

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

These questions have been taken from the Victorian Government [Year 6 to Year 7 Transition Information Pack 2020](#). For more information about Heathmont College visit: <https://www.heathmont.vic.edu.au/>

For responses to specific questions not included in this document, please contact one of our Transition Coordinators:

- [Madeleine Khoury](#)
- [Callum Petrie](#)

## DESIGNATED NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOLS AND THE DEPARTMENT'S PLACEMENT POLICY

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

Children of compulsory school age are guaranteed the right to enrol in their designated neighbourhood 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."

Designated neighbourhood schools can be identified online at [www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

### 2. What is a designated neighbourhood school?

The *designated neighbourhood school* is generally the government school within closest proximity to the student's permanent residential address, unless the Minister for Education or Regional Director has restricted the zone of the school.

For children residing in metropolitan areas, Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong, the designated neighbourhood school is measured by a straight line from your permanent address. If you live in another area, it's measured by the shortest practical route by road and considers access issues.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/zones-restrictions.aspx>

### 3. How can I find my designated neighbourhood secondary school?

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

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

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

## 5. If my child has two permanent addresses, how is their designated neighbourhood school decided?

If your child resides at multiple addresses, their 'permanent residence' is the address at which they spend the majority of their weekdays.

If your child spends an equal amount of time at two addresses, both addresses will be considered as their permanent address and they will be entitled to enrol in either one of the designated neighbourhood schools for both addresses.

## 6. Can my Year 6 child attend the secondary school their sibling currently attends even though we are no longer in the zone?

Students with a sibling at the same permanent address, who will be attending the school at the same time in 2021, will be given high-level preference, after students who live within the school zone. This is subject to school capacity and enrolment restrictions.

## 7. Can my child attend a government secondary school that is not our designated neighbourhood secondary school?

You can request a Year 7 placement at a school that is not your designated neighbourhood school, however that school can only accept your enrolment if there is sufficient capacity at the school. All applications for Year 7 enrolment at a government school are subject to the following principles:

- your child is entitled to be enrolled at their designated neighbourhood school.
- applications to schools other than your designated neighbourhood school are considered subject to the school having available spaces, as per the Priority Order of Placement under The Department of Education and Training's Placement Policy.

## 8. What is the Department's Placement Policy?

The Placement Policy prioritises children and young people living within the school zone and the siblings of students already attending the school.

Guidance material 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 residing together at the same permanent address and 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 in their designated neighbourhood school, or it may not be in the student's best interests to enrol at their designated neighbourhood 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/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.

## 9. What is the Priority Order of Placement?

In circumstances when a school may not be able to accept all applications due to existing or future capacity concerns, schools must manage enrolment applications in accordance with the following priority order of placement:

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

In exceptional circumstances, a student may be enrolled in a school based on compassionate grounds, noting that enrolment on this basis is only used in exceptional circumstances.

For further information, please visit: [Placement Policy](#)

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

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

Parents/carers must be able to clearly demonstrate the exceptional circumstances which they believe make an enrolment at the designated neighbourhood 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.

More information on the Department's Privacy Policy is available here:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacypolicy.aspx>

## 11. What evidence may I be asked to provide if I am making an appeal on compassionate grounds?

When making an appeal on compassionate grounds, schools and regions can request that you provide further evidence to support your application, including, but not limited to:

- legal documentation;
- reports from allied health and/or medical professionals, Department of Health and Human Services Practitioners, Victoria Police, family violence services, court orders, etc.

For more information, please see the Schools' Privacy Policy here:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacypolicy.aspx>

## CHOOSING A SECONDARY SCHOOL

### 12. Where can I find general information about the transition to Year 7?

The Department's website contains comprehensive information on the transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

For information please visit: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/year-6-to-7.aspx>

### 13. Where can I find schools in my area?

To find a full list of schools by location within Victoria, please see:

- Victorian Government schools: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice/Home.aspx> and [www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au)
- Catholic schools: <http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/School-Directory-Search>
- Independent schools: [services.is.vic.edu.au/ebiz/customerservice/schoollocator.aspx](http://services.is.vic.edu.au/ebiz/customerservice/schoollocator.aspx)

### 14. What should I consider when choosing a secondary school?

There are many things to consider to ensure the school is the best fit for your child's learning and development. Factors you may consider include location, enrolment availability, curriculum focus, facilities and extra curricula activities. Various settings include:

- government schools (including specialist schools, Prep to Year 12 schools, special schools, English language schools and alternative schools)
- home schooling, which is where you take on responsibility for teaching your child. For more information see: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/home-school.aspx>
- non-government schools, including Catholic schools and independent schools.

### 15. How do I register my child for home schooling in 2021?

When you decide to educate your child at home, you take on responsibility for:

- planning their learning
- teaching them
- assessing what they've learnt.

To apply to register for home schooling you need to submit to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA):

- a completed application form;
- necessary documentation such as proof of your child's identity;
- a learning plan detailing how you intend to address the learning areas.

For more information see: <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/home/Pages/homeeducation.aspx>

**16. What should I do if my child will be attending a non-government school (Catholic or independent) for Year 7 in 2021 OR I am registering my child with the VRQA for home schooling in 2021?**

*Confirmed Placement*

If you are sure that you already have a place for your child in a non-government school to commence in 2021, or your child's registration for home schooling has been approved by the VRQA, you are not required to complete Section 4 of the *Application for Year 7 Placement* form. Instead, please complete Section 5.

*Unconfirmed placement*

If you have applied for a place for your child in a non-government secondary school to commence in 2021, but have not had this placement confirmed, or the VRQA is still assessing your child's registration application for home schooling, you may also apply for a place in a government school by completing section 4B.

*Late confirmation of placement*

If your child is granted a Year 7 place in a non-government secondary school, or your child's registration for home schooling is approved by the VRQA, after you have been allocated a place in a government school, you must notify your child's primary school immediately.

**17. Where can I find information about enrolment for fee-paying international students?**

Fee-paying international students can apply for enrolment in a government school at [www.study.vic.gov.au](http://www.study.vic.gov.au) or apply directly to non-government (Catholic or independent) schools.

**18. My child has a disability. How can I ensure their needs are met?**

The principles of effective transition planning, and placement, for students with disabilities are the same as for all students moving from primary to secondary school. Transition planning for students with disabilities may commence earlier to identify and develop supports for additional needs.

More information about inclusive education is available on the Department's website:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/additional-needs/Pages/default.aspx>

**19. How do I find the contact details of my regional office?**

You can find the regional office contact details and locations on the Department's website, here:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx>

**20. What assistance is available to support my child's travel to and from school?**

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

For more information, please see: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/travel-school.aspx>

## THE APPLICATION FOR YEAR 7 PLACEMENT 2021 FORM (THE APPLICATION FORM)

### 21. Who should be the first point of contact for enquiries about the Year 6 to Year 7 transition process?

The Year 6 Coordinator, Transition Coordinator or Principal of your child's primary school can help you with any questions you may have about the transition process.

### 22. How many secondary schools can I preference on the Application form?

You may list up to three government schools, in your order of preference, in section 4B.

If your child is not successful in gaining a Year 7 placement at one of your three school preferences, they will be placed at your designated neighbourhood school.

### 23. Do I need to identify three secondary school preferences if my first preference is my designated neighbourhood school?

No. It is sufficient to identify one preference if that school is your designated neighbourhood school.

### 24. What happens if my child does not receive a place in their preferred secondary school, or schools?

Your child will be allocated to their designated neighbourhood school.

### 25. What happens if I do not return the Application form?

Your child will be allocated to their designated neighbourhood school.

### 26. Do I need to complete the Application form if my child is attending a government school that offers both Year 6 and Year 7 (such as a Prep to Year 12, Prep to Year 10, or Prep to Year 9) and will be continuing at the same school?

No. If your Year 6 child is continuing at the same school (such as a Prep to Year 12, Prep to Year 10, or Prep to Year 9 school), the Application form does not need to be completed.

If your child attends a school which offers both Year 6 and Year 7, but you are seeking an enrolment in a different school for Year 7 in 2021, the Application form needs to be completed.

### 27. How do I apply for a Year 7 placement at the government secondary school where my Year 6 child's sibling is currently enrolled?

If you wish your child to attend the same government secondary school as their sibling, who resides at the same permanent residential address *and* who will be continuing at the school in 2021, please ensure the *Sibling Claim* information is completed in Section 4C of the Application form. Enrolment on sibling grounds is subject to school capacity and enrolment restrictions.

## 28. Who may sign the Application form?

Where practicable, all parents/carers with parental responsibility for a child should sign and submit a single application for placement form.

For the purposes of this form, a parent includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child including by way of Court order or parenting plan, a guardian for adult students and an informal carer of the child under an Informal Carer Statutory Declaration.

For further information, please visit:

[education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/parentalresponsibility.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/parentalresponsibility.aspx)

*Note: where it is not practicable or possible for parents/carers to sign a single Application form, this should be communicated to your child's primary school who will work with you and the Department's regional office to develop a solution for the specific situation of your family.*

*It is expected that if parents/carers have difficulty reaching agreement, the dispute should be resolved between the parents/carers through discussion, attendance at the Family Relationship Centre or at Court. It is not the responsibility of the Department, or the schools, to assist with this decision making process.*

## 29. What happens if I change my mind once my child's Year 7 placement has been accepted?

You must contact your child's primary school as soon as possible to advise them of your change of mind. The primary school will liaise with the secondary school(s).

## PLACEMENT APPEALS

### 30. How do I make an appeal about my child's Year 7 placement for 2021?

In the first instance, parents/carers should lodge a written appeal with the preferred secondary school. This is the school at which your child has been unsuccessful in gaining a Year 7 placement.

Your appeal may be lodged using the Year 6 to Year 7 Transition Placement Appeal form. Your child's primary school will provide you with a copy of this form.

This written appeal should be lodged with the preferred secondary school, by Monday 31 August 2020.

It will be considered by the school's placement committee and/or Principal and you will receive written notification of the outcome by Friday 11 September 2020.

### 31. What happens if my appeal to my preferred secondary school is not successful?

If your appeal to your preferred secondary school is unsuccessful and you believe that your grounds have not been adequately considered by school's placement committee and/or Principal, you may lodge a further written appeal to the relevant Department of Education and Training Regional Director by Friday 25 September 2020.

Appeals to the Regional Director may not be considered if you have not appealed to your preferred secondary school in the first instance.

Appeals are considered by a panel of senior regional staff that assess the appeal against the priority order of placement, and in exceptional circumstances, on compassionate grounds.

This panel provides a recommendation to the relevant Regional Director who makes the final decision. You will receive written notification of the outcome by Friday 30 October 2020. This outcome concludes the appeal process.

**32. Can I lodge an appeal to the relevant Regional Director after the closing date of Friday 25 September 2020?**

This date is set to ensure all Year 6 students have the opportunity to participate in the Year 7 Orientation Day on 8 December 2020, which is a vital step in a student's successful transition to secondary school.

Any appeals received after this date will be considered at the discretion of the relevant Regional Director and may not be accepted.

If you wish to lodge an appeal after Friday 25 September 2020, you should contact your regional office for advice.