

# BSS Enrolment Policy



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact 5334 1302

## BACKGROUND

Ballarat Specialist School provides educational programs for students aged from 3 and 18 years who have a diagnosed intellectual disability ranging from mild to profound.

By law in Victoria all children from the age of 6 up until they turn 17 years must be enrolled at a registered school or registered for home schooling unless they have a reasonable excuse. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with a comprehensive educational program and access to support networks. It also helps to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and active participation in their local community.

Specialist schools, including Ballarat Specialist School, have been established to cater for the specific educational needs of students with a disability or with additional needs. Under State and Federal discrimination law, specialist schools are permitted to set specific enrolment criteria and to not enrol students who do not meet these criteria.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the enrolment criteria for students seeking enrolment at Ballarat Specialist School and the evidence required to support applications for enrolment.

It is intended to provide clarity for the local community on the enrolment criteria and ensure a smooth and supported transition for enrolling students.

### Scope

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

## ENROLMENT CRITERIA

The following enrolment criteria have been specified and approved by the Regional Director, Central Highlands Victoria Region (as the Minister's delegate) under section 2.2.16(b) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic). A student's enrolment will be reviewed periodically in line with their needs.

Students seeking to enrol must have a diagnosis of Intellectual Disability from a registered psychologist evidenced by:

- a) Sub-average general intellectual functioning which is demonstrated by a full-scale score of two standard deviations or more below the mean score on a standardised individual test of general intelligence, (for example a full scale score of 70 or below on one of the recommended standardised individual tests of intelligence);

and

- b) Significant deficits in adaptive behaviour established by a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean on an approved standardised test of adaptive behaviour,(for example a Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales composite score of 70 or below);
  - and
- c) A history and evidence of an ongoing problem with an expectation of continuation during the school years.

Applications from students who do not meet the above criteria will be considered on a case-by- case basis by the region, in consultation with the principal, in consideration of the student’s education and support needs. The Regional Director, Central Highlands Victoria Region (or delegate) must approve enrolments for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria.

### Early Learning Centre

The Ballarat Specialist School Early Learning Centre (ELC) operates under *Education and Care Services Regulations 2011* as interpreted through the *Regulatory Framework in relation to Education and Care Services in Victoria*.

For further information regarding enrolment into the BSS ELC, parents or legal guardians will need to access our Early Learning Centre: Enrolment and Orientation Policy, which can be requested from the ELC or by calling 5334 1302.

### Foundation and above

All enrolment enquiries will be directed to the Assistant Principal: Enrolments and Induction. They will be responsible for collating all necessary information required to establish the eligibility of any student to be enrolled at BSS.

In all circumstances Ballarat Specialist School will support families to identify the eligibility of their students through a pre-enrolment interview. During this time the School will either ask for, or facilitate/assist the parents/guardians to obtain evidence to support the enrolment process. This evidence may include, but is not limited to:

<b>New prep</b>	<b>Other Victorian Government School</b>	<b>Other Non-Government School</b>	<b>Interstate / International Student</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental (legal guardian) approval</li> <li>• Birth certificate</li> <li>• Immunisation certificate</li> <li>• Pre-enrolment interview with BSS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental (legal guardian) approval</li> <li>• Intellectual assessment report</li> <li>• All additional reports from allied health supports</li> <li>• Latest school report and contact details</li> <li>• Pre-enrolment interview with BSS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental (legal guardian) approval</li> <li>• Any formal funding documentation</li> <li>• All additional reports from allied health supports</li> <li>• Latest school report and contact details</li> <li>• Pre-enrolment interview with BSS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental (legal guardian) approval</li> <li>• Current visa status</li> <li>• Any formal funding documentation</li> <li>• All additional reports from allied health supports</li> <li>• Latest school report and contact details</li> <li>• Pre-enrolment interview with BSS</li> </ul>

At the conclusion of the pre-enrolment interview parents/guardians will be informed of the likelihood of a successful enrolment into BSS. In circumstances where successful enrolment requires further information or evidence for the school to progress to a formal enrolment process then this will be presented either in the pre-enrolment interview or within 5 days of the interview.

If eligibility criterion has not been met, a Principal class officer or their representative will contact the family to discuss.

When eligibility criterion has been successfully met, then formal enrolment processes will commence

and an official enrolment pack provided to the family for completion.

On receiving an enrolment offer, the intended commencement date will be at the start of the next Victorian school semester (unless transferring from another Victorian Specialist School) or when a suitable vacancy occurs at the discretion of the Principal.

On the commencement of the student's placement at BSS, the BSS team will conduct a Student Support Group meeting (SSG) with Parents/Guardians to establish short term goals and facilitate the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Furthermore, the SSG will determine any further need for allied health support or any further information about their child's needs and/or specific health requirements in accordance with DET and BSS guidelines.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to communicate with external support agencies, such as those used through via the NDIS to further support student transition and development.

The assignment to class groups will be made by the Principal and Assistant Principals in consultation with the Leading Teacher of the appropriate Mini School. Staff will be notified of the placement and directed to background information and supports as necessary to promote a positive transition to BSS.

## PRIORITY ORDER OF PLACEMENT

In circumstances where the school may not have sufficient accommodation to be able to accept all applications from eligible students, the school will manage enrolment applications in accordance with the following priority order of placement:

1. Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.
2. Students who reside nearest to the school.

The school must ensure that all applicants eligible under the first criterion have been offered a place before moving to consideration of the second criterion.

### Verification of permanent address

When assessing enrolment applications under the priority order of placement, Ballarat Specialist School may ask for supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a student's permanent residence.

Ballarat Specialist School may request original or certified copies of rental agreements, unconditional contracts of sale or other official documentation that demonstrates permanent residence.

Documents should show the same address and parent's/carer's name as recorded on the school enrolment application form.

The school may also make the following enquiries to verify the information provided:

- a) checking the electoral roll at an Australian Electoral Commission office or the Victorian Electoral Commission head office
- b) checking with a real estate agent to confirm a rental address
- c) for a rental property which is a studio apartment or a one-bedroom unit, checking whether there are any regulations/codes limiting the occupancy of these apartments to one person per apartment.

The enrolment application may be unsuccessful if, after reasonable enquiries, the Principal is unable to verify that the evidence provided is genuine and valid. Applicants may then seek to appeal the decision according to the Appeal process outlined below.

### Enrolment on compassionate grounds

In exceptional circumstances, a student seeking enrolment at Ballarat Specialist School who meets the enrolment criteria may be approved by the Regional Director Central Highlands Region Victoria outside

of the priority order of placement, based on compassionate grounds. This is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement. Further advice and support when considering applications on compassionate grounds is available on the [Policy and Advisory Library](#) and from regional staff.

## EVIDENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

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

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

The Department provides assessment services to support specialist schools in determining whether the student meets their enrolment criteria. Department regional offices also play a role in supporting specialist schools with enrolment processes.

**NOTE: Enrolment applications may not be successful if the requested documentation is not provided or invalid.**

## APPEAL PROCESS

Parents/carers can appeal against the decision not to approve an enrolment by requesting a non-standard enrolment. This can occur in relation to enrolments at any age or year level. Further information on appeals can be found at [Enrolment: Enrolment in specialist schools | education.vic.gov.au](#).

## COMMUNICATIONS

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

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	12/23
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	12/26