



Early Education Program Enrolment Policy 2023

BACKGROUND

Southern Autistic School provides educational programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Specialist schools, including Southern Autistic 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 in the Early Education Program at Southern Autistic 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

Southern Autistic School offers an Early Education Program (EEP) for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis and is guided by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Age of entry to the program is for children between 2 years 8 months to 4 years 8 months.

At 4 years and 8 months, students are required to enrol in the school age program (see Enrolment Policy for criteria).

School specific enrolment criteria

1. **Diagnosis of ASD**
2. **Applications from students who do not yet have a confirmed diagnosis will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Principal, in consideration of the student's education and support needs.**

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. **Families who have an ASD diagnosis.**
2. **Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.**

2. Students who reside within the DTA.

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, South Eastern Victoria Region may ask for supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a student's permanent residence.

Southern Autistic 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.

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

Enrolment process

1. Attend a school tour
2. Attend an individual play session onsite
3. Families will complete enrolment documentation (submission of an enrolment form does not guarantee a placement at SAS)
4. School will offer a place pending availability
5. Child will be invited to transition sessions at school
6. Families will be notified of start dates

APPEAL PROCESS

Parents/carers can appeal against the decision not to approve an enrolment. This can occur in relation to enrolments at any age level. Parents or carers seeking to appeal a specialist school's enrolment decision should lodge a written appeal with the school. The Department will contact parents/carers with further information after an appeal is lodged.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2018
Approved by	Regional Director, South Eastern Victoria Region. School council members.
Next scheduled review date	August 2025