelevant factors for placement decisions.

## School age requirements and age exemptions

### School age

Except in very specific circumstances, schooling is compulsory for children who have turned 6 until they turn 17. This applies to students at all schools including mainstream, specialist, and government English language schools or centres.

For enrolment and attendance exemption categories and processes – refer to [Exemptions from School Enrolment and Attendance](#).

A person who is not of compulsory school age may not enrol in or attend a government school unless:

- they are 17 years old – noting that under department policy, when placing students in school year levels, schools must take account of the age restrictions for school enrolment and ensure that if the student turns 18 years old during the school year, they fall within one of the age exception or exemption categories outlined below
- they fall within an exception category set out in the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Regulations) – refer to the exception's information below
- they are granted an exemption from the age requirements in the Regulations – refer to the exemption's information below.

## Educational programs not subject to the school age requirements

The school age requirements set out in the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) and Education and Training Regulations 2017 (Vic) do not apply to individuals who will attend programs conducted at a government school:

- outside school hours

- by registered training organisations or other bodies that are separate from the school.

### Differences between an exception and an exemption

A person who falls within an exception automatically meets the age eligibility requirements to enrol in or attend a government school. If the principal is satisfied that the person meets the criteria for the exception, the principal cannot refuse to enrol the person on the basis of their age and the person will not be required to obtain an exemption from the minister or their delegate.

A person who does not fall within an exception may be eligible to apply for an exemption.

Exemptions are granted at the discretion of the minister, or minister's delegates (which currently includes the regional director for each region). There is no automatic eligibility to enrol in or attend a government school for a person that does not fall within an exception.

### Responsibility for assessing and approving school age eligibility requirements

Principals are responsible for assessing eligibility and approving the enrolment of individuals who:

- are of compulsory school age (from when they turn 6 until they turn 17)
- have turned 17 but are not yet 18 years old
- fall within an exception under the Regulations.

The minister or delegate (such as the regional director) is responsible for assessing and granting exemptions from the minimum and maximum school age requirements.

### Exceptions to the minimum age requirements

A child who is 5 years old or over by 30 April in the year of enrolment may:

- be enrolled at a government school
- attend a government school
- be enrolled in, attend, or participate in the following program or course offered by or conducted at a government school:
  - a course of primary education
  - a program or course approved in writing by the minister.

A child who is under 5 years of age on 30 April of the year of enrolment may enrol in or attend a government school for the purposes of attending:

- short-term prep transition programs in primary schools that prepare pre-schoolers for primary school
- early education programs in special developmental schools (as approved by the minister).

### Exceptions to the maximum age requirements

A person who is aged 18 years or older must not enrol in or attend a Victorian government school unless an exception or exemption applies.

Exceptions apply to individuals who:

- are turning 18 during the year of enrolment, if they are enrolling solely in an accredited senior

secondary course, for example Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM), International Baccalaureate (IB) or an accredited foundation secondary course for example, Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC)

- are turning 19 during the year of enrolment, if they are enrolling solely for the purpose of completing an accredited senior secondary course or an accredited foundation secondary course in that year (or that they are expected to successfully complete their course in the year of enrolment based on current assessment information and course plan)
- are enrolling or attending an English language government school or centre, if the student is seeking to continue their enrolment in the year in which they turn 18 years old and in the following year, solely for the purpose of completing the program
- will turn 20 years old during the year of enrolment and are enrolled at a government school situated outside the metropolitan area solely for the purpose of completing an accredited senior secondary course or an accredited foundation secondary course in that year and there is no TAFE institute or other registered education or training organisation (other than another government school) that:
  - is within 50 km from the school that offers an accredited senior secondary education course or an accredited foundation secondary course or
  - offers an accredited senior secondary education course or an accredited foundation secondary course through a distance education program that the person is eligible to enrol in.

### **Exemptions from the age requirements**

The minister or delegate (such as the regional director) may grant an individual an exemption from the minimum and maximum age requirements in the Regulations in limited circumstances.

An individual is eligible to apply for an exemption if they meet the criteria set out below. Eligibility does not guarantee that an exemption will be granted.

Exemptions from the minimum and maximum age requirements are rare, rather than being considered normal practice. This should be considered when considering enrolment decisions, such as beginning school, transitioning from primary to secondary school and planning for completing school or moving to other available settings.

Schools may not always be the most appropriate place for some children or young people. There are a range of age-appropriate settings available for children and young people, whether they may be early childhood services and settings or adult education options.

It is important that when considering applications for exemption from the age requirements that a balance is struck between the best interests of the child or young person and that of other students. This balance must be considered for individual cases and circumstances, while also ensuring that the exemption process is consistently and fairly applied.

The following arrangements apply to enrolments that can be assessed and endorsed by principals but require relevant regional director approval.

### **Early age entry**

Where a student is younger than 5 years old on or after 1 May in the year of enrolment and does not meet one of the exceptions listed above, an exemption from the minimum age requirements is required. An exemption from the minimum age requirements must be:

- requested in writing to the school by their parent/carers
- considered by the principal, who must make a written recommendation for consideration by the regional director
- forwarded to the relevant regional director, with all supporting documentation attached, via email
- assessed by the regional director, who must consider eligibility, the principal's recommendation and all other relevant circumstances, and decide regarding the application
- approved or not approved in writing by the relevant regional director. The regional office should notify both the parent or carer and school of the decision in a timely manner.

To be eligible for an exemption from the minimum age requirements a child must meet both of the following criteria:

- the child possesses suitable academic ability
- it is in the child's best interests to be enrolled at or attend a government school.

Applications that do not address the requirements for both criteria will not be eligible for approval.

To understand how the department applies the eligibility criteria for an exemption from minimum age requirements, the following guidance is provided.

#### Suitable academic ability

The department's preferred evidence of suitable academic ability is:

- a report from a psychologist confirming that the child has been assessed as  $\geq 130$  Full Scale IQ (2 standard deviations, or more above the mean), preferably using the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition, Australian and New Zealand (WPPSI-IV A&NZ), including the 10 sub-tests required to calculate the Full Scale score and Primary Index Scales, conducted after the child has attained the age of 4 years
- where a child is transferring from a school in another state or country after more than one term of enrolment and attendance, evidence from that school confirming that the child has suitable academic ability to attend school.

Where a child does not fall into one of the above categories, the department may also consider other evidence of suitable academic ability that:

- is provided by an authoritative independent source(s) – for example, a child psychologist registered with the Psychology Board of Australia, with experience in educational and developmental psychology
- clearly demonstrates that the child has suitable academic ability to attend school.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carers to obtain all relevant cognitive assessment/s and/or other reports and evidence to support their child's application.

Applications based solely on parental observations will not be accepted.

#### Best interests

Schools must consider the entry assessment from kindergarten and informal observations to assess development, literacy, and numeracy, and academic, social and emotional needs in determining a student's school readiness.

Early entry to school is generally not considered to be in the best interests of a child unless the child is:

- at least 4 years 6 months of age on or before 30 April in the year of school commencement
- considered at risk of long-term educational disadvantage by a childcare, kindergarten, allied health or other relevant professional if they do not commence at school.

To apply for a minimum age exemption for early entry to school, use the: [Minimum age exemption – early entry to school application form \(DOCX\)](#).

#### Maximum age exemption

A student aged 18 years or older who does not meet one of the exceptions listed above may only enrol in or attend a government school if they are granted an exemption from the age requirements.

Exemption from the maximum age requirements must be:

- requested in writing to the school by the young person or their parent/carer if appropriate
- considered by the principal, who must make a written recommendation for consideration by the regional director
- forwarded to the relevant regional director, with all supporting documentation attached, via email
- assessed by the regional director, who must consider eligibility, the principal's recommendation and all other relevant circumstances, and make a decision regarding the application
- approved or not approved in writing by the relevant regional director. The regional office should notify both the parent or carer and school of the decision in a timely manner.

A student is eligible for an exemption from the maximum age requirements if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- the person will be under 20 years of age on 31 December in the year the person completes year 10 and is unable to complete year 10 before they turn 18 and one or more of the following special circumstances exist for that person:
  - pregnancy
  - parental or primary carer responsibilities
  - serious illness or injury
  - a period of imprisonment
- the person is aged between 18 and 21 and the minister or delegate (such as the regional director) is satisfied of one or more of the following:
  - the exemption will enable the person to participate in a specific course or program approved by the minister
  - the exemption will enable the person to transfer from an English language government school or centre into year 10 at a government school
  - it would be unreasonable in the circumstances not to grant the exemption
- the person is seeking to enrol in an English language government school or centre, and the minister or delegate (such as the regional director) considers it in the person's best interest to be enrolled at or to attend that educational setting.

To apply for a maximum age exemption use the [Maximum age exemption application form \(DOCX\)](#).

It is department policy that an exemption from the maximum age requirements will generally not be granted unless the person:

- has previously been enrolled in and attended the school in the last 12 months

- is expected to complete school in the exemption period based on their current or proposed course information and assessment. This means that if the student successfully completes the requirements of their current enrolment/course plan/units in which they are enrolled, they will have successfully completed the requirements of the accredited senior secondary course in which they are enrolled, and they are expected to do so in the year of enrolment; or
- has a clear transition plan that has been agreed to by the young person and/or their parent/carer; and poses no or minimal risks to other students through their attendance at the school
- has no other age-appropriate setting or option available for an equivalent course of study (no other age appropriate setting within 50 kilometres of the student's home and online study is inappropriate)

When considering an application for exemption from the age requirements and gathering the supporting documentation, principals and decision-makers should consider the following:

- the need to provide a child safe environment to all students at the school
- the best interests of the student – includes the young person's academic, social and emotional needs, aspirations and abilities
- age-appropriate settings or options – taking into consideration the student's aspirations, abilities and needs, such as relevant adult education settings
- online study options – may be inappropriate if the student does not have reliable access to the required technologies to undertake the course, will not meet the prerequisite requirements for enrolment, and/or does not possess the required English language proficiency.

Please note:

- accredited senior secondary course – includes Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM) or International Baccalaureate (IB)
- foundation secondary course – includes the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC)
- complete school – means that if the student successfully completes the requirements of their current enrolment/course plan/units in which they are enrolled, they will have successfully completed the requirements of the accredited senior secondary course in which they are enrolled, and they are expected to do so in the year of enrolment.

### Designated neighbourhood schools – school zones

A school zone defines an area's designated neighbourhood government school (local school). Every Victorian student has a legislated right to enrol at their local school.

School zones are published on the [Find my School website](#).

For children residing in metropolitan Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, their local school is usually the nearest government school in a straight line from the child's permanent address. In all other areas of Victoria, it is usually the nearest school by the shortest practical route, recognising the additional travel distances often experienced in regional settings.

A small number of school zones have been adjusted and these are referred to as non-standard zones. Non-standard school zones may be created to:

- improve school accessibility to align with geographical and structural barriers such as rivers and freeways (noting that a main road is not usually considered to be a barrier to accessing a school)
- support schools with very high local enrolment demand, to ensure that the needs of the school's local community are being met.

If a non-standard zone is in place, then the zones from surrounding schools are adjusted to ensure that all children are designated a local school.

The department reviews school zones annually. Zones may be adjusted to reflect the opening of new schools, changing provision at existing schools (for example, relocating a campus or changing year levels offered), improving school accessibility, or managing enrolment demand. The Minister for Education (or delegate) approves any changes to school zones.

Though all students are guaranteed a place at their local school, in some cases a school may not have sufficient accommodation to enrol all students from outside their zone. For more information about how these enrolments must be prioritised, refer to the [Placement Policy](#).

Schools with specific enrolment criteria including English Language Schools and Select Entry Schools, do not have zones. For more information, refer to: [Selective Entry and Other Specialism Schools and Programs](#).

Specialist schools do not have zones as they are not designated neighbourhood government schools under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. For more information, visit [Enrolment in specialist schools](#).

#### Sample wording for school websites

Schools must include links to Find my School and the Placement Policy on their school website. Sample wording for use on school websites is:

Our school zone is available on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) which hosts the most up-to-date information on school zones in Victoria.

Students residing within our school zone are guaranteed a place at our school, which is determined based on your permanent residential address.

Our school manages enrolments using the [Placement Policy](#) to ensure that students have access to their designated neighbourhood school and may enrol at another school, if there are available places.

#### Placement Policy

This section of the department's enrolment guidelines outlines the obligations on Victorian government schools in relation to placement of students and is referred to as the Placement Policy.

The department's Placement Policy embeds the legal entitlement for students to enrol at their designated neighbourhood school, and to enrol at another school if there is sufficient accommodation.

All Victorian government schools must manage enrolments in accordance with this Placement Policy, except those schools where the Minister or delegate has approved specific entry criteria, being:

- select entry high schools
- specialist schools
- English Language Schools and Centres
- camp and outdoor schools



- hospital schools and teaching units
- distance schools
- flexible learning government schools and flexible learning campuses
- any other school with entry criteria as approved by the Minister or delegate.

The Placement Policy applies to the placement of students at all year levels, from Foundation (Prep) to Year 12. Single-sex government schools are required to follow the Placement Policy, noting that only students of the requisite gender are eligible to apply.

Specialist schools are subject to different placement requirements than those described in the Placement Policy. For more information, refer to: [Enrolment in specialist schools](#).

If families are seeking to better understand the Placement Policy, please refer them to: [Starting school](#).

### Right to attend the designated neighbourhood school

Eligible children and young persons have the right to be admitted to their designated neighbourhood government school, regardless of capacity. Accordingly, all students that reside within the area of a designated neighbourhood school (referred to as a 'school zone') must be offered a place when seeking enrolment. For information on eligibility, refer to: [Eligibility to enrol in a Victorian government school](#).

A student's designated neighbourhood school is generally the school that is nearest the student's permanent address as determined by the school zone. The [Find my School website](#) provides guidance on which school zone a student's permanent residence is located within.

For information on verifying a student's permanent address, refer to: [Determining permanent residence](#).

The department recognises that some schools may require additional capacity to accommodate students from within their school zone. In these circumstances, schools may be supported by the temporary allocation of relocatable buildings. For more information about how relocatable buildings are allocated, refer to: [Relocatable Building Management](#).

### International students

International students (such as those holding a dependant or temporary visa) have the legal entitlement to enrol at their designated neighbourhood school.

However, under the Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000 (Cth), students who hold a subclass 500 student visa (a student visa in their own name) may only attend government schools accredited to accept international students. The department refers to students who hold a student visa in their own name as Standard and Study Abroad students.

Given Standard and Study Abroad students are required to attend an accredited school, they may not be able to attend their closest school.

Schools may contact the International Education Division for support with queries regarding international student enrolments: [international@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:international@education.vic.gov.au)

### Attending a school that is not the student's designated neighbourhood school

Students are able to apply for a place at a school that is not their designated neighbourhood school.

All students who seek enrolment in a school outside of their designated neighbourhood school should be enrolled in that school if:

- there is sufficient accommodation at the school
- this request for enrolment aligns with the school's enrolment management implementation plan (if they have one).

Where there is insufficient accommodation at a school for all students who seek entry, students must be enrolled according to the Placement Policy's priority order of placement (see below).

The department takes into account a school's enrolment practices when determining the allocation of relocatable buildings. Buildings are prioritised to schools which are addressing local demand, and which have a high percentage of enrolments from within their school zone.

### Sufficient accommodation

Whether a school has sufficient accommodation to enrol additional students depends on a number of factors. These include if the school will continue to have appropriate physical and operational capacity and resources to provide high quality education and services to the school's overall student population.

Sufficient accommodation takes into consideration:

- built capacity and/or target-built capacity
- current enrolments and forecast enrolments
- current demand and forecast demand within the school zone
- staffing levels
- industrial agreements
- subject/curriculum demands on the school
- where practical, planning for an even distribution of students across all year levels while maintaining class size targets.

Schools must have sufficient accommodation to meet current and future in-zone demand before enrolling students from outside the school zone.

In some instances, schools may not have sufficient accommodation to offer placement to all students. This includes instances where schools are forecast to come under significant enrolment pressure from within the school zone. Where this is the case, the department will work with schools to develop an enrolment management implementation plan to support long term enrolment planning.

Sufficient accommodation is determined by the principal in consultation with their regional office, and it should reflect current and future in-zone demand. In instances where further support may be needed, final determination on sufficient accommodation may be made by the regional director.

### Priority order of placement

Eligible children and young persons have the right to be admitted to their designated neighbourhood government school, regardless of capacity.

In circumstances where schools do not have sufficient accommodation to accept all students who apply from outside their school zone, schools must manage enrolment applications in accordance with the following priority order of placement:

1. students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same

time

2. all other students in order of closeness of their home to the school.

In exceptional circumstances, a student may be enrolled in a school based on compassionate grounds. This is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement. Further information is available below under 'Exceptional circumstances – compassionate grounds'.

#### Priority 1 – Siblings

The sibling priority applies to placement decisions at all year levels, from Foundation (Prep) to Year 12. There is an expectation that schools will enrol all older and younger siblings, unless otherwise approved by the regional director.

A sibling is defined broadly and can include step-siblings and students residing together as part of a multiple family cohabitation or out-of-home-care arrangements, including foster care, kinship care and permanent care. Students seeking enrolment on sibling grounds should be residing together at the same permanent address and must be attending the school at the same time.

Where siblings do not reside together on a full-time basis, families may still seek enrolment on sibling grounds. These applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If there are complex sibling arrangements such as this, schools should contact their regional office to seek advice. Regional office contact details and locations are on the department's website, visit: [Office locations](#).

A school should only seek to restrict or limit enrolments of out-of-zone siblings if they consider there to be significant future or current capacity restraints (for example, there is a concern that students within zone could not be accommodated in present or future years) and where they have approval from the regional director.

To seek approval to restrict enrolments for out-of-zone siblings, schools must submit the Exemption to Priority 1 of the Placement Policy application form. Schools can obtain a copy of the application form by contacting their regional office. All applications are assessed by both regional and central offices.

Any agreement between schools and the relevant regional director on enrolment restrictions for out-of-zone siblings must be reviewed annually.

#### Priority 2 – Order of closeness of their home to the school

In metropolitan areas, and in Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, closeness to school is the distance measured in a straight line from the child's permanent residential address to the school. In any other area of Victoria, closeness to school is the distance measured by the shortest practical route by road.

Distances from an address to the 5 nearest schools (as measured in a straight line) are available on the [Find my School website](#). This website can be used when considering order of closeness to school, particularly for metropolitan areas, and in Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. In other areas, schools should consider travel distance between the applicant's address and the school when considering order of closeness.

Closeness to school is either assessed upon receipt of an enrolment application or as part of the annual Foundation (Prep) enrolment or Year 7 placement processes for government schools.

Timelines will be strictly observed for Foundation (Prep) enrolment and Year 7 placement applications. If an application for Foundation (Prep) enrolment or Year 7 placement misses the deadline, it should be

considered after applications received on time (if the student does not live in the school zone or does not have a sibling attending the school at the same time).

#### Exceptional circumstances – compassionate grounds

In exceptional circumstances, a student may be enrolled at a school on compassionate grounds. This is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement.

Families must be able to clearly demonstrate the exceptional circumstances which they believe make an enrolment at their designated neighbourhood school unsuitable for their child or children.

Exceptional circumstances may include family violence, wellbeing and safety concerns, physical and/or mental health concerns. Importantly, this is not a comprehensive list of exceptional circumstances whereby a family may seek an enrolment on compassionate grounds – each application will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Under the Disability Standards for Education 2005, education providers are legally required to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability. On that basis, grounds for exceptional circumstances do not include concerns related to a student's disability where those concerns can be addressed by making reasonable adjustments. For examples of reasonable adjustments and further guidance, refer to: [Making reasonable adjustments](#).

The student will generally be offered a place at the school in next closest proximity to the student's permanent address or current address or location where relevant.

When considering an application or appeal on compassionate grounds, schools and regional staff can request that families provide further evidence. This may include:

- legal documentation
- reports from allied health and/or medical professionals, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing practitioners, Victoria Police, and/or family violence services
- court orders.

Matters of compassionate grounds are of a sensitive nature and may pose risks to health and life (for example, matters related to family violence). Family and student privacy must be maintained when considering applications on compassionate grounds.

For more information, refer to: [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

Schools can contact their regional office to seek advice and support when considering applications on compassionate grounds. Regional office contact details and locations are on the department's website, visit: [Office locations](#).

#### Student tests and interviews

A placement offer must not be dependent on a satisfactory report, test or interview.

Student tests or interviews may only occur after a placement offer has been made. This covers all forms of testing, including examinations for school specific scholarships, academic programs, leadership programs, sporting trials, music or performing arts auditions, and other try-outs or performance assessments. Schools must also not hold formal or informal interviews for prospective students and their families.

Schools must not reserve places or prioritise placement for students on the basis of anticipated test results.

For secondary schools, this means that tests or interviews cannot occur prior to the state-wide release of Year 7 placement offers in July each year. Schools must not promote tests or interviews before placement offers have been made (refer to the state-wide timeline in the Placement Information Pack).

This does not apply to selective entry and other specialism schools that are not required to manage enrolments in accordance with the Placement Policy. For further information, visit: [Selective Entry and Other Specialism Schools and Programs](#).

### Enrolment management

Schools, in consultation with their regional office, manage enrolments to ensure that all students can attend their local school now and into the future. Strategies that support enrolment management include:

- maintaining accurate and complete enrolment records and data, to facilitate enrolment planning
- planning for an even distribution of students across all year levels while maintaining class size targets
- considering your enrolment projections and ensuring that the starting cohort of enrolment numbers does not increase to the extent that the overall capacity of the school is exceeded for the life of the cohort
- monitoring enrolment trends and subject/curriculum demands in the school
- advising current and prospective parents about any limits on enrolment early.

Schools under enrolment pressure may be supported with an enrolment management implementation plan. Enrolment management implementation plans provide current and projected data and, where required, support schools to implement enrolment restrictions approved by regional directors.

### Restricting enrolments

Under section 2.2.16 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), the Minister for Education may specify and approve entry criteria for a particular school. This power has also been delegated to the department's 4 regional directors.

This allows the Minister for Education, and regional directors as delegates, to restrict new enrolments at a school by setting unique entry criteria. This could include, for example, limiting entry year enrolments to students who reside in-zone and to out-of-zone siblings.

In determining the need for such a restriction, the following factors are considered:

- demand for places from within and outside the school's zone
- the school's site and built capacity
- sufficient accommodation
- the effect on, and capacity at, surrounding schools.

The regional director will notify the school in writing if a restriction is being applied or modified. All restrictions are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they are still required.

Regional offices can recommend and work in partnership with schools to develop enrolment management implementation plans. Schools may also request an enrolment management implementation plan.

Schools seeking more advice or support in developing or implementing an enrolment management implementation plan should contact their regional office.

### Determining permanent residence

Every child is guaranteed a place at their designated neighbourhood school (or local school). Families may seek enrolment for their child at a school that is not their local school and should be enrolled if that school has sufficient accommodation. Refer to the [Placement Policy](#) for more information.

To support each child's right to attend their local school, and to make sure the priority order of placement is followed, schools may need to verify a child's permanent residence. This can occur for both in-zone and out-of-zone children, either before an offer of enrolment or placement is made, or as a condition of the offer.

It is important to consider a child's personal circumstances when making determinations about their permanent residence. The welfare and education of children should not be disadvantaged because of their inability to provide evidence of address.

### Meaning of 'permanent residence'

A child's permanent residence is the address at which they permanently reside at the time of seeking enrolment.

If a child resides at multiple addresses, their permanent residence is the address at which they spend the majority of their weekdays.

If a child spends an equal amount of time at 2 addresses, both addresses are considered their permanent address and the child can be enrolled in the local school for either address. The final choice of which school the child attends rests with the parents/carers or prospective student if they are an adult or mature minor for the purpose of making enrolment decisions.

### Evidence for demonstrating permanent residence

When assessing enrolment applications, schools may request that parents/carers provide supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a child's permanent residence. Supporting documentation may include original or certified copies of rental agreements, unconditional contracts of sale or other official documentation that demonstrates permanent residence.

To obtain sufficient supporting documentation, schools may ask parents/carers to complete a [Residential address check \(PDF\)](#). The residential address check is intended as guidance only and schools have discretion to accept less than 100-points of information as outlined in the checklist. Documents should show the same address and parent's/carer's name as recorded on the school enrolment application form.

Schools may also ask parents/carers to complete a statutory declaration confirming they are living at the address and that the arrangement is genuine and intended to be permanent. It is a criminal offence to make a false statutory declaration and, if made on purpose, the person making the statutory declaration is liable to penalties of perjury (refer to [Statutory declarations](#)). In the event a school receives a statutory declaration and is unsure about its validity, school staff should consult with their regional office.

Requests for additional supporting documentation may occur after the parent has submitted an enrolment application, if deemed necessary by the school. Information to parents/carers should clearly explain that the documentation is required to confirm the child's eligibility to enrol at the school. The

school should also clearly communicate to parents/carers that the enrolment application may not be accepted if the requested documentation is not provided.

If it comes to light that the address provided on the application form was not the child's genuine permanent residence, a school may withdraw an enrolment or placement offer under certain conditions (refer to the section below on 'Withdrawal of an enrolment or placement offer'). The regional office should be informed before an enrolment or placement offer is withdrawn.

#### Duration of rental agreements

If a school has concerns about the duration of a rental agreement being provided as proof of permanent address, the school should consult with the family to ensure that reasonable consideration has been given to the family's living circumstances. For example, it is not acceptable to disregard a rental agreement that is shorter than 12 months from the time of submitting the enrolment application if this accurately reflects a family's residential circumstances.

If a rental agreement does not cover the first day of attendance, a school may seek further information closer to enrolment. Schools can make the enrolment conditional on providing a renewed rental agreement before the first day of school and may withdraw an enrolment or placement offer under certain conditions (refer to 'Withdrawal of an enrolment or placement offer').

#### Determining permanent residence as a condition of enrolment or placement offer

If you are making an enrolment or placement offer that is conditional on the parent/carer satisfying determining permanent residence requirements, this should be made explicit in both the initial letter of offer and in any subsequent communication.

#### Inability to provide evidence of permanent residence

Schools should ensure enrolment practices do not unfairly disadvantage families of children who are unable to provide proof of permanent address because of their individual circumstances. This is particularly relevant to children experiencing homelessness, family violence or recently arrived immigrants or refugees. In these cases, school staff should seek advice from their regional office before rejecting an enrolment application on the basis that the family of the child is unable to provide proof of permanent residence.

Note: Department policy does not prohibit schools listing the address of a specialist service, crisis or other temporary accommodation, or school address if required, for a child or young person experiencing family violence, to protect the child or young person from harm.

#### Verification of permanent residence

Schools can make reasonable enquiries to verify permanent address information provided by parents/carers, such as:

- checking the electoral roll at an Australian Electoral Commission office or the Victorian Electoral Commission head office
- checking with a real estate agent
- for a rental property which is a studio apartment or a one-bedroom unit, checking whether there are any regulations/codes limiting the occupancy of these apartments to one person per apartment.

Schools should remember that multiple families may live together in one residence. School staff should be understanding of these arrangements when verifying permanent residence.

To satisfy privacy law requirements, schools should ensure parents/carers applying for enrolment are aware of the enquiries the school may make to verify the information provided about a child's permanent residence. Schools must not undertake home inspections or surveillance to verify permanent residence.

If the principal does not accept that the address provided on the enrolment application form (and any other supporting documentation) is the genuine permanent residence of the child, the school may reject the application if it does not have sufficient accommodation for all who apply, in line with the [Placement Policy](#).

### Withdrawal of an enrolment or placement offer

There are some circumstances in which schools can withdraw an enrolment or placement offer.

If, after an enrolment or placement offer is made, the child's permanent residence changes or it comes to light that the address provided on the application form was not the genuine permanent residence of the child, a school may withdraw an enrolment or placement offer in the following circumstances:

- where, after the priority order of placement is applied to the correct address, a place is not available for the child
- the new address is not within the school zone
- the enrolment or placement offer and any subsequent material provided to the child and their parent/carer expressly states that the offer may be withdrawn prior to the first day of attendance if the child's permanent place of residence changes or the school becomes aware that the address provided on the application form was not the genuine permanent residence for the child.

Prior to withdrawing an offer of enrolment, school staff must consult with the regional office. School staff should also consider any safety or wellbeing issues related to the child.

If the regional office is supportive of the school withdrawing the enrolment or placement offer, the school should issue written communication to the parent/carer noting the outcome and ensure the parent/carer is aware that they may appeal this decision (refer to [Appealing enrolment decisions](#)).

### Appealing enrolment decisions

Parents and carers are able to appeal against a school's decision not to provide a placement. This can occur in relation to enrolments at Foundation, placements at Year 7, or placements at other year levels.

The department supports Victorian government schools to maintain a fair and transparent enrolment process by providing a standardised application form and enrolment form that are completed in 2 stages:

- Stage 1: Application form – captures enrolment expressions of interest from parents/carers.
- Stage 2: Enrolment form – captures detailed student information once there is a confirmed placement offer from the school.

Where schools have an online application or enrolment form, the content must align with the department's forms.

### Foundation (Prep) enrolment



Each year, the department releases the statewide Foundation (Prep) enrolment timeline to Victorian government primary schools in mid-late Term 4. The timeline includes key dates, activity descriptions and an overview of responsibilities to help schools plan for their Foundation enrolments.

### Student transfers between schools

Parents/carers are entitled to request a transfer between schools. During this process, schools must avoid practices that:

- compel students to transfer or withdraw from school (for example, for behavioural issues) through any other means than the formal expulsion process (refer to [Expulsions](#))
- restrict entry to eligible students.
- Gladstone Views Primary School will only accept transfer enrolments from students whose families have relocated into the designated school boundary.
- For students transferring from a local school outside the designated school boundary, enrolment may only be considered at the beginning of Semester 1 and Semester 2 of the current academic year.
- Families seeking a transfer will be asked to provide the reason for the transfer request. Gladstone Views Primary School reserves the right to direct families back to the school where their child/children are currently enrolled if the transfer request does not align with the school's enrolment policy and Department of Education guidelines.
- All transfer enrolments are subject to available capacity and compliance with Department of Education regulations.

### Schools must:

- provide student information for all students transferring out
- receive student transfer information for all students transferring in
- seek parent or carer consent for a transfer if the transfer follows a behaviour or disciplinary incident that may have otherwise resulted in commencement in expulsion procedures – use the [student exit form \(DOCX\)](#) to obtain this consent
- update CASES21 and contact regional staff as appropriate for additional advice and support.

### Related policies

- [Attendance](#)
- [Decision Making Responsibilities for Students](#)
- [Exemptions from School Attendance and Enrolment](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Home Schooling and Partial Enrolments](#)
- [Immunisation](#)
- [International Student Program \(ISP\)](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)

- Suspension
- Primary to Secondary School Transition
- Transition – Early Childhood to School