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**Policy Title:** Enrolment in ACT Public Schools (Preschool–Year 12)  
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**Legislation:** *Education Act 2004 (ACT)*

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The *Education Act 2004* (the Act) requires all children of compulsory education age living in the ACT to be enrolled with an education provider or registered for home education. Public schools are a key education provider in the ACT.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all children and young people of compulsory education age living in the ACT.
- 1.3 Enrolment is the statutory responsibility of the parents of the child.
- 1.4 Parents with children living in the ACT must enrol their child at a school not later than 14 school-term days after the day the child turns 6 years old, begins to live in the ACT, or changes schools.
- 1.5 If a child is not enrolled, one of the following must apply:
- an Exemption Certificate is in force for the child
  - the child is participating in an approved training or employment alternative (with a Approval Statement in force)
  - the Chief Executive is satisfied that the child's parents have a reasonable excuse for non-compliance with the enrolment requirement.
- 1.6 In accordance with the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cwlth), children with disabilities can elect to enrol at a school of their choice on the same basis as other prospective students and with the right to reasonable adjustments to ensure they are able to enrol on the same basis as any other child.
- 1.7 Schools may enrol children to the school's capacity determined by the Department. Within this context parents may choose the school and type of education best suited to the needs of their child.
- 1.8 Most ACT public schools have a Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) which is published on the Department's website. The PEA is the area in which resident children have priority over non-residents to enrol at the school. The PEA boundaries may change over time. For more information refer to the Department's website:  
[http://www.det.act.gov.au/school\\_education/choosing\\_a\\_school/priority\\_enrolment\\_areas](http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/choosing_a_school/priority_enrolment_areas)
- 1.9 In some instances, certain areas may be included within the PEA of more than one school. Where one of these schools has reached capacity and is no longer

able to accept enrolments, enrolment will be guaranteed at another school serving that area.

- 1.10 Schools must also accept siblings of enrolled students who live in the ACT. Schools can accept out-of-area enrolments if there is capacity available after catering for children from the priority enrolment area. ACT residents will be given priority for out of area enrolment before non-ACT residents. All colleges must comply with the procedures documented in Procedures for Placement of Students in ACT Public Colleges.
- 1.11 During the school year, schools must also be able to accommodate students who move into the priority enrolment area.
- 1.12 There are special enrolment requirements for some settings including Special Schools, Telopea Park School and the Allen Main Memorial Preschool. For further information refer to section 4, Procedures.
- 1.11 Schools must determine, in consultation with their communities, the procedures for the acceptance of out-of-area enrolments while ensuring compliance with this policy.
- 1.12 Enrolment at a primary school that is located in a high school's priority enrolment area does not guarantee enrolment at that high school..

## 2 RATIONALE

- 2.1 This policy provides the context for the enrolment of children in ACT public schools.
- 2.2 This policy does **not** cover: enrolment at non-government schools; enrolment at education providers other than schools; or registration for home education.
- 2.3 All public schools in the ACT are committed to providing quality education for students regardless of individual differences.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 The **Act** refers to the ACT *Education Act 2004*.
- 3.2 A school's **capacity** is the number of students that can be accommodated within the school. In determining an individual school's capacity, a range of design factors, specific educational programs and class sizes are taken into consideration. The capacity figures include additional student accommodation available in transportable buildings.
- 3.3 School capacity is monitored annually to ensure that they reflect changes in building or design arrangements across the system.
- 3.4 **Chief Executive** refers to the Chief Executive of the ACT Department of Education and Training or his or her delegate.
- 3.5 A child is of **compulsory education age** if the child is at least 6 years old and under the age that the first of the following happens: the child completes year 12; or, the child is 17 years old.
- 3.6 **Department** refers to the ACT Department of Education and Training.

- 3.7 A **disability** results in a total or partial loss of a person's functions or reduction in their ability to function on a day-to-day basis, caused by one or a combination of impairments including intellectual disability, physical disability, vision impairment, hearing impairment, language disorder, mental health condition and autism.
- 3.8 **Education course** refers to a variety of courses including study, vocational education and higher education undertaken at an education provider. The Chief Executive may approve additional education providers.
- 3.9 **Education provider** refers to a school, a registered training organisation, a university or a higher education provider. The Chief Executive may approve additional education providers.
- 3.10 **Enrolment** is the term used for the administrative procedure by which a person becomes a student of an education provider. In ACT public schools, it involves the collection of statistical data and the creation of a student record. A student must be enrolled in order to meet the attendance and the full-time participation requirement.
- 3.11 **Evidence of where the child lives** can be the child's parents' electricity account, tenancy agreement or similar. This must be provided to the principal of the school or the principal's delegate when seeking enrolment. If a statutory declaration is the only available evidence of where a child lives, the enrolment request will be forwarded to the relevant Schools Director for consideration.
- 3.12 **Giftedness** refers to a child's outstanding, innate ability in one or more of the following domains: intellectual, creative, socioaffective or sensorimotor (Gagne, 2007). A child may display particular abilities/levels of giftedness at any stage or point in their education.
- 3.13 A child who **lives in the ACT** is a child whose principal place of residence (including a place of residence from which the child is temporarily absent and to which the child intends to return to live in) is in the ACT, and who has been resident at an address or addresses in the ACT for at least one month. It is not a prerequisite to live in the ACT for a full month to be entitled to enrol.
- 3.14 A **school term day** is a day at which a public school in the ACT is open for student attendance. School term days are determined by the Department and published on the Department's website at [www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au).
- 3.15 Each ACT public school gives priority to the enrolment of children living in its **priority enrolment area (PEA)**. The Department determines and regularly reviews PEAs. PEAs may be one suburb, part of a suburb, or a group of suburbs. In some instances certain suburbs may be included within the PEA of two public schools.
- 3.16 Where demand for places at a particular school or college exceeds available places, NSW children will not be considered. In these circumstances NSW children will be offered a place in another ACT school or college.
- 3.17 A child's **parent** is a person with parental responsibility for the child.
- 3.18 **Proof of age and identity** will be satisfied by presentation of a birth certificate, passport or similar.

- 3.19 **Proof of immunisation status.** Where available an immunisation history statement should be provided to the school.
- 3.20 A **sibling** of a child or young person, as defined in the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (ACT), includes a stepbrother or stepsister of the child or young person and a half-brother or half-sister of the child or young person.

#### **4. PROCEDURES**

##### **4.1 Entitlement to enrol**

- 4.1.1 At the first point of entry into the ACT public school system, an enrolment form must be completed and evidence cited at the school for enrolment to be approved.

##### **4.2 Preschool and primary**

- 4.2.1 Parents are encouraged to visit the school at which they are seeking to enrol their child to gather information and for assistance with the enrolment process.

- 4.2.2 Children seeking to enter school at the preschool entry point should be four years of age on or before 30 April in that year.

- 4.2.3 Children seeking to enter school at the kindergarten entry point should be five years of age on or before 30 April in that year.

- 4.2.4 Children may enrol at Jervis Bay School at the beginning of the school year if they turn four years of age on or before 31 July in that year, aligned with NSW requirements.

- 4.2.5 The Allen Main Memorial Preschool is located in Duntroon as an annex of Campbell Primary School. Parents wishing to seek to enrol their child should contact Campbell Primary.

- 4.2.6 Early childhood schools follow the same enrolment procedures as primary and preschools and will provide a range of services and facilities including on-site access to health services and childcare. For more information about early childhood schools refer to the Department's website at:  
[http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching\\_and\\_learning/early\\_childhood\\_schools](http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/early_childhood_schools)

##### **4.3 Early entry**

- 4.3.1 Early entry to school may be granted to children upon meeting certain eligibility criteria relating to either mobility or giftedness. To gain approval for early entry into preschool or kindergarten, the Director for Learning and Teaching first considers the written evidence presented. An educational and psychological assessment conducted by a registered psychologist may be required before a final decision can be made. Further information is available on the Department's website at:  
[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/31952/GAT\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/31952/GAT_Policy.pdf)

##### **4.4 Early intervention programs**

- 4.4.1 Early enrolment for children under compulsory education age is also available to children eligible for entry into Early Intervention (Special Education)

Programs, the Koori Preschool Program and English as a Second Language programs. Further information is available on the Department's website at: [http://www.det.act.gov.au/school\\_education/special\\_education](http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/special_education)

#### 4.5 Special education programs

4.5.1 Application for a special education setting may be made through the school counsellor or through the Student Support section of the Department. Once approval for entry into a special education setting is received, placement into the school setting occurs according to the guidelines for primary schools, high schools and colleges. Children with a confirmed disability and additional educational needs are welcome to apply for access to special education programs. Further information is available on the Department's website at: [http://www.det.act.gov.au/school\\_education/special\\_education](http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/special_education)

#### 4.6 High school placement

4.6.1 Parents must complete an application for placement, and must identify at least three high school preferences. Children are guaranteed a place in their PEA high school. If they have nominated a school that is not their PEA school, their placement will be considered based on specific criteria at each school. Further information is available on the Department's website at: [http://www.det.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/25301/High\\_School\\_Enrolment\\_Extra\\_Info.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/25301/High_School_Enrolment_Extra_Info.pdf). Parents are encouraged to visit the school at which they are seeking to enrol their child to gather information and for assistance with the enrolment process.

4.6.2 An applicant for high school enrolment has the right to lodge a letter of appeal to the Department of their placement on the grounds expressed on the enrolment application. The appeal will be considered by an internal Appeals Panel. The decision of the Panel is final.

#### 4.7 College placement

4.7.1 College placements are managed through an online placement process.

4.7.2 Children are guaranteed a place in their PEA college. Children can apply for a non-PEA college and will be considered based on specific criteria.

4.7.3 An applicant for college enrolment has the right to lodge an appeal of their placement.

#### 4.8 Telopea Park School

4.8.1 Telopea Park School, le Lycee Franco-Australian de Canberra, is a unique bi-national French-Australian school. Since 1984, the school has operated under a bi-national agreement between the French and Australian governments. The school website at <http://www.telopea.act.edu.au> outlines the entry criteria and enrolment procedures.

#### 4.9 International students

4.9.1 Non-Australian citizens or non-permanent residents may enrol in ACT public schools, subject to certain conditions which may include the payment of fees subject to the conditions of the *International Fee Paying Students* policy and the *Enrolment of Temporary Visa Holders - Charging* policy.

4.9.2 They must hold a valid visa and must meet the specific travel, entry and residency conditions set by the relevant state and territory governments and Australian Government agencies. Enrolment is only for the period of the visa and must be approved by the Department.

4.9.3 Further information is available on the Department's website at: [http://www.det.act.gov.au/school\\_education/international\\_students](http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/international_students)

#### 4.10 Exemption from enrolment

4.10.1 Parents seeking an exemption from the enrolment requirement should seek an Exemption Certificate. The Department's *Exemption Certificates* policy is available on the Department's website at: [www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au).

#### 4.11 Enrolment evidence

4.11.1 Children who live in the ACT have enrolment priority over children who do not live in the ACT.

4.11.2 When enrolling in an ACT public school or special program delivered by the Department, evidence of proof of age and where the child lives must be provided to the school at the time of enrolment.

4.11.3 Where a parent cannot provide the evidence required they will be referred to the relevant School Network Leader for a decision on the student's enrolment.

4.11.4 After initial enrolment and when a parent and/or a student changes address, evidence must be provided to the school.

4.11.5 Each year schools will request from parents an update of address. The annual updates will only require evidence of where a student lives if the address is different to the address currently on file at the school. This information will not affect enrolment status.

4.11.6 Under the ACT Public Health Regulation 2000, schools are required to collect and maintain immunisation status records on all newly enrolled students at the preschool or point of entry into the primary school years. Each year schools will request from parents an update of immunisation status.

4.11.7 A child will not be excluded from enrolling in an ACT public school if they have not been immunised. Under the ACT Public Health Regulation 2000, in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurring at a preschool or school, the Chief Health Officer may give a written direction to a person in charge of a school to exclude from school: a child, or each child who has the disease; or a non-immunised child, or each non-immunised child.

## 5. POLICY OWNER

Executive Director, School Improvement

## 6. RELATED POLICIES

*International Fee Paying Students*

*Enrolment of Temporary Visa Holders - Charging*

*Gifted and Talented Students*

*Students with a Disability: Meeting their Educational Needs*  
*Student Immunisation Record Keeping*  
*Attendance at ACT public schools*  
*Education participation requirements*  
*Exemption Certificates*

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