

Policy

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

Before admitting a student, schools must:

- **for students transferring from another Victorian government school**, import student information using CASES21; and provide parents with the Student Enrolment Information Form for validation of student information
- **for students who are new to the government system**, obtain a completed enrolment form. For all students, schools must:
 - collect relevant admission information
 - provide a privacy notice to the enrolling parent explaining the use to be made of enrolment information. For sample notices see: Privacy within [Department resources](#)
 - collect and record an Immunisation History Statement - primary students. For admission, all applicants must be:
 - an Australian citizen, or a student with relevant specified visas or [Immicard](#) see : [International Student Program](#)
 - deemed eligible and approved for enrolment by the principal or relevant regional director. On admission schools consider the following in determining a student's school readiness:
 - entry assessment from kindergarten♣
 - informal observations to assess development, literacy and numeracy, and academic, social and emotional needs.

Age eligibility and approval requirements

Compulsory school age

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, schooling is compulsory for students aged between 6 and 17 years unless an exemption from attendance has been granted. For exemption categories and process see:

[Attendance](#)

This applies to all schools including mainstream, specialist, and government English language schools or centres.

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

- the person falls within an exception to the age eligibility requirements set out in the age regulations; or
- the person is granted an exemption from the age regulations.

What is the difference between an exception and an exemption?

A person who falls within an exception automatically meets the age eligibility requirements to enrol in or attend a government school. If the principal is satisfied that the person meets the criteria for the exception, the principal cannot refuse to enrol the person on the basis of their age and the person will not be required to obtain an exemption from the Minister or their delegate.

A person who does not fall within an exception may be eligible to apply for an exemption. Exemptions are granted at the discretion of the Minister, or Minister's delegate (which currently include Regional Directors). There is no automatic eligibility to enrol in or attend a government school.

Principal responsibility

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

- individuals who are of compulsory school age, i.e. those aged between 6 and 17 years; and
 - individuals who fall within an exception under the Regulations.
- Individuals who fall outside of the compulsory school age may attend school only if they fall within an exception under the Regulations or are granted an exemption. There are exceptions for:♣
- children who are at least 5 years of age by 30 April of the year of enrolment, and are enrolling in a course of primary education; and
 - certain categories of students aged 18 or over who are enrolling in or completing an accredited senior secondary course.

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

Exceptions to the minimum age requirements

A child who is aged less than 5 years old at 30 April of the year of enrolment may enrol in or attend a government school for the purposes of attending:♣

- short-term prep transition programs in primary schools that prepare pre-schoolers for primary school
 - Early Education Programs in special developmental schools (as approved by the Minister).
- A child who is aged five years or over by 30 April of the year of enrolment may enrol in or attend a government school if they are enrolling in or attending a:

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

Exceptions to the maximum age requirements

Exceptions apply to individuals who:

- are turning 18 during the year of enrolment, if they are enrolling solely in an accredited senior secondary course, for example Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or International Baccalaureate (IB)♣
- are turning 19 during the year of enrolment, if they are enrolling solely for the purpose of completing an accredited senior secondary course in that year, i.e. they are expected to successfully complete their course in the year of enrolment based on current assessment information and course plan
- are enrolling or attending an English language government school or centre, if the student is seeking to continue their enrolment in the year in which they turn 18 years of age and in the following year, solely for the purpose of completing the program
- will turn 20 years of age during the year of enrolment, and satisfy each of the following criteria:
 - is enrolled at a government school situated outside the metropolitan area solely for the purpose of completing an accredited senior secondary course in that year; and
 - there is no TAFE institute or other registered education or training organisation (other than another government school) within 50 kilometres of the school in which the person is seeking to enrol that is offering an accredited senior secondary education course through a distance education program that the person is eligible to enrol in

Educational programs not subject to the age requirements

The age requirements set out in the Regulations do not apply to individuals who will attend programs conducted at a government school:

- outside school hours
- by Registered Training Organisations or other bodies that are separate from the school.

Exemptions from the age requirements

The Minister or (if the Minister has delegated power) a Regional Director may grant an individual an exemption from the minimum and maximum age regulations in limited circumstances.

An individual is eligible to apply for an exemption if they meet the criteria set out below. Eligibility does not guarantee that an exemption will be granted.

Exemptions from the minimum and maximum age requirements are the exception rather than the norm. This should be taken into account when considering enrolment decisions, such as beginning school, transitioning from primary to secondary school and planning for completing school or moving to other available settings.

Schools may not always be the most appropriate place for some children or young people.

There are a range of age appropriate settings available for children and young people, whether they may be early childhood services and settings or adult education options.

It is important that when considering applications for exemption from the age requirements a balance needs to be struck between the best interests of the child or young person and that of other students. This balance must be found for individual cases and circumstances, while also ensuring that the exemption process is consistently and fairly applied.

The following arrangements apply to enrolments that can be assessed and endorsed by principals but require relevant regional director approval.

Early age entry

Where a student is younger than 5 years of age on 30 April in the year of enrolment and does not meet one of the exceptions listed above, an exemption from the minimum age requirements is required.

Early age entry or exemption from the minimum age requirements must be:

- requested in writing to the school by their parent/carers
- considered by the principal, who must make a written recommendation for consideration by the regional director
- forwarded to the relevant regional director, with all supporting documentation attached, via email
- assessed by the regional director, who must consider eligibility, the principal's recommendation and all other relevant circumstances, and make a decision regarding the application
- approved or not approved in writing by the relevant regional director. The regional office should notify both the parent and school of the decision in a timely manner.

To be eligible for an exemption from the minimum age requirements a child must meet both of the following criteria:

- the child possesses suitable academic ability; and
- it is in the child's best interests to be enrolled at or attend a government school.

Applications that do not address the requirements for **both** criteria will not be eligible for approval.

To understand how the Department applies the eligibility criteria for an exemption from minimum age requirements, the following guidance is provided.

Suitable academic ability

The Department's preferred evidence of suitable academic ability is:

- a report from a psychologist confirming that the child has been assessed as ≥ 130 Full Scale IQ (2 standard deviations, or more above the mean), preferably using the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition, Australian and New Zealand (WPPSI-IV A&NZ), including the 10 sub-tests required to calculate the Full Scale score and Primary Index Scales, conducted after the child has attained the age of 4 years; or:
- where a child is transferring from a school in another state or country after more than one term of enrolment and attendance, evidence from that school confirming that the child has suitable academic ability to attend school.

Where a child does not fall into one of the above categories, the Department may also consider other evidence of suitable academic ability that:

- is provided by an authoritative independent source(s) – for example, a child psychologist registered with the Psychology Board of Australia, with experience in educational and developmental psychology; and
- clearly demonstrates that the child has suitable academic ability to attend school.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain all relevant cognitive assessment/s and/or other reports and evidence to support their child's application.

Applications based solely on parental observations will not be accepted.

Best interests

Early entry to school is generally not considered to be in the best interests of a child unless the child is:

- at least 4 years 6 months of age on or before 30 April in the year of school commencement; and
- considered at risk of long term educational disadvantage by a childcare, kindergarten, allied health or other relevant professional if they do not commence at school.

To apply for a minimum age exemption for early entry to school, use the:  [Minimum Age Exemption - Early Entry to School Application \(docx - 51.45kb\)](#) form.

Maximum age exemption

A student aged over 18 years of age at any time during the year of enrolment who does not meet one of the exceptions listed above may only enrol in or attend a government school if they are granted an exemption from the age requirements.

Exemption from the maximum age requirements must be:

- requested in writing to the school by the young person or their parent/carer
- considered by the principal, who must make a written recommendation for consideration by the regional director
- forwarded to the relevant regional director, with all supporting documentation attached, via email
- assessed by the regional director, who must consider eligibility, the principal's recommendation and all other relevant circumstances, and make a decision regarding the application
- approved or not approved in writing by the relevant regional director. The regional office should notify both the parent and school of the decision in a timely manner.

A student is eligible for an exemption from the maximum age requirements if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- the person will be under 20 years of age on 31 December in the year the person completes year 10 **and** is unable to complete year 10 before they turn 18 **and** one or more of the following special circumstances exist for that person:
 - pregnancy;
 - parental or primary carer responsibilities;

- serious illness or injury;
- a period of imprisonment.
- the person is aged between 18 and 21 and the Minister is satisfied of one or more of the following:
- the exemption will enable the person to participate in a specific course or program approved by the Minister
- the exemption will enable the person to transfer from an English language government school or centre into year 10 at a government school
- it would be unreasonable in the circumstances not to grant the exemption
- the person is seeking to enrol in an English language government school or centre, and the Minister considers it in the person's best interest to be enrolled at or to attend that educational setting.

To apply for a maximum age exemption use the [Maximum Age Exemption Application](#) form. It is Department policy that an exemption from the maximum age requirements will generally not be granted unless the person:

- has previously been enrolled in and attended the school in the last 12 months
- is expected to complete school in the exemption period based on their current or proposed course information and assessment; or
- has a clear transition plan that has been agreed to by the young person and/or their parent/carer; and
- poses no or minimal risks to other students through their attendance at the school;
- has no other age-appropriate setting or option available for an equivalent course of study i.e. no other age appropriate setting within 50 kilometres of the student's home and online study is inappropriate.

When considering an application for exemption from the age requirements and gathering the supporting documentation, Principals should consider the following:

- **best interests** - includes the child or young person's academic, social and emotional needs, aspirations and abilities
- **age-appropriate settings or options** - taking into consideration the student's aspirations, abilities and needs, such as relevant adult education settings
- **online study** - may be inappropriate if the student does not have reliable access to the required technologies to undertake the course, will not meet the prerequisite requirements for enrolment, and/or does not possess the required English language proficiency

Please note:

- **accredited senior secondary course** - includes Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or International Baccalaureate (IB)
- **complete school** - means that if the student successfully completes the requirements of their current enrolment/course plan/units in which they are enrolled, they will have successfully completed the requirements of the accredited senior secondary course in which they are enrolled, and they are expected to do so in the year of enrolment.

Information required for enrolment

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

- date of birth (note: evidence of date of birth can be official, such as a birth certificate or where this is not able to be produced, unofficial, such as a doctor's note attesting to a child's age).
- names and addresses of the student and enrolling parent or carer
- details of medical and other conditions that may require special consideration
- emergency telephone numbers, including a nominated doctor
- an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register

- the name of the previous school and the student's current year level, where students transfer from another school. Note: For students transferring from another Victorian government school, data can be imported using CASES21 (mandatory from July 2017) see

Transfers

The table below outlines further information required for admission.

Further Requirements	Description
Consent	<p>The signature of: student, if they are over 15 and living independently parent as defined in the Family Law Act 1975 Note: In the absence of a current court order, each parent of a child who is not 18 has equal parental responsibility. both parents for parents who are separated, or a copy of the court order with any impact on the relationship between the family and the school an informal carer, with a statutory declaration. Carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - may be a relative or other carer - have day-to-day care of the student with the student regularly living with them - may provide any other consent required e.g. excursions. <p>Notes for informal carer: statutory declarations apply for 12 months the wishes of a parent prevail in the event of a dispute between a parent legally responsible for a student and an informal carer. Note: Secondary students may complete parts of the form and co-sign.</p> <p>Where consent is disputed When (parent) consent is disputed principals and staff should: avoid becoming involved avoid favouring one parent act in accordance at all times with the best interests of the student and the school community act sensitively and realise that a resolution, satisfactory to both parents, may not be possible. For more information on enrolment where there is disputed parental consent, see: Decision Making Responsibilities for Students</p>
Student identification and name	<p>For applicants who are: Australian-born, a birth certificate or equivalent non-Australian-born, a passport or travel document such as a visa or Immicard.</p>
Immunisation History Statements - primary students	<p>Schools are required to: request that parents provide them with an Immunisation History Statement for their child from the Australian Immunisation Register take a copy of all Immunisation History Statements and record information on the immunisation status of each enrolled child. Parents or carers must provide an Immunisation History Statement for their child from the Australian Immunisation Register to the school regardless of whether the child is or is not immunised.</p>

Further Requirements	Description
	<p>Note: Homeopathic immunisation is not a recognised form of immunisation, and therefore cannot be listed on an immunisation status certificate.</p> <p>Prospective students will not be prevented from enrolling in primary school if they have not been immunised.</p> <p>Collecting Immunisation History Statements will assist health authorities in protecting students in the event of a vaccine-preventable disease occurrence at the school. An unvaccinated student may be excluded from school for a period of time.</p> <p>Parents or carers of secondary student applicants are not required to provide an immunisation status certificate.</p> <p>For more information on: immunisation in primary and secondary schools, see: Immunisation maintaining and using immunisation records see: Enrolment the Department of Health's fact sheet, Starting Primary School</p>

Incomplete student information

This table outlines the principal's options when student information is incomplete.

The principal may	provided that the principal
defer admission of a student for up to 5 days	requests that the parent or carer provide the missing information advises the parent or carer they are legally responsible for ensuring a child of school age attends school.
conditionally enrol the student: if the information is not provided after 5 days and further delay in enrolling the student is likely to affect the student's education and wellbeing.	records the conditions; and advises the parents or carers in writing that the enrolment is conditional upon providing the missing information and will only be formally completed when these conditions are met.

Related policies

- [Attendance](#)
- [Decision Making Responsibilities for Students](#)
- [Enrolment](#)
- [Immunisation](#)
- [International Student Program](#)
- [Placement](#)
- [Transfers.](#)

Related legislation

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017
- Family Law Act 1975
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

Department resources

- [Privacy: Information for Schools](#) (staff access only)
- [Immicards](#) Schools Bulletin
- [Register of Delegations and Authorisations](#) for current delegations.

Other resources

For more information see:

- [Better Health Channel](#): a Department of Human resource for immunisation advice
- [Starting Primary School?](#): a Department of Health primary school immunisation fact sheet.