

Foundation (Prep) Enrolment Information Pack for Parents and Carers

Guidance for parents and carers of children starting Foundation (Prep) in
a government school in 2026

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From the Department of Education

Enrolling your child into Foundation (Prep) in 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

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

If your child is turning 5 years old by 30 April 2026 and is eligible to start school next year, it is time to decide where they will go to school.

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

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

As the Victorian Government supports school choice, you can also apply for a place at a government school that is not your local school. The school should enrol your child if there is a place available, in line with the department's Placement Policy.

The Foundation (Prep) enrolment timeline and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in this information pack, will help you understand when and how to enrol your child into Foundation at a government primary school for the 2026 school year.

The Foundation enrolment timeline only applies to enrolment in a government primary school. If you wish for your child to attend a non-government school (Catholic or Independent school), please contact individual non-government schools for their enrolment processes. For information about enrolling in a government specialist school, please visit: vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol.

What you need to do

1. Locate your local school for 2026 and other nearby government schools on findmyschool.vic.gov.au.
2. Contact a government primary school to book a school tour and learn more about the school and the enrolment application process.
3. Submit your enrolment application to the school **by Friday 25 July 2025**. You can use the application form in this pack to apply. The school may also provide you with a copy of the form to complete or advise if they are using online enrolment through VicStudents.

You will be notified of the outcome of your application **between Monday 28 July and Friday 8 August 2025**. If you receive an enrolment offer, you should respond to the offer **by Friday 22 August 2025**.

More information

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

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

Foundation (Prep) enrolment timeline 2025-26

| 2025 Dates | Activity |
|--|---|
| Term 2: Tuesday 22 April 2025 – Friday 4 July 2025 | |
| Terms 1 and 2, 2025 | Primary schools conduct tours, information sessions and other activities for families seeking Foundation (Prep) enrolment for their child for 2026. |
| By the start of Term 2, 2025 | School zones for the 2026 school year go live on findmyschool.vic.gov.au Parents and carers should go to findmyschool.vic.gov.au to locate their designated neighbourhood school (local school) for 2026. The Enrolment Information Pack for Parents and Carers is available to download from Enrolling in Foundation (Prep): vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep . |
| From Week 1, Term 2 2025 | Primary schools may distribute the Enrolment Information Packs to prospective families and their local community. |
| From Week 1, Term 2, 2025 | Enrolment applications open – parents and carers submit their completed enrolment application to a government primary school from this date. |
| Term 3: Monday 21 July 2025 – Friday 19 September 2025 | |
| By Friday 25 July 2025 | Enrolment applications due – parents and carers submit their completed enrolment application to a government primary school by this date. |
| Between Monday 28 July and Friday 8 August 2025 | Primary schools notify parents and carers in writing of Foundation (Prep) enrolment outcomes, as per the department's Placement Policy. This may include a letter of offer, a letter confirming enrolment, or an unsuccessful application letter. Parents and carers sent an unsuccessful application letter may start submitting a written appeal to the primary school. |
| By Friday 22 August 2025 | Parents and carers sent a letter of offer indicate acceptance of their child's place by this date. |
| By Friday 22 August 2025 | Closing date for parents and carers to submit a written appeal to a primary school. |
| By Friday 5 September 2025 | Primary schools notify all parents and carers, in writing, of the outcome of their appeal by this date. |
| By Friday 19 September 2025 | Closing date for parents and carers to submit a written appeal with the relevant Regional Director, where they have been unsuccessful with their appeal to the primary school. |
| Term 4: Monday 6 October 2025 – Friday 19 December 2025 | |
| During Term 4, 2025 | Primary schools host transition sessions. |
| By Friday 31 October 2025 | Regions notify all parents and carers in writing of the outcome of Regional Director appeals by this date. This only applies to appeals received by the closing date of Friday 19 September 2025. |

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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

Foundation enrolment timeline and resources

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

The first year of primary school is called Foundation or Prep. The Department of Education has a Foundation enrolment timeline for all Victorian government primary schools to follow (see page 4). The timeline will help you understand when and how to enrol your child into Foundation at a government primary school for the 2026 school year.

2. When should I enrol my child for Foundation?

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

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

To enrol your child in a Victorian government primary school for the 2026 school year, submit an enrolment application to the school by 25 July 2025.

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

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

1. Find your local school on the Find my School website findmyschool.vic.gov.au (see question 12).
2. Contact a government primary school to book a school tour or to learn more about the school and the enrolment application process.
3. Submit an enrolment application for Foundation **by Friday 25 July 2025**.
4. You will be notified of the outcome of your application **between Monday 28 July and Friday 8 August 2025**. If you receive an enrolment offer, you should respond to the offer **by Friday 22 August 2025** (see question 7).
5. Take part in information and transition sessions **during Term 4 2025**.
6. Your child will start Foundation from **Wednesday 28 January 2026**.

4. How do I submit an application?

Before applying, contact the school to learn about their enrolment application process.

The school will tell you whether to complete the application form supplied in this pack or provide you with a link if they are using online enrolment through VicStudents. The school may also request that you provide proof of your address as part of your application.

You should submit your paper or online enrolment application to the school by Friday 25 July 2025.

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

5. What happens if I miss the enrolment timeframes?

You can apply to enrol your child into Foundation for the 2026 school year at any time from Term 2, 2025.

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

While you are asked to apply by Friday 25 July 2025, applications after this date will still be accepted from those families who miss enrolment timelines, move permanent residence or newly arrive to Victoria. Applications submitted after 25 July 2025 will be processed by the school as they are received, in accordance with the department's Placement Policy.

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

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

Enrolment offers

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

Schools will send offers between Monday 28 July 2025 and Friday 8 August 2025. The letter will include instructions on how to accept your child's offer.

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

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

Your unsuccessful letter will include the next steps, including contacting your local school or nearby government schools to start the enrolment process. You can also appeal the decision (see questions 26-29).

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

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

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

Designated neighbourhood schools and school zones

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

Your local school is generally the government school closest to your child's permanent residential address.

For children residing in metropolitan Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong, their local school is usually the nearest government school in a straight line from their permanent address. If you live in another area, it is usually the nearest school by the shortest practical route by road.

For more information, please visit: vic.gov.au/school-zones

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

Yes, the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#) guarantees your child a place at their local school. This means, if your child lives within the school zone, they must be offered a place when seeking enrolment.

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

Find your local school, and other schools in your area, on the Find my School website by following the steps below.

1. Enter findmyschool.vic.gov.au into your browser
2. Enter your address under 'Enter your address to get started'
3. Select 2026 under 'Enrolment year'
4. Select Primary under 'School type'

The map will then show your address, your local school, and on the left the contact details for the school. If you scroll down, it will also show you the five closest schools to your address.

You can also search by school name under 'Search for school'.

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

13. My property sits across two or more school zones. Which is my local school?

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

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

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

If your child spends an equal amount of time at two addresses, both are considered their permanent address. They can enrol in either one of the local schools. However, that does not mean they can enrol at both schools.

For more information and help to determine your address for enrolment, please visit: [vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol](https://www.vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol)

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

Yes, you can apply to schools other than your local school. The school should enrol your child if there is a place available, in line with the Placement Policy (see question 17).

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

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

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

For more information, please see: [vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol](https://www.vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol)

The department's Placement Policy

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

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

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

The priority order of placement only applies where parents and carers are seeking enrolment in a school other than their child's local school, and where that school does not have sufficient accommodation to offer places to all who apply for entry. The priority order of placement is set out in the next question (question 18).

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

18. How are applications from outside the school zone prioritised?

Where schools cannot offer a place to all children who live outside their school zone, schools will prioritise out-of-zone applications using the following priority order of placement:

1. students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time
2. all other students in order of closeness of their home to the school.

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

For more information regarding the Placement Policy and priority order of placement, please refer to the Enrolment FAQs for parents and carers available at [vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol](https://www.vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol)

19. I can see that siblings are prioritised for enrolment. How is a sibling defined?

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

- both younger and older siblings
- step-siblings residing together at the same permanent address
- students residing together at the same permanent address as part of statutory out-of-home care arrangements, including foster care, kinship care, residential care and permanent care
- students permanently residing together in the one residence as part of multiple family cohabitation.

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

Enrolling in a primary school

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

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

The enrolment form requires additional personal and health information to finalise your child's enrolment for Foundation in the 2026 school year. You will need to supply an Immunisation History Statement and any relevant supporting documentation such as medical plans or court orders. The enrolling school must also sight evidence of your child's name and date of birth (e.g., birth certificate).

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

21. Who may sign the application and enrolment forms?

Where practical, all parents and carers with legal responsibility for a child should sign the application form and enrolment form.

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

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

Where it is not possible for parents and carers to sign the same form, you should communicate this to the school who will allow separate forms to be completed by each parent and carer.

22. Where can I find schools in my area?

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

- Victorian government schools: findmyschool.vic.gov.au
- Catholic schools: vea.catholic.edu.au/choosing-a-catholic-school/
- Independent schools: is.vic.edu.au/independent-schools/

23. How do I register my child for home schooling in 2026?

For information on home schooling please visit the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) website at: <https://www2.vrqa.vic.gov.au/home-education>

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

If you are a parent or carer of a child holding a fee-liable visa (for example a dependent student visa, visitor or tourist visa, or a bridging visa in some instances) you should apply for enrolment in a government school at study.vic.gov.au or apply directly to non-government (Catholic or Independent) schools. International students holding fee-exempt visas should submit the application form to a government school directly.

If you have any further questions regarding international student enrolments, or wish to confirm whether your child's visa is fee-liable or fee-exempt, you can find further information at study.vic.gov.au, or can contact the International Education Division directly at international@education.vic.gov.au.

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

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

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

Appeals

26. How do I make an appeal?

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

The completed appeal form should be lodged with the primary school by **Friday 22 August 2025**.

The appeal will be considered by the school's enrolment committee and/or Principal. The school will check to ensure compliance with the priority order of placement, and the processes for verifying permanent address, as appropriate. The school will also consider appeals on compassionate grounds on a case-by-case basis. For an appeal on compassionate grounds, you will need to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances that make an enrolment at your child's local school unsuitable for your child.

You will receive written notification of the outcome by **Friday 5 September 2025**.

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

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

If you are not satisfied that the school has correctly applied the Placement Policy or adequately considered your circumstances in the assessment of your appeal, you may lodge a further written appeal to the relevant Department of Education Regional Director by **Friday 19 September 2025**.

You must re-use the appeal form from your school-level appeal for this stage. Appeals to the Regional Director will not be considered if you have not appealed to the primary school in the first instance.

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

Appeals to the Regional Director are considered by a panel of senior regional staff that assess the appeal against the Placement Policy. This panel provides a recommendation to the relevant Regional Director who makes the final decision. You will receive written notification of the decision by **Friday 31 October 2025**. This outcome **concludes** the appeal process.

28. Can I lodge an appeal to the relevant Regional Director after the closing date of Friday 19 September 2025?

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

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

29. How do I find the contact details for the Department of Education?

You can find contact details on the department's website, here: [vic.gov.au/contact-us-department-education](https://www.vic.gov.au/contact-us-department-education)

Useful links

Please find some useful links below that may be helpful for you as your child starts primary school in 2026:

Find my School – [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](https://www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au)

Information on school zones – [vic.gov.au/school-zones](https://www.vic.gov.au/school-zones)

Enrolling in Foundation (Prep) – [vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep](https://www.vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep)

Enrolling in school – [vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol](https://www.vic.gov.au/how-choose-school-and-enrol)

Disability and inclusive education – [vic.gov.au/disability-and-inclusive-education](https://www.vic.gov.au/disability-and-inclusive-education)

Department of Education contact details – [vic.gov.au/contact-us-department-education](https://www.vic.gov.au/contact-us-department-education)