



ENROLMENT POLICY

BACKGROUND

Vermont South Special School provides educational programs for students with disability and high needs who have an intellectual disability.

By law in Victoria all children from the age of 6 up until they turn 17 years must be enrolled at a registered school or registered for home schooling unless they have a reasonable excuse. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with a comprehensive educational program and access to support networks. It also helps to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and active participation in their local community.

Specialist schools, including Vermont South Special School, have been established to cater for the specific educational needs of students with a disability or with additional needs. Under State and Federal discrimination law, specialist schools are permitted to set specific enrolment criteria and to not enrol students who do not meet these criteria.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the enrolment criteria for students seeking enrolment at Vermont South Special School and the evidence required to support applications for enrolment.

It is intended to provide clarity for the local community on the enrolment criteria and ensure a smooth and supported transition for enrolling students.

Scope

Enrolment at Vermont South Special School is based on a student's disability and associated educational needs. Subject to capacity, student intake may be at any stage of the year, providing the student is of school age and satisfies the eligibility criteria. All applications for enrolment at Vermont South Special School require regional approval.

ENROLMENT CRITERIA

The following enrolment criteria have been specified and approved by the Regional Director, North East Victoria Region (as the Minister's delegate) under section 2.2.16(b) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic). The enrolment criteria have been determined based on the identified education needs of students in the community. A student's enrolment will be reviewed periodically in line with their needs.

Students seeking to enrol into Vermont South Special School must have a diagnosis of Intellectual Disability from a registered psychologist evidenced by:

- a. Sub-average general intellectual functioning which is demonstrated by a full-scale score of between 50 and 70 on a standardised individual test of general intelligence, **and**
- b. Significant deficits in adaptive behaviour established by a composite score of between 50 and 70 on an approved standardised test of adaptive behaviour, **and**
- c. A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years.

Applications from students who do not meet the above criteria will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the region, in consultation with the Principal, in consideration of the student's education and support needs. The Regional Director, North East Victoria Region must approve enrolments for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria.

Priority Order Of Placement

In circumstances where the school may not have sufficient accommodation to be able to accept all applications from eligible students, the school will manage enrolment applications in accordance with the following priority order of placement:

1. Students who reside nearest to the school. [Getting to and from school for students with disability | Victorian Government](#)
2. Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.

The school must ensure that all applicants eligible under the first criterion have been offered a place before moving to consideration of the second criterion.

Verification Of Permanent Address

When assessing enrolment applications under the priority order of placement, Vermont South Special School may ask for supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a student's permanent residence. Vermont South Special School may request original or certified copies of rental agreements, unconditional contracts of sale or other official documentation that demonstrates permanent residence. Documents should show the same address and parent's/carer's name as recorded on the school enrolment application form.

The school may also make the following enquiries to verify the information provided:

- a. checking the electoral roll at an Australian Electoral Commission office or the Victorian Electoral Commission head office
- b. checking with a real estate agent to confirm a rental address
- c. for a rental property which is a studio apartment or a one-bedroom unit, checking whether there are any regulations/codes limiting the occupancy of these apartments to one person per apartment.

The enrolment application may be unsuccessful if, after reasonable enquiries, the Principal is unable to verify that the evidence provided is genuine and valid. Applicants may then seek to appeal the decision according to the Appeal process outlined below.

Provisional Enrolment

- In the case where a child's FSIQ has not been able to be calculated but the assessing psychologist believes the child is operating within the FSIQ range of 50 and 70, enrolment will be considered
- Such enrolments are subject to the family agreeing to an assessment being conducted in two years' time, to ascertain an accurate measure of cognitive functioning and to therefore confirm eligibility and on-going enrolment
- In the case that the child's FSIQ falls outside the eligibility criteria, Vermont South Special School will assist the family find a school that better matches their child's educational needs

Dual Enrolment

- No students in their first year of school can be dual enrolled
- Families wishing to seek dual enrolment will discuss this with the liaison officer at Vermont South Special School as well as the pertinent staff member at the school they wish to seek additional enrolment
- Dual enrolment will preferably be 4 consecutive days at Vermont South Special School, with Friday being the day at the mainstream school. If justified, students may attend their mainstream school for 2 days per week, being Thursday and Friday
- All DET requirements regarding dual enrolment are followed

Funding

- All prospective students must meet eligibility criteria for funding, under the category of Intellectual Disability, according to the DET's guidelines
- An 'alternative placement' will be sought for students who meet Vermont South Special School enrolment criteria but who are funded under another category of funding
- Funding must be in place prior to a student commencing enrolment
- In the case where a family can demonstrate the need for their child to commence enrolment sooner, Vermont South Special School will proceed with enrolment, as long as funding eligibility criteria have been met
- All guidelines, as set out by the DET are followed by Vermont South Special School

Enrolment on compassionate grounds

In exceptional circumstances, a student seeking enrolment at Vermont South Special School who meets the enrolment criteria may be approved by the Regional Director North East Victoria outside of the priority order of placement, based on compassionate grounds. This is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement. Further advice and support when considering applications on compassionate grounds is available on the [Policy and Advisory Library](#) and from regional staff.

EVIDENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

To support a student's application for enrolment, the following evidence and supporting information should be provided:

A signed psychologist's report, from within the last 24 months, reporting the results of both cognitive and adaptive behaviour assessments.

The Department provides assessment services to support specialist schools in determining whether the student meets their enrolment criteria. Department regional offices also play a role in supporting specialist schools with enrolment processes.

NOTE: Enrolment applications may not be successful if the requested documentation is not provided or invalid.

APPEAL PROCESS

Parents/carers can appeal against the decision not to approve an enrolment. This can occur in relation to enrolments at any age level. Parents or carers seeking to appeal a specialist school's enrolment decision should lodge a written appeal with the school. The Department will contact parents/carers with further information after an appeal is lodged.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Vermont South Special School enrolment policy will be made available to the school community on the school's website.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy approved by	Jane Henderson October 2022
Next scheduled review date	October 2026

See over for procedures relating to the enrolment of students

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Pre-Enrolment Procedures

- Prospective families make an appointment to visit and tour Vermont South Special School
- Tours are provided to families on an individual basis
- If a family believes their child's needs can be met by Vermont South Special School, the liaison officer initiates the enrolment process i.e. a transfer from another school for an already eligible student or a referral for assessment to establish eligibility

Transition

- Prior to a new student commencing, a staff member from Vermont South Special School conducts an observation at the new student's school/kindergarten to gather pertinent information
- Transition visits to Vermont South Special School are arranged by the liaison officer, in consultation with pertinent Vermont South Special School staff and the child's family
- Outside of the commencement of a school year, the date of enrolment is decided upon collaboratively, involving the Vermont South Special School principal, the family and the school being transferred from
- The Vermont South Special School liaison officer will pass all student details to the office staff so that CASES21 and PSDMS information is activated
- The Vermont South Special School business manager will ensure that allocated funding is transferred as quickly as possible from the transferring school

Enrolment

- During transition visits, the liaison officer and the school nurse collect and verify all information provided by the family
- Students are unable to commence enrolment until both birth and immunization certificates are sighted
- Students with conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, anaphylaxis are unable to commence enrolment until the required current medical certificates and health/safety plans have been provided to the school
- Enrolment information is entered into CASES21 by Vermont South Special School office staff
- The Vermont South Special School nurse creates a student file for every new enrolment
- All information contained in the student file can also be found in the student's digital file, housed in the restricted U: drive on the school's server

Designated Transport Area

- The Victorian Department of Education and Training has established clear boundaries for each specialist school across the state
- Only families who reside within these boundaries can access the government-provided buses
- Vermont South Special School provides the map of the boundaries in response to any family or external agency request, and it can also be found on the school's website
- Vermont South Special School processes requests for bus placement as efficiently as is possible and takes into consideration the individual needs of families
- Families living outside the designated transport area may enrol their eligible child into Vermont South Special School but will not have access to the government-provided buses