



*A School With A View*

## PLACEMENT/ENROLMENT POLICY

### RATIONALE

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 has approved specific entry criteria, being:

- select entry high schools
- special and special development schools
- English Language Schools and Centres
- camp and outdoor schools
- hospital schools and teaching units
- distance schools
- community/alternative schools individual schools with entry criteria as approved by the Minister

The Placement Policy applies to the placement of students at all year levels, from Prep to Year 12.

### RIGHT TO ATTEND THE DESIGNATED NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOL

Eligible children and young persons have the right to be admitted to their designated neighbourhood 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

### 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 capacity at the school to accommodate all students who apply.

### PLACEMENT WHEN THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT PLACES FOR ALL STUDENTS WHO SEEK ENTRY

Where there are insufficient places at a school for all students who seek entry, students are enrolled according to the Placement Policy's priority order of placement, which has five criteria

- students for whom the school is the designated neighbourhood school
- students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time
- where the Regional Director has restricted the enrolment, students who reside nearest the school
- students seeking enrolment on specific curriculum grounds
- all other students in order of closeness of their home to the school

### SIBLINGS

A sibling can be defined to broadly include step-siblings residing together at the same permanent address and students residing together at the same permanent address as part of statutory out-of-home-care arrangements, including foster care, kinship care and permanent care. Enrolment on sibling grounds may also be considered for students permanently residing together in the one residence as part of multiple family cohabitation. Students seeking enrolment on sibling grounds must be residing together at the same permanent address and must be attending the school at the same time.

There is an expectation that schools will enrol all older and younger siblings, unless otherwise agreed with the Regional Director. 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 agreed with the Regional Director. Any agreements between Schools and the Regional Director on enrolment restrictions for out of zone siblings must be reviewed annually.

The sibling criteria applies to placement decisions at all year levels, from Prep to Year 12. For Year 7 applications, parents and carers can indicate on the Application for Year 7 Placement form if the student has an older sibling who resides at the same permanent residential address and who will also be enrolled at the school at the same time.

## **CURRICULUM GROUNDS**

In years Prep to 10 all Victorian government schools offer the Victorian Curriculum as set by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority – therefore regardless of which government school they choose, parents can be confident that their child will learn the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship. Within this broader curriculum, schools have the flexibility to focus on particular learning areas depending on the needs and interests of their community. For example, within the languages learning area government schools have the flexibility to select which language(s) they offer in consultation with their local communities. Students seeking enrolment on curriculum grounds are considered only after the school has first ensured that all students eligible under the first three criteria of the placement policy have been accommodated.

## **ORDER OF CLOSENESS OF THEIR HOME TO SCHOOL**

This criteria only applies to students who are seeking enrolment in a school other than their designated neighbourhood school (where their permanent address is outside of the school's zone).

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES- COMPASSIONATE GROUNDS**

The Department recognises there may be some situations where, due to exceptional circumstances, a student may be unable to enrol in their designated neighbourhood school, or it may not be in the student's best interests to enrol in their designated neighbourhood school. In these exceptional circumstances, enrolment at another school may be sought on compassionate grounds.

In these instances, 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, citing, for example, family violence or specific wellbeing, safety, physical health 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. 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. If seeking enrolment at a specific school that is not their designated neighbourhood school, families must be able to provide substantive evidence addressing why an enrolment at the specific school would best meet their child's circumstances. When making an application to the Principal / Regional Director on compassionate grounds, schools and Regions can request that families provide further evidence to support their application, including, but not limited to: legal documentation reports from allied health and/or medical professionals, Department of Health and Human Services Practitioners, Victoria Police, family violence services, court orders and so on. Not all of these documents may be requested from families;

they will be requested on a case-by case-basis. These documents may assist schools and regions in their decision making processing in determining if there are exceptional circumstances and whether enrolment should be considered on compassionate grounds. Instances of compassionate grounds are of a sensitive nature and if they relate to family violence, may pose risks to health and life. Family and student privacy will be maintained in these circumstances.

## PERMANENT RESIDENCE

For the purpose of student enrolment in Victorian government schools, the Department considers permanent place of residence is the address at which a child permanently resides at the time of enrolment. If a child resides at multiple addresses, the child's 'permanent residence' is the address at which the child spends the majority of his/her weekdays. If the child spends an equal amount of time at two addresses, both addresses will be considered the child's permanent address and the child will be entitled to enrol in the designated neighbourhood school for either address (or any other Victorian government school subject to entry criteria and capacity). The final choice of which school the child ultimately attends rests with the parents/carers or student if they are an adult or mature minor for the purpose of making enrolment decisions.

Evidence for demonstrating permanent residence To assist schools in verifying a student's permanent residence when assessing enrolment applications, schools may request parents/carers to provide supporting documentation such as original or certified copies of rental agreements or unconditional contracts of sale, electoral roll confirmation, council rates notices or other official documentation that demonstrates permanent residence at that address such as a driver's license or health care card. Documents should show the same address and parent's/carer's name as recorded on the school enrolment application form.

This request may occur after the parent has submitted an Enrolment Application Form, if deemed necessary by the school. The school should also clearly communicate to parents/carers applying to enrol, that the enrolment application may not be accepted if the requested information/documentation is not provided. Alternatively, the school may ask parents to complete a statutory declaration confirming they are living at the address and that the arrangement is genuine and intended to be permanent. Schools may also remind parents/carers that a person who makes a false declaration is liable to the penalties of perjury.

## ENROLMENT PROCESS

Documentation and other requirements Schools must:

- enrol eligible students, who are new to the Victorian government education system under the name contained in the documents supporting their admission; primarily their birth certificate
- keep copies of sighted documents (note: for primary students this includes an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register)
- verify changes to student enrolment names
- maintain and update student details obtained on enrolment
- provide new families with a privacy collection notice upon enrolment and keep all information confidential and managed in accordance with the Department's privacy policy and Victorian privacy laws.

A Victorian Student Number (VSN) is allocated to a student in the name certified in enrolment documents. When students transfer between schools, the name will remain as the name attached to the VSN, unless new legal documentation with an amended name is provided.

## CHANGING ENROLMENT NAME

Schools can change the name under which a student is enrolled if:

- new legal documentation with an amended named is provided, such as:
  - officially amended birth certificate
  - proof of adoption
  - court order authorising another name supporting documentation , which was not originally available, differs from the name provided during conditional enrolment

- proof is provided that the enrolling parent/carer or the student is using another name under a scheme designed to ensure their safety, such as witness protection.

## CASES21 STUDENT INFORMATION DATABASE

CASES21 is the student information database, and includes enrolment forms, transfer information, the student register (in primary schools) and class lists. The section below describes how schools maintain student information in CASES21:

1. Enrolment data is entered for students who are new to the Victorian government school system.
2. Data is:
  - confirmed/updated and signed by the parent/carer when students transfer
  - updated when changes occur, such as guardianship
  - reviewed half yearly, specifically parent/carer contact information. Refer to CASES21 Administration User Guide for guidance including processes for generating the Student Enrolment Information Form and Student Information Full Details Report)
  - revised annual for State and Commonwealth reporting
  - updated when informed by parents of changes to family circumstances
3. Records are disposed of in accordance with the General Disposal Schedule.

Where students are moving from one government school to another government school, student data must be transferred using CASES21 and:

- parents are not required to complete a new enrolment form if data is transferred using CASES21
- schools must not create a new student record in CASES21 — this will create a duplicate record
- schools are required to send a copy of the Student Enrolment Information Form to the parent or carer for checking, updating and signing to ensure student data is current and accurate

For students who are new to the government system, schools must obtain a completed enrolment form before admitting a student.

## ENROLMENT FORMS

Enrolment forms are available on CASES21 and must be completed for students enrolling in a Victorian government school for the first time.

Enrolment forms must include:

- Students enrolling at our school as part of a Foundation intake will be required to provide proof of age (indicating that they have turned 5 years of age by the 30th April of that year)
- names and addresses of the student and enrolling parent or carer
- details of medical and other conditions that may require special consideration
- emergency telephone numbers, including a nominated doctor
- an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register
- the name of the previous school and the student's current year level, where students transfer from another school
- the Privacy Collection Statement

## OTHER INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION

### Consent

- the student, if they are over 15 and living independently
- the parent as defined in the Family Law Act 1975 (Note: In the absence of a current court order, each parent of a child who is not 18 has equal parental responsibility)
- both parents for parents who are separated, or a copy of the court order with any impact on the relationship between the family and the school
- an informal carer, with a statutory declaration. Carers: may be a relative or other carer, have day-to-day care of the student with the student regularly living with them, or may provide any other consent required e.g. excursions)

### When parent consent is disputed, principals and staff should:

- avoid becoming involved
- avoid favouring one parent
- act in accordance at all times with the best interest of the student and school community
- act sensitively and
- realise that a resolution, satisfactory to both parents, may not be possible

### Evidence of student's name and date of birth

Schools should ask for the student's birth certificate as evidence of the student's name and date of birth.

Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a student's full name and date of birth includes a passport, citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard. Where no official documentation can be produced, the school must ask for other identifying documentation such as a doctor's note attesting to a child's age and/or a Medicare card.

### Immunisation history statements — Primary students

Primary schools are required to:

- request that parents provide them with an Immunisation History Statement for their child from the Australian Immunisation Register
- take a copy of all Immunisation History Statements and record information on the immunisation status of each enrolled child

Parents or carers must provide an Immunisation History Statement for their child from the Australian Immunisation Register to the school regardless of whether the child is or is not immunised.

Note: Homeopathic immunisation is not recognised form of immunisation, and therefore cannot be listed on an immunisation status certificate.

Prospective students will not be prevented from enrolling in primary school if they have not been immunised.

Collecting Immunisation History Statements will assist health authorities in protecting students in the event of a vaccine-preventable disease occurrence at the school. An unvaccinated student may be excluded from school for a period of time.

### Maintaining and using immunisation records — primary students

Immunisation History Statements from the Australian Immunisation Register indicate whether primary students have been immunised against some or all of the following infectious diseases:

- hepatitis
- poliomyelitis

- rotavirus
- mumps
- diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenza type B
- measles
- rubella
- pertussis (whooping cough)
- pneumococcal
- varicella (chickenpox)
- Meningococcal
- Tetanus

**This section describes how schools should maintain and use immunisation records for primary students:**

1. Obtain copies of official Immunisation History Statements from parents/carers prior to enrolment. Record the immunisation status of the student on CASES21 (whether an Immunisation History Statement has been received or not).
2. Maintain a file containing Immunisation History Statements (note: if a primary student transfers to another primary school, a copy should be sent to the receiving school and recorded in CASES21).
3. During disease outbreaks refer to student Immunisation History Statements. Instruct parents /carers of students not immunised to keep their children at home for the recommended period, as outlined in the Department of Health Exclusion Table.

In accordance with amendments to ‘No Jab No Play’ legislation, as of 28 February 2018 only the Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is acceptable for the purposes of enrolling in a primary school in Victoria. Sighting of the stamped immunisation booklet or documents produced by GPs or other immunisation providers are not sufficient evidence to meet this requirement. The immunisation status of the student must be recorded on CASES21 (whether an Immunisation History Statement has been received or not) and updated when necessary.

**Maintaining Student Family Occupation and Education (SFOE) information**

Funding for equity (Social Disadvantage) provides an individual loading for students from disadvantaged backgrounds that will increase with the density of disadvantage at the school. Increased funding for schools has proven to raise educational outcomes, particularly for these students. Schools use Social Disadvantage funding to deliver tailored educational programs that meet the needs of this cohort of students.

The Social Disadvantage loading allocates funding based on parental occupation, parental education and the level of concentration of disadvantage in a school. Students with the highest level of need are targeted with the most funding to ensure schools have the resources to support them.

SFOE information that parents provide directly affects the level of Social Disadvantage funding that a school will receive. Therefore, it is essential that schools:

- ensure that their staff understand why SFOE data is needed and the benefits of ensuring there are no errors in data logged on CASES21
- clearly explain to parents the importance of correctly completing the parent information form
- have a process to ensure SFOE information is accurate and up-to-date
- contact parents when occupation and/or education data is missing, incomplete or unclear
- keep records to explain any changes or updates to data submitted by parents

**Incomplete or missing student information or documentation**

The Principal may defer admission of a student for up to five days, provided that the principal:

- requests that the parent or carer provide the missing information
- advises the parent or carer they are legally responsible for ensuring a child of school age attends school

Conditionally enrol the student:

- if the information is not provided after 5 days and
- further delay in enrolling the student is likely to affect the student's education and wellbeing

provided that the principal:

- records the conditions; and
- advises the parents or carers in writing that the enrolment is conditional upon providing the missing information and will only be formally completed when these conditions are met

### **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 (e.g. for behavioural issues) through any other means than the formal expulsion process
- restrict entry to eligible students

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
- update CASES21 and contact regional staff as appropriate for additional advice and support

### **Approval process**

School principals approve transfers, including when:

- the student is transferring to their designated neighbourhood school; or
- the student residence changes and is now closer to a different government school (where requested); or
- transfer is sought from an Australian school outside the state system; or
- the transfer is sought at the commencement of the school year or term 3 and in secondary schools the student can be accommodated mid-year without the reorganisation of the existing school program; or
- transfer is requested (other than in those instances cited above) by a parent/carer and the principal of each school involved supports the request; or
- a student is expelled from a school via the formal expulsion policy. For students of compulsory school age, the principal of the school from which the student has been expelled is responsible for ensuring enrolment in another school or registered training organisation in consultation with the local area team and regional office

For all other transfers where the parent or carer appeals against the Principal's decision to not enrol the:

- transferring principal makes recommendations to the Regional Director
- Regional Director determines approval

### **Transfer of information**

#### **Transfer of information between Victorian government schools**

When a Victorian government school student has been accepted at another Victorian government school, the transferring school will provide the student's information to that next school. All Victorian government schools must transfer student information through CASES21.

Parent or carer consent is not required to transfer student information or records (including SSS/DCS files) to the student's next Victorian government school.

Transferring student information to the student's next Victorian government school is in the best interests of our students, because it assists that next school to provide optimal education and support to the student. This also enables the Department to fulfil important legal obligations.

The Department, which includes all Victorian government schools, central and regional offices, is a single legal entity. This means that all student records and files, including DCS/SSS files, are owned by the Department (on behalf of the State of Victoria), not individual schools, networks or school staff. This also means that transferring student information to the student's next Victorian government school is a 'use' of that information for the same primary purposes for which it was collected, consistent with Victorian privacy law.

Where a student is in youth justice or secure welfare custody, all Victorian government schools must transfer information through CASES21, Student Data Transfer, to Parkville College. The student will remain enrolled at their base school while concurrently enrolled at Parkville College for the purposes of receiving education while in custody.

In addition, student information can be provided to the student's next Victorian government school in any and all of the following ways: verbally (principal to principal, or nominees), electronically (via email) and in hardcopy (by providing copies of the student's records, including health reports). If the student has received Student Support Services (SSS) support in the last two years, the SSS area based team must arrange for the SSS/Department Confidential Student file (DCS) to be sent to the SSS area based team for the receiving school.

## REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was ratified at school council February 2021.