

Local Enrolment Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact reception on 03 55232218

Purpose

Portland Bay School caters for school age students with intellectual disabilities to prepare them to lead safe, fulfilled and productive lives in the community. The purpose of this enrolment policy is to explain eligibility criteria to enrol at Portland Bay School and to ensure a smooth and supported transition for students and the school when students enrol in the school.

Note: Department of Education and Training (DET) enrolment policy and guidelines must always be followed.

Background

Portland Bay School provides educational programs for students with disability and high needs who have an intellectual disability.

By law in Victoria all children from age 6 and 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 Portland Bay 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.

Enrolment at Portland Bay School is based on a student's disability and associated educational needs. 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 Portland Bay School require Department of Education regional approval.

Eligibility Criteria for Enrolment at Portland Bay School

The following enrolment criteria have been specified and approved by the Regional Director, South-Western Victoria Region (as the Minister's delegate) under section 2.2.16(b) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic). A student's enrolment will be reviewed periodically in line with their needs.

Students seeking to enrol 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 two standard deviations or more below the mean score on a standardised individual test of general intelligence, (for example a full scale score of 70 or below on one of the recommended standardised individual tests of intelligence); and
- B. Significant deficits in adaptive behaviour established by a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean on an approved standardised test of adaptive behaviour, (for example a Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales composite score of 70 or below); 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, South-Western Victoria Region (or delegate) 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 with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.
2. Students who reside nearest to the school.

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, Portland Bay School may ask for supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a student's permanent residence.

Portland Bay 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.

Enrolment on compassionate grounds

In exceptional circumstances, a student seeking enrolment at Portland Bay School who meets the enrolment criteria may be approved by the Regional Director South West 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

The Department provides assessment services to support students, parents and carers and 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.

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

Intellectual Disability

A signed psychologist's report from within the last 24 months reporting the results of an IQ test and assessment of adaptive behaviour.

This can be done using the Department of Education Assessment Service which is Assessments Australia. The school can provide referral forms.

Appeal Process

Parents/carers can appeal against the decision not to approve an enrolment by requesting a non-standard enrolment. This can occur in relation to enrolments at any age or year level. Further information on appeals can be found at [Enrolment: Enrolment in specialist schools | education.vic.gov.au](http://Enrolment:Enrolment%20in%20specialist%20schools%20|%20education.vic.gov.au).

Communication

The Portland Bay School enrolment policy will be made available to the school community on the school's website.

Dual Enrolments

Eligible students may be dual enrolled in a mainstream school and Portland Bay School at the same time at a suitable time fraction agreed by the Student Support Group and the schools concerned. In these cases the enrolment criteria still applies.

Transition

Prospective students may participate in transition activities at the school to prepare for enrolment under the guidance of the Student Support Group and Portland Bay School. This can be discussed with school staff and the Student Support Group.

Student Transfers

- All eligible students transferring into school will be placed in groups by the principal in consultation with class teachers
- Students will not be able to start at Portland Bay School until eligibility has been established and student files and transfer documents have been lodged
- New student record files will be created using existing material from the student's previous school
- Copies of files for students transferring out will be sent to the relevant school on request

Classes

All students at Portland Bay School are ungraded and students will be placed in classes according to the student's age and needs and the needs of the school.

Designated Transport Area

Eligible students can access student transport if they live in the Designated Transport Area. There is a map of the area in the foyer of the school but it includes Bridgewater, Nelson, Mt Richmond, Dartmoor, Heywood, Digby, Condah, Macarthur and Yambuk.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2028