

Foundation (Prep) Enrolment Information Pack for Parents/Carers

Guidance for parents/carers of children starting
Foundation (Prep) in a government school
in 2024

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Department
of Education

From the Department of Education

Enrolling your child into Foundation (Prep) in 2024

Dear Parents / Carers

Starting school is an exciting and important time for you and your child or children. We want to help make the enrolment process as easy as possible for you.

If your child is turning 5 years old by 30 April 2024 and is eligible to start school next year, it is time to decide where they will go to school.

In Victoria, your child has the right to attend their designated neighbourhood government school (your 'local school'). This right is set out in the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#).

The department's [Find my School](#) website allows you to find your local school based on your permanent residential address. The website is the official and most up to date source of information on school zone maps.

As the Victorian Government supports school choice, you can also apply for a place at a government school that is not your local school. The school will consider your application in line with the department's Placement Policy.

The new Foundation (Prep) enrolment timeline and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in this information pack, will help you understand when and how to enrol your child into Foundation at a government primary school for the 2024 school year.

The Foundation enrolment timeline will only apply to government primary school enrolment. If you wish for your child to attend a non-government school (Catholic or Independent school), please contact individual non-government schools for their enrolment processes.

What you need to do

1. Locate your local school and other nearby government schools on findmyschool.vic.gov.au.
2. Contact a government primary school to book a school tour and learn more about the school and the enrolment application process.
3. Submit an enrolment application to a government primary school **by Friday 28 July 2023**.

You will be notified of the outcome of your application **by Friday 11 August 2023**. If you receive an enrolment offer, you should accept the offer **by Friday 25 August 2023**.

More information

Contact a government primary school if you require more information about the application process or if you need help completing the form.

We wish your child well as they start their school journey and trust that primary school will be a richly rewarding experience.

Foundation (Prep) enrolment timeline 2023-24

2023 Dates	Activity
Term 2: Monday 24 April 2023 – Friday 23 June 2023	
Terms 1 and 2, 2023	Primary schools conduct tours, information sessions and other activities for families seeking Foundation (Prep) enrolment for their child for 2024.
By the start of Term 2, 2023	School zones for the 2024 school year go live on findmyschool.vic.gov.au Parents/carers should go to findmyschool.vic.gov.au to locate their designated neighbourhood school for 2024. The Enrolment Information Pack for Parents/Carers is available to download from Enrolling in Foundation (Prep): vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep .
From Week 1, Term 2 2023	Primary schools may distribute the Enrolment Information Packs to prospective families and their school community.
From Week 1, Term 2, 2023	Enrolment applications open – parents/carers may submit their completed enrolment application to a government primary school from this date.
Term 3: Monday 10 July 2023 – Friday 15 September 2023	
By Friday 28 July 2023	Enrolment applications due – parents/carers submit their completed enrolment application to a government primary school by this date.
By Friday 11 August 2023	Primary schools notify parents/carers in writing of Foundation enrolment outcomes, as per the department’s Placement Policy. This may include a letter confirming enrolment, a letter of offer, or an unsuccessful application letter. Parents/carers sent an unsuccessful application letter may start submitting written appeals to the primary school.
By Friday 25 August 2023	Parents/carers sent a letter of offer return the completed enrolment form by this date, to indicate acceptance of their child’s place.
By Friday 25 August 2023	Closing date for parents/carers to submit a written appeal with the primary school.
By Friday 15 September 2023	Primary schools notify all parents/carers, in writing, of the outcome of their appeal by this date.
Term 4: Monday 2 October 2023 – Wednesday 20 December 2023	
During Term 4, 2023	Primary schools host transition sessions.
By Friday 20 October 2023	Closing date for parents/carers to submit a written appeal with the relevant Regional Director, where they have been unsuccessful with their appeal to the primary school.
By Friday 17 November 2023	Regions notify all parents/carers in writing of the outcome of Regional Director appeals by this date. This only applies to appeals received by the closing date of Friday 20 October 2023.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

NOTE: Your designated neighbourhood government school is referred to as your 'local school' in this section of the document. Your local school is the school your address is in the school zone for. Find your local school on the [Find my School website](#).

Foundation enrolment timeline and resources

1. What is the Victorian government school statewide enrolment timeline for Foundation (Prep)?

The first year of primary school is called Foundation or Prep. The Department of Education has released a Foundation enrolment timeline for all Victorian government primary schools to follow (see page 4). The timeline will help you understand when and how to enrol your child into Foundation at a government primary school for the 2024 school year.

2. When should I enrol my child for Foundation?

Your child must be 5 years old by 30 April in the year that they start school.

Schooling is compulsory for children who have turned 6 years old.

To enrol your child in a Victorian government primary school for the 2024 school year, submit an enrolment application to the school by 28 July 2023.

3. How do I enrol my child in their first year of primary school?

Take these steps to enrol your child in their first year of primary school:

1. Find your local school on the Find my School website findmyschool.vic.gov.au (see question 12).
2. Contact a government primary school to book a school tour or to learn more about the school and the enrolment application process. The school will provide you with the form to complete.
3. Submit an enrolment application for Foundation **by Friday 28 July 2023**.
4. You will be notified of the outcome of your application **by Friday 11 August 2023**. If you receive an enrolment offer, you should accept the offer **by Friday 25 August 2023**.
5. Take part in enrolment information and transition sessions **during Term 4 2023**.
6. Your child will start Foundation **from Tuesday 30 January 2024**.

4. How do I submit an application?

The school will provide you with an application form or enrolment form. You should submit the completed form to the school by Friday 28 July 2023.

You may submit a completed application form for your child to more than one school.

It is recommended that you only complete an enrolment form for the school your child will attend. By completing an enrolment form, you are indicating your acceptance of a place for your child at that school (subject to any further checks or information required by the school).

5. What happens if I miss the enrolment timeframes?

You can apply to enrol your child into Foundation for the 2024 school year at any time from Term 2, 2023.

It is important to follow the statewide timeline to enrol your child in Foundation. The timeline allows schools to plan their classes, staffing and transition activities to ensure your child has the best start to school.

While you are asked to apply by Friday 28 July 2023, applications after this date will still be accepted from those families who miss enrolment timelines, move permanent residence or newly arrive to Victoria.

Applications submitted after 28 July 2023 will be processed by the school as they are received, in accordance with the department's Placement Policy.

6. Who do I contact for help or more information?

The Enrolment Officer or Principal of the primary school you want to apply to can help you with any questions you may have about the enrolment process.

Enrolment offers

7. How do I accept my child's Foundation enrolment offer?

Schools will send offers between Monday 31 July 2023 and Friday 11 August 2023. The letter will include instructions on how to accept your child's offer.

If you receive multiple offers, you should only accept one and then contact those schools that your child will not be attending to let them know you will not be accepting the offer. This is an important step as it impacts schools' staffing, planning and transition activities.

8. What happens if I receive a letter saying my application was unsuccessful?

Your unsuccessful letter will include the next steps, including contacting your local school or nearby government schools to start the enrolment process. You can also appeal the decision (see questions 28-31).

9. What happens if our residential address details change after my child's Foundation enrolment has been accepted?

You must contact the primary school that offered your child a place as soon as possible to inform them of your updated address.

If your new address is out of zone, the offer may be formally withdrawn. In this instance, you will need to contact your new local school or other government schools to seek enrolment.

Designated neighbourhood schools and school zones

10. What is a designated neighbourhood school (referred to as your local school)?

Your local school is generally the government school within closest proximity to your child'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 and Geelong, their local school is measured by a straight line from their permanent address.

If you live in another area, it is measured by the shortest practical route by road and considers access issues.

For more information, please visit: [vic.gov.au/school-zones](https://www.vic.gov.au/school-zones)

11. Is my child guaranteed a place at their local school?

Children of compulsory school age are guaranteed the right to enrol at their local school. This right is set out in 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".

12. How can I find my local primary school and other schools in my area?

The Department of Education has made it simple to find your local school, and other schools in your area with the Find my School website.

1. Enter findmyschool.vic.gov.au into your browser
2. Enter your address under 'Enter your address to get started'
3. Make sure 2024 is selected under enrolment year
4. For Foundation (Prep) enrolment, ensure primary and Prep is selected under school type
5. The map will then show your address, your local school, and contact details for the school
6. If you scroll down, it will also show you the five closest schools.

To start a new search, simply replace the address or school name.

13. My property sits across two/multiple school zones. Which is my local school?

Your child has a right to attend any of those schools as your local school.

14. If my child has two permanent addresses, how is their local school decided?

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

If your child spends the same amount of time at two addresses, both addresses are considered their permanent address. They are able to enrol in either one of the local schools.

For more information and help to determine your address for enrolment, please visit:

vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol

15. Can my child apply to a government primary school that is not our local school?

Yes, you can apply to schools other than your local school. The school will consider your application in line with the Placement Policy (see question 17).

Children are not guaranteed a place at a school that is not their local school.

16. What address do I put down if I have bought or am building a property at a different address to my child's current address?

Complete the form with your **current** address. Once you have moved into your new property, you are entitled to enrol at your new local school, subject to verification of permanent residence.

For more information about determining permanent residence, please see: vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol

The department's Placement Policy

17. What is the department's Placement Policy and priority order of placement?

The Placement Policy is an important tool that schools use to manage enrolments. It:

- Sets out the legal right for students to enrol at their designated neighbourhood school (referred to as your 'local school')
- provides schools guidance on how to prioritise students when they have limited places available (the priority order of placement).

The priority order of placement only applies where parents/carers are seeking enrolment in a school other than their child's local school, and where that school has existing or future capacity concerns.

In exceptional circumstances, a child may be enrolled in a school based on compassionate grounds. This is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement.

For more information, refer to: vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol

18. What changes have been made to the department's Placement Policy?

The Placement Policy has been updated to provide greater clarity for schools and parents/carers, and to support consistent decision-making.

Changes include simplifying the priority order of placement. Applications received from families who reside **outside of the school zone** will now be reviewed based on 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. all other students in order of closeness of their home to the school.

Students cannot be prioritised for enrolment based on curriculum grounds.

There have been no changes made to compassionate grounds in the policy, which states that in exceptional circumstances, a student may be enrolled in a school based on compassionate grounds. Compassionate grounds is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement.

For more information regarding the Placement Policy, including recent changes, please refer to the [Enrolment FAQ for parents and carers](https://vic.gov.au/school-zones) at vic.gov.au/school-zones

19. I can see that siblings are prioritised for enrolment. What is considered a sibling?

The definition of a sibling reflects modern family living arrangements. It includes, but is not limited to:

- both younger and older siblings
- step-siblings residing together at the same permanent address
- 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
- students permanently residing together in the one residence as part of multiple family cohabitation.

To enrol on sibling grounds, the siblings should be residing together at the same permanent address and must be attending the school at the same time.

Where siblings do not reside together on a full-time basis, families may still seek enrolment on sibling grounds. These applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the Charter of Human Rights. These applications may not be prioritised for enrolment.

Enrolling in a primary school

20. Where can I find general information about enrolling in Foundation at a Victorian government school?

For information please visit: vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep

21. What is the difference between an application form and an enrolment form?

The application form is a short, expression of interest form. It only requires information related to enrolment eligibility and supports schools to make enrolment offers in line with the Placement Policy. A school may request that you provide proof of your address as part of your application.

The enrolment form requires additional information to finalise your enrolment for Foundation in the 2024 school year. You will need to supply supporting documentation such as a copy of your child's birth certificate and an Immunisation History Statement.

22. Who may sign the application and enrolment forms?

Where practicable, all parents/carers with parental responsibility for a child should sign the application form and enrolment form.

For the purposes of these forms, a parent/carer includes:

- the parents as set out on the child's birth certificate or as described in a court order
- an informal carer, with a statutory declaration.

Where it is not practicable or possible for parents/carers to sign a single form, you should communicate this to the school who will allow one form to be completed by each parent/carer.

23. Where can I find schools in my area?

To find a full list of schools in Victoria, please see:

- Victorian government schools: findmyschool.vic.gov.au
- Catholic schools: cecv.catholic.edu.au/School-Directory-Search
- Independent schools: is.vic.edu.au/independent-schools/

24. How do I register my child for home schooling in 2024

For information on home schooling please visit the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) website at: vrqa.vic.gov.au/home/Pages/homeeducation.aspx

25. Where can I find information about enrolment for international students?

International students can apply for enrolment in a government school at study.vic.gov.au or apply directly to non-government (Catholic or Independent) schools. If you have any further questions regarding international student enrolments, you can also contact international@education.vic.gov.au.

26. My child has a disability. How can I ensure their primary school will support them?

Every Victorian government school has established programs and practices to support a wide variety of student needs, including students with disability and additional needs. Schools must make reasonable adjustments to ensure students with disability have the same learning opportunities as children without disability.

More information about disability support at school and disability rights and adjustments is available on the department's website: vic.gov.au/disability-and-inclusive-education

27. What help is available to support my child with travel to and from school?

There are a range of transportation options for eligible students, including the:

- School Bus Program
- Students with Disabilities Transport Program (for travel to specialist schools)
- conveyance allowance.

Students may also be eligible for discounted travel through a child myki card or a Victorian Student Pass.

For more information, please see: vic.gov.au/travelling-school

Appeals

28. How do I make an appeal about my child's unsuccessful Foundation enrolment for 2024?

In the first instance, parents/carers should lodge a written appeal with the primary school who has issued the unsuccessful application letter. Accompanied with this letter should be an **appeals form** which provides additional information on appeals and a detailed timeline. If this appeals form is not included with your letter, please request this from the primary school.

This appeals form should be lodged with the primary school by **Friday 25 August 2023**.

It will be considered by the school's enrolment committee and/or Principal and you will receive written notification of the outcome by **Friday 15 September 2023**.

29. What happens if my appeal to the primary school is not successful?

Your unsuccessful appeals letter from the school will outline the next steps in detail.

If you are not satisfied that the school has correctly applied the Placement Policy or adequately considered your circumstances in the assessment of your appeal, you may lodge a further written appeal to the relevant Department of Education Regional Director by **Friday 20 October 2023**.

It is still important you contact your local school, or another school that is able to accept your enrolment, during the appeals process. This will ensure that your child does not miss out on any important transition activities.

Appeals to the Regional Director are considered by a panel of senior department staff that assess the appeal against the Placement Policy. This panel provides a recommendation to the relevant Regional Director who will notify you of the final decision by **Friday 17 November 2023**. This outcome **concludes** the appeal process.

30. Can I lodge an appeal to the relevant Regional Director after the closing date of Friday 20 October 2023?

This date is set to ensure all children can participate in transition activities, which is a vital step in a child's successful start to school.

Any appeals received after this date will only be considered if the relevant Regional Director considers there to be exceptional circumstances. If you wish to lodge an appeal after the closing date, you should contact your regional office for advice.

31. 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: vic.gov.au/office-locations-department-education

Useful links

Please find some useful links below that may be helpful for you as your child starts primary school in 2024:

Find my School – findmyschool.vic.gov.au

Information on school zones – vic.gov.au/school-zones

Enrolling in Foundation (Prep) – vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep

Enrolling in school – vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol

Disability and inclusive education – vic.gov.au/disability-and-inclusive-education

Regional office contacts – vic.gov.au/office-locations-department-education-and-training