

Placement procedure

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

1. Overview

This procedure provides detailed instructions about the placement of children and young people in a government school and preschool. It makes sure:

- the department meets its obligations to provide access to education to children and young people living in South Australia as per the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#) and the [Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#)
- all children who wish to access a government preschool can do so, while making sure resources are allocated as efficiently as possible.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff in the department when determining placement of children and young people into a government school and preschool.

This procedure should be read along with the [school and preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 714KB\)](#) and the following:

- [admission procedure \(PDF 721KB\)](#)
- [transfer procedure \(PDF 696KB\)](#)
- [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#)
- [year level progression and class placement procedure \(PDF 614KB\)](#).

This procedure applies to children entitled to enrol at preschool the year before starting school and those children with a preschool entitlement from their third birthday (Aboriginal children and Children in Care).

Placement to a universal 3-year-old preschool program is out scope of this procedure. Preschools can refer to the [Universal 3-year-old preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 669KB\)](#) (staff login required).

Families can visit [preschool for 3 year olds](#) for further information.



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4. Detail

4.1. General principles for placement

The following principles are applied when managing placements in a school or preschool:

- Every child and young person has a right to education and an opportunity to attend a local school or preschool near their primary place of residence (home) or accessible via transport.
- Parents have the freedom to send their child to a non-local school or preschool of their choice if accommodation and resources are available at the school or preschool to accommodate them.
- Schools and preschools under enrolment pressure will adopt appropriate strategies and prioritise enrolments for local students. They will work collaboratively within their partnership to make sure resources are allocated as efficiently as possible.
- Selective entry of non-local students through special interest programs will not impact on a school's ability to cater for local demand (and other priority groups, like Enter for Success Strategy).
- The provision of supported or additional programs will not impact on the delivery of a preschool program for children in their eligible preschool year.
- Principals will consider the criteria outlined in this procedure, including the distance from the child's home to the school, curriculum needs of the child, social and family links the child has to the school, and any transportation and location needs of the child when determining whether a child or young person's placement can be managed.
- It's unlawful for schools and preschools to discriminate either directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, age, nationality, culture, disability, religion, gender identity, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, sexual orientation, intersex status, marital or relationship status, and family responsibilities. This does not prevent schools from ensuring fair access through tailored interventions for Aboriginal children or children in care, where such support is necessary to promote equity.
- Equal opportunity is promoted in all government schools and preschools. Schools and preschools must maximise the educational opportunities and outcomes for priority groups, including Aboriginal children and children and young people in care.

4.2. Part A: Local school or preschool

4.2.1. Placement in a local school or preschool

Most children and young people will be offered automatic entry to the local school or preschool nearest to a child or young person's home, unless the department:

- has established [geographic boundaries](#) for the school or preschool via a zone or local catchment area.

- has provided a school bus service or transport allowance to access a bus service, as the child's or young person's home is greater than 5km from their nearest school, as per the [school transport policy \(PDF 385KB\)](#). For more advice on bus routes contact the Transport Services Unit via [edTransport](#) (staff login required).
- has restricted new local enrolments at a school or preschool by implementing capacity management strategies (see the [strategic capacity management section](#) below).

The nearest school (excluding specialised schools or special purpose schools) is measured by road distance from the child or young person's home to the school. Schools and preschools can use the [find a school or preschool tool](#) to determine a student's local school or preschool.

Schools must use caution in outer metropolitan Adelaide and unzoned areas where access to transportation may mean the local school may not be the nearest school listed on the website. For more information refer to the [school transport policy \(PDF 385KB\)](#), or via [edTransport](#) (staff login required).

When a school or preschool opens, closes or amalgamates, the local school or preschool for students to enrol in is determined by the department as per the [amalgamating, closing, opening and naming of preschools and schools procedure \(PDF 411KB\)](#) (staff login required).

4.2.2. Strategic capacity management

Schools and preschools under enrolment pressure must consider the impact of enrolling students living outside their local area. They must make sure they implement appropriate strategies to manage enrolments within the school's accommodation and resources or the preschool's assigned physical capacity and enrolment cap.

For schools, enrolment pressure is calculated according to the school's enrolment capacity. It's assessed on a case-by-case basis by the department. For preschools, enrolment pressure is calculated on their assigned enrolment cap and the service's physical capacity.

4.2.2.1. Managing enrolments

When managing enrolments, a principal or preschool director (director) must:

- communicate the school or preschool's enrolment management strategies to their local partnership, prospective families, their local school community, and nearby services. This communication should be user-friendly, [accessible](#) (see the South Australian Government's [online accessibility policy](#)), promote inclusion and detail the complaints processes available. Also see [publication of zones and catchments](#) section for further information.
- make sure sufficient reserve of places are available to cater for demand from local families, including children and young people that may arrive during the school year. For preschools reserving places, see [appendix 2: preschool enrolment management strategies](#).
- make sure the school operates an enrolment ceiling that has enough allowance for local growth and demand. This includes monitoring and planning for local projected growth, local preschool enrolments, future siblings and transfers of local students following placements in the Intensive English Language Program or New Arrivals Program (IELP or NAP).

The department provides all secondary schools in metropolitan Adelaide an enrolment ceiling provision via the school enrolment and capacity planning tool dashboard during the [statewide registration of interest process](#) (staff login required) for students starting secondary school.

- Make sure the preschool operates within its assigned physical capacity and approved enrolment cap. Enrolments must align as close as possible to a ratio of 1 educator to 10 children per session for preschools with a [preschool category ranking level \(PDF 158KB\)](#) (staff login required) of 1. For preschools with a category ranking of 2 and 3, the ratio is 1 educator to 11 children per session. Also see [preschool staffing allocation and enrolment cap \(PDF 155KB\)](#) (staff login required).
- Make sure to limit students from outside of the local area enrolling at the school. Check and verify the student's home address before confirming the enrolment. See the [admission procedure \(PDF 721KB\)](#). However, Aboriginal families regardless of where they live should be welcomed and given a place wherever possible.
- Children enrolled in a school-based preschool are part of the school and should be able to continue their enrolment into the school. Enrolment offers to non-local preschool children must be endorsed by the principal to make sure the child can be accommodated in reception when the child becomes eligible to start school. This also means the preschool enrolment cap cannot exceed the number of children who can be accommodated in reception the following year.
- maximise the effective use of all available learning areas and class sizes. This may include creating shared classroom areas with other school facilities (for example shared use of out of school hours care (OSHC) service, dedicated language, music or drama rooms). Consider risk mitigation and legislative requirements under the [National Quality Framework](#) (NQF).
- reduce the provision of supported and additional programs offered at the preschool to accommodate all eligible preschool children.

4.2.2.2. Additional capacity support

In consultation with their education director, a principal or director may request a school enrolment capacity analysis to help determine an appropriate course of action to manage enrolments by contacting Asset Planning, Standards and Sustainability Unit at education.AssetPlanning@sa.gov.au.

For schools, a principal who has been managing enrolments as per the strategic capacity management process, may still experience enrolment pressure due to factors such as local population growth. In this case, they can liaise with their education director and Schools and Preschools division to implement additional capacity management strategies such as:

- a [new or amended school zone](#)
- a [capacity management plan \(CMP\)](#)
- [additional accommodation](#) (refer to the Asset Planning, Standards and Sustainability unit) (staff login required).

The department will consider the factors that have contributed to a school being under enrolment pressure in determining the most appropriate capacity management strategy to enable the school to accommodate local families.

A regional or rural school that does not have a neighboring government school within a reasonable distance cannot implement a school zone or CMP. However, these schools must still implement appropriate strategies to prioritise enrolments for their local area and limit non-local students if under enrolment pressure.

4.2.2.3. Preschool staffing and physical capacity adjustments

The education director may approve an increase to a preschool's staffing allocation to ensure the placement of all children seeking to enrol in a government preschool.

An increase in a preschool's staffing allocation may be approved when a preschool:

- has reached their enrolment cap and they have not been able to accommodate all local children
- is unable to refer unplaced children to a nearby preschool with available places
- the demand for preschool exceeds the capacity of the preschool.

Principals or preschool directors can apply to vary the preschool assigned physical capacity, in circumstances where:

- the demand for preschool exceeds the capacity of the preschool
- a child cannot be accommodated in a neighbouring preschool.

For more information see [preschool maximum physical capacity – applying for temporary changes](#) (staff login required).

4.2.3. Geographic boundaries for a school or preschool

4.2.3.1. School zones

A 'school zone' is a defined geographic boundary surrounding a school from which the school accepts its core intake of students.

All metropolitan government secondary schools and a number of primary schools (excluding specialised schools, special purpose schools and specialised education options), have a school zone.

School zones may be implemented, amended or revoked to reflect changes including demand, demographics, school amalgamations, openings, closures, school enrolment capacities, department bus services, administrative boundary changes or policy changes.

The school zone is subject to approval by the Minister. Once the school zone is approved and published in the Gazette, the school must enrol children and young people living in its school zone. However, starting dates for students changing schools (late transfers) throughout the school year may be negotiated by principals as per the [transfer procedure \(PDF 696KB\)](#).

If a school with a school zone is unable to accommodate all children and young people living in its school zone, additional accommodation or further enrolment restrictions may be required by implementation of a capacity management plan (CMP). See [restrictions of local enrolments at a school or preschool](#) section for further information.

4.2.3.2. School catchment areas (for schools without a school zone)

A 'school catchment area' is a geographic area surrounding an unzoned school that is closest by road, as per the [find a school or preschool tool](#), than any other unzoned mainstream government school offering the same year levels.

Schools without a school zone that have multiple schools nearby which offer the same year levels (under 5kms), can use the unzoned catchment area surrounding their school to help determine who their local students are and who they should prioritise and accommodate for enrolment. The school will accommodate all families living in their catchment. If schools are experiencing enrolment pressure they should apply the appropriate local strategic capacity management strategies. See the [managing enrolments](#) section for further information.

Unzoned schools in metropolitan Adelaide use the [find a school or preschool tool](#) to determine the school's catchment area.

In outer metropolitan Adelaide and regional SA, the school catchment area may also include children whose home is greater than 5km from their nearest school, and who can access the school bus service or a transport allowance as per the [school transport policy \(PDF 385KB\)](#).

4.2.3.3. Shared school zones

When a shared zone between 2 or more metropolitan schools is established, families living in the shared area may nominate to attend any school they are zoned for. If there are no places at the chosen school, the child or young person may be referred to enrol at another school in the shared zone.

Where demand from families living in the shared area exceeds places available during the registration of interest process, following automatic acceptance of siblings living in the zone, the remaining in zone applications may be ranked according to the department's [criteria for allocation of points in schools](#) and students are shared between the schools in the shared zone.

Principals in a shared zone will work collaboratively to balance their enrolments and determine the best schooling option for the family, including the accommodation of younger siblings in the future.

4.2.3.4. Preschool local catchment area

Preschool local catchment areas are required in the greater metropolitan Adelaide area. They're also required for preschools in country towns where there's more than one government preschools service available. Education directors may also decide to implement preschool local catchment areas for preschools in nearby communities.

In regional or rural areas where a residential address does not fall within any preschool catchment, the nearest preschool will be allocated as the child's local service, even if the designated preschool has its own defined catchment area.

A principal or director must prioritise enrolments of children living within their local preschool catchment area. Families may choose to enrol their child in another preschool when places are available.

Primary schools with a school-based preschool must make sure the preschool local catchment area aligns with, or is within, the school's geographical boundary (for example school zone or unzoned catchment areas).

A review of a preschool's local catchment area may be initiated by a principal or director in consultation with their local partnership, to make sure it reflects the changing needs of the community. Contact Enrolment, Capacity and Transition Unit at education.ECTU@sa.gov.au for help mapping the proposed or revised preschool local catchment areas.

Changes to preschool local catchment areas must be approved by the local education director and forwarded to Enrolment, Capacity and Transition Unit at education.ECTU@sa.gov.au by the end of term 1 each year. Any families who have lodged a preschool registration of interest for the coming school year, affected by the change of boundary for a local preschool catchment, must be notified as soon as possible.

4.2.3.5. Determining a school's local students

Schools must use the [find a school or preschool tool](#) to determine if a prospective student lives in the school's zone or catchment area. To assist with enrolment enquires at the school a link to the [find a school or preschool tool](#) must be provided on the school's website to ensure consistency and accuracy.

In unzoned areas outside of metropolitan Adelaide the department may offer a school bus service or transport allowance to access a bus service, if a child's home is greater than 5km from their nearest school in line with the [school transport policy \(PDF 385KB\)](#).

For more information or advice on school zones and catchment areas contact the Enrolment, Capacity and Transition Unit.

4.2.3.6. Publication of zones and catchments

Schools and preschools should not create their own version of zone or catchment maps, but should link to the [find a school or preschool tool](#) on the school or preschool's website.

4.2.4. Restrictions of local enrolments at a school or preschool

4.2.4.1. Capacity Management Plan

A capacity management plan (CMP) assists a school to return to or maintain sustainable enrolment numbers, which helps children attend their local school. CMPs are developed based on need, not on the location of the school. CMPs are not unique to South Australia and are used nationally.

A Capacity Management Plan (CMP) may be introduced when a school is experiencing a significant increase in demand from local students and has maximised all available infrastructure and no additional accommodation is recommended. A CMP is developed by the department in consultation with the principal and local education director.

In line with the [Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#) the Minister may publish by notice in the Gazette, any policy in relation to the enrolment of a child at a Government school (for the purposes of this procedure commonly referred to as a CMP).

The enrolment criteria outlined in the CMP may include:

- the maximum school enrolment capacity
- the identification of school zones, where students living in the zone are eligible to enrol
- limitations or conditions on enrolment of students, such as removing automatic entry for some non-local students
- limitations or conditions relating to special interest programs and other services
- a priority order for applications from families living in the school zone (where appropriate).

Enrolment instructions not detailed in the CMP will be managed by the principal in line with this procedure, and the:

- [school and preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 714KB\)](#)
- [admission procedure \(PDF 721KB\)](#)
- [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#)
- [transfer procedure \(PDF 696KB\)](#)
- [year level progression and class placement procedure \(PDF 614KB\)](#).

In circumstances where a child or young person cannot be offered a place within their zoned school that's operating under a CMP, the school will support the child or young person to enrol at a nearby government school. Where the child or young person is directed to a nearby government school, the nearby school must consider the unplaced zoned student a priority for enrolment. For example, the enrolment should be treated similar to their own local students, and a placement should be offered as soon as possible.

The principal is responsible for implementing the CMP and all decisions on enrolments until the CMP is revoked. Once revoked, the principal returns to managing enrolments as per the department's general school and preschool enrolment policy and procedures.

For more information and a listing of schools currently approved to operate under a CMP, refer to the [capacity management plans at schools](#) webpage.

4.2.4.2. Preschool priority of access criteria

When demand from local families exceeds the available places at a preschool, the department's [preschool priority of access criteria](#) must be applied to support the allocation of places.

If the preschool is unable to accommodate a local family, the principal or director must help the family access an alternative nearby preschool. This will involve working collaboratively with the education lead, early childhood and local partnership to identify available places in nearby preschools.

4.3. Part B: Non-local school or preschool

4.3.1. Placement in a non-local school

The following non-local students may be eligible for automatic entry to a school:

- a child or young person with [siblings currently attending the school](#)
- a [child or young person in care](#)
- a [child or young person identified as Aboriginal](#) and participating in a department program
- a [child or young person granted entry due to a special consideration](#).

In addition to the above categories, all schools can accept applications from other non-local students if they have the current and future ability to do so (if it's within their enrolment ceiling).

When demand from non-local families, without automatic entry, exceeds the available places, applications will be considered according to the department's [criteria for allocation of points in schools](#). Applications are ranked from highest to lowest points and offers made on this ranked order.

If a place is offered to a non-local student in a school, principals must inform families before enrolment that:

- attendance to a non-local school will not necessarily entitle the student to access a transport allowance as per the [school transport policy \(PDF 385KB\)](#), a specialised education option or access to a particular program or service offered at the school
- enrolment does not provide automatic entry to a neighbouring secondary school
- siblings of non-local students may not be given priority for enrolment over local students in the future, if there are insufficient places.

4.3.2. Placement in a non-local preschool

For a preschool, when demand from non-local families exceeds the available places, the [preschool priority of access criteria](#) must be applied to support the allocation of places.

4.3.3. Children with siblings currently attending the school

Children who live outside of the school's local (out-of-zone) area with older siblings currently attending the school will receive automatic entry during the [registration of interest process](#) (staff login required) for the coming school year, where:

- the child meets the definition of [sibling](#) described in this procedure
- the child and sibling will be enrolled to attend the school in the same calendar year
- the sibling did not enter the school through a department approved selective entry or panel process (including special interest programs, specialised education option, bi-lingual, alternative placements or alternative curriculum streams)

- the school has not restricted out-of-zone siblings through implementing a department approved [capacity management strategy](#) (for example CMP)

All other siblings may be considered as other non-local applications, and acceptance is based on available places.

For schools with multiple campuses (such as R-12 schools or Roma Mitchell Secondary College Girls Campus) sibling enrolment is not automatic across different campuses. A child or young person may only be guaranteed for enrolment if they will be attending the same campus as their sibling. The acceptance of siblings from other campuses is subject to local demand and the school's capacity to accommodate the additional students.

Schools must make sure all enrolment offers to families selected by the school to enrol and participate in a school's special interest program clearly outline that future non-local siblings will not receive automatic entry to enrol. See [selective entry to special interest programs](#) for further information.

[Specialised schools](#) have their own enrolment criteria. Siblings do not receive automatic entry to enrol at these schools and must apply to the school directly.

4.3.4. Children and young people in care

A child in care will receive automatic entry to enrol at any government preschool or school (across all year levels), regardless of their current residential address. Noting a child in care who need to change schools, outside of a registration of interest process for a major enrolment intake, must follow the process outlined in the [admission procedure \(PDF 721KB\)](#).

[Local Student Support Services](#) (staff login required) and the Department of Child Protection (DCP) will work in partnership with a principal or director to:

- support discussions with a child's caseworker and carer in relation to the child's needs, educational pathway, expectations, responsibilities and commitments, prior to submitting a registration of interest form to start preschool or school. See the [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#) for further information.
- identify the most appropriate placement for a child or young person in care needing to change their current school. See [enrolling a child or young person in care](#) (staff login required) or the 'admission process for a child or young person in care changing schools' section in the [admission procedure \(PDF 721KB\)](#) for further information.
- improve the educational outcomes of children and young people in care.

For advice and support contact Children in Care services at education.ChildrenInCareService@sa.gov.au.

4.3.5. Children and young people who identify as Aboriginal

Children and young people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent or both and live outside of a preschool or school's local area will receive automatic entry to enrol, through the following programs:

- Walkalong initiative – this program supports Aboriginal students who are moving with their families from locations inside and outside of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara and Maralinga Tjuratja

Lands. The program links Anangu families to metropolitan schools and provides advice and support to the schools enrolling these children and young people. More information is available at [about Aboriginal services](#) (staff login required) or contact Aboriginal Education at education.AboriginalServices@sa.gov.au.

- Enter for Success strategy – this strategy provides all Aboriginal children eligible to start preschool or school the ability to apply and be accepted into any preschool or school of their choice through a major enrolment intake (starting preschool, reception, or year 7). See the [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#) for further information.

For a preschool, the [preschool priority of access criteria](#) must be applied to support the allocation of places.

Other non-local Aboriginal children and young people wishing to change schools, outside of a registration of interest process for a major enrolment intake, should be prioritised and accommodated if places are available.

4.3.6. Children granted a special consideration placement

The principal or director can accept the placement of a child at their school or preschool regardless of their home address if they determine it's in the child's best interest to do so, based on the criteria outlined below.

4.3.6.1. Children and young people with significant extenuating family or individual circumstances

The principal or director determines that on the evidence provided the child or young person's wellbeing will be negatively and severely impacted if placed at their local school or preschool. This may include:

- compassionate circumstances, such as chronic [homelessness](#) (staff login required), escaping domestic violence or recently orphaned
- medical reasons, including severe illness and significant mental health concerns or conditions (usually those that have necessitated hospitalisation or medical treatment)
- circumstances that significantly impact on the welfare and or safety of the child or young person. This may include being at serious risk through contact with another student or member of the school or preschool community.

A request to attend a school or preschool due to work commitments, learning difficulties, childcare arrangements or to be with peers is not usually considered a reason for special consideration placement.

If the school or preschool is under significant enrolment pressure, the principal or director must carefully assess the requests for special consideration, and where required consult with their local education director. The principal or director's decision to accept the special consideration placement must be documented.

Schools and preschools must make sure families are aware that the offer of placement into their school or preschool due to special consideration will not result in automatic entry into neighbouring schools (for example secondary school).

4.3.6.2. Children and young people living in shared care arrangements

Generally, a child or young person will attend a school or preschool close to the home of the parent who has the majority of their primary day-to-day care.

If a child or young person lives in a shared care arrangement between 2 primary home addresses, the child or young person can seek placement at either local (zoned) school or preschool.

Alternatively, parents, in agreement, can request their child attends a school mid-way between the 2 homes. In preschools this may include enrolling their child in 2 local preschools.

Although schools will make a reasonable effort to consider placement at the preferred school mid-way for the child or young person, if the request cannot be accommodated, a reasonable alternative may be considered. These requests must be made via the local education director.

The school must request any supporting documents of a child's living arrangements before confirming the enrolment (for example court orders). See [admission procedure \(PDF 723KB\)](#) for more information.

In exceptional circumstances, students may be approved to enrol in more than 1 school at the same time. This may happen if the child or young person spends a large majority of the school year in a location a significant distance between their homes, that a school mid-way is not possible. See the 'shared (dual) enrolment' section in the [transfer procedure \(PDF 268KB\)](#) for more information.

4.3.6.3. Defence School Mentor Program

A child or young person whose parent has documented evidence they are a current serving member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) may be considered for placement at a school with a [Defence School Mentor](#) embedded.

The decision to accept a non-local placement is the responsibility of the principal and is based on available places. If the school is unable to accommodate the request the family will be encouraged to contact their local (zoned) school.

Schools should encourage families to contact their ADF regional education liaison officer (EDLO) on the Defence Member and Family Helpline 1800 624 608 or email MemberAndFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au. EDLOs provide education support to Defence families as they move around the country, providing information, advice, referral and specialised assistance.

4.4. Part C: Specialised education options

Department preschools, children's centres and schools have responsibility for maximising the learning outcomes and wellbeing of all children and students by providing access to high-quality education.

The principal or director must take reasonable steps to ensure all children and young people with disability can attend their local preschool, children's centre or school, on the same basis as any other child or student.

The principal or director must adhere to their obligations under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#). The department provides schools and preschools with additional resources to support students with disability or additional needs, and schools and preschools can request access to departmental specialist support services.

Some students with disability may meet eligibility for a special class, disability unit or special school. For more information see the [specialised education options for children and students with disability placement procedure \(PDF 571KB\)](#) (staff login required), or the [Inclusive Preschool Program and the Briars Preschool placement procedure \(PDF 142KB\)](#) (staff login required).

Where a child or young person exits a specialised education option to enter a local school or preschool, the [general principles for placement](#) must be applied. Placement in a disability unit attached to a school does not guarantee placement into the mainstream school. (Refer to Leaving a specialised education option in the [specialised education options for children and students with disability placement procedure \(PDF 571KB\)](#) (staff login required).

Contact Inclusive Teaching and Learning for more information at education.ITL@sa.gov.au.

4.5. Part D: Education options for overseas students

It's a [Department of Home Affairs](#) requirement that all temporary residents (excluding visitors) maintain adequate schooling arrangements for children and young people. Children or young people that are compulsory school aged are either issued visas or are attached to visas issued to their parents (dependants). There are admission conditions for overseas visitors, temporary work visas, detainee minors or asylum seekers with a bridging visa.

Children and young people who are temporary residents can attend a school or preschool subject to certain conditions based on their visa sub-class. See the [overseas students fact sheet \(PDF 587KB\)](#) (staff login required).

For the purposes of enrolment, the type of visa sub-class determines whether:

- a child or young person from overseas is eligible to enrol as a fee-paying school student, where placement is negotiated by the department. See [International Education Services \(IES\)](#) for further information.
- or is recognised as a local child or young person and able to apply directly to their local school. Refer to [Part A: local school or preschool](#) section.

The type of temporary visa will also determine the charges payable. Refer to [materials and services charge instruction](#) (staff login required).

For visa sub-classes funding and approval requirements refer to the [overseas students fact sheet \(PDF 587KB\)](#) (staff login required) or contact [IES](#) at education.ISP@sa.gov.au or 8226 3402.

4.6. Part E: Specialised schools, special purpose schools, programs and alternative curriculum streams

4.6.1. Specialised schools

Some schools have been established to offer students a specific learning program, in either curriculum or in the nature of the student enrolment. These are referred to as specialised schools. This includes single sex, agricultural, senior colleges (for example year 11 and 12 only), and science and mathematics schools.

Student placement at a specialised school has been developed to meet a particular circumstance and therefore these schools have their own enrolment criteria. Specialised schools do not have a school zone (or local area) and offer enrolment to students living all over South Australia.

Families seeking a placement in a specialised school can approach the school directly for more information.

4.6.2. Special purpose schools

A special purpose school is established to provide primary or secondary education to children and young people or a particular group of children and young people within the community. Education may be provided in various alternative educational settings or in relation to particular languages (for example language schools). Settings may include training centres, prisons, hospitals or other healthcare facilities, or for a group of students with particular needs. The governance arrangements and operations for these schools operate differently to other schools.

Families seeking a placement in a special purpose school can approach the school directly for more information.

4.6.3. Special interest programs and bi-lingual schools

While all schools provide the Australian Curriculum, some schools also offer students a particular focus on a specific interest or talent, such as languages, the arts and sports.

Entry into a special interest program is managed directly by the school, and may include an entry process with an audition, test or interview the year before starting at the school. Refer to the [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#) for more information.

Although a school manages their special interest program, the program must:

- meet the requirements of the Australian Curriculum and where necessary, the educational merit confirmed in consultation with the Curriculum and Learning Division email education.CurriculumAndLearning@sa.gov.au
- be supported by the education director, local partnership, governing council and school community and be consistent with their site learning plan
- have no impact on a school's ability to cater for local demand (where applicable)
- be contained within the school's limits of available accommodation, resources and funding.

4.6.4. Department approved selective entry special interest programs

When a school wants to introduce or change their current special interest program/s to include an approved selective entry process that allows out zone students to apply, the principal will seek approval from the Chief Executive (or delegate).

Before developing an implementation plan, the principal should seek advice from their local education director, the Curriculum and Learning Division at education.CurriculumAndLearning@sa.gov.au and the Enrolment, Capacity and Transition Unit at education.ECTU@sa.gov.au.

The plan should include staffing, financial and accommodation impacts, community consultation and support, [safety management](#) (staff login required) and the education merit of the program.

Principals submit a detailed implementation plan for the program to the department, via their local education director.

Schools must undertake an annual self-review of their programs and risk assessment to make sure the programs remain suitable and relevant for staff and students. The department may initiate a review of a school's special interest program periodically.

4.6.5. Alternative curriculum framework stream

Along with the Australian Curriculum, some schools also offer an alternative curriculum framework stream. For example Steiner, Montessori and International Baccalaureate as per the [curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting: early childhood services to year 12 policy \(PDF 620KB\)](#).

The principal must seek approval from the Chief Executive if they wish to introduce an alternative curriculum framework stream. The principal will seek approval by submitting a detailed implementation plan for the alternative stream. For more information contact the Curriculum and Learning Division at education.CurriculumAndLearning@sa.gov.au.

4.6.6. Supported programs in preschools

Within the existing preschool staffing allocation and physical resources, preschools may deliver additional programs or activities that support the development, learning, health and wellbeing of the child and family. When developing supported programs, consultation should occur with the governing council, education director and partnership to make sure the program meets the needs of the community.

The principal or director must make sure the supported program complies with any requirements under the [Education and Care Services National Law](#), and [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). Any programs offered, that are within scope of the national law and regulations, will be included as part of the preschool's assessment and rating process. Contact Regulation and Compliance at education.NQFEnquiries@sa.gov.au for more information.

Supported programs must be reviewed and a [safety management](#) (staff login required) risk assessment completed on an annual basis to make sure the program remains relevant and does not impact on the provision of the preschool program.

A minimal contribution to cover the cost of any additional resources (excluding staffing) may be charged to families participating in the program. This must take into account the hours offered and the preschool contribution. Failure to contribute should not be used as grounds to exclude the participation of a child or family.

Supported programs are delivered within the operating hours of the preschool. Children attending a supported program are not considered an enrolment of the preschool program.

4.7. Part F: External education and home education

Open Access College gives students who are unable to regularly attend school access to an external education program or online learning to studies not available at their current school. This is sometimes referred to as an external education and conditions for students eligible to enrol is detailed in the [Open Access College enrolment policy \(PDF 223KB\)](#). For general questions call 1800 882 328 or email Student.Services805@schools.sa.edu.au.

Families can choose to educate their children at home by applying for an exemption from attending school. The [guide to home education in South Australia \(PDF 1.6MB\)](#) explains the process and requirements, and parents considering home education should be encouraged to read this document.

The principal manages applications for home education as per the [exemption from school procedure \(PDF 646KB\)](#) (staff login required). For more information contact Home Education at education.HomeEducation@sa.gov.au. For general exemption queries email education.StudentExemptions@sa.gov.au.

4.8. Part G: Application for placement

A preschool or school will generally receive most of their applications for enrolment through a major enrolment intake for the coming year (for example preschool, first year of primary and secondary school). These applications are also known as a registration of interest.

Applications outside of major enrolment intakes, are ad hoc and usually occur when a child is a late application or applies to change preschool or school (also known as a transfer request).

When deciding whether to enrol a child or young person, the [general principles for placement](#) must be applied. Principals and directors must work in partnership with families to identify any adjustment and support requirements to assist the student's inclusion.

4.8.1.1. Accepting an application

The principal or director must make sure:

- Enrolment offers align to the approved timelines for the coming major enrolment intake as outlined in the [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#).
- An application from a child or young person eligible for placement outside of a registration of interest process (such as interstate transfer) are acknowledged and accommodated as soon as possible. See the [transfer procedure \(PDF 268KB\)](#).
- Responding to an application is not delayed while operational considerations, such as a student's starting date, finalising other enrolments and subject choices are determined. These can be negotiated with the family during the pre-enrolment process. See [admission procedure \(PDF 723KB\)](#) for more information.

4.8.1.2. Declining an application

The principal or director may decline an application for enrolment if:

- the child or young person does not meet the requirements for placement as set out in this procedure and there are no available places to accommodate the request, or
- the child or young person is not eligible to enrol as per the [school and preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 724KB\)](#).

If the school or preschool is unable to offer a place to a non-local child or young person, the school or preschool must advise the applicant as soon as possible. If the school has a non-local waiting list, non-local families may request their child's name be included for consideration if a place becomes available in the future.

When a placement is declined, the principal or director must document and appropriately file the reasons. Families may request the reasons in writing from the principal or director, who should reply in a timely manner and provide them with a copy of the reasons recorded. As part of the response the principal or director should encourage them to discuss any concerns.

If anyone considers their application for enrolment was not assessed in a fair manner or was contrary to the department's policies or procedures, they must be advised of the [complaint management policy \(PDF 360KB\)](#).

They can also contact the Customer Feedback unit by using the [department's online feedback and complaints form](#) or by phone (free call) 1800 677 435. See [feedback and complaints about a school or preschool](#) for further information.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. Minister for Education, Training and Skills

The Minister (or delegate) may, by written notice, grant an exemption from attendance or participation as per the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#).

May publish, by notice in the Gazette, a policy in relation to the enrolment of a child in a Government School (for example, Capacity Management Plan) to help manage enrolment numbers.

May, by written notice in the Gazette, vary or revoke a policy in relation to the enrolment of a child in a Government school.

May approve school zones for schools to help manage growth and demand for enrolments.

5.2. Chief Executive

Approve applications to introduce alternative curriculum frameworks.

May direct a student be enrolled in a specific school if needed.

May vary or revoke, in writing, a direction to enrol in a specific school or specific kind of school.

Direct an adult person to be enrolled in a specific school or specific kind of school.

5.3. Parent

Make sure that when their child is of compulsory school age or compulsory education age, the child is enrolled at a school. Where appropriate, seek an approved exemption for their child, or (in the case of a child of compulsory education age) in an approved learning program.

Provide the principal or director with all information requested in a timely manner, to help determine placement and enrolment for their child.

5.4. Principal or Preschool Director

Manage the day-to-day operations of the school or preschool, including enrolments. The principal or director must:

- manage processes to acquire necessary resources and facilities to accommodate eligible students
- make sure relevant enrolment information is communicated to their local community, families and prospective applicants
- maintain accurate and complete enrolment data
- manage placement into the school or preschool in a transparent manner without discrimination or prejudice
- actively engage with prospective families who are requesting enrolment (where appropriate)
- make sure enrolments proceed in line with departmental policy and procedures.

5.5. Education Director

Make determinations in relation to disputes that cannot be resolved at the school and preschool level.

Make sure principals or directors manage placements in line with departmental policies and procedures.

Endorse special interest program implementation plan when departmental approval is required (for example selective entry).

Approve preschool local catchment areas.

Approve adjustments to a preschool's enrolment cap or assigned physical capacity.

Consult with principals with a current CMP in relation to requests for special consideration enrolment.

Consider requests relating to children and young people living in shared care arrangements for a mid-way school.

Consult with directors on the delivery of additional support programs or activities.

Identify schools with unsustainable enrolments to reduce the risk of schools reaching or exceeding its enrolment capacity.

5.6. EALD program manager

Plan for future IELP or NAP provision in response to short and long-term settlement trends.

Inform schools of enrolment trends that may impact on the school's total student enrolment capacity and future enrolments.

Determine the boundary areas for IELP or NAP centres to manage growth and demand for enrolments.

5.7. Education Lead, Early Childhood

Provide advice to principals or directors in the interpretation of preschool placement requirements.

Support preschools to manage enrolment pressures.

Provide advice about the effective allocation of preschool staffing resources to accommodate all eligible preschool enrolments within a partnership. This includes advice about the availability of places, and alignment of enrolments with required educator to child ratios.

Support preschools in partnerships to develop agreed local catchment areas.

5.8. Student Support Services (team leader)

Work with the school or preschool to facilitate access and local support for students with disability and additional needs.

Coordinate the enrolment and necessary supports for children and young people in care.

5.9. Department of Child Protection (caseworker)

Liaise with the child's carer, student and the local [Student Support Services](#) to determine the child or young person's preschool or schooling options and education support requirements.

5.10. Priority Learners Directorate

Provide advice in the interpretation and implementation of school enrolment requirements determined by the Minister and the department.

Make sure that these procedures are compliant and up to date with relevant legislative and state government obligations. Make sure the rules and criteria for determining which school a child or young person will be enrolled in are considered as per the department's general principles for placement.

Provide advice to principals and education directors on capacity management strategies to support schools that are experiencing, or are projected to experience, enrolment pressure.

Provide advice to principals to plan for enrolments to make sure the school operates an enrolment ceiling that has enough allowance for local growth or demand.

Develop and seek approval from the Minister (or delegate) to establish, amend or revoke school zones and capacity management plans.

Where a child or young person cannot meet the education participation requirements, issue an exemption certificate on behalf of the Minister.

5.11. Strategy and Performance

Monitor school enrolment trends, particularly in the major enrolment intake year levels of reception and year 7, school capacities and student location data. This will provide insights to help identify schools that are under or over capacity. It allows for evidence-based decision making and monitoring to optimise the use of the department's schools.

Identify schools with unsustainable enrolments to reduce the risk of a school reaching or exceeding its enrolment capacity.

5.12. Infrastructure division

Provide advice to the Executive Director, Infrastructure regarding when and where new or expanded schools are required.

Project manage the provision of additional accommodation.

Calculate school enrolment capacities, by undertaking functional analysis.

5.13. International Education Services (IES)

Manage the enrolment and placement of full fee-paying overseas students into SA government schools. The department is registered to deliver education to overseas students under the:

- [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#)
- [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 \(Cth\)](#).

5.14. Quality Preschools directorate

Provide advice to education lead, early childhood, principals, or directors on interpreting and implementing preschool requirements in relation to enrolments, enrolment caps, and ratios via contact education.PreschoolPolicyAndAdvice@sa.gov.au.

6. Definitions

6.1. automatic entry

If the child or young person meets the eligibility requirements for placement, the school will accommodate the enrolment as soon as possible.

6.2. best interest of the child

Consideration of the long-term and short-term welfare concerns for a child or young person, such as their safety and wellbeing, intellectual, cultural, social and emotional needs, aspirations and abilities.

6.3. capacity management plan (CMP)

A school specific enrolment criterion approved by the Minister. It allows a school to restrict enrolments, including those in their zoned area. The CMP is established in line with the [Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#).

6.4. caseworker

A person allocated to children or young people in care by the Department for Child Protection (DCP).

6.5. catchment area (school)

A geographic area surrounding an unzoned school that's closest by road than any other unzoned government school (excluding specialised schools, special purpose schools and specialised education options) offering the same year levels.

6.6. child or young person

Persons under 18 years of age.

6.7. children and young people in care

Where a child or young person is subject of a custody or guardianship order, under the [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(SA\)](#).

This includes the following care arrangements:

- where a child or young person is under the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection
- where there is an order granting a specified person care of a child (previously referred to as Other Person Guardianship)
- Voluntary Custody Agreements

Where a child or young person is under registered child protection orders from other states.

Where a child or young person is an unaccompanied refugee minor under the [Immigration \(Guardianship of Children\) Act 1946 \(Cth\)](#) with guardianship delegated from the Minister for the Department of Home Affairs to the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection.

6.8. de facto relationship

The relationship between two persons (who may be of the same or opposite sex) who, although not legally married to each other, live together as a couple on a genuine domestic basis.

6.9. discrimination

Treating a person in a way that results in that person or their child receiving less favourable treatment because of their gender, nationality, culture, disability, religion, gender identity, pregnancy or potential

pregnancy, sexual orientation, intersex status, marital or relationship status, and family responsibilities as defined in the:

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#).

6.10. EALD

English as an additional language or dialect program.

6.11. enrolment cap (preschool)

The number of places that a preschool may accept enrolments based on the service's approved staffing allocation.

6.12. enrolment ceiling (school)

The number of students the school can accommodate to ensure places for forecasted siblings and in-zone growth within the school's enrolment capacity.

6.13. enrolment ceiling provision

A department allocated number of enrolments a secondary school can take as part of the statewide registration of interest process for students starting secondary school.

6.14. enrolment pressure

When demand for enrolment is greater than places available at the school or preschool.

6.15. entitled preschool program

An approved early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year before they start schooling, or as defined within the [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#).

Preschools may also be referred to as a kindergarten, school-based preschool, Children's centre, children's centre for early childhood development and parenting, early learning centre, child parent centre, childhood service centre or integrated children's centre.

Under the [National preschool reform agreement](#) a child may attend a preschool for 600 hours in the year before starting full time school delivered over 40 weeks across 4 terms. Aboriginal children or children who are or have been in care are entitled to commence a preschool program any time following their third birthday and are not limited to major enrolment intakes.

Variations to a preschool entitlement, including withdrawal, may be approved by the Lead Director, Preschools and Early Childhood Services on a case-by-case basis.

6.16. exemption

A formal certificate issued by the Minister or delegate exempting a child or young person from attending school permanently or for a nominated period of time.

6.17. guardian

A person who has legal guardianship or custody of a child.

Where a child in care is placed under the guardianship of the Chief Executive by court order, the Chief Executive is the lawful guardian of the child or young person. The DCP case worker is responsible for making sure a child or young person is enrolled in school. For more information see the [Department for Child Protection \(DCP\)](#).

6.18. in loco parentis

A person acting in a parental style relationship with a child, where the person has intended to place themselves in the position of a parent toward a child and has assumed the same duty and authority as a parent with respect to the nurturing, control and protection of a child. A person in loco parentis may include a person:

- in a de facto relationship with a child's biological parent where they have assumed responsibility for the child
- who has taken over care of a child after the death of both biological parents, or where there has been a family breakdown and the child is estranged from both biological parents
- who is a kinship carer for the child / children
- in an informal fostering arrangement.

This person does not have to assume any or all financial responsibility for a child to satisfy this definition.

6.19. local preschool catchment

A geographic area surrounding a preschool from which the preschool accepts its core intake of children.

6.20. mid-way

For children or young people in shared care arrangements between their parents and who have evidence of more than one primary place of residence (home), it's an appropriate school in or towards the middle of the 2 home addresses (via road).

6.21. parent

For the purposes of this procedure, the term 'parent' refers to all persons responsible for the child. A person responsible for the child means a person who is the child's:

- biological parent, adoptive parent or other person recognised as a parent if the child was conceived following a fertilisation procedure or under a surrogacy arrangement

- guardian
- person standing in loco parentis.

This does not include a person who has had their legal custody, guardianship or responsibility for the child removed by a Court, Act or Law. As an example, a biological parent who has had their custody, guardianship or parental responsibility for the child removed by a parenting order made under [Family Law Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#) is not a person responsible for the child.

6.22. partnership

A collective of geographically defined schools and preschools, and the communities they serve. This collective is called the education and child development local partnership. All government preschools and schools are part of the local partnership model.

6.23. physical capacity (preschool)

The assigned physical capacity to each preschool service, based on the available space, accessible toilets and design of individual sites.

6.24. placement

The act of prioritising offers for enrolment and allocating children or young people to a particular preschool or school.

6.25. preschool category ranking

Priority level assigned to a preschool to give an indication of the degree of social disadvantage and geographical isolation a service may have. There are 3 levels of ranking. Category 1 reflects the services with the highest need and category 3 those services with the lowest need.

6.26. primary place of residence

The permanent residential home where the child or young person primarily lives in South Australia.

Children or young people in shared care arrangements may have more than one primary place of residence (home).

6.27. reasonable effort

Means the efforts that any reasonable person would use to comply with the obligation to provide a child or young person the opportunity to engage in learning.

6.28. reception

The first year of schooling in South Australia.

6.29. registration of interest

A formal expression for a child or young person to apply to enrol to attend a school or preschool for the coming enrolment intake. This is not an enrolment but an application process.

6.30. school enrolment capacity

The number of students that can be accommodated in the school's existing learning areas.

6.31. school zone

A defined geographic boundary surrounding a school from which the school accepts its core intake of students. School zones are a tool that help schools manage enrolments within their school enrolment capacity and make sure families have priority access to their local school.

Where a school zone description states 'bounded by' or 'within' it means residential addresses on the inside of a boundary are considered in the zone (for example one side of the road). Addresses on the other side of the boundary are generally not included (unless the description refers to 'both sides' of a road).

6.32. shared care arrangements

Children or young people who spend specific amounts of time with each parent are considered to be in a shared care arrangement. Each parent with care for the child or young person may spend an amount of time with the child or young person throughout the year, depending on what has been agreed to by the parties or allocated by a Court.

6.33. sibling

A person who is:

- a biological or adoptive sibling of the current enrolled child or young person irrespective of their home address (with evidence of at least one biological or adoptive parent in common)
- a child or young person whose home is the same as that of the enrolled student's and whose parent is the partner (including de facto relationship) of the enrolled student's parent. Parents will need to provide evidence that shows both parties are in a genuine relationship and that the children or young people have the same home
- a child or young person officially in care or foster care and living at the same place of residence with the enrolled child or young person.

6.34. supported programs in preschools

A program delivered by departmental staff within the existing preschool staffing allocation and physical resources of the preschool, designed to support the development, learning, health and wellbeing of the child and or family.

6.35. transfer

The act or process of moving a student from one school or preschool to another.

7. Appendices

[Appendix 1: Criteria for allocation of points in schools](#)

[Appendix 2: Preschool enrolment management strategies](#)

[Appendix 3: Preschool priority of access criteria](#)

8. Supporting information

[Capacity management plans at schools](#)

[Find a school or preschool tool](#)

[Guide to home education in South Australia \(PDF 1.6MB\)](#)

[Homelessness](#) (staff login required)

[Materials and services charge instruction](#) (staff login required)

[Overseas students fact sheet \(PDF 587KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Preschool category ranking level \(PDF 158KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Preschool staffing and enrolment cap fact sheet \(PDF 155KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Safety management](#) (staff login required)

[Specialised education options for students with disability](#) (staff login required)

8.1. Related legislation

[Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(SA\)](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)

[Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011 \(SA\)](#)

[Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)

[Family Law Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)

[Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)

8.2. Related policies

[Admission procedure \(PDF 723KB\)](#)

[Complaint management policy \(PDF 360KB\)](#)

[Curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting: early childhood services to year 12 guideline \(PDF 721KB\)](#)

[Curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting: early childhood services to year 12 policy \(PDF 620KB\)](#)

[Exemption from school procedure \(PDF 646 KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Inclusive Preschool Program and the Briars Preschool placement procedure \(PDF 142KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Open Access College enrolment policy \(PDF 223KB\)](#)

[Registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#)

[School and preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 714KB\)](#)

[School transport policy \(PDF 385KB\)](#)

[Specialised education options for children and students with disability placement procedure \(PDF 571KB\)](#)
(staff login required)

[Transfer procedure \(PDF 696KB\)](#)

[Universal 3-year-old preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 669KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Year level progression and class placement procedure \(PDF 614KB\)](#)

9. Record history

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9.1. Approvals

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Policy Officer: Manager, Enrolment Policy

Policy sponsor: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Responsible Executive Director: Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: 1 April 2026

Next review date: 1 April 2029

9.2. Revision record

Version: 2.2

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: 1 April 2026

Review date: 1 April 2029

Amendment(s): Minor update to preschool local catchment area – clarification for families in rural and regional areas where address does not fall within any catchment.

Version: 2.1

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: 17 December 2025

Review date: 17 December 2028

Amendment(s): Minor update for new template, change hyperlinks to public webpage links where policies are on public facing education website.

Version: 2.0

Approved by: Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools

Approved date: 15 August 2025

Review date: 15 August 2028

Amendment(s): Preschool priority of access updated to include the Enter for Success strategy and distance calculator. Updated hyperlinks and email addresses. Clarified existing policy positions.

Version: 1.8

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: September 2024

Review date: September 2027

Amendment(s): Minor update to capture new name for Preschool Policy team and amendments to preschool local catchment area responsibilities and sibling criteria for specialised schools.

Version: 1.7

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: July 2024

Review date: July 2027

Amendment(s): Minor update to amend broken hyperlinks to policy, updated defence school mentor program information and definitions for consistency with other enrolment policy and procedures. Minor amendment to preschool priority of access, removal of transitional arrangement for children where a sibling gained entry via selective entry and further information regarding leaving specialised education options (Part C).

Version: 1.6

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: 12 March 2024

Review date: 12 March 2027

Amendment(s): Added link to distance calculator in 'criteria for allocation of points in schools. Updated hyperlinks. Converted to PDF and policy information pages adapted as appendices.

Version: 1.5

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: 9 October 2023

Review date: 9 October 2026

Amendment(s): Removed reference on 'preschool priority of access' page to enrolment offers occurring in 2 rounds to ensure consistency with updated 'registration of interest process procedure'.

Version: 1.4

Approved by: Director, Conditions for Learning

Approved date: 2 June 2022

Review date: 2 June 2025

Amendment(s): To provide further clarification on description for 'Children granted a special consideration placement.

Version: 1.3

Approved by: Director, Conditions for Learning

Approved date: April 2022

Review date: April 2025

Amendment(s): Update of terminology and minor amendments, including the remove of year 7 into HS and references to year 8.

Version: 1.2

Approved by: Director, Conditions for Learning

Approved date: 1 April 2021

Review date: 1 April 2024

Amendment(s): Incorporation of *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* and Amendment Bill.

Version: 1.1

Approved by: Executive Director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools

Approved date: 22 June 2020

Review date: 22 June 2023

Amendment(s): Incorporation of *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* and *Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020* provisions. New branding applied to document, published as HTML document on EDi, edited for plain English in consultation with Online Communications. Clarified school zones, local preschool catchments and preschool capacity management strategies to assist schools and preschools.

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Chief Operating Officer

Approved date: 16 April 2019

Review date: 16 April 2022

Amendment(s): The new document amalgamates school and preschool enrolment procedures related to the placement of children and young people within an education setting.

10. Contact

Priority Learners Directorate

Email: education.SchoolsAndPreschools@sa.gov.au

11. Appendix 1: Criteria for allocation of points in schools

If a school is able to offer enrolment to non-local students (other than those who meet the criteria for automatic entry listed in [placement in a non-local school](#) he placement procedure) however the demand for enrolment at the school exceeds places available, the school will consider:

- the distance from the child's home to the school
- any curriculum needs of the child
- any social and family links the child has to the school
- any transportation and location needs of the child.

It's recommended that a school, through their registration of interest process, allocate points for each category for their non-local student applications. The allocation of points can also be applied where demand from families living in a shared zone exceeds places available.

It's recommended schools rank each category as follows:

11.1. Distance

The shortest distance between the school and the student's home address by road should be calculated. The closer the child's home to the school the higher the points allocated. The maximum number of points allocated in this category is 20. Use the [distance calculator](#) to determine the allocation of points based on the distance between a child's home address and school by road.

During the statewide transition process for starting secondary school, distance points are calculated by the department. Refer to the [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#).

Curriculum

This category relates to a non-core specific curriculum offering that is not available at the local school or through open access college (for example language, arts, drama).

This category excludes special interest programs where the school is approved to undertake their own selective entry process the year before starting at the school.

Points are allocated based on the child's previous studies and participation in the specific educational focus, with the maximum number of points allocated in this category being 4.

11.2. Social and family links

Social and family links refers to children who have a particular kinship or family links to students already attending the school. This includes current friendship, after school or supported after school care, old scholars for immediate family members and peer groups.

The maximum number of points allocated in this category is 1.

11.3. Transport or location convenience

One point may be allocated if the desired school is closer than the zoned school. Similarly, 1 point may be allocated in situations where there's public transport difficulties associated with attending the zoned school.

The maximum number of points allocated in this category is 1.

11.4. Special consideration significant extenuating family or individual circumstances

Requests for special consideration placement, such as disability or medical needs, may be granted where there's evidence that prohibits enrolment at the student's local school (see see [children granted a special consideration placement](#) in the placement procedure). If the special consideration placement is not approved, the application does not receive additional points outside of those listed above.

12. Appendix 2: Preschool enrolment management strategies

All preschools must endeavour to provide places for children living within the preschool local catchment area as a priority.

A preschool experiencing enrolment pressure is required to implement strategies to manage their enrolments making sure all local applications are prioritised. When under enrolment pressure, consideration should be given to reserving places for local children.

12.1. When not to reserve places

If the preschool has a history of meeting all demands for enrolments then the service is not required to reserve places for eligible preschool children.

In rural communities where there's no alternative government preschool, all eligible preschool enrolments may be confirmed. The preschool's staffing and enrolment cap may be amended to accommodate all eligible preschool children. If additional staffing is required to ensure compliance with the national educator-to-child requirements, a preschool staffing adjustment form must be submitted to People and Culture Operations at education.HR@sa.gov.au.

12.2. When to reserve places

If local demand for a preschool is at or nearing the assigned enrolment cap, the preschool is experiencing enrolment pressure. A preschool would generally be under enrolment pressure if 90% of their vacancies, as defined by the assigned enrolment cap, had been filled by children living within their preschool local catchment area, at the end of first round of enrolment offers.

When a preschool is experiencing enrolment pressure, the principal or director may select to reserve the remaining unfilled places to accommodate eligible preschool children, presenting to enrol at a later date.

A principal or director may also select to reserve up to 10% of their enrolment places when enrolment trends over the last 3 years demonstrate local families enrolling after enrolment offers.

12.3. Accessing reserved places

Eligible preschool families can access reserved places at any time. If places remain before the first day of the school year, the places may be offered to non-local families from the preschool's waiting list.

When a child cannot be offered a place within their local preschool and has been directed to a nearby preschool with reserved places, this child's enrolment must be considered a priority and a reserved place offered.

Reserved places must only be held until the start of the school year, unless consultation has occurred with the partnership and education director or the principal or director has knowledge or evidence of:

- eligible Aboriginal children and children in care, identified to enrol after the start of the school year
- history of local families presenting early in the school year

- interstate transfers moving into the area, including defence force families.

12.4. Preschool staffing adjustment

To accommodate all eligible preschool children, a preschool's staffing and enrolment cap may be amended, or children may be offered enrolment at a nearby preschool with available places. The education director or their delegate is responsible for approving all requests to amend a preschool's staffing allocation.

13. Appendix 3: Preschool priority of access

In South Australia, most children enrolled in a preschool will live within the preschool local catchment area. Acceptance into a particular preschool is subject to the preschool's capacity and available resources.

This priority of access applies to entitled preschool children only (such as enrolling the year prior to starting school). For the priority of access for children through a universal 3-year-old preschool program, see the [universal 3-year-old preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 669KB\)](#) (staff login required).

13.1. Aboriginal children and children in care

Eligible children who identify as Aboriginal through the department's Enter for Success strategy and children in care can access and enrol at any government preschool regardless of their home address. Wherever possible, an Aboriginal child and/or a child in care will have the highest priority of access and be offered enrolment.

Aboriginal children or children in care continue to be entitled to access a preschool program any time following their 3rd birthday. These children do not need to participate in a major enrolment intake. If no places are available at a family's first nominated preschool, the child may need to be placed elsewhere (local preschool or nearby preschool with capacity) until a place becomes available and a transfer can be arranged to the preferred preschool. This process will be closely supported by the preschool leader and Education Lead, Early Childhood.

See [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#) for further information on the Enter for Success strategy.

Once enrolled an Aboriginal child or child in care can continue at the preschool until they either commence school or until they turn 6 years of age. The child is included in the preschool's enrolment cap for the entirety of their enrolment. For information on preschool entitlement see the [school and preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 714KB\)](#).

Offers for each enrolment intake

There are two major enrolment intakes for children enrolling in preschool the year prior to starting school. The first intake occurs at the beginning of year term 1 (intake 1) and the second intake at the beginning of term 3 (intake 2). See registration of interest process (enrolment) procedure (PDF 716 KB) for further information.

13.2. Applications from local families (priority of access)

After offering enrolment to Aboriginal children and children in care, preschools will prioritise enrolment to families living in their local catchment area. If more registrations of interest for a preschool are received from local families than available places, then the preschool will apply a priority order to applicants. Places will be offered based on whether any, all or a combination of the following applies:

1. the child has previously been in care
2. the child has been granted enrolment due to special or extenuating circumstances – in consultation with the Local Education Team

3. other considerations in the following order:
 - the distance of the child’s residence from the preschool (kms by road)
 - the length of time the child has lived in the preschool local catchment area
 - the child has siblings currently enrolled in the school or service
 - the family currently attends programs at the service.

13.3. Applications from local families unable to be accommodated

Education Lead, Early Childhood in consultation with site leaders will identify available preschool options within the partnership to accommodate all local children unplaced after enrolment offers.

A child who cannot be offered a place within their local preschool and is directed by the partnership to a nearby preschool must be prioritised for placement over other non-local families. In circumstances where the preschool has reserved places, a reserved place must be offered.

13.4. Applications from non-local families

If the preschool has places available after offering enrolment to priority groups (such as Aboriginal children, children in care, local children, and unplaced local families referred by the partnership) places may be offered to children living outside of the preschool local catchment area.

When more registrations of interest for the preschool are received from families living outside of the preschool local catchment area than available places, places will be offered based on the following priority order:

1. the child has previously been in care
2. the child has been granted enrolment due to special or extenuating circumstances – in consultation with the Local Education Team
3. other considerations, in the following order:
 - the distance of the child’s residence from the preschool (kms by road)
 - the child has siblings enrolled in the school or service
 - transportation needs
 - the family currently attends programs at the service.

For special consideration placement refer to see [children granted a special consideration placement](#) in the placement procedure.

13.5. Distance calculator

Use the [preschool distance calculator](#) to determine the distance between a home address and preschool by road.