



## Enrolment Policy

### **Replacement of Previous Policy Related Documents**

With the promulgation of this document, the following policy-related documents are replaced:

Dezoning of Primary Schools for 1989 (88/296), Extension of Dezoning of Schools for 1990, 23 June 1989, \* Choice of Schools 1992, 5 May 1991, \* Enrolment of Children with Disabilities (88/007).

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## Introduction

This document provides information for the community and direction for school personnel on the entitlements, requirements and procedures for the enrolment of students in government schools in New South Wales.

It is a summary statement which draws on a variety of other Department of School Education documents which are identified in the text. Individuals requiring more detailed information should refer to the documents or the directorates indicated.

Each principal, in consultation with the Director, Public Schools NSW and the school community, will develop a written enrolment policy for the school.

## Legislative Context

The government school system in New South Wales exists to provide high quality education for all students. The *Education Reform Act 1990* outlines the objects of education and the legal requirements for compulsory schooling.

In brief, the legislation requires **students between the ages of six and fifteen to be enrolled** at a government or registered non-government school, and to attend school on each day that instruction is provided or to be registered for home-schooling. It is the duty of the parent or carer of the student to ensure that these obligations are fulfilled.

## General Principles Governing Enrolment

1. A student is considered to be enrolled when he or she is placed on the admission register of a school.
2. A student should be enrolled in one school only at any given time.
3. Children are entitled to be enrolled at the government school that is designated for the intake area within which the child's home is situated and that the child is eligible to attend.
4. Parents may seek to enrol their child in the school of their choice.
5. School local areas are determined by the Department of School Education through a process involving consultation between Educational Services and the Director, Public Schools NSW.
6. Schools are required to set an enrolment number to cater for anticipated local demand and to seek to ensure that every eligible local child has a place at his or her local school if he or she chooses to attend it.
7. Schools are required to have a written policy which states the grounds on which non-local enrolments will be accepted.
8. The primary criteria for acceptance of non-local enrolments will include the availability of appropriate staff and permanent classroom accommodation.
9. The policy and criteria should be expressed in plain English, and in community languages where necessary. It should be made clear what consideration will be given to each of the criteria.

In addition to these general principles, there are particular criteria for enrolment in some schools including students with special learning needs.

The decision on where to enrol a student, and with what level of support, will depend on a number of factors, including a student's educational needs, the expressed desires of parents and caregivers, the capacity of the system to provide the level of support services required generally and at a particular location and the availability of support services at alternative locations.

## Discrimination in Enrolment

In the context of the above principles and their application, which clearly constrain an individual's choice of provision, no person will be discriminated against in enrolment on the grounds of their sex, age, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual preference or marital status.

## Enrolment Ceilings

Table Top Public School is required to establish an enrolment ceiling, based on available permanent accommodation.

Demountables are not counted towards the enrolment ceiling unless replacement accommodation is under construction.

**Table Top Public School's enrolment ceiling**

Block	Available rooms	Current use	Ceiling
A	Staff Room	Meeting room	0
C	2 x classrooms Administration	2 x classrooms – K/1 & 4/5/6 Administration offices	60 0
G	Library	1 x learning space	0
D11	1 x Classroom	1 x classroom	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 classrooms</b>		<b>90</b>

**Year Group Ceilings**

Year	Ceiling	Local Enrolment Buffer
Kindergarten	13	1
Year 1	13	1
Year 2	13	1
Year 3	13	1
Year 4	13	1
Year 5	13	1
Year 6	12	1

## Enrolment Buffer

No additional accommodation (permanent or demountable) is provided to cater for increased enrolments resulting from non-local placements.

Within the enrolment ceiling, a buffer has been determined to accommodate local students arriving throughout the year. The size of the buffer will be based on historical data, on enrolment fluctuations and on the number of families moving into or out of the area.

Places in the buffer are not to be offered to non-local students.

Where spare accommodation exists, except for enrolments at the commencement of the school year, non-local placements must not generate demand for extra staff or create disruption to school routine.



## Placement Panels

Where demand for non-local places exceeds availability, the school will establish a placement panel to consider and make recommendations on all non-local enrolment applications.

The composition of the panel includes the principal, one teacher and one school community member nominated by the school's parent organisation.

The panel will be chaired by the principal who will have the casting vote. While there may be consultation with the school community representative, the development of criteria for the enrolment of non-local students will be the responsibility of the Principal. The criteria will be consistent with the general principles governing enrolment stated above.

In assessing the application of the criteria to individual cases, the panel will consider only those matters presented on the application form and not oral or other submissions. The decisions made by the placement panel must be made within the context of the agreed enrolment ceiling and the buffer retained for local students arriving later in the year. The placement panel should record all decisions and minutes of meetings are to be available on request by the Director, Public Schools, NSW.

## Criteria for Non-local Enrolment Applications

Criteria for selecting amongst non-local enrolment applications is documented and made available, in advance, to parents who are interested in enrolling their children.

Criteria includes factors such as:

- Proximity and access to the school
- Siblings already enrolled at the school
- Medical reasons
- Safety and supervision of the student before and after school
- Special interests and abilities
- Compassionate circumstances
- Structure and organisation of the school.

The principal will ensure that the established criteria are applied equitably to all applicants. Parents should be provided with an explanation of the decisions of the placement panel in writing, should they request it.

### **Waiting Lists**

Waiting lists are established for non-local students. Parents should be advised in writing if their child is to be placed on a waiting list and his or her position on it. The size of the waiting list should reflect realistic expectations of potential vacancies.

Waiting lists are current for one year.

### **Appeals**

Where a parent wishes to appeal against the decision of the placement panel, the appeal should be made in writing to the principal. Where required, the principal should provide or arrange assistance, such as an interpreter, to enable the appeal to be set out in writing.

The principal will seek to resolve the matter.

If the matter is not resolved at the local level the Director, Public Schools NSW will consider the appeal and make a determination. The Director, Public Schools NSW, will consult with the principal and school community as necessary.

The purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the stated criteria have been applied fairly.

# Responsibilities

## **Responsibilities of the Principal**

With regard to enrolment, the school principal is responsible for:

- preparing an enrolment policy in consultation with the school community,
- informing present and prospective members of the school community about provision available at the school,
- managing the school enrolments within the resources provided to the school,
- advising the Director, Public Schools NSW of enrolment and curriculum trends in the school,
- maintaining accurate and complete enrolment data,
- establishing an enrolment ceiling to cater for anticipated local demand,
- setting an enrolment buffer to cater for anticipated local demand during the year,
- establishing a placement panel when demand for non-local places exceeds available accommodation,
- documenting and declaring the criteria for selection amongst non-local enrolment applications to parents and the school community, and
- making decisions on non-local enrolments at the school level wherever possible.

## **Responsibilities of the Director, Public Schools NSW:**

With regard to enrolment, the Director, Public Schools NSW is responsible for:

- monitoring enrolment policies, procedures, numbers and ceilings at all schools in the directorate,
- making determinations for out of area placements which cannot be resolved at the school level, and
- monitoring schools' local areas in collaboration with principals of adjacent directorates (where appropriate) and *Educational Services*.

## Kindergarten Enrolments

The principal will advise the parent body and the school community of the enrolment arrangements for the next year's Kindergarten children, including the policy on immunisation.

Children may enrol in Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year **if they turn five years of age on or before 31 July in that year**. Documentation providing proof of age, such as a birth certificate or passport, is required on enrolment.

The enrolment of eligible children in the Kindergarten year is to commence within the first week of the school year. The principal is to ensure that enrolments proceed as quickly as possible in a manner which is in the best interests of the incoming children. In larger schools the principal may plan for the enrolments to occur over a number of days with all Kindergarten enrolments being completed by the end of week two of the school year.

Whilst it is the intention that children be enrolled at the beginning of the year, parents who choose to enrol eligible children after the beginning of the school year may do so, up to the end of Term 2.

The principal will enrol in Kindergarten, students on transfer and children reaching the statutory age of six years.

*Refer to Memorandum to Principals 86.205, Kindergarten Enrolment: Policy Change, 30 September 1986.*

**The Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992 requires parents to provide documented evidence of a child's immunisation status on enrolment in schools, pre-schools and child care centres.**

*\* Information is contained in the booklet, Immunisation - An Essential Guide to the New School Entry Requirements, which is available from Educational Services.*

Parents have the right of not having their children immunised. However, under the Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992, in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, unimmunised children will be required to remain at home for the duration of the outbreak.

*Refer to Memorandum to Principals 93.016, Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992 Immunisation: Children Entering Kindergarten, 21 April 1993, available from Educational Services.*

## Enrolment of Students with Special Learning Needs Students with Disabilities

The Department of School Education provides a range of services and resources to support the education of students with disabilities.

These include:

- Targeted funding, specialist teachers and consultancy services to support students enrolled in regular classes,
- Special classes within regular schools,
- Special schools,
- Modifications to buildings to facilitate access,
- Provision of specialised equipment and technology, and
- Special transport services.

When considering the enrolment of a student with a disability, all these provisions should be considered.

The decision on where to enrol a student with a disability, and with what level of support, will depend on a number of factors, including the student's educational needs, the expressed desires of parents and caregivers, the capacity of the system to provide the level of support services required generally and at a particular location and the availability of support services at alternative locations.

In many situations it will be possible to enrol a student with a disability at the desired school with the necessary level of specialist support. In some circumstances the level of support required, or the specialist nature of that support, will necessitate alternative enrolment options being provided.

In each case, when a student with a disability presents for enrolment, it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that an appraisal of the student's educational needs is carried out.

For some students appraisal will have occurred as part of a planned transition process. For others, the appraisal will take place at the time enrolment is sought. Appraisals will involve parents or caregivers and will entail consideration of the student's support needs in areas such as curriculum, mobility, social skills, personal care and communication. It will often involve consideration of supporting documentation from medical practitioners and other health and education professionals.

Department Educational Services staff are available to assist in this process, in particular, to identify the resources which may be available to support the enrolment. Requests for enrolment in special classes or special schools are considered by the Directorate's Placement Panel.

The Education Services Handbook contains descriptions of services available, eligibility criteria for access to services and procedures to be adopted in enrolling students with disabilities.

## Enrolment of Non-Australian Citizens

Non-Australian citizens entering Australia must hold a valid visa and are subject to the specific travel, entry and residency conditions set by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA).

Education is compulsory for non-Australian citizens between the ages of six and fifteen holding a visa granting them permanent resident status.

Non-Australian citizens holding a temporary visa are subject to specific enrolment conditions as outlined below:

### Temporary Residents

- The temporary resident visa allows for the enrolment on a temporary basis of school aged students in a New South Wales government school. Enrolment is only for the period specified on the visa.

## Short Term and Part-time Attendance of Students

A student should be enrolled in one school only at any given time. For a variety of reasons, such as parents visiting a locality for a brief period or a student being involved in an integration program, a student enrolled at a particular school may need to attend another school for a short period of time.

Where this period is no more than one term, or in the case of a student involved in a special placement of no more than 2.5 days per week, the student should not be enrolled, but regarded as being on a short term attendance. The home school should maintain the student's name on an attendance register, with a note to the effect that the student is attending another school.

The school the student attends for a short term (the host school), must keep a record of the student's attendance and notify the home school at the end of the stay or, in the case of part-time attendance, at the end of each term.

## Specialised Programs

For various reasons a student enrolled at a particular school may need to attend a specialised program at another school or support unit for a period of time or part time. Such programs include support classes for students with behaviour disorders and emotional disturbance, hospital schools and students visiting Stewart House or the Royal Far West School.

Such students remain enrolled in their home schools. It is the responsibility of the principal or the senior officer of the specialised program to ensure that an attendance register is kept and that all students attending the specialised program are recorded on this register. A copy of the student's attendance record should be forwarded on a regular basis to the home school, as stated above.

*Refer to School Attendance, Policy and Procedures 1991, available from Educational Services.*



## Home Schooling

A parent of a child may apply in writing to the Minister for registration of the child for home schooling. A Board of Studies inspector or other authorised person under the Education Reform Act 1990 will recommend to the Minister to register, or not register, a child for home schooling. Parents can appeal to the Schools Appeals Tribunal against a recommendation not to register.

*Refer to Education Reform Act 1990 Part 7, pages 29-35.*

## Refusal of Enrolment

Principals may refuse enrolment of a student on the grounds of previously documented violent behaviour if there is evidence that the student has not learned the appropriate skills to manage this behaviour.

*Refer to Procedures Concerning Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion of Students from School and Declaration of Place Vacant, June 1996, available from Educational Services.*

### **Enrolment Data**

Information needs to be recorded about each student enrolled at the school:

- To comply with legal requirements,
- For school administrative purposes, and
- For resourcing, accountability and reporting requirements.

### **Enrolment Forms**

Information should be collected from parents about each student enrolling at the school. Enrolment forms are used for collecting the required information from parents. Parents' signatures are required on the forms to certify that the information provided is correct.

To assist families and school staff members responsible for enrolment, the Department has produced bilingual student enrolment forms.

*Refer to Bilingual Student Enrolment Forms, Second Edition available from Educational Services.*

## Register of Enrolment

*The Education Reform Act 1990 states that schools must keep a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments ... of all children at the school. Page 12, Section 24.*

An effective enrolment register must include as a minimum:

- The student's name and address,
- Birth date, gender and country of birth,
- Parent or caregiver's details,
- The date the student enrolled at the school and the class entered, and
- The date the student leaves, or transfers from, the school.

Students attending the school on a short-term (less than one term) or temporary basis should not be enrolled, and may only be entered if they can be distinguished from regular enrolments. Such students should maintain their enrolment at their home school for the duration of their short-term or temporary placement.

## Resourcing, Accountability and Reporting

The enrolment return submitted by schools in February each year forms the basis for the calculation of our staffing entitlements and global funding. Principals have an obligation to ensure that the enrolment information on the return is complete and supported by adequate enrolment and attendance documentation to meet accountability and audit requirements.

Principals are responsible for certifying the accuracy of the school enrolment return and must ensure that the students included in the return are those:

- Present on the day of the completion of the return,
- Although absent from the school on the day, have had some attendance in the current year and have not informed the school that they are leaving, and
- Although absent from school on the day, advice in writing has been received from the parent or guardian, or formal record of parent interview, to state that the student will be returning before the conclusion of term one.

Other enrolment information, including age/grade, NESB and ATSI data, provided on the Term 1 and Mid-year census, provides data for resourcing for specific programs, obtaining funding and national reporting.

Student enrolment information and the enrolment returns are subject to regular review as part of the school audit process by Educational Services.

*Refer to the Memorandum to Principals 95.087, School Enrolment Returns, 24 November 1995, available from Educational Services.*

## Consultation and Further Advice

Principals seeking further advice on these matters should consult their Director, Public Schools NSW or the office identified in the text.