



ENROLMENT POLICY

Children of school age have the right to be admitted to their designated neighbourhood government school at the beginning of the school year (or when relevant) unless an approved alternative placement has been arranged.

Rationale

- To inform prospective parents of requirements for enrolment at Officer Primary School (OPS).

Aims

- To provide places for those children who reside within the school neighbourhood.
- To provide an equitable and transparent process which accounts for local issues.
- To provide an efficient process of enrolment that satisfies the needs of students, families and the school.
- To provide the school with some control, regarding enrolment growth, given constraints in relation to the size of the school grounds.

Implementation

Department Guidelines

Before admitting a student, schools must:

- **for students transferring from another Victorian government school**, import student information using CASES21; and provide parents with the Student Enrolment Information Form for validation of student information
- **for students who are new to the government system**, obtain a completed enrolment form.

For all students, schools must:

- collect relevant admission information
- provide a privacy notice to the enrolling parent explaining the use to be made of enrolment information.
- collect and record an Immunisation History Statement - primary students.

For admission, all applicants must be:

- an Australian citizen, or a student with relevant specified visas or Immicard
- deemed eligible and approved for enrolment by the principal or relevant regional director.

On admission schools consider the following in determining a student's school readiness:

- entry assessment from kindergarten
- informal observations to assess development, literacy and numeracy, and academic, social and emotional needs.

Age eligibility and approval requirements

Compulsory school age

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, schooling is compulsory for students aged between 6 and 17 years unless an exemption from attendance has been granted. This applies to all schools including mainstream, specialist, and government English Language schools or centres.

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

- the person falls within an exception to the age eligibility requirements set out in the age regulations. 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 based on their age. Or;
- the person is granted an exemption from the age regulations. 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 Regional Directors. There is no automatic eligibility to enrol in or attend a Government school.

Principal responsibility

Principals are responsible for assessing eligibility and approving the admission of:

- individuals who are of compulsory school age, i.e. those aged between 6 and 17 years; and
- individuals who fall within an exception under the Regulations.

Individuals who fall outside of the compulsory school age may attend school only if they fall within an exception under the Regulations or are granted an exemption. The exceptions are set out in more detail below. However, there are exceptions for:

- children who are at least 5 years of age by 30 April of the year of enrolment, and are enrolling in a course of primary education; and
- certain categories of students aged 18 or over who are enrolling in or completing an accredited senior secondary course.

These decisions can be made by the principal without further approval.

Exceptions to the minimum age requirements

A child who is aged less than 5 years old at 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).

A child who is aged five years or over by 30 April of the year of enrolment may enrol in or attend a Government school if they are enrolling in or attending a:

- course of primary education
- course approved by the Minister
- preschool program conducted on Government school premises.

Principals are responsible for assessing whether a person seeking enrolment falls within the scope of an exception to the standard age requirements. If the person meets the exception criteria the person automatically meets the age eligibility requirements for enrolment. The principal cannot refuse to enrol the person solely based on their age.

Information required for enrolment

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:

- date of birth (note: evidence of date of birth can be official, such as a birth certificate or where this is not able to be produced, unofficial, such as a doctor's note attesting to a child's age).
- names and addresses of the student and enrolling parent or guardian
- 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. Note: For students transferring from another Victorian government school, data can be imported using CASES21 (mandatory from July 2017)

The signature of:

- 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
 - may provide any other consent required e.g. excursions.

Notes for informal carer:

- statutory declarations apply for 12 months
- the wishes of a parent prevail in the event of a dispute between a parent legally responsible for a student and an informal carer.

Where consent is disputed

- When (parent) consent is disputed principals and staff should:
 - avoid becoming involved
 - avoid favouring one parent
 - act in accordance always with the best interests of the student and the school community
 - act sensitively and realise that a resolution, satisfactory to both parents, may not be possible.

For applicants who are:

- Australian-born, a birth certificate or equivalent
- non-Australian-born, a passport or travel document such as a visa or Immicard

Schools are required to:

- request that parents provide them with an Immunisation History Statement for their child from the Australian Immunisation Register. Parents or guardians 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.
- take a copy of all Immunisation History Statements and record information on the immunisation status of each enrolled child.
- Note: Homeopathic immunisation is **not** a 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.

Incomplete student information

Principal's options when student information is incomplete;

- defer admission of a student for up to 5 days provided that the Principal
 - requests that the parent or guardian provide the missing information
 - advises the parent or guardian 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 guardians in writing that the enrolment is conditional upon providing the missing information and will only be formally completed when these conditions are met.

Admission

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
- keep all information confidential and managed in accordance with:
 - the Department's privacy policy
 - Victorian privacy laws.

Rule: At initial enrolment a Victorian Student Number (VSN) is allocated to a student in the name certified in admission 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

Note: The majority of students enrolled prior to 2009, with names different from those appearing on their birth certificate due to previous Department policy; can continue to be enrolled in these names.

- Schools can change the name under which a student is enrolled if new legal documentation with an amended name 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 or the student is using another name under a scheme designed to ensure their safety, such as witness protection.

CASES21 student information database

The database includes:

- admission forms
- transfer information
- the student register, in primary schools
- class lists

Maintaining student information in CASES21

- Enrolment data is entered for students who are new to the Victorian government school system.
- Data is:
 - confirmed/updated and signed by the parent/guardian when students transfer
 - reviewed half yearly, specifically parent/guardian contact information, see: CASES21 Administration User Guide for guidance including processes for generating the Student Enrolment Information Form and Student Information
 - revised annually for State and Commonwealth reporting
 - updated when informed by parents of changes to family circumstances
 - Records are disposed of in accordance with the General Disposal Schedule

Note: Schools enrolling international students should update CASES21 to confirm the student's commencement of study within 5 working days of commencement. Any changes to the student's enrolment should also be recorded in a timely manner. This will ensure an accurate disbursement of funds to the relevant school.

Note: Where students are moving from one government school to another government school, student data can be transferred using CASES21 (mandatory from July 2017) 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 for checking, updating and signing to ensure student data is current and accurate.

Note: 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.

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
- diphtheria
- tetanus
- pertussis (whooping cough)
- poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenza type B
- Pneumococcal
- Rotavirus
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Meningococcal
- varicella (chickenpox)

- How schools should maintain and use immunisation records for primary students;
 - Obtain copies of official Immunisation History Statements from parents/guardians prior to enrolment
 - **Note:** 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
 - Record the immunisation status of the student on CASES21 (whether an Immunisation History Statement has been received or not).
 - Maintain a file containing Immunisation History Statements.
 - **Note:** If primary students transfer to another primary school a copy should be sent to the receiving school and recorded on CASES21.
 - During disease outbreaks refer to student Immunisation History Statements.
 - Instruct parents/guardians of students not immunised to keep their children at home for the recommended period, as outlined in the Department of Health's School exclusion table

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.

Transfer between schools

Parents/guardians are entitled to request a transfer between schools.

Schools must:

- provide student information for all students transferring out
- receive student transfer information for all students transferring in.

Schools must avoid practices that:

- force students to transfer or withdraw from school; except when the student is expelled
- restrict entry to eligible students.

Approval

School principals approve transfers when:

- the student residence changes and is now closer to a different government school (where requested)
- transfer is sought from an Australian school outside the state system
- 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
- transfer is requested (other than in those instances cited above) by a parent/guardian and the principal of each school involved supports the request
- a student is expelled from a school. 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 regional office.

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

- transferring principal makes recommendations to the regional director
- regional director determines approval.

Additionally, schools should note that they cannot enrol international students wishing to transfer from another school (prior to the student completing six months of the principal course of study) without a release letter issued by the Department's International Education Division

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.

Important: Throughout this policy, '**student information**' means personal and health information about the student, including achievement information, foreseeable risk and wellbeing information.

Parent 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 it was collected, consistent with Victorian privacy law.

From July 2017, all Victorian government schools are expected to transfer student information through CASES21.

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.

Enquiries by a family about a potential transfer between Victorian government schools

Victorian government schools may not share student information with another Victorian government school **before** that student has been **accepted at** that next school, **unless** consent is given. This means that when a parent (or student on their own behalf) is enquiring about a possible placement at another Victorian government school, the student's current school cannot share student information with that potential new school, unless the parent (or student) has consented.

Transfer process

Transfer information required

Transfer information that must be provided by the transferring school to the receiving school;

- Receiving school is a Victorian Government school
 - Student information, including information on any foreseeable risks (if applicable) Note: From July 2017, all Victorian government schools will use CASES21 to transfer this information.
- Receiving school is a Non-Government school including Catholic school;
 - Transfer note (downloadable from CASES21), including information on any foreseeable risks (if applicable).
- Interstate school;
 - Interstate Student Data Transfer Note, including information on any foreseeable risks (if applicable).

Transferring student process

The administrative process when Victorian government schools transfer students to other Victorian government schools;

- Update student details in CASES21, including:
 - the transfer date as the last date the student attended / will attend classes
 - transfer note (if used) that has been reviewed by the transferring principal
 - immunisation status for primary students.Note: CASES21 automatically updates the Victorian Student Register (VSR) as well as generating the Student Enrolment Information Form and Student Information Full Details Report.
- Complete the student exit process in CASES21.

When the student has been accepted by the receiving school, send the receiving school:

- all required student information, including any foreseeable risks, and the immunisation certificate for primary students. (From July 2017 this information must be transferred through CASES21)

Note: Parents are required to provide the receiving school with:

- evidence of the student's name and date of birth.
- passport or travel documentation for non-Australian born students
- Court orders or written consent of both parents agreeing to admission

Receiving student process

Where students are transferring between Victorian government schools student information can be transferred using CASES21 (mandatory from July 2017). In this instance the receiving school receives notification through CASES21 that data has been transmitted from the transferring school. The Victorian Student Register is automatically updated when the student data is imported by the receiving school.

When students transfer or transition between government schools, student names must not be changed unless new legal documentation with an amended name is provided.

When student information is transferred using CASES21:

- parents are not required to complete a new enrolment form
- schools are not required to create a new student record in CASES21 because that would create a duplicate record
- receiving schools must send a copy of the Student Enrolment Information Form to the parent for checking, updating and signing to ensure the student data is current and accurate.

Before a student is offered a place, receiving schools may consult with the transferring school to ensure that the person presenting to the school to enrol the student has decision-making responsibility for that student and that there are not Family Law Act orders or other orders or documents that are relevant to determining who has decision-making responsibility for that student.

How the receiving government school deals with missing or conflicting transfer information which may include considering a conditional enrolment;

- student information is not received then the receiving Principal will;
 - seek further information from the transferring school
 - choose between:
 - deferring admission for 1 day, or
 - admitting the student conditionally and maintaining a record of attendance until the information is provided
- Principal is unable, after reasonable enquiries, to obtain information then the receiving Principal will;
 - report all circumstances to the regional director
 - keep the student in attendance as a conditional enrolment until the matter is resolved.
- transferring school provides conflicting information about family circumstances then the receiving Principal will;
 - seek further information from the parents/guardians **before** the School Enrolment Information Form is issued and the transfer proceeds

- parents/guardians do not provide documentation to clarify conflicting information then the receiving Principal;
 - may defer the admission of the student for up to 5 days
 - advise the parents/guardians that:
 - they are required under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 to enrol compulsory school age children at school and ensure the student attends
 - enrolment is conditional upon provision of the required information in a specified timeframe
 - the student should continue attending their current school where their record of attendance is being maintained.

Note: The principal can seek advice from:

- the regional director and/or
- the Department's Legal Services Division.

How schools deal with unresolved matters;

- When the matter is not resolved and there are no pressing circumstances then the receiving Principal does not proceed with the transfer and the student returns to the transferring school. The transferring school reactivates the student in CASES21.
- When the matter is not resolved and both principals agree that the child's education is likely to be adversely affected by not proceeding with the transfer then the receiving Principal;
 - proceeds with the transfer
 - advises the parents or guardians in writing that the enrolment is conditional and will only be completed when these conditions are met
 - records the conditions.

Examples: written consent from both parents to the enrolment or production of a court order.

OPS Guidelines

- The Principal will report to School Council at each meeting on current enrolment trends and future enrolment predictions based on the implementation of this policy.
- Our relevant school staff will contact principals of previous schools of all students seeking transfers to discuss the circumstances of the transfer, to seek a transfer note, copy of birth certificate or immunisation certificate (if enrolling), and to discuss any academic or behavioural matters.
- A commencement date will be agreed between the school and the parent/guardian, with the school generally requesting that families allow a minimum of 48 hours following receipt of enrolment forms to arrange placement and prepare for the arrival of the student/s.
- The school Leadership and Administration will be responsible for the implementation and continuous monitoring of this policy.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **June 2021** and is due for review in **June 2024**