

# ENROLMENT 2020

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

This document will continue to be updated.  
Last update: 3 May 2019

### **How can I find my local school?**

Visit [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) and type in your home address. The website will then locate your designated neighbourhood school.

### **How can I help someone who cannot access the internet or speak English, find their local school?**

Those requiring translation assistance can call their regional office on 1300 338 691. Free translation services are available.

Those without internet access can call the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) hotline on **1800 896 950** for assistance to locate their designated neighbourhood school.

### **My child is in primary school but I want to know my local secondary school, can I find this on the website?**

Yes, all public schools, including primary, secondary and specialist schools, can be found on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au). Type in your address and click on the 'Secondary schools' tab to find your current secondary school zone.

The Department reviews school zones on a regular basis. As such, your school zone may change in the time period between your child enrolling in primary school and secondary school.

### **Are all schools on the website?**

All public primary, secondary and specialist schools are on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### **Do you have a map of Catholic and independent schools?**

For more information on Catholic schools you can contact the Catholic Education Office or visit: <https://www.cem.edu.au/SchoolSearch.aspx>

For independent schools that are members of Independent Schools Victoria you can visit: <https://www.is.vic.edu.au/who-we-are/member-school-details>

## WHAT DO THESE CHANGES MEAN?

### Is the Department of Education and Training/the Victorian Government changing its enrolment rules for parents who want to send their children to public schools?

There are no changes to the Department's Placement Policy or the relevant legislation that guides every Victorian child's right to enrol in a government school, the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#).

Under the Placement Policy, schools are required to prioritise enrolment for students living in that school zone. This has not changed, and the Department always seeks to ensure the policy is applied consistently across the state.

Parents who want to send their children to schools located outside of their school zone still have this choice. However, students enrolling at a school from within the school zone will have first priority. This is consistent with current policy.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### How is Victoria's population growth impacting on the ability of Victoria's public school sector to respond to it?

Victoria's population and economic growth is faster than anywhere else in Australia. That's why the Victorian Government is preparing for the future by delivering the biggest pipeline of major projects in the state's history.

The Government is already planning now for this growth in the school system with one of the most significant school infrastructure programs Victoria has ever seen – including delivering 100 new schools over the next eight years.

At the same time, the Department is constantly working with all schools to assess school capacity, local demand and projected enrolment numbers.

Every Victorian public school is part of a state-wide network that provides education and a community to Victorian children and their families.

Parents can be confident that there will be a place for their child in their designated neighbourhood school.

## ENROLMENT ZONES/DETERMINING DESIGNATED SCHOOL

### How did the Department decide this was my child's designated school?

Designated neighbourhood schools are generally the public school within closest proximity to the student's permanent residential address, unless the Minister for Education or Regional Director has restricted the zone of the school.

Closest proximity is calculated as the nearest school by straight line distance in metropolitan areas (including Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo), or the nearest school by shortest practical route (in regional areas).

## What is a Designated Neighbourhood School (DNS)?

In Victoria, all children are entitled to be enrolled at their designated neighbourhood school as a right under the legislation. Designated neighbourhood schools are generally the public school within closest proximity to the student's permanent residential address, unless the Minister for Education or Regional Director has restricted the zone of the school.

For children residing in metropolitan areas, Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong, the designated neighbourhood school is usually the nearest public school in a straight line from your child's permanent residential address. In any other area of Victoria, it is the nearest school by the shortest practicable route by distance.

When a new school is established, zones for neighbouring schools are adjusted to accommodate the new school. The Department works closely with schools to address the changing demographics of the local population. This process also occurs when there is any change to provision of education offered by the Government in an area as a result of a school closing or merging, or the addition or removal of a year level offered by a particular school, as approved by the Minister for Education.

## Which schools have zone maps?

All public primary and secondary schools, including Prep/Foundation to Year 9 and multi-campus schools have zone maps. This does not include schools with specific enrolment criteria including English Language Schools and Select Entry Schools. Specialist schools also do not have zones and have special enrolment criteria. You can see all Specialist schools by clicking on the 'specialist' button.

## What are the zones for specialist schools?

Specialist schools are an important part of Victoria's education landscape but do not have zones as they are not designated neighbourhood schools under the legislation. You can still search for specialist schools on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

Specialist schools do have designated transport zones. If you are considering enrolment at a specialist school, contact the school directly for information about designated transport zones.

For more information, see:

- [Getting to and from school for students with a disability](#)
- [Transport for students with a disability](#)

## What is the legislation that gives my children the right to enrol in their designated neighbourhood school?

Your child or children are guaranteed the right to enrol in their local school by the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#), specifically S 2.2.13 (1), which states, "A child of compulsory school age is entitled to be enrolled at his or her designated neighbourhood Government school."

### **Can I enrol my child at a school that is not the designated neighbourhood school?**

Children of school age have the right to be enrolled at their designated neighbourhood school. They can attend another public school of their choosing if that school has the capacity and accepts their enrolment.

Section 2.2.14 of the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#) (Vic) states “A child of compulsory school age may be enrolled at a Government school which is not the child's designated neighbourhood Government school if there is sufficient accommodation for the child at that school.”

### **My child already attends a school that is not their designated neighbourhood school. Do I need to do anything?**

If your child is already enrolled at that school, you do not need to do anything further. Your child will maintain their existing enrolment.

### **Can I still choose which school my child attends, or does my child have to attend their designated neighbourhood school?**

You can still request enrolment at a school that is not your designated neighbourhood school.

That school can only accept your enrolment if there is sufficient capacity at the school.

If a school has some capacity, but not enough to fit everyone from outside its zone, the school uses the Placement Policy to determine enrolments. For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### **Why am I in a different zone to my neighbours?**

School zones are determined based on proximity. That means that you and your neighbour could be closest to different schools.

In Victoria, all children are entitled to be enrolled at their designated neighbourhood school, or to enrol at another school if there is sufficient accommodation.

In some instances a school zone will cross two properties.

### **I looked on another Melbourne school zones website and my zone seems different to the one on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)**

[Findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) provides all parents and students with clear information about school zones in Victoria and is the official source for all Victorian public school zones.

## **ZONES**

### **How are school zones defined?**

For children residing in metropolitan areas, and in Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong, their designated neighbourhood school is usually the nearest public school in a straight line from the child's

permanent residential address. In any other area of Victoria, it is the nearest school by the shortest practical route.

When a new school is established, zones for neighbouring schools are adjusted to accommodate the new school. The Department will work closely with schools to address the changing demographics of the local population.

There are some exceptions for schools that have restricted zones in place; where a different zone is in place, mainly to manage enrolment growth.

### **What is the difference between a school boundary and a zone?**

The Department now uses the term 'school zone' to refer to what may have previously been understood as a school boundary. All mainstream public schools have a zone.

### **Why have some zones been changed?**

Most zone changes relate to the application of the standard methodology for developing zones and resolving legacy issues and consideration of demographics of the local area.

Other changes that have been made may relate to the:

- opening of new schools
- retirement of outdated zones
- removal of zone overlaps
- ensuring any orphaned areas are allocated to a zone
- consistency of methodology applied to Prep/Foundation to Year 9 and senior secondary zones
- consistency of methodology applied to multi-campus schools
- applying a consistent methodology to the design of all zones.

Individual schools that have had zone changes have been notified.

To view all school zones, visit [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### **What is the Department doing to notify parents living in these areas that their school zone has changed?**

The changes do not affect children who are already enrolled in school.

Visit [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) and type in your residential address to locate your designated neighbourhood school.

### **How many restricted zones are in place? What communities are being impacted by this restriction?**

There are a small number of restricted zones across Melbourne to respond to population growth.

Restricted zones zone may be smaller than a standard school zone to manage enrolment pressure where demand exceeds capacity.

To view all school zones across Victoria, visit [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### **Why are these changes happening now?**

Ensuring that schools and the general public have clarity about their school zones now mean that public schools will remain diverse communities where students thrive in the years to come.

### **Will my school's zone move again?**

Most school zones will not change, however school zones that are next to a new school or that experience a change in population demand may be adjusted in the future.

Updated zones will be made available on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### **How often are zones going to be updated?**

It is intended that any zone changes will happen once a year during Term 1, ready for the Year 6 to 7 transition period.

### **Where school zones are changing now, are they going to come into effect immediately?**

All zones on the website will be operational from the 2020 school year.

### **Where school zones change in the future, are they going to come into effect immediately?**

No, changes will always come into effect the following school year.

### **Which point have you measured from to determine zones?**

The location point for all public schools is taken from the Department's State Register at a particular point in time. This register is updated annually.

### **How are schools that are 'metropolitan' and 'regional' defined?**

For the majority of schools, Local Government Area (LGA) boundaries have been used to define which schools are metropolitan and which are regional. In a small number of cases schools have been classified differently to the LGA to reflect localised ongoing or planned development in those areas.

### **How do you measure 'shortest path'?**

'Shortest path' is used to determine zones for regional schools. This uses the shortest practical route by road to account for accessibility to the school.

## **Why are there two methods of defining school zones?**

In metropolitan areas (including Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo), your designated neighbourhood school is generally defined on a straight-line measurement from your house to the closest public school. This accounts for the fact that accessibility is generally better in metropolitan areas with schools closer in distance, more roads and increased transport options. In regional areas, your designated neighbourhood school is measured by the shortest practicable route. This methodology uses the shortest practical route by road, reflecting that your closest school may be more difficult to access due to the nature of the road network in your area.

## **My child will have to cross a significant road to attend their designated neighbourhood school. Why has its zone not been stopped at the main road?**

The Department recognises that some zones need to be aligned with natural 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. In metropolitan areas it is difficult to align school zones to main roads. In rural areas, shortest possible route has been used to define school zones because in these areas the Department has recognised that the road network does affect whether a child can access their local school.

## **Why doesn't my unit address appear on the website?**

The address search function on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) uses your street address to identify the parcel of land which contains your residence. If you are in a unit, your local school is the school designated for that street address.

## **What is a parcel of land?**

The Victorian Government's definition of a parcel of land is an individual piece of land for which a land title has been issued. This information is captured by [Vicmap](https://vicmap.vic.gov.au) and parcels are identified when users zoom in on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

## **My property sits across two/multiple school zones. Which is my designated neighbourhood school?**

Zones are based on proximity to closest school. In some cases, a zone may intersect or cross through parcels of land or properties. If your house sits across two or more school zones, then you have a right to attend any of those schools as your designated neighbourhood school.

## **Why do I have a lake or an airport in my zone? Does this mean some children are being excluded?**

Every part of the State of Victoria is allocated to a zone to ensure a contiguous map with no excluded sections. This includes places where people do not live, such as lakes. This does not change which school is a child's designated neighbourhood school, and removing these features of the landscape would not allow more students to go to a particular school. The purpose of a school zone is to provide every student with access to their designated neighbourhood school.

## **Why have some schools been given restricted zones?**

Some schools face particularly high enrolment demand. If this is the case, it may be necessary to put in place a restricted zone to help it continue to meet the needs of its local community. This sometimes reduces the area for which it is a designated neighbourhood school. Restricted zones can only be created by the Regional Director or the Minister for Education, and affect only a small number of schools in Victoria where all other methods of managing enrolment pressure have been tried.

If a restricted zone is in place then the zones from surrounding schools are adjusted to ensure that all children have a designated neighbourhood school.

### **My school is under enrolment pressure, should it have received a restricted zone?**

The Department has a range of ways to support schools facing enrolment pressure. Restricted zones are only used in exceptional cases to ensure that the majority of Victorian children have access to their closest school.

### **Why has my school's restricted zone been removed?**

For a small number of schools facing high demand, it may be necessary to use a restricted zone to ensure the school meets the needs of its local community. Where demand has reduced as a result of the addition of new schools in the area or the provision of additional accommodation, it may be appropriate to revert to a standard school zone. This is an important part of the process of establishing contiguous zones across the whole of Victoria, to meet demand across the state and ensure that every school-aged child has the opportunity to attend their designated neighbourhood school.

### **I want my child to attend a particular school but it has a restricted zone. Can they still attend?**

If a school is your designated neighbourhood school, then your child has a right to attend it, and is guaranteed a place.

You may choose to apply for your child to attend another school. The school can make an assessment based on student capacity, as per the [Placement Policy](#).

### **Why was the community not consulted on changes to school zones?**

The large majority of school zones have not changed. In a small number of cases the Department has retired restricted zones where schools are no longer facing enrolment pressures, opening these schools up to a wider community. Any school that had a change to their zone was contacted prior to the announcement of the new zone.

### **Do single-sex schools have zones?**

Yes. However, these zones are not determined in the same way as co-educational schools as they do not represent a local school for all children- but only a single sex.

### **How have zones for bilingual schools been determined?**

There are currently 12 bilingual schools in Melbourne. These schools are treated as mainstream schools and have a standard zone.

**My child's designated neighbourhood school is bilingual and half of the school curriculum is in a language other than English. Does my child have to attend this school?**

If it is your designated neighbourhood school, then your child has a right to attend it, and is guaranteed a place. If you do not want your child to attend this school, you can apply to other schools and they can accept the enrolment if they have the capacity to do so.

**How have the Department determined zones for stand-alone senior schools?**

There are a small number of public schools that provide senior secondary education with no 'feeder' arrangements with other schools. The zones for these stand-alone senior secondary schools are produced as a normal secondary school, as per the standard methodology. The zone is then overlaid on the surrounding mainstream secondary schools that offer Years 7 to 12 to reflect the provision as an additional option. Students of applicable age living within the zone of a senior secondary school have the choice to attend either the senior secondary college, or the Year 7 to 12 secondary school.

**On the [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) website, my address is showing both a secondary and senior secondary for my address, which one is my designated neighbourhood school?**

Students of applicable age living within the zone of a senior secondary school have the choice to attend either the senior secondary college, or the Year 7 to 12 secondary school.

Both schools are your designated neighbourhood school. Your child has the right to attend either school, however the senior secondary is only available for the year levels offered at the school.

**My child attends a Prep/Foundation to Year 9 school. Can they still attend the related 'feeder' secondary school?**

Most Prep/Foundation to Year 9 schools have a 'feeder' arrangement with an associated senior secondary school. This is where most students transition at the end of Year 9.

**My designated neighbourhood school is showing as a Prep/Foundation to Year 9, but I want my child to attend a standard primary or secondary school. Does this mean my child has to move schools in Year 10?**

All available options for your child can be found on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au). Many Prep/Foundation to Year 9 schools have a related secondary school that most children attend. You can request to enrol your child at any public school, and the school can accept if it has sufficient capacity.

**My child attends a Prep/Foundation to Year 9 school. Do they have to move schools when they reach Year 7 to attend their designated neighbourhood secondary school to Year 12?**

No. If you live within a junior secondary school's zone, you have the choice to enrol your child at the junior secondary school, or at the Year 7 to 12 secondary school.

To view the schools and zones for your residential address, visit [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### **Do community schools have a zone?**

No. Community schools are an important part of Victoria's education landscape. They provide an alternative offering to students and do not just draw from their local area.

### **Do select entry schools have a zone?**

No. Select entry schools do not have a zone because they are open to all students across the state.

### **Which campus do I attend at a multi-campus school?**

Contact the school directly and they will be able to direct you to the right campus for your child. You can see all the campuses on the [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### **What new schools are opening in 2020?**

The interim names of the 11 new schools opening in 2020 are:

- Armstrong Creek West Primary School
- Beveridge Primary School (new campus)
- Botanic Ridge Primary School
- Casey Fields (Five Ways) Primary School
- Clyde North East Primary School
- Craigieburn South Secondary School
- Davis Creek Primary School
- Keysborough South Primary School
- Lucas Primary School
- Point Cook South Senior Secondary School
- Wyndham South (Riverwalk) Primary School.

The names of these schools may change prior to opening.

The zones for these schools are included on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

## **ENROLMENT**

### **How do I enrol my child in school?**

Everything you need to know about enrolling in a school can be found on the Department's website at: [How to choose a school and enrol](#)

If you require further information, please contact your local school.

## **I provided proof that my child's residence is within the school's zone, but the school is asking me for extra evidence – why is this, and what evidence will be accepted?**

Multiple forms of identification may be required to ensure that your child lives within the school zone, 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.

Further information about determining permanent residence can be obtained from your local school, or through the [Placement Policy](#) on the Department website.

## **CAPACITY**

### **What is capacity?**

#### *Built capacity*

A school's current built capacity is the number of students that can be accommodated in the school's existing learning spaces (permanent and relocatable buildings) according to the Department's School Facilities Schedule.

The schedules are tables that set out the number and type of learning spaces and/or square metres of space that are required for a school of a certain size to deliver the curriculum based on a certain number of enrolled students. The schedules include the requirement for both general learning spaces and specialist learning spaces; for example, art rooms. The facilities schedules enable a consistent indication of the facilities requirements of schools.

#### *Site capacity*

A school's site capacity is the maximum number of teaching spaces that can be accommodated on a school site, whilst considering other relevant site factors, including physical characteristics of individual sites and the needs of the school community. More specifically, the key factors in considering the capacity of a site are:

- safety
- physical constraints
- curriculum
- health and wellbeing
- the effect on, and capacity at, surrounding schools.

### **Why is this change in policy being introduced?**

This is not a change in policy. This is about ensuring that schools and the Department of Education and Training have a shared understanding of the capacity of each school site across Victoria.

It is important for principals, school councils, parents and the broader school community to understand the capacity of their school. This is so that students receive the best educational outcomes in a safe environment.

To ensure Victoria remains the Education State, school infrastructure needs to keep pace with the number of children entering the school system each year. By understanding the current built capacity of every school, the Department can better plan for the increase in enrolment numbers in the coming years.

### **What does the school built capacity mean for my school?**

By knowing the current built capacity of the school site, principals and school councils can plan for future enrolments. The Victorian School Building Authority can also plan for potential capital works projects, or new relocatable buildings, which may be required.

### **How is the school built capacity determined?**

The Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) measures the current built capacity of each school based on the information available in its asset management system. This information is updated when the VSBA is involved in projects that change the built form of a school. In addition, when schools make changes to their buildings or room use, they should provide updated school asset drawings to the VSBA.

The VSBA calculates the site capacity of schools on a case-by-case basis, especially if school clusters (groups of surrounding schools) have current or future growth pressures. In some circumstances, to accommodate strong local growth, the built capacity of a site may be increased beyond what was previously envisaged.

If a school is advised of a current built capacity number that is not expected, contact

**1800 896 950** or email [vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### **What are the facilities schedules?**

Facilities schedules are tables that set out the number and type of learning spaces and/or square metres of space that are required for a school of a certain size to deliver the curriculum based on a certain number of enrolled students. The schedules include the requirement for both general learning spaces and specialist learning spaces; for example, art rooms. They enable a consistent indication of the facilities requirements of schools.

### **How does the school built capacity affect future enrolments? Can my child still attend my preferred school?**

Children of school age have the right to be enrolled at their designated neighbourhood school. They can attend an alternative public school of their choosing if that school has the capacity to enrol them.

By ensuring each school and the Victorian School Building Authority have a shared understanding of each school's future capacity, enrolments can be planned for and managed.

### **Can't the school just get a relocatable to increase its capacity?**

Relocatable buildings can be an efficient way to address capacity constraints on a school site in some circumstances. However it may not always be an appropriate for solving enrolment pressure. For example, an additional relocatable building should not be put on a site if it:

- encroaches on the school's only or main oval or a reasonable amount of open and play space.
- results in excessive removal of vegetation (although some tree removals may be required in isolated cases).
- impedes safe egress from the site in the case of emergencies.
- would unreasonably impede the provision of and access to site services such as water and electrical infrastructure.
- is not able to be accommodated by the physical constraints of a site, such as slopes or curves.
- has not also considered the need for provision in a school network.

It is important that the provision of a relocatable building does not impede upon the right for every child to have a safe environment in which to learn. In most instances, there are a number of other solutions that a school can use in addition to a relocatable. The Department continues to work with schools across Victoria to actively manage demand, and uses a number of solutions, including relocatable buildings, to achieve this. The move towards accessible and public zones for all mainstream public schools will assist schools in managing capacity across the state.

### **Why does there need to be a limit on capacity at some schools?**

The Department is committed to ensuring that every school in Victoria is a great school. This means ensuring that schools have the facilities they need to deliver the full curriculum to every student within the space available. For some schools, particularly on smaller sites, understanding their capacity enables them to plan for the future, and continue to meet the needs of their community in the long term.

### **How does capacity link to choice in public schools?**

Victorian students will always have a place at their designated neighbourhood school. Students can also choose to attend any other Victorian public school outside their zone if the school has capacity.

### **The Placement Policy says that it's subject to facility limitations. How do I know what this is?**

'Facility limitations' refers to the capacity of a school. In the first instance this is the current built capacity of a school. The capacity of a school cannot necessarily be increased for all schools all the time.

In Victoria, students have the right to attend their designated neighbourhood school. This means the Department and the Government make every effort to increase the built capacity of a school where that is required to accommodate students from within the school's zone.

Different methods are available to increase the built capacity of a school, however, sometimes there is a limit to how much the capacity of a school can be increased.

A school's site capacity is the maximum number of teaching spaces that can be accommodated on a school site, while considering other relevant site factors, including physical characteristics of individual sites and the needs of the school community. More specifically, the key factors in considering the capacity of a site are:

- safety
- physical constraints
- curriculum
- health and wellbeing
- the effect on, and capacity at, surrounding schools.

Relocatable buildings can be an efficient way to address capacity constraints on a school site. However it may not always be an appropriate solution. For example, an additional relocatable building should not be put on a site if it:

- encroaches on the school's only or main oval or a reasonable amount of open and play space
- results in excessive removal of vegetation (although some tree removals may be required in isolated cases)
- impedes safe egress from the site in the case of emergencies
- would unreasonably impede the provision of and access to site services such as water and electrical infrastructure
- is not able to be accommodated by the physical constraints of a site, such as slopes or curves
- has not also considered the need for provision in a school network.

Every school is a great school. It is important to consider all schools when assessing whether the built capacity of one school needs to increase, and to manage demand across the entire system.

A number of options for additional accommodation are considered by the Department where they are needed. Where the built capacity of a school cannot be increased, the school's zone may need to be reassessed, and the Department will work with schools to ensure a solution for everyone.

## PLACEMENT POLICY

### What is the Placement Policy?

The Department's Placement Policy outlines the process by which places are offered at Victorian public schools. The 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.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### What is the Priority Order of Placement?

The Department's Placement Policy indicates that where there are insufficient places at a school for all students who seek entry, students are enrolled in the following priority order:

1. Students for whom the school is the designated neighbourhood school.
2. Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.
3. Where the Regional Director has restricted the enrolment, students who reside nearest the school.
4. Students seeking enrolment on specific curriculum grounds.
5. All other students in order of closeness of their home to the school.

6. In exceptional circumstances, compassionate grounds.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### **What changes have been made to the Department's Placement Policy?**

There are no changes to the Department's Placement Policy. The Department always seeks to ensure the policy is applied consistently.

Under the Placement Policy, schools are required to prioritise enrolment for students living in that school zone. This has not changed.

Parents who want to send their children to schools located outside of their school zone still have this choice. However, students enrolling at the school from within the school zone will have first priority. This is also current policy.

### **What are 'compassionate grounds' and how are they assessed?**

The Placement Policy recognises there are exceptional circumstances where a student may be unable to attend their designated neighbourhood school, or where on compassionate grounds, the student should be offered a place at another public school.

Applications for enrolment on compassionate grounds are considered by the enrolling school, per the Placement Policy.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### **Why was my child not permitted to attend their chosen school under 'compassionate grounds'?**

The Placement Policy recognises there are exceptional circumstances where a student may be unable to attend their designated neighbourhood school, or where on compassionate grounds, the student should be offered a place at another public school.

Applications for enrolment on compassionate grounds are considered by the enrolling school, per the Placement Policy.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### **My child has studied a specific subject, and wants to attend a specific school that offers this curriculum speciality– why have they not been permitted to under 'curriculum grounds', which is listed in the Placement Policy?**

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.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

## How do I make an appeal about my child's school placement?

In the first instance, parents or carers should lodge an appeal with the school at which the student has been unsuccessful in seeking a placement. If this appeal is unsuccessful and parents or carers are not satisfied that their appeal has been adequately considered, they are able to escalate the appeal to the relevant Regional Director.

Appeals to the Regional Director are considered using the criteria in the [Placement Policy](#)

To escalate an enrolment appeal, email your regional office. In the subject line include 'Enrolment Appeal' and the school name.

For contact details or if you're not sure which Region you are in, see: [Contact us](#)

## What if I'm an international student?

Fee-paying international students should make a new application at [International Student Program](#) or for enrolment into a government school, or apply directly to their school of choice if this is a non-government school.

For more information, see:

- [Victorian Government Schools International Student Program](#)
- [International Student Program](#)

## SIBLINGS/COUSINS/FRIENDS

### Can my younger child attend the school their older sibling attends even though we are no longer in the zone?

Under the Placement Policy, students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time are given high-level preference, after students who live within the school zone.

### My child's cousin or friend wants to attend the same school. What can I do?

If your child's cousin or a friend lives within the same school zone as your child, then they can attend as it is also their closest school. All students have a right to attend their designated neighbourhood school.

If your child's cousin or friend lives outside the zone of their preferred school then they can apply to enrol at that school. Students are placed according to the priority order of placement and subject to the school having sufficient capacity.

### My child/children live some of the time with their other parent, does this mean they have two designated neighbourhood schools?

If your child resides at multiple addresses, their 'permanent residence' is the address at which they spend the majority of their weekdays. If they spend an equal amount of time at two addresses, both addresses will be considered as their permanent address and they will be entitled to enrol in

the designated neighbourhood school for either address (or any other Victorian public school subject to entry criteria and capacity). The final choice of which school they ultimately attend rests with the parents/carers (or with the student if they are an adult or mature minor for the purpose of making enrolment decisions).

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### **Can my step-children attend the same school as my children?**

For the purposes of the Placement Policy a sibling can include step-siblings who live at the same permanent address. Under the Placement Policy, students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time are given high-level preference, after students who live within the school zone.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### **Will siblings be separated?**

This is not likely to occur. Under the Placement Policy, students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time are given high-level preference, after students who live within the school zone.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

## **GENERAL PROCESS**

### **My child wasn't able to get into a particular school in 2019, but now they could have because of a zone change. What can I do? Isn't this unfair?**

The Department continually assesses capacity, enrolment demand and population growth for all schools in Victoria. School zones are updated on a yearly basis to reflect the opening of new schools and changes in demand.

If your child missed out on a place at your preferred school last year, there are options available to you. The first step is to speak to the school about enrolment.

### **My child's primary school said that it was a feeder to the secondary school, and now my child is not able to attend. What can I do?**

The Department's Placement Policy outlines the priority order in which students are placed in a school. The [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) website clarifies designated neighbourhood schools, and the surrounding school choices. Children of school age have the right to be enrolled at their designated neighbourhood public school. They can attend a school of their choosing, but only if that school has the capacity to admit them.

For more information, see: [Placement Policy](#)

### **How do I find out my nearest kinder and/or TAFE?**

To locate kindergartens, see: [Find a service.](#)

To locate TAFE courses or campuses, see: [TAFE and training](#).

Please note that attendance at an early childhood facility or kindergarten located on a school site does not necessarily provide automatic enrolment in a school. Eligibility is determined by permanent place of address.

## TRANSPORT

### Why doesn't my school zone include an assessment of public transport?

In metropolitan areas your designated neighbourhood school is generally defined on a straight-line measurement from your house to the closest public school. This accounts for the fact that accessibility is generally better in Metropolitan areas with schools closer in distance, and better transport options. In rural areas, the measure is shortest practical route. This uses the shortest practical route by road, reflecting that your closest school may be more difficult to access due to the nature of the road network in your area.

For more information about transport, see:

- [Student transport](#)
- [School bus program for rural and regional Victoria](#)
- [School Bus Program](#)
- [Victorian Student Pass](#)
- [Travelling to school](#)

### Is there any assistance with travelling to school?

A range of transportation options are available to eligible young people, including the School Bus Program, travel to specialist schools, Students with Disabilities Transport Program and conveyance allowance.

For more information, see: [Travelling to School](#)

### Will my child still be able to catch the bus to school if zones are changing?

Yes. Where the confirmation/change of a school's enrolment zone would potentially alter a student's eligibility for transport assistance through the Department's transport programs, they will be granted an exemption to continue with their existing travel arrangements.

Any child – and their siblings – who currently catches a school bus will still be able to catch a school bus.

While school zones will continue to be reviewed annually, the Department will work with schools to identify active travel opportunities.

# For internal use only

## QUESTIONS FROM SCHOOLS

**Our school website has an old, now outdated map of the zone. How can we update the school website with the new map?**

Remove the old map from your website. You will be able to link from your school website directly to [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au). It is important that your school website information is the most up-to-date information.

For more information and support, see:

- [Managing Enrolments](#)
- [Enrolment 2020 Communications Support Pack for Principals](#)

**Why was my school's zone moved?**

Your school is among a small number of schools where zones have been updated for 2020 to adjust to new schools that will open in 2020, retain or amend a restricted zone, respond to overlaps or orphaned areas and otherwise reflect the standard methodology for creating a school zone.

If your school is affected, a senior member of Department staff has contacted you to talk through what has changed and why.

**Can I still offer specialist programs at my school?**

Schools can continue to have the flexibility to focus on particular learning areas depending on the needs and interests of their community. Students seeking enrolment on curriculum grounds can be considered after the school has first ensured that all students eligible under the first three criteria of the Placement Policy have been accommodated.

**What will happen to my existing specialist programs, such as for high ability students?**

Schools continue to have the flexibility to focus on particular learning areas depending on the needs and interests of their community. Students seeking enrolment on curriculum grounds can be considered after the school has first ensured that all students eligible under the first three criteria of the Placement Policy have been accommodated.

**My school is under enrolment pressure, should I have received a restricted zone?**

Both schools and the Department have a range of ways to support schools facing enrolment pressure. Restricted zones are only used in exceptional cases where other options are either impractical, or undesirable.

If you are concerned that your school is facing enrolment pressure, speak to your regional office on 1300 338 691.

## **I've found an error with my zone. How do I fix it?**

Your feedback is welcomed. Please call the VSBA Hotline on **1800 896 950** or email [vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au).

## **School bus routes and regions – will student access to buses be affected?**

The changes do not impact on school transport routes. Call 1800 896 950 or email [vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au) if you think your students have been affected.

Where the confirmation/change of a school's enrolment zone alters a student's eligibility for transport assistance through the Department's transport programs, they will be granted an exemption to continue with their existing travel arrangements.

Any child – and their siblings – who currently catches a school bus will still be able to catch a school bus.

## **How has capacity been determined?**

### Primary schools

The current built capacity of primary schools is calculated by identifying the number of classrooms (or equivalent general learning spaces) located on a school site and multiplying that figure by 25 (students per classroom or equivalent general learning space).

The calculation then confirms that the school has the required specialist learning spaces, such as art, music, library, and multi-purpose rooms, as per the school facilities schedules.

The Department has also addressed the 26/21 requirement by basing capacity on 25 per room, but then if individual schools have exceptional circumstances (and have lots of P-2 students) then they are given special consideration in the allocation of relocatable buildings.

### Secondary schools

The current built capacity for secondary schools allows for some transferability between general and specialist learning spaces. To enable delivery of the secondary school curriculum, more total spaces are provided per student than in primary schools.

As a result, the current built capacity of secondary schools is calculated by identifying the total number of classrooms (or equivalent general learning spaces) located on a school site and comparing them to the requirement outlined in the schedules.

### Special and special developmental schools

The current built capacity of special and special developmental schools is calculated in the same way as primary schools. The only exception to this is 12 students per classroom is used for special schools and eight students per classroom for special developmental schools.

### P-9 and P-12 Schools

For Prep/Foundation (Foundation) to Year 9 schools and Prep/Foundation (Foundation) to Year 12 Schools, the primary school current built capacity methodology is applied to primary learning spaces and the secondary school current built capacity methodology is applied to secondary learning spaces as classified in the VSBA's *Building and Room Report* (available on the [School Facilities Profile](#)).

### Other considerations

The VSBA measures the current built capacity of each school based on the information available in their asset information system, which includes schools' School Asset Management System (SAMS) Plans.

If a school has excess non-entitled specialist learning spaces, these may be counted towards current built capacity, provided that they are fit for purpose as a classroom or general learning space.

Per the School-funded Capital Projects Policy, buildings that are classified as entitled spaces for the purposes of Student Resource Package and other funding are counted towards a school's capacity.

Trade Training Centres (TTC), Australian Technical Colleges (ATC) and other non-entitled facilities provided from Commonwealth Government funding are not included in the current built capacity count.

In general, if schools need to verify their building information they should contact their Regional Office. The Regional Office will notify the VSBA if a review is required.

### **Will my enrolments decline?**

Every student still has the right to choose a school as long as that school has capacity. The provision of current built capacity data and school zone maps is not expected to result in the loss of any enrolment numbers.

### **The Department says my school has XX teaching spaces but I believe I'm supposed to have more places?**

The VSBA measures the current built capacity of each school based on the information available in its asset information system. This information is updated when VSBA is involved in projects that change the built form of a school. In addition, when schools make changes to their buildings or room use, they should provide updated school asset drawings to the VSBA.

If a school is advised of a current built capacity number that is not as they expect, they should contact VSBA. Capacity numbers can be discussed, clarified, and amended by calling **1800 896 950** or emailing [vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au).

### **What if I can't run my art classes?**

A school's current built capacity takes into account not only general learning spaces, but also specialist learning spaces, including art rooms.

By knowing your schools current built capacity, you will also know the number and type of learning spaces and/or square metres of space that are required for your school to deliver the curriculum based on a certain number of enrolled students.

### **What about English as an Additional Language (EAL) enrolments?**

English as an Additional Language (EAL) is a specialist program run at some schools. Eligibility to enrol in EAL is usually decided by schools, however a Victorian Curriculum and Assessment

Authority determination may be required in some instances. For more information, see: [EAL Provision for Newly Arrived Students](#).

If schools have any questions about EAL provision, they should contact their regional office.

**I hire out my school to third parties to get additional revenue. What about X activity on Saturdays?**

A school's built capacity is determined based on the Department's school facilities schedules. Separate to this, schools are encouraged to use their facilities to be part of their community. Schools can hire or license spaces in their school to the public. The information being provided on current built capacity data and school zone maps will not change those arrangements.

**The capacity number given to my schools is lower than my school's current enrolment. What does this mean?**

The VSBA is aware of a small number of schools that have a current known built capacity number that is lower than the current enrolment number for that school. In most cases, the VSBA is aware of the individual reasons for this apparent discrepancy. For example, there may be a capital works project occurring on site which will increase the school capacity, or a relocatable building is due to be delivered to the school and that will resolve the discrepancy.

If a school is advised of a current built capacity number that is not as they expect, they should contact the VSBA. Capacity numbers can be discussed, clarified, and amended by calling 1800 896 950 or emailing [vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au).

**What is an international student?**

An international student is an overseas national who comes to Australia on a visa that allows them to study in Australia. Schools are able to enrol international fee-paying students (students on a 500 'school sector' study visa) up to the limit of their international student enrolment cap, which must be agreed between the School Council, the Department and their respective Region. Fee-exempt international students or dependents (students on a 500 'higher education, ELICOS or VET sector' study visa) can enrol in their neighbourhood school.

For more information, visit [International Student Program](#).