Transition to School
Parent Information Pack

Outer East Area - North Eastern Victoria Region

Locate your designated neighbourhood school using
www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

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Authorised by the Department of Education and Training,

2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

Dear parents and carers,

As your child is about to start school, it is time to decide where they will attend primary school.

This Information Pack focuses on enrolling in a government primary school. If you are considering a government specialist school, or other setting, you are advised to make direct contact with that school.

Enrolling your child, or children, in Foundation (Prep) is an important choice. The Department's *findmyschool* website allows you to locate your designated neighbourhood school based on your permanent residential address. The website is the official and most up to date source of information on school zone maps.

Your child has a right to enrol in their designated neighbourhood school; this right is set out in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. Your designated neighbourhood school is determined on the basis of your permanent residential address. Every designated neighbourhood school is a great school that provides a supportive environment that fosters the emotional and intellectual growth of their students.

Applications to schools other than your designated neighbourhood school are considered subject to the school having available spaces, as outlined in the Department's Placement Policy.

The transition timeline and *Frequently Asked Questions* (FAQs) contained in this document will help you navigate the transition to primary school process.

What you need to do

1. Read the Department's Placement Policy including the permanent address guidelines and the priority order of placement at: www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/placement.aspx
2. Locate your designated neighbourhood school using www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au
3. Contact your designated neighbourhood school and submit an enrolment application for Foundation by **7 August 2020.**

If you prefer, you may contact another local primary school to enquire about enrolling.

Your primary school will notify you of the outcome of your child's Foundation enrolment application by **21 August 2020**.

Fee-paying International students

Fee-paying international students are not required to complete this form. For enrolment in a government school, make an application online at: www.study.vic.gov.au.

More information

Contact your primary school if you require more information about the enrolment process and transition arrangements.

We wish your child well in their transition to primary school and trust that primary schooling will be a richly rewarding experience.

Outer East Area Transition to School Timeline 2020-2021

FOR PARENTS and CARERS

Recommended timeline to support children transition from kindergarten to Foundation (Prep) in a government primary school, and specialist school, recognising that some children may require a more comprehensive transition plan to meet their individual needs.

Activities	Recommended Time/Date
Obtain a copy of Transition to School Parent Information Pack from your child's kindergarten or from your designated neighbourhood school. Your designated neighbourhood school can be located at www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au Enrolment forms are available on school websites.	Week 3, Term 2 2020
Contact primary schools and specialist school for details about participating in their online information sessions for prospective families; view primary school websites for information about how to support your child's transition to school.	From 1 May 2020
Submit an enrolment application for a Foundation (Prep) placement for the 2021 school year.	By 7 August 2020
Primary schools manage enrolment applications using the Priority Order of Placement https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/placement.aspx. Primary schools will notify parents/carers of their child's Foundation (Prep) placement by 21 August 2020. If your child is enrolling in a specialist school, you will be notified of the outcome of your enrolment application from 21 August 2020.	By 21 August 2020 From 21 August 2020
Transition planning commences for vulnerable children with diverse learning needs, including children in out of home care, families who identify from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and children with a disability or additional learning needs — includes convening a Program Support Group and developing a transition plan which may include additional visits to the primary school.	From 24 August 2020
Enrolment information sessions commence for families of all enrolled children.	From 1 September 2020
Transition sessions for enrolled children commence. Primary schools may also provide extra transition activities for children with additional needs.	Commencing Term 4 (5 October)
State-wide Transition day (students placed in 2021 classes based on your child's Transition Learning and Development Statement (TLDS), observations from transition activities, and other information)	Tuesday 8 December 2020
Foundation (Prep) assessments are conducted to allow primary schools to develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and areas for further development of your child and to develop programs to meet their needs.	Start of 2021 school year
Schools commence Student Support Group meetings for children experiencing vulnerability with diverse learning needs – parents and carers are invited to attend. These meetings provide you with the opportunity to work with your child's school to make decisions about their education and check their progress.	Start of 2021 school year

Transition to School:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **At what age should my child be enrolled at primary school?**

To start primary school your child will need to turn five years old by 30 April in the year they start school.
Your child must be at school in the year they turn six years of age. This is the compulsory school starting age.

Schools are able to provide families with relevant information about the best time for your child to start school. Other early childhood professionals, such as your child's early childhood educator, can also provide advice to help you make an informed decision about the best age for your child to start school.

2. **My kindergarten teacher mentioned that my child may benefit from a second year of funded kindergarten, when do we need to decide?**

Your kindergarten teacher should discuss with you the most appropriate environment to address your child's learning needs and the timeline and tasks for applying for a second year. Applications are due by the end of Term 3.

3. **My child will be turning six this year but won't be attending school- what do I need to do?**

You will need to submit a school exemption application to the Department of Education and Training (DET). The exemption form can be found on the DET website Going to kindergarten if your child is six years old

4. **What is the legislation that gives my child the right to enrol in their designated neighbourhood school?**

Children of compulsory school age are guaranteed the right to enrol in 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.".
Designated neighbourhood schools can be identified online at www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au

5. **When do I enrol my child in primary school for Foundation (Prep)?**

You are required to enrol your child at a Victorian government primary school by 7 August 2020. If you are moving to a new area or from interstate or overseas, your child can enrol at any time during the year once your child is permanently residing at your new address.

6. **Where can I find the Victorian school term dates?**

School term dates for 2020 to 2025 are available at https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/datesterm.aspx

7. **How can I learn more about the Victorian education system?**

If you are moving to Victoria from overseas or interstate, information about education in Victoria, whether in regional schools or schools in Melbourne can be found at; https://www.study.vic.gov.au/en/Pages/default.aspx

8. **How do I choose a school?**

Your child will usually go to the designated neighbourhood school.
For more information, please see: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/zones-restrictions.aspx

You can also choose to send your child to a:

- different government school if they have places available, or a
- Catholic or independent school. Learn about the different types of schools

9. How can I find my designated neighbourhood school (local) school?

Visit www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au and type in your permanent residential address. The website will then locate your designated neighbourhood Government school.
Visit Catholic Education Melbourne and Independent Schools Victoria

10. Can my child attend a government school that is not our designated neighbourhood school?

You can request a Foundation (Prep) placement at a school that is not your designated neighbourhood school; however, that school can only accept your enrolment if there is sufficient sapce at the school. For more information please see https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/zones-restrictions.aspx

11. How can I decide on a primary school that is the best fit for my child?

For information on things to consider when choosing a primary school, go to https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/choose-enrol-school.aspx

It is recommended that you contact the individual school that you are considering for more specific details. Information is often available in local early childhood education services or on primary school websites.

12. How do I enrol my child at school for Foundation (Prep)?

Unlike many early childhood education services, Victorian government primary schools do not have a central enrolment system. To enrol your child in a Victorian government school you will need to fill out an enrolment form at that school and provide the school with important information about your child, including:

- evidence of your child's date of birth (if they were not born in Australia, a passport or travel document such as a visa)
- your contact, phone and address details, and that of any other parent, guardian and/or carer
- names and contact details of emergency contacts
- doctor's and dentist's names and phone numbers
- Immunisation Status Certificate
- health and welfare information
- information about the language/s your child speaks and hears at home
- custody orders (if applicable)
- documents that show proof of permanent residential address

Enrolment forms are available at each school. If you need an interpreter to help fill out the enrolment form, the school staff can help organise this for you.

For more information about enrolling in a government school, go to

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/choose-enrol-school.aspx

13. Who may sign the enrolment form?

Where practicable, all parents/carers with parental responsibility for your child should sign the enrolment 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, see:
education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/parentalresponsibility.aspx

Where it is not practicable or possible for parents/carers to sign a single form, they should communicate this to the primary school who will allow more than one enrolment form to be completed and submitted by each parent.

For more information see:
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/parentalresponsibility.aspx

14. Can I get help with the cost of school uniforms and books?

You may be eligible for assistance to help with some school costs such as camps and excursions and school uniforms or books if you hold an eligible concession card or you meet other special eligibility criteria. You are encouraged to talk to your school Principal, Assistant Principal or Student Welfare Coordinator about your situation and they will assess your eligibility for assistance.

15. How can I support my child to transition to primary school?

Local early childhood services and schools organise their own transition to school programs and activities each year. To find out more, talk to your child's early childhood educator or contact the school where your child is enrolled.

Participating in transition to school programs and activities will help you and your child

- get a better understanding of what school will be like
- establish friendships with other children and families who will be attending the school.

Primary schools will offer a range of transition sessions commencing Term 4, prior to the year of enrolment. It is recommended that you also attend these transition sessions with your child to familiarise yourself with the school and its environment.

Your school may also provide more visits or transition activities for students with additional needs. Contact your school for more information.

You can also check out the Department's tips for parents to help prepare children for primary school:
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/tips-starting-school.aspx

16. What is a Transition Learning and Development Statement? Will my child's kindergarten/childcare share it with the primary school?

To make it easier to share information with you and your chosen school, your child's early education service will write an individual Transition Learning and Development Statement (Statement) that summarises your child's interests, skills and abilities and identifies individual approaches and teaching strategies to support your child on their learning journey.
The information in the Statement helps Foundation teachers get to know the children entering their classes, and to plan appropriate learning and teaching programs. The Statement is not a report card.

It is important for you to contribute to the Statement, as it will give your child's new teacher a better understanding of your child and help the school to plan for your child's continued learning and wellbeing as they settle into school. You can ask to receive a copy.

Ask your early childhood education service for more information or visit the Department's website at
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/Pages/transition.aspx

In addition to the information schools receive as part of the Statement, schools are obliged to conduct a range of assessments with each child when they enter Foundation (Prep). These assessments are typically carried out early in the year to allow primary schools to develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and areas for further development of children and to develop programs to meet their needs.

Primary schools have different approaches to the scheduling of these individual assessments. Contact your primary school for details on how they will conduct assessments for your child.

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

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

18. My child has a disability, how can I ensure their additional needs are met?

To assist your child's transition to school, it is important that you are open and honest with the school about your child's needs. This includes sharing information about your child's learning and development in early childhood settings, assessments and reports from professionals. Sharing information will enable the school to work with you to develop strategies to support your child.

19. What supports are available for my child who has additional needs?

The Department provides a range of policies, programs and resources for schools to support the delivery of high-quality schooling for all students, including students with disabilities. These resources may be provided in the Student Resource Package, through student support services, a workforce including psychologists, social workers, youth workers, speech pathologists and visiting teachers, or through specific early identification and intervention programs.

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/additional-needs/Pages/disability-school-support.aspx

The Program for Students with Disabilities is a targeted supplementary funding program that provides individualised funding for eligible children with high support needs.

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/additional-needs/Pages/disability-students-program.aspx

Resources from the Program for Students with Disabilities can be used in a number of ways to support students, including;

Teaching staff, specialist staff (e.g. Special Needs Coordinator, occupational therapists, speech pathologists), teacher professional development, specialist equipment/materials, including assistive technology, education support staff.

Training and funding – for staff that assist children who require regular, complex medical support at school

Accessible Buildings Program – funding to provide improved access to mainstream school facilities for children and parents with injuries or disabilities. Facility modifications may include ramps and handrails (including temporary ramps), toilet and shower modifications, modifications for vision or hearing impairments (e.g. sound field systems), change tables and hoists, and limited external works to improve access for the applicant.

Student Support Groups – provide you with the opportunity to participate in joint planning for your child and to monitor their progress at school. Student Support Groups ensure those with the most knowledge of, and responsibility for your child, work together with you to set shared goals for your child's education, plan reasonable adjustments for your child to access the curriculum, provide educational planning that is ongoing throughout your child's school life, and monitor your child's progress.

20. Can my child enrol in a specialist school?

There are specific criteria for enrolling your child in a specialist school. These criteria are used to establish eligibility against the Program for Students with Disabilities guidelines.

You will need to contact the relevant specialist school to assess enrolment eligibility for your child. In addition to the enrolment requirements, eligibility is further determined by your residential address.

21. What are the key dates that I need to be aware of to ensure a smooth transition for my child into Foundation (Prep) at a government school?

You are advised to contact prospective primary schools. You can make an appointment with the Principal or Assistant Principal to discuss additional support that may be required for your child. Primary schools advise families to collect information, reports and assessments for targeted funding (if applicable) by 18 September to ensure funding commences at the start of Term 1 in the year of enrolment.

Transition sessions often commence in Term 4 prior to the year of enrolment. You are encouraged to work with your school to develop a model that works best for you and your child.

22. What is the Primary School Nursing Program and can all children access it?

The Primary School Nursing Program is a free service offered to all children attending primary schools and English Language Centre schools in Victoria.

Primary school nurses visit schools throughout the year to provide children with:

- the opportunity to have a health screening assessment
- information and advice about healthy behaviours
- and linking children and families to community-based health and wellbeing services.

23. What support is available at primary school for my child who is still learning English as an additional language?

Your school will provide additional language support as appropriate.

24. I am caring for a child in out of home care and would like more information on how I can help them to thrive at primary school.

You are encouraged to speak to your child's school about the resources and supports they will provide, as well as what you can do to encourage and support your child's learning. LOOKOUT Education Support Centres can also provide advice and support to carers regarding all aspects of a student's education. They aim to boost the capacity of schools, carers, child protection practitioners and out of home care services to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people living in out of home care

If you would like more information or advice, please contact LOOKOUT Centre, North Eastern Victoria Region
lookout.nev@edumail.vic.gov.au

25. Who can I contact for advice on Koorie education in schools?

Primary schools, parents and community can obtain assistance with Koorie cultural inclusion, Koorie education guidance and support through their region by contacting the Koorie Education Coordinators (KEC).

The KEC can arrange for a Regional Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) to be assigned to any school where contact with Koorie families may be requested.

26. 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, see:
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx

Or contact the North Eastern Victoria Region directly via email: nevr@edumail.vic.gov.au or phone: 1300 333 231.