

School and preschool enrolment policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

1. Overview

This policy aims to:

- identify children eligible to be enrolled in a government preschool and outline compulsory requirements for children and young people being enrolled in government primary and secondary schools
- make sure department staff and parents meet their legislative and regulatory obligations when enrolling children and young people
- make sure preschool and school practices in relation to enrolments are equitable and inclusive of all South Australian children and young people.

Note:

- Throughout this policy, the term 'Aboriginal' respectfully refers to Anangu peoples, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.
- The term 'parent' refers to parents, guardians and/or caregivers with responsibility for the care of Aboriginal children.
- The term 'family' includes parents, carers, families and extended families, Elders and community members involved in the education of their Aboriginal children.

2. Scope

This policy describes the responsibilities of schools, preschools and parents in relation to:

- non-compulsory preschool.
- compulsory education and the enrolment, attendance and participation requirements of children and young people under the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#).

This policy applies to children entitled to enrol at preschool the year before starting school and those children with a preschool entitlement from their third birthday (Aboriginal children and Children in Care).

Placement to a universal 3-year-old preschool program is out scope of this policy. Preschools can refer to the [Universal 3-year-old preschool enrolment policy \(PDF 669KB\)](#) (staff login required).

Families can visit [preschool for 3 year olds](#) for further information.



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4. Detail

4.1. Part A – preschools

4.1.1. Eligibility for enrolment at preschool

In South Australia (SA), parents can enrol their child in a government preschool program provided that the child lives in SA and:

- has Australian citizenship or permanent residency, or
- is a child with a relevant specified visa or [ImmiCard](#).

Children who live outside of SA may be considered for enrolment where specific requirements are met.

All children are entitled to access a preschool program for up to 4 terms the year before they start school.

Aboriginal children and children who are or have been in care are entitled to access a preschool program any time after their 3rd birthday.

Where children start preschool in the mid-year intake, they are eligible to begin reception mid-year the following year and undertake 6 terms of reception. See [starting school](#) for more detail.

4.1.2. Starting preschool

Government preschools have two major enrolment intakes each year, where children are eligible to access 4 terms of their full preschool entitlement (15 hours per week).

Aboriginal children and children who have been or are in care, are eligible to attend preschool after their 3rd birthday. In these circumstances, a child may be enrolled at any time after their 3rd birthday and attend a preschool program for an average of 15 hours per week.

Their entitlement of 15 hours per week is not limited to 4 terms and can continue up to the child's 6th birthday.

4.1.2.1. Age of eligibility

Table 1: Preschool age of eligibility

Child	Age of child	Eligibility
Aboriginal children and children who are or have been in care	From date of 3rd birthday	Eligible to start 15 hours per week at any time, not limited to major enrolment intakes.
All children	Turn 4 years of age before 1 May of that year	Eligible to start 15 hours per week from term 1 of the same year (intake 1).

All children	Turn 4 years of age between 1 May and 31 October of that year	Eligible to start 15 hours per week from term 3 of the same year (intake 2).
All children	Turn 4 years of age after 31 October of that year	Eligible to start 15 hours per week from term 1 of the following year (intake 1).

Parents wishing to enrol a child after the commencement of their eligible major enrolment intake can start preschool at a mutually agreed time between the parents and principal/preschool director ('director').

Parents need to consider their child's readiness to begin preschool before enrolling in a preschool program.

4.1.2.2. Aligning preschool and school commencement dates

When parents decide that their child will commence school in the year they turn 6 years of age, it is recommended that the child enrol in the nearest major preschool enrolment intake that will provide the child access to up to 4 terms of preschool prior to commencing school.

Aboriginal children and children who are or have been in care may start school when they reach the age of eligibility for enrolment at a government school or continue at preschool until they turn 6 years of age.

Where extended time in a preschool setting is being considered, the principal or director should have discussions with all parties to identify the benefits of extended time in a preschool setting and the timing of transition into school. See [starting school](#) for more detail.

4.1.3. Interstate and overseas transfers

Children transferring from an interstate or overseas preschool, who turn 4 years of age during the year, are eligible to continue their learning and be enrolled in a SA government preschool.

The principal of a school-based preschool or preschool director must be satisfied and have sufficient documented evidence that the child has been enrolled in and regularly attended a preschool program for a minimum of 1 term prior to transferring to SA. See [documented evidence](#) definition below for acceptable documentation.

Children who have moved from interstate or overseas, who have not attended a preschool program will be eligible to begin in a SA government preschool as per the age eligibility requirements outlined above.

Aboriginal children and children who are or have been in care who have moved from interstate or overseas (regardless of whether they have attended a preschool program) and have turned 3 years of age are eligible to begin in a SA government preschool. Consultation should occur with the parents as to the best time for this to occur to make sure continuity or commencement of learning for the child.

4.1.4. Australian Defence Force families

A parent who is a full-time serving member of the permanent navy, the regular army, or the permanent air force, who has a child who turns 4 years of age on or before 31 July, can choose to have their child start preschool at the beginning of that year (intake 1).

The principal of a school-based preschool or director must be satisfied and have sufficient documented evidence that 1 or both parents are current serving members. See [documented evidence](#) definition below for acceptable documentation.

Where parents may be considering this choice, the principal or director should support the parents to consider the best time to have their child start preschool and transition to school, with consideration of possible future Australian Defence Force postings to interstate or overseas locations.

Defence families can contact the Defence Member and Family Helpline at 1800 624 608 or memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

4.1.5. Special consideration for other enrolments

Early entry to preschool is not a guarantee. Enrolments for children who meet the eligibility requirements for preschool are to be given priority over early entry enrolments. Requests for early entry to a preschool are assessed on a case-by-case basis by the principal or director.

A principal or director may grant a child early entry to a preschool program based on the following considerations:

- the child will continue to access preschool at the same service
- the preschool has the ability to accept the enrolment within existing resources
- more time at preschool is likely to significantly improve the child's learning, wellbeing, and developmental outcomes
- there has been consultation between all parties (eg principal, director, parents and relevant departmental staff and agencies).

Early entry to preschool may be offered to:

- children with additional needs or disability or both
- children with [significant extenuating family or individual circumstances](#)
- children with emerging English as an additional language or dialect (EALD)
- children who are at significant risk due to family circumstances.

The child may attend preschool for up to 6 hours per week in the term prior to the child starting their eligible preschool year. Children accessing early entry may be eligible to access appropriate [student support services](#).

4.1.6. Admission to preschool

Admission to a government preschool is managed by the principal or director following the instructions outlined in the following procedures:

- [admission procedure \(PDF 723KB\)](#)
- [placement procedure \(PDF 771KB\)](#)
- [transfer procedure \(PDF 268KB\)](#)

- [registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 713KB\)](#).

Before confirming the enrolment, parents will be asked to supply evidence of their child's immunisation status, the child's residential addresses, full name, and birth date.

See the [school enrolment](#) page for further information.

4.1.6.1. Immunisation requirements

For a child to be enrolled by their parents and continue to attend a preschool, the child must meet the immunisation requirements under the [South Australian Public Health Act 2011 \(SA\)](#).

A parent must supply current approved immunisation records for their child:

- at the time of enrolment
- after the child receives a scheduled immunisation within specified age ranges.

Refer to [immunisation requirements and early childhood services](#) for more information.

4.1.7. Extended transition to school

A principal and director may grant a child to have more time at preschool and an extended transition to school (of 1 additional term) at preschool, based on the following considerations:

- the child has additional needs or disability or both and has a personalised learning plan ([One Plan](#) (staff login required))
- there has been consultation between all parties (eg the principal, director, DCP case worker, carer, parents, and student support services staff)
- more time in the preschool environment will maximise the child's educational outcomes.
- the preschool has the physical capacity to support the extended transition to school.

An extended transition to school is not a guarantee but rather an exception, where it is agreed by the principal and director to be in the best interests of the child.

During the transition period the enrolment of the child belongs to the school who will be responsible for providing any additional staffing and resources needed to support the child within the preschool setting.

Enrolments for children who meet the age eligibility requirements for preschool are to be given priority for preschool enrolment over extended transition arrangements.

4.1.8. Withdrawing from preschool

Parents may formally withdraw their child from preschool within the first 6 weeks of beginning preschool. Once withdrawn, the child is eligible to be re-enrolled in a preschool program, starting at the beginning of the following major enrolment intake. The preschool [notification of withdrawal form \(DOCX 90KB\)](#) (staff login required) must be completed and the end date must be recorded in the child's enrolment record.

Parents seeking to re-enrol their child in the same preschool will need to re-apply through the registration of interest process for the following major enrolment intake (ie a place will not be reserved at the preschool).

Parents of Aboriginal children who wish to formally withdraw their child from preschool may do so at any time. When a parent decide that the child is ready to return to preschool, they may re-enrol their child at any time if the preschool has capacity to accept the child. Where the preschool does not have capacity, the child is to be placed onto a waitlist for future consideration if a place becomes available and supported to enrol an alternative preschool for placement.

4.2. Part B – schools

4.2.1. Compulsory school requirements

4.2.1.1. Compulsory school age

All children living in SA must be enrolled in and attending school from the age of 6 years until they turn 16 years of age. This is known as the compulsory school age under the [Education and Children’s Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#).

Parents may be subject to penalties if it is found that a child or young person of compulsory school age is not enrolled in a school and does not have an approved exemption from attending school.

4.2.1.2. Compulsory education age

When a young person reaches 16 years of age they must continue to be enrolled in school or other approved learning program until they turn 17 years of age. This is known as compulsory education age under the [Education and Children’s Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#).

Where a young person has achieved a South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) or other qualification under an approved learning program, there is no requirement for them to continue to be enrolled at and attend school or participate in an approved learning program at or over the age of 16 years.

4.2.2. Eligibility for enrolment at school

All compulsory school age children or young people who are living in SA can enrol in a government school, provided the child or young person:

has Australian citizenship or permanent residency, or

is a student with a relevant specified visa or [ImmiCard](#). Enrolment is subject to certain conditions, which may include payment of student fees. Refer to [international student program website](#).

Students who are post compulsory school age, and adult students where they meet the requirements of the [Education and Children’s Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#) and the [adult education enrolment policy \(PDF 625KB\)](#), may be considered for enrolment.

Children who reside outside of SA may be considered for enrolment on a case- by-case basis where specific requirements are met.

For further information on eligibility for enrolment email education.customers@sa.gov.au.

4.2.3. Starting school

Government primary schools have two major enrolment intakes each year for children being enrolled by their parents in reception: intake 1 for children starting at the beginning of the year (term 1), and intake 2 for children starting mid-year (term 3).

Children who start reception through the mid-year (intake 2) will undertake 6 terms of reception.

4.2.3.1. Age of eligibility

Table \2: Primary school age of eligibility

Age of child	Eligibility
Turns 5 years of age before 1 May of that year	Can start reception at the beginning of that year (intake 1). Children undertake 4 terms of reception.
Turns 5 years of age between 1 May and 31 October of that year	Can start reception at the beginning of term 3 of that year (intake 2). Children undertake 6 terms of reception.
Turns 5 years of age after 31 October of that year	Can start reception at the beginning of following year (intake 1). Children undertake 4 terms of reception.

4.2.3.2. Commencing school in the year a child turns 6 years of age

For parents who do not wish to enrol their child until the year they turn 6 years of age, it is recommended the child starts school on the first day of the nearest major enrolment intake (eg the start of the school year or mid-year, whichever is closest in months) prior to the child turning 6 years of age. A child must be enrolled at a school by their 6th birthday.

Where Aboriginal children and children who are or have been in care are to remain in preschool after their 5th birthday, it is recommended they commence school in mid-year term 3 (intake 2) so they are provided with access to 6 terms of reception.

If parents determine their child will not commence school until they turn 6 years of age, the child may be enrolled at any time with consideration of the following:

- there have been discussions with relevant parties, ie the principal/director, parents, and student support services staff in relation to transitioning to school.
- the discussions are documented in a transition plan to support continuity of learning and the establishment of any supports needed for the child.

4.2.4. Interstate and overseas transfers

Children transferring from an interstate or overseas school who have completed a preschool program, or who will turn 5 years of age during the year, are eligible to continue their learning and enrol in a SA government school.

The principal must be satisfied and have sufficient [documented evidence](#) to support that the child:

- has recently moved from interstate or overseas and has enrolled in and attended 4 terms of preschool or equivalent immediately before starting school, or
- has recently moved from interstate or overseas and has been enrolled and regularly attended school immediately before transferring to a SA government school (minimum 1 school term).

Children who have moved from interstate or overseas, who are not transferring from an interstate or overseas school or completed a preschool program, will be eligible to start at a SA government school as per the age eligibility requirements outlined above.

4.2.5. Australian Defence Force families

A parent who is a full-time serving member of the permanent navy, the regular army, or the permanent air force, who has a child who turns 5 years of age on or before 31 July, can choose to have their child start reception at the beginning of that year (intake 1).

The principal must be satisfied and have sufficient [documented evidence](#) that 1 or both parents are current serving members.

Where parents may be considering this choice, the principal should support the parents to consider the best time to have their child start school, with consideration of possible future Australian Defence Force postings to interstate or overseas locations.

Defence families can contact the Defence Member and Family Helpline at 1800 624 608 or memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

4.2.6. Early entry to school

Early entry to school, outside of the above conditions, is only possible in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by Chief Executive (or delegate). Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis and must be recommended by the department, via the local education director.

Early entry to school is not automatically granted. The department will assess each application based on the child's best interests, taking into account their age, relevant [documented evidence](#) regarding the continuity of their education, and/or an evaluation of whether the child has the necessary intellectual, social, and emotional skills to succeed at school.

The application will also consider if the child is at risk of long-term educational disadvantage by a childcare, preschool, allied health or other relevant professional if they do not begin school.

The principal can help parents decide if their child has the necessary attributes needed for early entry to school. It is the responsibility of the parent to obtain all relevant assessments, and/or other reports and evidence to support their child's application. This may include the use of comprehensive, multiple-criteria, reliable and valid assessment tools, including checklists, standardised tests, interviews, and observations.

Schools can refer to the 'gifted and talented learners' section in the [curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting: early childhood services to year 12 guideline \(PDF 338KB\)](#) for further information.

Applications based solely on parental observations will not be accepted.

For further information or trouble shooting schools can contact education.ECTU@sa.gov.au.

4.2.7. Attendance and participation requirements

Once a child is enrolled at a school, the child must attend every day and for such parts of each day, that instruction is provided for the child at the school. This includes all compulsory school activities.

If a student is absent, parents must provide the school with a reasonable explanation for the absence, unless permission for the absence has already been granted via an [exemption](#). This includes for a child under the age of 6 years.

The attendance requirements for government schools are described in the [attendance policy \(PDF 677KB\)](#).

The department offers various alternative schooling options for children and young people to support their participation in education, including:

- children unable to regularly attend school may be eligible to access an external education program as per the [Open Access College enrolment policy \(PDF 223KB\)](#)
- children and young people with disability may be eligible to enrol in a specialised education option, as per the [children and students with disability policy \(PDF 194KB\)](#).

All government schools must make reasonable efforts to work with families and provide adjustments and support to make sure every child and young person is given the opportunity to engage in learning.

4.2.7.1. Tailored learning support

Secondary school aged students in year 8 or higher who are at risk of disengaging from education due to significant and complex personal barriers may be able to access [Tailored Learning](#) support that allows these students to access flexible and personalised learning programs, as per the [Tailored Learning policy \(PDF 565KB\)](#). For further information families can refer to [Tailored Learning](#).

4.2.7.2. Attendance requirements at school and preschool for children and young people

Schools must also make sure every child and young person is able to meet the attendance at school, and participation requirements of the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#). See the section below for attendance requirements at various ages.

Preschool age children

A child can attend an approved preschool program for up to 4 terms before starting school, if they meet the requirements for entry determined by the department. Aboriginal children and children who are or who have been in care can attend an approved preschool program from 3 years of age.

Children under 6 years – pre compulsory school age

A child can be enrolled and be admitted to a school under the age of 6 years, if they meet the requirements for entry determined by the department.

Once a child under 6 years of age is enrolled in school, they are subject to the same attendance requirements as children of compulsory school age and must attend regularly.

Attendance at school for a child under 6 years of age may be changed to meet the child's specific needs (such as a part-time or modified program). This is arranged by negotiation between the principal and the parents at enrolment, and where necessary the department's [exemption requirements](#) must be applied.

A parent may decide to formally withdraw their child who is under 6 years of age from school. The school should make every effort to support the student and family to remain engaged with schooling; however, if this is the parent's final decision it must be recorded in the Student Record Folder.

The principal must make sure that parents understand that it is a requirement under legislation that their child must be enrolled in and attending a school by 6 years of age. This may be at the beginning of the next major enrolment intake or by their 6th birthday.

Children aged 6 to 16 years – compulsory school age

A child must be enrolled in a primary or secondary school and attend school, from when a child turns 6 years until they turn 16 years of age, unless the child has an approved [exemption](#) from attending school.

Children aged 16 to 17 years – compulsory education age

A child must attend school or participate in a full-time approved learning program, or a combination of programs, as to constitute full-time, until they turn 17 years of age. That is unless they have achieved a SACE or other qualification under an approved learning program.

Students aged 17 to 21 years – post compulsory school or education age

Current students aged 17 years to 21 years, are not required by law to keep studying and can choose to leave school, after discussing this with their parents and the school. If students in this age group want to stay and finish their studies, schools should support them. This includes students who have left school for less than 6 months and want to return to finish their senior secondary schooling (see [returning to senior secondary](#) in the year level progression and class placement procedure for more information).

A school must do everything they can to support Aboriginal students to remain at school and complete their studies, including working with student support services, Aboriginal education staff and the family.

Adult students, aged 18 years to 21 years, who have left school for more than 6 months can return to school to complete their studies, if:

- They are eligible through the [adult education enrolment policy \(PDF 625KB\)](#).
- They have a current [working with children check \(WWCC\)](#) before attending the school, and
- They are not a prohibited person under the [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016 \(SA\)](#).

Students aged 17 to 21 years can enrol at their local government school, following the usual [placement procedure \(PDF 771KB\)](#). They do not have to attend a senior college, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements.

Adult students aged 21 years or older – Adult Education Provision (AEP)

Adult students aged 21 years or older who have not achieved their SACE can complete this qualification under the adult education provision (AEP) detailed in the [adult education enrolment policy \(PDF 625KB\)](#).

Students have up to 5 calendar years or 200 credits (whichever occurs first) to complete their SACE. The AEP is only provided once for each eligible person.

4.2.8. Exemption from attending school

The Minister or delegate has the authority to grant a child of compulsory school age or a child of compulsory education age (as the case requires) an exemption from attendance or participation at school or in approved learning programs (including for [home education](#)).

Exemptions from attending school or participating in an approved learning program are managed by the principal, in accordance with the instructions outlined in the [exemption from school procedure \(PDF 646KB\)](#) (staff login required).

4.2.9. Admission to school

Every child has a right to education. Placement in a particular government school or service is managed by the principal in line with the instructions in the [placement procedure \(PDF 771KB\)](#) (staff login required).

The department is committed to inclusion, and principals will make reasonable adjustments to ensure all children and young people with disability can attend school, on the same basis as any other child or young person.

Principals will manage admission and transfers to their school or services in a fair and transparent manner, without discrimination or prejudice as per the [admission procedure \(PDF 723KB\)](#) and [transfer procedure \(PDF 689KB\)](#).

Equal opportunity is promoted in all government schools to maximise the educational opportunities and outcomes for priority groups, including Aboriginal children and children in care.

See the [school enrolment](#) page for further information.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. Parents

Make sure when their child is of compulsory school age or compulsory education age they are enrolled at a school or in an approved learning program pursuant to the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#)

Make sure any enrolment form is completed for their child, and give the principal or director all information and documentation requested in a timely manner, to verify:

- their child's full name
- their child's date of birth
- residential address(es) for the child
- details of any school or approved learning program and information relating to the academic progress in which their child was previously, or is currently, enrolled
- any other information as requested (for example immunisation records, court orders, intervention orders and parenting plans)

Make sure they exercise proper care and control of their child of compulsory school age or compulsory education age to be enrolled in and attend the school in which they are enrolled on every day, and for such parts of every day, that instruction is provided for the child at the school or to participate in an approved learning program (respectively), pursuant to the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#).

Where appropriate, make sure their child has received an approved exemption from school.

5.2. Principal or preschool director ('director')

Manage the day-to-day operations of the school or preschool, including enrolments. The principal or director must:

- make sure this policy and related procedures are adhered to as they relate to registration of interest processes, transfers, admission, and placement of students.
- manage processes to acquire necessary resources and facilities to accommodate students eligible for placement at the school or preschool.
- make sure relevant information is communicated to, and is clear and understood by their local community, families, and prospective applicants.
- maintain accurate and complete enrolment data.
- manage all enrolments into the school or preschool in a transparent manner, with consideration of the best interests of a child and young person, their safety and wellbeing, the right of every child to education, without discrimination or prejudice to the child or young person nor their parents.
- make reasonable adjustments for all children and young people to participate in education to maximise their educational opportunities and outcomes.
- make sure the school provides a supportive learning environment, including access to services, to engage all students in their learning, with consideration to a student's personal circumstances, physical, social, mental wellbeing, and cultural safety needs.
- make sure school and preschool communication in relation to enrolment is accessible, promotes inclusion and details complaints processes available.
- make sure children and young people and their parents are provided with an opportunity to participate in decisions affecting them, be listened to, and be taken seriously.
- make sure every effort is made to support students to remain in school or preschool by engaging in their learning including consultation with families.

5.3. Education Director

Make sure principals and directors manage enrolments in accordance with instructions set out by relevant national and state legislation and departmental policies and procedures.

Recommend early entry special considerations and variations to preschool entitlement, including withdrawal from preschool.

5.4. Education Lead - Early Childhood

Provide leadership, curriculum and pedagogical expertise to the department's early childhood services, preschools, and early years of schooling (birth to year level 5).

Contributes to improved learning and development outcomes for children.

Provide support and advice to principals and directors to interpret the preschool and school eligibility requirements.

5.5. Tailored Learning leaders, Schools

Comply with the [Tailored Learning policy \(PDF 565KB\)](#)

Maintain responsibility for all students accessing Tailored Learning.

Develop and maintain strong connections with students, families and case managers.

Work in partnership with the Tailored Learning Directorate, to develop Tailored Learning practices in their school.

Utilise resources and tools to effectively manage Tailored Learning, tailored to their local conditions.

5.6. Schools and Preschools

Give advice to principals, directors and education directors in the interpretation and implementation of enrolment requirements for schools and preschools determined by the Chief Executive and the department.

Make sure this policy and corresponding procedures are compliant and up to date with relevant legislative and state government obligations.

Where a child or young person cannot meet attendance or participation requirements, have the delegations in place to issue an exemption certificate on behalf of the Minister.

Approve early entry special considerations and variations to preschool entitlement, including withdrawal from preschool.

Monitor, evaluate and review this policy in collaboration with key stakeholders.

5.7. Chief Executive (or delegate)

Determines the policy for enrolment in a government school of a child who is under 6 years of age pursuant to [Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#).

Approves early entry to school for children under 6 years of age, in exceptional circumstances.

5.8. Minister for Education, Training and Skills (or delegate)

Grant exemptions, by written notice, from attendance or participation pursuant to the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#).

Declare by notice in the government gazette other approved learning programs.

6. Definitions

6.1. Aboriginal

This document uses the term 'Aboriginal' to refer to people who identify as:

- Aboriginal
- Torres Strait Islander
- both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

This usage is preferred by Aboriginal South Australians and the department.

6.2. additional needs and/or disability

Children with disability and/or additional needs including physical, sensory (hearing and/or vision), autism spectrum disorder, global developmental delay, speech, and language and/or significant challenging behaviours.

6.3. admission

The administrative process of enrolling or being allowed to enrol at a school and preschool.

6.4. adult student

A student who is 18 years of age or over.

Excludes those students who turned 18 years during their studies at school. These students are referred to as current or continuing students.

6.5. approved learning programs

Includes:

- Secondary education provided under the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#), including:
 - SACE (SA Certificate of Education), including modified SACE
 - International Baccalaureate (IB)
 - Steiner Education (Waldorf Schools) Secondary Certificate.
- University degrees, diplomas, or other university award courses.
- Technical and Further Education courses provided by TAFE SA.
- Accredited courses provided by registered training organisations.
- Apprenticeships or traineeships undertaken with an registered employer under the [South Australian Skills Act 2008 \(SA\)](#).
- Other programs declared by the Minister (or delegate) by notice in the government gazette.

- A combination of the above.

6.6. best interest of a child or young person

Consideration of the long-term and short-term welfare concerns for a child or young person, such as their safety and wellbeing, intellectual, cultural, social and emotional needs, aspirations, and abilities.

6.7. child or young person

Persons under 18 years of age.

6.8. children and young people in care

Where a child or young person is the subject of a custody or guardianship order under the [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(SA\)](#).

This includes the following care arrangements:

- where a child or young person is under the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection
- where there is an order granting a specified person care of a child (previously referred to as Other Person Guardianship)
- voluntary custody agreements.

Where a child or young person is under registered child protection orders from other states.

Where a child or young person is an unaccompanied refugee minor under the [Immigration \(Guardianship of Children\) Act 1946 \(Cth\)](#) with guardianship delegated from the Minister for the Department of Home Affairs to the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection.

6.9. child of compulsory school age

A child of or above the age of 6 years but under the age of 16 years.

6.10. child of compulsory education age

A child must participate in a full-time approved learning program from the age of 16 until they reach 17 years of age, unless they have already completed their SACE or another recognised qualification.

6.11. children with significant extenuating family or individual circumstances

The principal or director can accept the early entry of a child at their school or preschool if they determine it will support the child's wellbeing. This may include:

- compassionate circumstances such as chronic homelessness, escaping domestic violence or recently orphaned

- medical reasons, including severe illness and mental health concerns or conditions (usually those that have necessitated hospitalisation or medical treatment)
- matters that significantly impact the welfare of the child.

6.12. delegate

A person or persons appointed and engaged in the department that has been delegated powers or certain functions by the Minister or Chief Executive pursuant to the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#).

6.13. discrimination

When a person treats another person or their child in a way that is less favourable because of their gender, nationality, culture, age, disability, religion, gender identity, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, sexual orientation, intersex status, marital or relationship status, and family responsibilities as defined in the [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#), the [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#) and [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#).

6.14. documented evidence

The following evidence is considered sufficient documentation for the assessment of eligibility for early age entry to school or preschool:

- A letter from the educational leader of the previous school or preschool acknowledging that the child met the eligibility criteria for entry into their service and was either enrolled in and regularly attended school or preschool before transferring (for the minimum period).
- An Australian Defence Force certificate of service or an extract of service (or other authorised record) showing that one or both parents, with responsibility for the child, are currently an effective full-time serving member of the permanent Australian navy, the regular army, or the permanent air force.

The evidence must be to the satisfaction of the principal or director.

6.15. eligible preschool year

Children are eligible to access up to 4 terms of preschool in the enrolment intake before they start school.

6.16. enrolment

The process through which a person becomes a student of an education provider.

6.17. entitled preschool program

An approved early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year before they start schooling, or as defined within the [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#).

Preschools may also be referred to as a kindergarten, school-based preschool, Children's centre, children's centre for early childhood development and parenting, early learning centre, child parent centre, childhood service centre or integrated children's centre.

Under the [National preschool reform agreement](#) a child may attend a preschool for 600 hours in the year before starting full time school delivered over 40 weeks across 4 terms. Aboriginal children or children who are or have been in care are entitled to commence a preschool program any time following their third birthday and are not limited to major enrolment intakes.

Variations to a preschool entitlement, including withdrawal, may be approved by the Lead Director, Preschools and Early Childhood Services on a case-by-case basis.

6.18. exemption certificate

A formal certificate issued by the Minister or delegate exempting a child or young person of compulsory school age or a child of compulsory education age from attending or participating at school or in an approved learning program permanently or for a nominated period.

6.19. guardian

A person who has legal guardianship or custody of a child.

When a child in care is placed under the guardianship of the Chief Executive by court order, the Chief Executive is the lawful guardian of the child or young person. The DCP case worker is responsible for making sure a child or young person is enrolled in school. For more information see the [Department for Child Protection \(DCP\)](#).

6.20. home education

A child or young person enrolled at school but exempted from attending school and whose education will be conducted by 1 or both parents from a home base. A child must be registered and approved for home education with the department.

6.21. Immicard

An [Immicard](#) is the primary identity document in Australia for refugees or people seeking asylum.

6.22. in loco parentis

A person acting in a parental style relationship with a child, where the person has intended to place themselves in the position of a parent toward a child and has assumed the same duty and authority as a parent with respect to the nurturing, control and protection of a child. A person in loco parentis may include a person:

- In a de facto relationship with a child's biological parent where they have assumed responsibility for the child
- Who has taken over care of a child after the death of both biological parents, or where there has been a family breakdown and the child is estranged from both biological parents

- Who is a kinship carer for the child or children
- In an informal fostering arrangement.

This person does not have to assume any or all financial responsibility for a child to satisfy this definition.

6.23. living in South Australia

The child's primary place of residence (physical home) is located within South Australia.

6.24. personalised learning plan (One Plan)

A document that sets out the needs, aims and objectives for individual children or young people to facilitate access and participation in their educational program on the same basis as their same-aged peers.

6.25. Open Access College (OAC)

Open Access College provides students unable to regularly attend school access to an external education program, or online learning to studies not available at their current school.

6.26. parent

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'parent' refers to all persons responsible for the child. A person responsible for the child means a person who is the child's:

- biological parent, adoptive parent or other person recognised as a parent if the child was conceived following a fertilisation procedure or under a surrogacy arrangement
- guardian
- person standing in loco parentis.

This does not include a person who has had their legal custody, guardianship or responsibility for the child removed by a Court, Act or Law. As an example, a biological parent who has had their custody, guardianship or parental responsibility for the child removed by a parenting order made under [Family Law Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#) is not a person responsible for the child.

6.27. placement

The act of prioritising offers for enrolment and allocating children or young people to a particular school or preschool.

6.28. qualification

Means a SACE or at least a Certificate 2 (or equivalent qualification), under an approved learning program. A student over the age of 16 years of age, who has achieved a qualification under an approved learning program, is considered as having completed their schooling.

6.29. reasonable effort

Means the efforts that any reasonable person would use to comply with the obligation to provide a child or young person the opportunity to engage in learning.

6.30. reception

The first year of schooling in South Australia.

6.31. registration of interest

A formal expression for a child or young person to apply to enrol to attend a school or preschool for the coming enrolment intake. This is not an enrolment but an application process.

6.32. SACE

[South Australia Certificate of Education](#). Includes SACE achieved through modified subjects at Stage 1 and Stage 2 for students with identified intellectual disabilities.

6.33. school

Non-government and government schools at which education services (courses of instruction in primary and/or secondary education) are provided, or students enrolled, and who are registered with the [SA Education Standards Board](#) as per the [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011 \(SA\)](#).

6.34. specified visa

Includes international students, dependants of tertiary students, children entering on a tourist or visitor visa who will be studying in a public school or dependants of temporary resident visa holders. See [placement procedure \(PDF 789KB\)](#)

6.35. tailored learning

Tailored Learning provides support to students who may benefit from learning programs that are flexible and personalised to their needs, combined with quality case management to enhance engagement in education. Tailored Learning is reserved for students at risk of disengaging from education due to significant and complex personal barriers where an alternative learning environment and case management is provided.

6.36. transfer

The act or process of moving a student from one school or preschool to another.

7. Supporting information

[Immunisation requirements and early childhood services](#)

7.1. Related legislation

[Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(SA\)](#)

[Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016 \(SA\)](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)

[Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#)

[Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)

[Family Law Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)

[Immigration \(Guardianship of Children\) Act 1946 \(Cth\)](#)

[Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)

[South Australian Public Health Act 2011 \(SA\)](#)

[South Australian Skills Act 2008 \(SA\)](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990](#)

7.2. Related policies

[Admission procedure \(PDF 723KB\)](#)

[Adult education enrolment policy \(PDF 625KB\)](#)

[Attendance policy \(PDF 677KB\)](#)

[Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework \(EYLF\) v2.0 \(PDF 25MB\)](#)

[Children and students with disability policy \(PDF 195KB\)](#)

[Exemption from school procedure \(PDF 646KB\) \(staff login required\)](#)

[National Preschool Reform Agreement 2021-2026](#)

[Open Access College enrolment policy \(PDF 223KB\)](#)

[Placement procedure \(PDF 789KB\)](#)

[Registration of interest process \(enrolment\) procedure \(PDF 716KB\)](#)

[Screening and suitability – child safety policy \(PDF 646KB\)](#)

[Specialised education options for children and young people with disability placement procedure \(PDF 571KB\) \(staff login required\)](#)

[Tailored learning policy \(PDF 565KB\)](#)

[Transfer procedure \(PDF 693KB\)](#)

[Year level progression and class placement procedure \(PDF 614KB\)](#)

8. Record history

Published date: December 2025

8.1. Approvals

OP number: 222

File number: DE25/12809

Status: approved

Version: 3.4

Policy Officer: Manager, Enrolment Policy

Policy sponsor: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Responsible Executive Director: Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: 17 December 2025

Next review date: 17 December 2028

8.2. Revision record

Version: 3.4

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approval date: 17 December 2025

Next review date: 17 December 2028

Amendment(s): Minor update for new template and change hyperlinks to public webpage links where policies are on public facing education website. Reducing duplication with tailored learning support documentation.

Version: 3.3

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approval date: January 2025

Next review date: January 2028

Amendment(s): Minor edit - Update to reflect changes from FLO program to Tailored Learning Support.

Version: 3.2

Approved by: Lead Director, Priority Learners

Approved date: 29 May 2024

Review date: 29 May 2027

Amendment(s): Update to reflect realignment of the Office for Early Years into PSP and renaming PSP division to Schools and Preschools.

Version: 3.1

Approved by: Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools

Approval date: 28 February 2024

Review date: 28 February 2027

Amendment(s): Updated to reflect new hours of preschool entitlement for Aboriginal children and children in care. Updated hyperlinks to ROI process (enrolment) procedure, *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.

Version: 3.0

Approved by: Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools

Approval date: 3 October 2023

Next review date: 3 October 2026

Amendment(s): Updated to reflect inclusion of mid-year intake for children starting primary school in 2024 and updated impacts on entry requirements for preschools and schools. Updated FLO enrolment information, which will be developed into a stand-alone policy to reflect the redesign of tailored learning and supports for disengaged students.

Version: 2.6

Approved by: Executive Director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools

Approval date: 5 January 2023

Review date: 5 January 2026

Amendment(s): Update to preschool notification of withdrawal form to reflect the mid-year intake for preschools in 2023.

Version: 2.5

Approved by: Executive Director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools

Approval date: 20 October 2022

Review date: 20 October 2025

Amendment(s): Update to reflect the mid-year intake for preschools in 2023.

Version: 2.4

Approved by: Director, Conditions for Learning

Approval date: April 2022

Review date: April 2025

Amendment(s): Update of terminology and minor amendments, including the remove of year 7 into HS and references to year 8.

Version: 2.3

Approved by: Director, Conditions for Learning

Approval date: 16 April 2021

Review date: 16 April 2024

Amendment(s): Incorporation of Education and Children's Services (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2021 and preschool variation approvals.

Version: 2.2

Approved by: Executive Director: Executive Director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools

Approval date: 19 June 2020

Review date: 19 June 2023

Amendment(s): Incorporation of new Education and Children's Services Act 2019 and Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 requirements. Includes immunisation requirements for early childhood services. Updated to include FLO enrolment, replaces the previous FLO enrolment policy.

Version: 2.1

Approved by: Director, Conditions for Learning

Approved date: 12 November 2019

Review date: 16 April 2022

Amendment(s): Major edit to update to new HTML template. Published as HTML document on Edi, edited for plain English in consultation with Communications directorate.

Version: 2.0

Approved by: Chief Operating Officer

Approved date: 16 April 2019

Review date: 16 April 2022

Amendment(s): Major edit to align with new policy framework and removes mandatory procedural instructions into separate documents.

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Chief Executive

Approved date: 12 February 2012

Next review date: 12 February 2013

9. Contact

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