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Enrolment Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Language Loop - 03 9280 1955

PURPOSE

This policy sets out requirements for entry into Victorian government schools, including admissions, enrolments, the placement of students and transfers between schools.

SCOPE

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) (the Act), 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.

Every Victorian student has a legislated right to enrol at their designated neighbourhood school (section 2.2.13 of the Act), and may be enrolled at another school subject to sufficient accommodation (section 2.2.14 of the Act).

The following information provides the requirements for entry into a Victorian government school. This includes admission and enrolment pre-requisites, placement into a Victorian government school, transfers between schools, concurrent enrolments and enrolment in specialist schools.

POLICY

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 Regulations 2017 (Vic))

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School age requirements and age exemptions

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 enrolment or attendance has been granted. For enrolment and attendance exemption categories and processes — refer to Exemptions from School Enrolment and Attendance.

Compulsory schooling for students aged between 6 and 17 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 Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Regulations) — refer to the Exceptions information below; or
- the person is granted an exemption from the age requirements in the Regulations — refer to the Exemptions information below

Educational programs not subject to the school age requirements

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

- outside school hours; or
- 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 delegate (which currently include Regional Directors). There is no automatic eligibility to enrol in or attend a government school.

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 (those aged between 6 and 17 years); and
- individuals who fall within an exception under the Regulations

The Minister or delegate (such as a Regional Director) is responsible for assessing and granting exemptions to the minimum and maximum school age requirements.

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 5 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

Exemptions from the age requirements

The Minister or delegate (such as a 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 taken into account 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 needs to be 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 of age on 30 April in the year of enrolment and does not meet one of the exceptions listed above, an exemption from the minimum age requirements is required. Early age entry or 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 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

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; and
- 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 ≥ 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; or:
- 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; and
- clearly demonstrates that the child has suitable academic ability to attend school

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer 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; and
- 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.

Designated neighbourhood schools – school zones

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

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

Some school zones need to align with geographical and structural barriers such as rivers and freeways, however, a main road is not usually considered to be a barrier to accessing a school.

Schools that face particularly high enrolment demand may require a restricted zone to be put in place by the Minister for Education (or delegate), to help the school continue to meet the needs of its local community. This sometimes reduces the area for which it is a local school.

If a restricted zone is in place, then the zones from surrounding schools are adjusted to ensure that all children are designated a local school. For more information about enrolment management, refer to the Placement Policy.

The department reviews school zones on an annual basis. Zones may be adjusted to reflect new schools, changing provision at existing schools or to address changing student demand.

School zones are published on the Find my School website.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

REVIEW CYCLE

Date Implemented	September 2022
Author	
Approved By	Glenrowan Primary School Council – September 2022 Winton Primary School Council – September 2022
Responsible for Review	Principal
Review Date	September 2025