

# 2021 Enrolments

## Frequently asked questions



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This document contains the most frequently asked questions about enrolments and school zones for Victorian government schools including specialist schools.

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

## LOCAL SCHOOL, WEBSITE, AND HELP

### How can I find my local school (designated neighbourhood Government school)?

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

### How can I help someone who cannot access the internet or speak English, find their designated neighbourhood Government school?

Those requiring translation assistance can call their regional office on: 1800 338 663. 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 Government school.

### Are all schools on the website?

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

### Which schools have zones?

All Government primary and secondary schools, including Prep/Foundation to Year 9 and multi-campus schools have a zone. This does not include schools with specific enrolment criteria including English Language Schools and Select Entry Schools.

School zones can be found on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

Specialist schools do not have a zone, but are included in [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) to support parents and carers to make informed decisions about school options.

### My child attends an early childhood or kindergarten on school grounds. Are they eligible to enrol at the school?

Attendance at an early childhood facility or kindergarten located on a school site does not provide automatic enrolment in a school.

Eligibility is determined by your permanent place of address and school zone.

Parents and carers with children living outside a school's zone still have the choice to request enrolment at their preferred government school. Subject to school capacity, the enrolment can be accepted.



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## **My child is in primary school but I want to know my local secondary school, can I find this on the [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)?**

Yes. All Government schools, including primary, secondary and specialist schools, can be found on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au).

Type in your address and click on the 'Secondary schools' tab to find your current secondary school zone.

## **Why does find [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) show school zones for 2020 and 2021?**

The Department reviews school zones annually.

Zones may be adjusted to reflect new schools, changing provision at existing schools or to address changing demand and demographics of the local population. Most zones do not change.

No student currently enrolled in a school is required to change schools as a result of a zone change in 2021.

Findmyschool.vic.gov.au shows the school zones for enrolment in the current academic year (2020) and the school zones for enrolment in the following academic year (2021).

Parents and carers considering enrolling their children in government schools in 2020 or 2021 can use [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) to identify their designated neighbourhood Government school or closest specialist school options from the residential address they provide.

## **Who can I contact if I need more information about school zones or enrolments?**

Call the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) hotline on 1800 896 950 or email us at [vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsba@edumail.vic.gov.au). Your enquiry will be directed appropriately.

Free translation services are also available. Call your regional office on: 1800 338 663.

## **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](#)

## **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: <http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/School-Directory-Search>

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>

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# SCHOOL ZONES

## FINDMYSCHOOL.VIC.GOV.AU, DESIGNATED LOCAL SCHOOL AND CHANGES FOR 2021

### What is a designated neighbourhood Government school?

Except in certain circumstances, in Victoria, all children of compulsory school age have a statutory entitlement to be enrolled at their designated neighbourhood Government school. Designated neighbourhood Government schools are generally the government school closest in 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 Government school is usually the nearest government 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

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

Your child or children are guaranteed the right to enrol at 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."

### How are school zones defined?

For children residing in metropolitan areas, and in Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong, the designated neighbourhood Government school is usually the nearest government 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 works closely with schools to address the changing demographics of the local population.

There are some exceptions for defining zones (e.g. restricted zones to manage enrolments). This is at the discretion of the Minister and/or Regional Director.

### 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.

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

No. If your child is already enrolled at a school, they retain their existing enrolment.

## **Why has my school zone changed between 2020 and 2021?**

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 demographics of the local population.

Most zones do not change. Changes do not affect children who are already enrolled in a government school.

Individual schools that have had zone changes have been notified by the Department.

## **If my school zone is changing between this year and next year, can I enrol my child at either school?**

No. Your child has the right of enrolment at their designated neighbourhood Government school. School zones define an area's designated neighbourhood Government school for the year in which school enrolment is sought.

However, you can apply to enrol your child at any government school that is not your designated neighbourhood Government school subject to the school's capacity. The school may accept your enrolment subject to its capacity and in accordance with the Department's [Placement Policy](#).

## **Why is my designated neighbourhood Government school not in my suburb?**

School zones are not defined by suburban boundaries.

Designated neighbourhood Government schools are usually the nearest school to your home address. In metropolitan areas, and in Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong, this is defined on a straight-line measurement from your house to the closest government school. In regional areas, your designated neighbourhood Government school is measured by the shortest practicable route.

## **Why does [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) not precisely locate my residential address?**

In rare circumstances, the search result may not accurately identify the property address.

In these cases, the property boundary labelled with the street number shown in [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) should be used to determine the school zones in which the property is located.



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## Do I have a right to enrol at the next closest school as shown on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)?

You have a right of enrolment at your designated neighbourhood Government school. This is the school within your zone.

Parents and carers with children living outside a school's zone still have the choice to request enrolment at their preferred government school.

Subject to school capacity, the enrolment can be accepted in accordance with the [Placement Policy](#).

## Why does Google maps tell me my nearest school is different to that shown on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)?

In metropolitan areas, and in Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong, your nearest school is measured in a straight-line from your house to the closest government school.

In regional areas, your designated neighbourhood Government school is measured by the shortest practicable route.

The location point for all government schools is taken from the Department's State Register. This location may be different from what is shown in other web maps such as Google.

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

School zones are determined based on proximity. This 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 Government school, or to enrol at another school if there is sufficient accommodation.

In some instances, two school zones will cut across an individual property. If this is the case, then the child residing at the property has the right to attend either school.

## Why is the zone on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) different to other Victorian or Melbourne school websites (example Melbourne school zones)?

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

## What is the Department doing to notify parents living in areas where the school zone has changed?

The Department works with school communities to ensure information and accurate advice is provided about school zones. School zones are reviewed on an annual basis, however changes are minimal.

Any changes to school zones do not affect children who are already enrolled at the school.

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

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

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

The Government's investment in new schools and upgrades to existing schools is enabling the Department to reduce the number of restricted zones. This means greater choice for parents who want to send their children to schools within those areas.

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

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

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

### **How do you measure 'shortest practical route'?**

'Shortest practical route' 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 Government school is generally defined on a straight-line measurement from your house to the closest government 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 Government 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 Government school. Why doesn't the zone stop 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 designated neighbourhood Government school.

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## Why doesn't my unit address appear on the [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)?

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 designated neighbourhood Government 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](#) 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 Government 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 Government school.

## Why do I have a lake or an airport in my zone?

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 Government 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 Government 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 Government 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 Government 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.

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

For a small number of schools facing high demand, it may be necessary to put in place a restricted zone. This is 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.

Applying a standard methodology for school zones is important, as each school zone links with its neighbouring school zone to provide contiguous zones across the whole of Victoria. This helps to meet enrolment demand throughout the state.

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

If the school is your designated neighbourhood Government school, then your child has a right to enrol at that school and is guaranteed a place.

You may choose to apply for your child to attend another school. The school will 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. No student currently enrolled in a school will be required to change schools.

School zones are updated regularly and take into consideration feedback from school leaders and community perceptions.

## 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 designated neighbourhood Government 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 designated neighbourhood Government schools and have a standard zone.

## My child's designated neighbourhood Government 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 Government 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, subject to their school's capacity.

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

There are a small number of government 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 designated neighbourhood 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](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) website, my address is showing both a secondary and senior secondary for my address, which one is my designated neighbourhood Government 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 Government 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 Government 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](https://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 government school, and the school can accept the enrolment subject to 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)

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### 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 [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)



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# SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

## ELIGIBILITY, CATEGORIES AND TRANSPORT

### What is a specialist school?

Victorian government specialist schools specialise in teaching a particular subject area or group of students, including children with disability.

Specialist schools for children with disability cater for school aged students who meet the school's enrolment criteria.

It is important to remember that all children have the right to attend their designated neighbourhood Government school and may enrol at any other Victorian government school subject to capacity and specific enrolment criteria. All schools must make reasonable adjustments to make sure a student with disability has the same learning opportunities as children without disability. Learn more about [reasonable adjustments](#).

You can find information about all government schools and their contact details at [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### 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 Government schools under the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#) (ETRA).

Specialist schools do have Designated Transport Areas (DTAs). DTAs are geographic areas established around government specialist or integrated schools to ensure the efficient provision of transport services under the Students with Disabilities Transport Program. Using the search function on [Getting to and from school for students with disability](#), you can enter your address to find which specialist school DTAs you live in.

If you are considering enrolment at a specialist school, you can search for specialist schools on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### How do I find out if my child is eligible to attend a specialist school?

Victorian government specialist schools provide specialist and intensive support in a dedicated setting for students with disability and additional learning and support needs.

[Findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) allows families to see all specialist schools within their residential area, through a specialist school filter, available on the site. Families can access school names and contact details at [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) and can then contact any school to find out specific enrolment criteria. Alternatively, families can contact their [Department of Education and Training regional office](#) who can assist families with information about schools their child is eligible to attend.

To see all government schools in Victoria, including specialist schools across the state, please visit [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

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## How do I find my nearest specialist school?

Visit [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au), type in your home address and click on the 'Specialist' schools tab to find your five nearest specialist schools, listed by order of proximity to your home address.

## The specialist school search results include each school's specialisation. What does this mean?

Specialist school programs are designed to meet the education and support needs of students with specific disabilities and are categorised according to the type of disability they cater for. These school categories are called 'specialisations' on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au).

For more information on the specialisations (specialist school category), click on the information icon next to each specialisation on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au). It is important to note that this is only a guide. It is recommended that you contact the school to discuss your child's eligibility.

## How do I enrol my child in a specialist school that specialises in teaching children with a disability?

In Victoria, students with disability can attend their designated neighbourhood Government school or other school of choice subject to capacity and any specific enrolment criteria and may also be able to apply to attend a specialist school. These school settings specialise in teaching children with an intellectual disability, autism, physical disabilities or who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Specialist schools have specific enrolment criteria that determine a student's eligibility. To learn more about a specialist school's enrolment criteria and for assistance in identifying which government schools would best meet the needs of your child, you can contact schools directly or [contact the relevant Region](#). You can find all of Victoria's specialist schools and their contact details on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

Enrolling a child with disability in a specialist school is a decision for the child's parents made in consultation with school and Department staff.

## Can I get help with transporting my child to a specialist school?

If you enrol your child in a specialist school, you may be able to get support with transport to and from school.

The Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP) provides help with travel and transport for eligible students attending specialist and integrated schools. To meet the criteria for transport help, a student must live in the Designated Transport Area of their specialist school. Designated Transport Areas (DTAs) are geographic areas established around government specialist or integrated schools to ensure the efficient provision of transport services under the SDTP. Using the search function on [Getting to and from school for students with disability](#), you can enter your address to find which specialist school DTAs you live in.

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# ENROLMENT IN A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

## 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](#) and [Starting school for children with additional needs](#)

If you require further information, contact your local school.

### What are the new schools opening in 2021?

The interim names of the 14 new schools opening in 2021 are:

- Cranbourne West Secondary School
- Docklands Primary School
- Edgars Creek Primary School
- Eynesbury Station Primary School
- Footscray High School Pilgrim Year 7-9 Campus
- Greenvale North West Primary School
- Merrifield West Primary School
- Oberon High School
- Pakenham Henry Road Secondary School
- Rockbank North Primary School
- Thoroughbred Primary School
- Timbertop (Officer North West) Primary School
- Truganina South East Primary School
- Wollahra 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)

### How do I enrol at a new school opening in 2021?

Principals will be appointed by the Department approximately six months prior to the school commencing Term 1, 2021. Details on how to enrol at the new school will be provided once the Principal is appointed.

For questions about a new school, call your regional office on: 1800 338 663 or the VSBA hotline on 1800 896 950.

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

The relevant legislation that guides every Victorian child's right to enrol at a designated neighbourhood Government school is the [\*Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)\*](#).

The Department's Placement Policy provides a framework for designated neighbourhood Government schools to make offers of enrolment to students. It does not apply to specialist schools.

The Placement Policy's 'priority order of placement' has been amended. This updated policy takes effect from day 1, Term 2, 2020 and will apply to all enrolments for the 2021 school year and transfers from day 1, Term 2, 2020.

The Placement Policy continues to prioritise children and young people living within the school zone and the siblings of students already attending the school. This has not changed.

The Placement Policy now clarifies that exceptional circumstances, compassionate grounds is an overarching consideration for schools to use when they are assessing enrolments. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by individual schools and only in exceptional circumstances.

Parents and carers with children living outside a school's zone still have the choice to request enrolment at their preferred government school. Subject to the school's capacity, the enrolment can be accepted.

This is consistent with current legislation and policy. The Department always seeks to ensure the policy is applied consistently across the state.

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

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

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

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

If a school has some capacity, but not enough to fit all enrolment requests from outside their zone, the school will use the Placement Policy to determine enrolments using the priority order of placement.

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

## My child has a disability. Can my I still enrol them in a designated neighbourhood Government school?

Every child has the right to enrol at their designated neighbourhood Government school. Reasonable adjustments are made for students with disability.

For more information, see:

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- [Disability rights and responsibilities](#)
- [Starting school for children with additional needs](#)
- [Reasonable adjustments](#)

## **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? What evidence is acceptable?**

Multiple forms of identification may be required to ensure that your child lives within the school zone, including original or certified copies of rental agreements, 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](#).

## **How is the Department/the government responding to population growth and the need for more schools?**

The Victorian Government is preparing for the future by delivering the biggest pipeline of major projects in our state's history – including delivering 100 new schools between 2019 and 2026.

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

Every Victorian Government 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 Government school.



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## PLACEMENT POLICY

### What is the Placement Policy?

The Department's Placement Policy outlines the process by which places are offered at Victorian government schools. The policy embeds the legal entitlement for students to enrol at their designated neighbourhood Government school, and to enrol at another school if there is sufficient accommodation.

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

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

The Placement Policy's 'priority order of placement' has been amended for the 2021 school year. Changes to the policy take effect from day 1, Term 2, 2020. This will have relevance to all mid-year transfers during 2020.

The Placement Policy continues to prioritise children and young people living within the school zone and the siblings of students already attending the school. This has not changed.

Guidance material now makes it clear that a sibling relationship is defined to reflect modern family living arrangements. This includes younger and older siblings. A sibling can be defined to broadly include step-siblings residing together at the same permanent address and students residing together at the same permanent address as part of statutory out-of-home care arrangements, including foster care, kinship care and permanent care.

Enrolment on sibling grounds may also be considered for students permanently residing together in the one residence as part of multiple family cohabitation. Students seeking enrolment on sibling grounds must be attending the school at the same time.

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

Parents and carers with children living outside a school's zone still have the choice to request enrolment at their preferred government school. If the school has sufficient capacity, the enrolment can be accepted.

This is consistent with current legislation and policy. The Department always seeks to ensure the policy is applied consistently across the state.

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

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

In exceptional circumstances, compassionate grounds are where a student is unable to enrol at their designated neighbourhood Government school, or, is not in the student's best interest to enrol at their designated neighbourhood Government school.

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Parents and carers must be able to clearly demonstrate the exceptional circumstances which they believe make an enrolment at the designated neighbourhood Government school unsuitable for their child (for example, family violence or specific wellbeing, safety, physical health and/or mental health concerns).

Each application will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and additional information may be required to support the application.

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

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

Schools are not required to accept 'compassionate grounds' enrolments. Compassionate ground enrolments are at the discretion of the school and regions. Each application should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Parents and carers have the right to appeal a non-placement decision with the school at which the student has been unsuccessful in seeking a placement and the Department's Regional Office.

### **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 the 'curriculum grounds' listed in the Placement Policy?**

In years Prep to 10, all Victorian government schools offer the Victorian Curriculum as set by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Regardless of which government school they choose, parents can be confident that their child will learn the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship.

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.

### **Can secondary schools make 'early offers' for Year 7 placement on curriculum grounds?**

No. Secondary schools are not able to make Year 7 placement offers, including those offers based on curriculum grounds before the state-wide release of Year 7 placement offers in August each year.

If you are concerned that a government school is making Year 7 placement offers that are not in accordance with Year 6 to Year 7 state-wide transition timeline, contact your regional office. See: [Contact us](#)

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

In the first instance, lodge a written appeal with the school at which the student has been unsuccessful in seeking a placement.

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Your appeal will be considered the school's placement committee and/or Principal. If this appeal is unsuccessful and you are not satisfied that the appeal has been adequately considered, it can be escalated to the relevant Regional Director.

Appeals to the Regional Director are considered using the criteria in the Placement Policy and in exceptional circumstances, compassionate grounds.

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

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 at a government school, or apply directly to their school of choice if this is a non-government (Catholic or independent) 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?

Yes, there is an expectation that the child will be enrolled if all students who live within the designated neighbourhood Government school zone have been catered for and the school has sufficient capacity.

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 designated neighbourhood Government school. All students have a right to attend their designated neighbourhood Government 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.



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## My child/children live some of the time with their other parent, does this mean they have two designated neighbourhood Government 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 at the designated neighbourhood Government school for either address (or any other Victorian government 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).

## Can my step-children attend the same school as my children if they live together at the same permanent address?

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

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

## Will siblings be separated?

This is not likely to occur. Under the Placement Policy, the sibling criterion applies to placement decisions at all year levels, from Prep/Foundation to Year 12. 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.



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# CAPACITY

## BUILT CAPACITY, SITE CAPACITY AND LIMITATIONS

### 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 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.

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## 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)

## 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 Government school. They can attend an alternative government 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

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designated neighbourhood Government 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 government schools?**

Victorian students will always have a place at their designated neighbourhood Government school. Students can also choose to attend any other Victorian government 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 Government 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

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- 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.



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# TRANSPORT

## OPTIONS FOR TRANSPORT, ACCESSING TRANSPORT AND INFORMATION

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

In metropolitan areas your designated neighbourhood Government school is generally defined on a straight-line measurement from your house to the closest government 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. If a change to 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.

### What is a Designated Transport Area?

The Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP) provides help with travel and transport for eligible students attending specialist and integrated schools. To meet the criteria for transport help, a student must live in the Designated Transport Area of their specialist school. Designated

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Transport Areas (DTAs) are geographic areas established around government specialist or integrated schools to ensure the efficient provision of transport services under the SDTP.

DTAs are not school zones. Parents/guardians may choose to enrol their child at any specialist school provided the child is eligible for enrolment and there is sufficient capacity at the school. However, only students residing in the DTA of the specialist school they attend are eligible for transport assistance under the SDTP.

For more information, see: [Getting to and from school for students with a disability](#)

## How are Designated Transport Areas defined?

Designated Transport Areas (DTAs) are designed to ensure that bus travel times do not exceed 120 minutes in either direction for any student. DTAs are established or amended via a process overseen by the Student Transport Unit of the Department of Education and Training.

## Which schools have Designated Transport Areas?

Most specialist schools have Designated Transport Areas (DTAs). There are a small number of specialist schools that do not have DTAs, generally because they are state-wide providers. This includes the deaf education schools. Students attending these schools may still be eligible for transport assistance under the Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP). Families can contact these schools directly for information about student transport assistance.

## How can I find out if my address is in the Designated Transport Area for a specialist school?

Using the new search function on the [Getting to and from school for students with a disability page](#) of the Department's website, families can enter their address to find which specialist school DTAs they live in.

Clicking on any result will show a map of the full DTA for that school. This will help families determine if they are eligible for help with transporting their child to and from the school. Families can also contact the school directly for information about its DTA.

For more information, see: [Getting to and from school for students with a disability \(including DTA search function\)](#)

## Has the Designated Transport Area for my child's specialist school changed?

Some minor adjustments have been made on a small number of Designated Transport Areas to remove overlap or align gaps. This has no material impact on schools or students. There are no changes to transport support as a result of these minor adjustments.



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## If the Designated Transport Area (DTA) search function says I live in the DTA for a particular school, does this mean my child can enrol at this school?

DTAs are not school enrolment zones. Specialist schools have enrolment criteria that determine a student's eligibility. To learn more about a specialist school's enrolment criteria, you are encouraged to contact the school directly or [contact the relevant Region](#).

Parents/guardians may choose to enrol their child at any specialist or designated neighbourhood Government school provided the child is eligible for enrolment and there is sufficient capacity at the school. You can find all of Victoria's government schools on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

## If the Designated Transport Area (DTA) search function says I live in the DTA for a particular school, does this mean my child is eligible for transport assistance?

The DTA search function allows families to find which specialist school DTAs they live in. Residing in the DTA of the specialist school is only one of the eligibility criteria for the Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP). In addition, to be eligible for the SDTP, your child must:

- meet the criteria for the [Program for Students with Disabilities](#);
- be enrolled at the school for three or more days each week; and
- be of school age and reside in Victoria.

## The Designated Transport Area (DTA) search function says my address is in the DTA for multiple specialist schools. What does this mean?

If your address is within the DTA for multiple specialist schools, your child may be eligible for transport assistance if you choose to enrol your child at one of these schools. To learn more about a specialist school's enrolment criteria, you are encouraged to contact the school directly or [contact the relevant Region](#).

You can find all of Victoria's government specialist schools and their contact details on [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

## How do I apply for transport assistance to a specialist school?

When enrolling your child at a specialist school, please speak with the school regarding access to transport assistance. The school will provide the relevant information and forms and may assist in completing your application.

## When do Designated Transport Areas get updated?

Designated Transport Areas (DTAs) are reviewed if:

- a new specialist school nearby is established,
- an existing school is closed or re-located,

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- the principal of a specialist school or the Department requests a review, or change to, a school's DTA,
- the demographics of an area change significantly.

DTAs are established or amended via a process overseen by the Student Transport Unit of the Department.

### **Are Designated Transport Areas applied differently in metropolitan and regional areas?**

No, Designated Transport Areas (DTAs) are defined to ensure efficient transport services in both metropolitan and regional areas.

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