

ENROLMENT POLICY



Enrolment Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the enrolment criteria for students seeking enrolment at Montague School and the evidence required to support applications for enrolment. It is intended to provide clarity for the local community on the enrolment criteria and ensure a smooth and supported transition for enrolling students.

By law in Victoria all children from the age of six (6) up until they turn seventeen (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.

Choosing the right school for your child is a major decision. In Victoria, all students with disability can enrol in their local government school or any other government mainstream school if there is sufficient accommodation. All students will be welcomed, and reasonable adjustments made to enable your child to learn alongside their similar-aged peers and achieve their full potential. Refer to the Placement Policy for more information.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are strategies or supports that help students with disability to attend school, learn, participate in school activities and support their wellbeing while at school. Reasonable adjustments can be made in the classroom, in the playground, to the school environment or when students are participating in dedicated events such as excursions or camps. Reasonable adjustments help to reduce the barriers students may experience due to their disability. Reasonable adjustments are made based on the student's individual learning needs. This means that reasonable adjustments made for one student might be different for another, or different in one school to another.

Special School Settings

In addition to mainstream schools, there are a range of government special school settings that provide specialised education for students with specific disability and high needs. There are specialist schools for children who are Deaf, for children with physical disabilities, for children with autism and for children with an intellectual disability. There are 'special schools,' for children whose score on an IQ test is between 50 and 70, and 'special development schools' for children whose score is below 50. There are also schools and alternative programs for children with behavioural issues, and for children who are having difficulties with learning.

Not every child or young person with disability is eligible to be enrolled in a special school setting. 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. The criteria for deciding if a child or young person is eligible to be enrolled in a Special School are outlined in the school's eligibility criteria and enrolment policy. To be eligible the child or young person must meet the specified criteria.

Montague School: Specific Enrolment Criteria

Enrolment at Montague School is based on a student's disability and associated educational needs. Subject to capacity, student intake may be at any stage of the year, providing the student meets all eligibility criteria. All applications for enrolment at Montague School require regional approval.

Montague School is a single-mode Intellectual Disability school with specific IQ requirements and should not be considered an option for students who are or can be enrolled in a mainstream-traditional school. Montague School provides vocational educational programs for students aged 15 to 18.

The following enrolment criteria have been specified and approved by the Regional Director, South Eastern Victoria (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.

Under certain circumstances, a student who does not meet a specialist setting's enrolment criteria may be enrolled as a non-standard enrolment for an approved period. Non-standard enrolments are 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-Eastern Victoria (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:

- Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.
- 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, Montague School may ask for supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a student's permanent residence. Montague 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:

- Checking the electoral roll at an Australian Electoral Commission office or the Victorian Electoral Commission head office.
- Checking with a real estate agent to confirm a rental address.
- 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 Montague School who meets the enrolment criteria, may be approved 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 Requirements

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

- a) A diagnosis of Intellectual Disability from a registered psychologist
- b) A signed psychologist's report from within the last 24 months reporting the results of an IQ test and assessment of adaptive behaviour.

The Department provides assessment services to support 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. Enrolment applications may not be successful if the requested documentation is not provided or invalid.

School Enrolment Panel

Montague School has established an enrolment panel to interview applicants, contact referees and consider the application and associated documentation. The panel comprises the following school staff:

- Business Manager
- Senior Wellbeing Representative
- Senior Teaching Representative
- Education Support Coordinator

Interview

The School Enrolment Panel interviews the applicant to assess their suitability against the following criteria:

- Current school experience.
- Applicant's strengths, likes and goals.
- Alternative schooling options.
- Commitment to education.
- Academic readiness.
- Social and emotional readiness.
- Capacity to integrate successfully in school life.
- Any risk they may pose to safety.
- Child protection and custody issues.
- Explain the nature of the school programs, rules and culture and establish the applicant's willingness to comply with school policies and procedures.
- Discuss support needs, such as the appointment of a mentor, regular monitoring of progress or assistance from the school counsellor/psychologist or other learning support staff.
- Where referees are not appropriate request alternative referees.
- If relevant, seek agreement from the applicant for the panel to access information from government agencies, health professionals or other relevant bodies.

The enrolment panel will inform the applicant that they may be accompanied by a support person, if required.

Appeal Process

Unsuccessful applicants may appeal against the decision of the enrolment panel. The appeal is made in writing to the school principal and sets out the grounds of the appeal. The purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the enrolment criteria and assessment have been applied equitably.

To challenge the outcome of an enrolment application, the following steps must be taken.

1. Appeals are to be made in writing and lodged with the school principal. The school's decision will be communicated to the parent/carer in writing. In assessing the appeal, the school principal will check that the school and department processes have been

followed and applied equitably.

2. If the appeal at the school level is unsuccessful and parents/carers are not satisfied that their appeal has been adequately considered, they are able to escalate this by lodging an appeal in writing to:

Regional Director
South Eastern Victoria Region
PO Box 5, Dandenong, VIC 3175

Communications

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

Relevant Legislation

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)

Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)

Policy Approval and Review

Policy last reviewed	21 February 2024
Approved by	Principal
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