

# Policy

## School Enrolment Policy

Please note this policy is mandatory and staff are required to adhere to the content

*This document is currently under review. Please direct any queries regarding this document to the policy officer listed in Table 1.*

**DECD14/14663**

### Summary

The School Enrolment Policy outlines the requirements for enrolling children and young people in DECD schools.

Table 1 - Document details

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<b>Policy officer (phone)</b>	8226 1071
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Date	Version	Revision description



# DECD SCHOOL ENROLMENT POLICY

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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## 1. Age Eligibility

As per the Department of Education and Children's Services Administrative Instructions and Guidelines, children are not required to attend school until they are six years old, and they may not be admitted before they are five, except into a child parent centre.

## 2. Early Entry - Children who turn five just after the school term starts

Children that turn five within two weeks of a term commencing may be permitted to enrol and attend school provided that:

- The child does not attend the site until they turn five.
- The principal agrees to enrol the child at the site as soon as they turn five (as this decision is to be made at the principal's discretion).
- The school is not under enrolment pressure in the year level requested.

As this is a local management decision, each individual principal is responsible for making a decision in this regard.

Early entry will cease in 2014 when the Same First Day policy comes into effect in all DECD schools, with the exception of identified gifted and talented students. For further information regarding Same First Day, please go to page 4 of this policy document.

## 3. Length of Learning from Reception to Year 2

It is departmental policy that children enrolling in Government schools have between eleven and fourteen terms in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. As a guide, children will progress according to the following pattern:

- Children admitted at the beginning of first term will have 12 terms, that is, three years in junior primary.
- Children admitted at the beginning of second term will have 11 terms.
- Children admitted at the beginning of third term will normally have 14 terms.
- Children admitted at the beginning of fourth term will normally have 13 terms.

In exceptional circumstances the length of time that particular children admitted in term 3 and term 4 will spend in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes and the ages at which they commence each level may be varied through discussion between parents and teachers and the principal with advice from other professionals, if appropriate. The principal, however has final say over which year level a child should be enrolled.

The developmental needs of the child linked to the SACSA Framework including such matters as the child's maturity, social, emotional and any special needs (both physical and intellectual) need to be taken into account when determining the progression policy for an individual child.

#### 4. Age and Approximate Year Level Groupings

Children usually start school when they turn five. The year level groupings (which are approximates only) from age five are usually as follows:

Age	Year Level
5	Reception
6	1
7	2
8	3
9	4
10	5
11	6
12	7
13	8
14	9
15	10
16	11
17	12

#### 5. Same First Day Policy

All children starting preschool education in 2013 will do so at the beginning of the year. It will generally no longer be possible to enrol in preschool in the term following a child's fourth birthday.

This movement from the current 'continuous enrolment' policy to a new 'single intake' policy starts in preschools in 2013 and will flow on to schools from 2014 onwards.

Children who would have started preschool under the current policy at the beginning of 2013 are unaffected.

Children who turn four before 1 May – who would have started preschool in term two of 2013 under the current policy – will be able to start one term earlier, at the beginning of first term 2013.

Children who turn four on or after 1 May – who would have started preschool in term three or four of 2013 under the current policy – will now start preschool at the beginning of 2014.

From 2014, South Australia will have the same first day of school for all children – the beginning of Term One. Having the same first day of school will ensure that every child is guaranteed four terms of Reception before they go on to the rest of their primary schooling. It will also mean a more stable environment for children with fewer changes to classes throughout the year.

Where a child turns five before May 1, they will start school on the first day of Term One of that year. Where a child turns five on or after May 1 they will start school on the first day of Term One the following year.

The minimum age for starting school will be four years and eight months from 2014.

This change brings SA into line with other states and territories.

## **6. Proof of Age**

At the time of enrolment parents/guardians are required to provide proof of their child's birth age. The following documents will be accepted by schools in this regard:

- Passport
- Birth certificate, or
- Official Centrelink documentation stating the child's name and birth date.

## **7. School Zoning**

The Minister for Education has the authority, under section 55A of the Education Regulations 1997, to establish school zones.

Approximately 60 primary schools and all secondary schools in metropolitan Adelaide are zoned. This means that a student's zoned school is determined according to their permanent and primary place of residence.

A place is reserved for each child in their zoned secondary school (except Adelaide High School, Urrbrae Agricultural High School, Mitcham Girls High School and Roma Mitchell Secondary College Girls Campus who have separate Enrolment Policies). While students are zoned to a particular secondary school, they are free to apply for enrolment at any other out of zone secondary school in the State. Acceptance of an enrolment in an out of zone secondary school however, depends on whether the number of enrolments at that school exceeds the number of places available.

## **8. Enrolment of children and students in out-of-zone school**

If a student wishes to enrol in an out-of-zone primary or secondary school, selection for entry to the school should take place in accordance with the department's Criteria for Allocation of Points. These criteria are communicated to parents in the Starting Secondary School Brochure. These criteria can also be accessed at each school upon enrolment or via the DECD website at <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/startinghighschool/>.

## 9. Criteria for Allocation of Points

Students can still apply for enrolment in out-of-zone primary and secondary schools, however acceptance in these schools will depend on whether the number of enrolments exceeds the number of places available.

Selection of out-of-zone students is based on the following Department of Education and Children's Services **Criteria for Allocation of Points**:

### Criterion 1 – Distance

The first criterion is the distance from your permanent and primary place of residence to the school. This is determined by the department's Geographical Information Systems database. Students that reside closer to the school are allocated more points by the system than those who live further away from the established zone. If a student has a Family Court custody arrangement in place, then the student should choose which address will be their permanent fixed address for the purpose of zoning. The maximum number of points that an out-of-zone student can be awarded in this category is 20.

### Criterion 2 – Curriculum

The second criterion relates to specific curriculum offerings that cannot be met at the zoned school. This includes languages, music programs and other curriculum areas (e.g. IB program) which meet special requirements. If the language/instrument is not available at the school either as a subject or through the Open Access College then 1 point is awarded. If the language/instrument is not available at the zoned school and the student has studied the language/instrument at their primary school then 2 points will be awarded. If the language is not available at the zoned school and the student has studied the language at their primary school and it is the students' mother tongue, then 3 points will be allocated. If it is a special language and the primary school has put in a specific recommendation that the student carry on this language and it is not offered at the zoned school, then 4 points will be awarded. Similarly if a selected stringed instrument is not offered at the zoned school and the student has previously studied with the Instrumental Music Service then 4 points will be allocated to the application. The maximum number of points that can be awarded in this category is 4.

### Criterion 3 – Social and Family Links

If the student has particular kinship or extended family links to students already attending the school then an additional point may be awarded. This includes current friendship/peer groups. The maximum number of points that can be awarded in this category is 1.

### Criterion 4 – Transport/Location Convenience

One point may be awarded if the desired school is closer than the zoned school. Similarly, one point may be allocated in situations where there are public transport difficulties associated with attending the zoned school. The maximum number of points that can be awarded in this category is 1.

### **Criterion 5 – Disability**

Special entry to a school is granted only in cases where there is a disability proven to prohibit enrolment at the zoned school. Other out-of-zone schools can be considered in such cases.

Please be aware that out-of-zone enrolments will only be accepted at Adelaide High School if the student meets the criteria outlined in the Enrolment Policy for Adelaide High School (see Enrolment Policy for Adelaide High School).

### **10. Sibling Rights Rule**

In those cases where a sibling currently attends an out-of-zone school, enrolment is guaranteed. Where a child of a particular family currently attends a particular school, their siblings also have a right to attend that school. If a break in attendance of that family occurs at the school for more than 12 months, then sibling rights no longer applies. For example if John Smith completed Year 12 at Unley HS in Term 4 2009 and his brother Adam Smith was in 7 this year and intended on applying for a place at Unley HS in 2011, then sibling rights would permit him entry to the school, as the break in attendance by that family at the school is only 12 months. If however older brother John left the school prior to completing the school year in 2009, then sibling rights would no longer apply as the break in attendance is greater than 12 months.

If students are claiming 'Sibling Rights' on the enrolment form, they must photocopy and attach to their application the ID card of the student/sibling who currently attends the out-of-zone school.

### **11. Sibling Rights Rule-Half and Step Brothers and Sisters**

Half brothers and sisters are blood relatives and therefore, as per the DECD Sibling Rights rule, are guaranteed entry to the same school in which their siblings attend (except Adelaide High School and Urrbrae Agricultural High School).

Step brothers and sisters, who are not blood relatives can only be guaranteed entry to the same school as their step siblings if they are residing at the same primary place of residence as the step siblings who attend the out-of-zone school.

Where there is a blended family living in a defacto relationship, then step brothers and sisters need to be living at the same primary place of residence in order to be guaranteed entry to the particular school. Proof of Residence documentation (such as a gas or electricity bill stating the residential address and the joint names) must be provided the school at the time of enrolment.

### **12. Right of Return**

Where students have been enrolled in an out-of-zone school and they cease their enrolment with that school, they have a right of return to the out-of-zone school for a period of 12 months. This is in keeping with the department's Sibling Rights Rule, where siblings have an automatic right to enrol at an out-of-zone school provided that the break in attendance of the family at the school is not greater than 12 months.

### 13. Proof of Residence/Change of Address

Where schools are at or nearing capacity, students need to provide at the time of enrolment proof of the child's primary place of residence. That is, school staff should request from parents/guardians:

1. A **gas or electricity bill** stating the new residential address (not a business address) and the name of the parent/guardian. The utility bill should be recent. Telstra and water rates bills are not acceptable as parents may receive these invoices for additional rental properties or businesses that they may own.
2. A copy of the property's Contract of Sale (if the home is the permanent residence), or
3. If the parent/guardian is renting then they should provide **a rental agreement and bond receipt (from the Residential Tenancies Tribunal)** stating where the parent/guardian is currently, or will be, residing over the next 12 months.
4. If a student states that they are residing with a relative/friend, then supporting documentation stating that the relative/friend is the legal guardian of the student is requested. This documentation should include a Parenting Order from the Family Court, which states that the relative/friend is the full-time guardian of the child. **Statutory Declarations are not considered to be sufficient documentation in this regard.**

Please note, the provision of a Contract of Sale on its own **is not considered to be sufficient** documentation. The property may have been purchased by the parent/guardian and rented to other occupants. This is why a copy of a recent utility bill is also required.

This documentation also needs to be provided by parents/guardians if they are seeking to change their address on the department's EDSAS system. Addresses should not be changed by schools if this information is not provided.

### 14. Renting of a Room(s)

The renting of a room or rooms at a property, does not meet the department's Enrolment Policy criteria. A child or student's zoned school is determined according to their permanent and primary place of residence. One or two rooms does not constitute a permanent and primary place of residence. Families must therefore rent an entire property in order for it to be considered their permanent primary place of residence.

As per the Proof of Residence criteria, a rental agreement and bond receipt (from the Residential Tenancies Tribunal) stating where the parent/guardian and student is currently, or will be, residing over the next 12 months. For the purpose of zoning, the rental agreement needs to cover at least 12 months of the students' first year at the school (i.e. For students applying for admission to a school in year 8 in 2012 then the rental agreement dates will need to be between January 2012 and January 2013). Both the agreement and the bond receipt need to be provided in order to satisfy this criteria.

## 15. Enrolment of Students with Separated Parents

Most family court orders stipulate that both parents must agree on where the student will attend primary or secondary school, irrespective of whether one parent has majority custody. That is, even if a parent has 60% custody and the other parent, 40% custody, they must still both agree on where the child will be enrolled. Irrespective of who has majority custody, both parents have an equal right to access the same information about the child from the school. That is, school reports and school newsletters should be sent to both parents.

At the time of enrolment schools should ask parents as to whether a current Family Court Order is in place. Copies of Family Court Orders should be retained by the school and kept in the student's file.

When determining the zoned school for students that live with both parents, the student (and parents) will need to advise the primary/secondary school about which parent's address will be used as the primary place of residence on the enrolment form.

In relation to the Year 7-8 transition process, if a student selects a school that is half way between each parent's residential address, then every effort should be made by the regional office to ensure that the student is successfully placed at the school of choice.

Please note that students in a separated family arrangement do not receive additional points for entry into schools under enrolment pressure.

Where primary/secondary schools are aware that there are two families involved, they should ensure that both families are provided with the same information about enrolment. In terms of the Year 7-8 transition process, one parent will be provided with a copy of the enrolment pack and form, however schools should notify the other parent/legal guardian that this is the case. Both parents/guardians should then agree to the preferences selected by the child on the form. Schools should explain to both parents/guardians that only one form can be submitted back to the primary/secondary school for processing.

Where both parents/guardians cannot agree as to the preferences selected on the form (or about which school the child should be enrolled), the department will accept the enrolment form from the enrolling parent (PG1) only.

Schools are not required to mediate these disagreements as these are private matters which need to be resolved by the parents involved. The aggrieved parent is encouraged to contact the Family Court to seek an order relating to the matter.

## **16. Students who claim to have a primary place of residence with a relative/friend**

Where a child or student claims to be residing (as their primary place of residence) with a relative or friend for the purpose of gaining an enrolment in an out-of-zone school, then supporting documentation stating that the relative/friend is the legal guardian of the student is required. This documentation must include a Parenting Order from the Family Court, which states that the relative/friend is the formal full-time carer of the child/student. **Statutory Declarations are not considered to be sufficient documentation in this regard.**

## **17. Enrolment of students in unzoned areas**

A number of students reside just outside of the metropolitan area and often this means that they are located in an 'unzoned' area. Students that reside in unzoned areas should be manually allocated to their closest school. In those cases where the student lives more than five kilometres from the nearest school, the allocated school is the nearest school, or the school serviced by a departmental bus run, if that run comes closer than the nearest school.

## **18. Gifted students**

The decision as to where a child (in year level terms) attends at his/her school is determined according to the 'educational attainments' of the child. This is not determined by the parents but by the Principal in consultation with any relevant experts and the parents. However, ultimately the Principal has the final say (unless instructed by the relevant Regional Director).

This issue of gifted children is covered by a specific policy and this and other relevant material will come up on a search of "gifted children" at:  
[http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/policy/default.asp?navgrp=OSPP&id=policy\\_index](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/policy/default.asp?navgrp=OSPP&id=policy_index)

## **19. Australian Defence Force students**

Where a school has Defence funded support roles embedded at the site, the school should ensure that Australian Defence Force students who live outside of the school's designated zone are given special consideration when applying for an enrolment at the school. The decision regarding whether the school has out-of-zone capacity to accept such students is the sole responsibility of the principal.

## **20. Extended Enrolment**

Principals may negotiate an extended enrolment when:

- Additional time in particular year levels at school is likely to significantly improve a child's learning and developmental outcomes.
- The school has the capacity to extend the enrolment within its current resources.
- Consultation has occurred between the principal, staff, parents and where applicable, personnel from the region, such bi-lingual support program, and/or specialist agencies have advised or supported this decision.

These enrolments are counted as eligible enrolments for funding purposes.

## **21. Enrolment in Special Education Courses or Programs**

Where a student is enrolled at a specific school for the purpose of undertaking a Special Education course or program, the enrolment will cease when the student completes the required course or program. At the conclusion of the course or program, the student can apply for a mainstream enrolment at their school of right. Where students wish to apply for an out-of-zone school, then they must do so in accordance with the department's Criteria for Allocation of Points (see section 8 of this policy).

## **22. Home Educated Students**

Families wishing to educate their children at home must complete an *Application for Exemption from Attendance at School for the Purposes of Home Education*.

Applications are available upon request from the Home Education Project Officer, Office for Schools on telephone 8226 1327. On receipt of the application, the Home Education Project Officer will arrange a time to conduct a home visit to discuss in detail the application. Following the home visit, a report and a recommendation regarding the approval of an exemption from attendance is then made to the Director, Site and Regional Improvement and Accountability for consideration. Children and students are required to attend school until a determination is made regarding their application.

## **23. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students – Enter for Success Program**

The Enter for Success Program allows Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students to enrol and be accepted into Year 8 in any secondary school of their choice in South Australia. As part of the program, all secondary schools will be required to enrol ATSI students and provide them with appropriate support to ensure that they are accepted, engaged and succeed in the education programs at a school.

The Enter for Success Program attempts to assist in redressing the unacceptable levels of ATSI student attendance and retention.

The Enter for Success Program is only applicable to Year 7 students who identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The program can only be accessed by Year 7 students while they are in Year 7. While primary schools should encourage students to apply for the program during the transition process period, Year 7 students have until the last day of term 4 to apply for the program. Students will not be able to register for this program after this date.

Students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to access this program will have this status recognised at their secondary school of choice.

## **24. Overseas Enrolments**

Students who are not Australian citizens or Australian permanent residents are allowed to enrol in South Australian Government schools, subject to certain conditions based on their visa sub-class.

The type of visa-sub class also determines whether a child is a full fee paying or eligible to be recognised as a local student (therefore paying local fees only).

For further information in this regard, schools/parents/guardians should contact International Education Services as per the details below:

Telephone: +61 8 8226 3402

Fax: +61 8 8227 2391

Email: [decsisp@sa.gov.au](mailto:decsisp@sa.gov.au)

<http://www.internationalstudents.sa.edu.au/default.asp?navgrp=home&id=benefits>