Eastern Ranges School
56 Dorset Road, Ferntree Gully 3156 I PO Box 400, Ferntree Gully 3156
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Enrolment Policy

BACKGROUND

Eastern Ranges School develops and implements innovative and specialised programs that focus on the needs of students diagnosed with Autism, an associated intellectual disability and a language disorder. Our programs are informed by current research and are embedded in best practice that prepares our students and their families for the future.

Specialist schools, including Eastern Ranges 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 and process for students seeking enrolment at Eastern Ranges 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 Eastern Ranges School is based on a student's disability and associated educational needs. Subject to capacity, student intake my be at any stage of the year, providing the student is of school age and satisfies the eligibility criteria. All applications for enrolment at Eastern Ranges School require regional approval.

ENROLMENT CRITERIA

The following enrolment criteria have been specified and approved by the Regional Director, North Eastern 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 at Eastern Ranges School must have:

- A diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder;
  and
- 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
- Significant deficits in language skills established by a comprehensive speech pathology assessment demonstrating language skills equivalent to a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean, (fore example a core language score of 70 or below on one of the recommended comprehensive language tests).

School specific enrolment criteria

Students commence enrolment in foundation at Eastern Ranges School in the year they turn six years old thus completing Year 12 in the year they turn 18 years old.

Eastern Ranges School supports dual enrolment for eligible students from Grade 1 onwards.

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, North Eastern Victoria Region (or delegate) must approve enrolments for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria.

Designated Transport Area

The Designated Transport Area (DTA) defines the geographical area surrounding Eastern Ranges School within which DET provides transport assistance to enrolled students. The DTA also defines the priority enrolment zone for Eastern Ranges School.

A map of Eastern Ranges School's DTA is available on our website at the following link:

Getting to and from school for students with disability (Victorian Government)

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 the attending the school at the same time.
2. Students who reside nearest to the school. Getting to and from school for students with disability (Victorian Government)

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 seeking enrolment applications under the priority order of placement, Eastern Ranges School may ask for supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a student's permanent residence.

Eastern Ranges 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 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 Eastern Ranges School who meets the enrolment criteria may be approved by the Regional Director North Eastern Victoria Region 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 comprehensive report from a child psychiatrist or paediatrician confirming a diagnosis of Autism;
b) a signed report from a psychologist, including a comprehensive assessment of adaptive behaviour (not more than 12 months old);
c) a signed report from a psychologist including a cognitive assessment stating an FSIQ of 70 or below (not less than 2 years old);
d) a signed report from a psychologist providing a statement of diagnosis of autism based on confirmation from a paediatrician or psychiatrist, as well as a parent and/or teacher interview, direct observation of the student and including specific reference to a formal diagnostic framework
e) a signed report from a speech pathologist containing a comprehensive speech pathology assessment (not more than 12 months old) and a statement that the results of the assessment are consistent with a diagnosis of Autism.

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.

Please refer to **Appendix A** for further information about the documentation required for enrolment applications at Eastern Ranges School.

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.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	December 2025

AB 23/2/2024.

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Appendix A: Enrolment Documentation Requirements

The following criteria are used to deem eligibility to attend Eastern Ranges School, by the Resources Coordination Committee to establish eligibility for support from the ***Program for Students with Disabilities 2023*** under the category **Autism** and to access funding through the verification or Disability Inclusion Profile process.

A. A clear medical statement of Autism. **A written statement providing an explicit diagnosis of autism based on DSM-V criteria, from a paediatrician/psychiatrist is required.**

AND

B. A cognitive assessment stating an FSIQ of 70 or below. **Less than 2 years old. *A report of assessment is required from a registered psychologist which clearly indicates a cognitive functioning score (IQ) of 70 or below.*** This report should be inclusive of observations of Autism traits by the psychologist, family, and where possible, teacher.

AND

C. Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale III (Comprehensive Teacher Form). **Less than 12 months old.-** Evidence of significant defects in adaptive behaviour established by a composite score two standard deviations or more below the mean on the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales- III.

AND

D. A diagnosis of Autism from a registered psychologist. **A written report from a psychologist providing a statement of diagnosis of autism based on confirmation from a paediatrician or psychiatrist, as well as a parent and/or teacher interview, direct observation of the student and including specific reference to a formal diagnostic framework *it is required to reference the DSM-V* or** ICD-10 with the triad/dyad of impairments noted. It is **preferred** to also reference ADI-R, ADOS-2 or CARS.

AND

E. A core language score of two or more standard deviations below the mean. ***Less than 12 months old.*** **The assessment findings must also include a statement that the results of the assessment are consistent with a diagnosis of Autism.** A statement from a registered speech pathologist using an approved language test is required: approved tests are the PLS-5, TELD-3, CELF-P2, CELF-5, CASL, CASL-2, TOLD-P5, TOAL-5, TOLD-I5; the most appropriate assessment for the individual student as deemed by the Speech Pathologist. Be informed that applications on the sole bases of pragmatic skill deficits are unlikely to succeed
*additional guidance available upon request for students with severe pragmatic language difficulties refer to the DET Professional Guidelines.

AND

F. A history of evidence of ongoing problem with the expectation of continuation during school years. Reports by either a medical practitioner or psychologist should normally demonstrate history.

RECOMMENDED TO ALSO INCLUDE:

G. An Occupational Therapist report. ***Less than 12 months old. Inclusive of examples*** in the following areas: **Challenging Behaviours** - The need for constant visual supervision, individual program intervention, withdrawn, self-harming or social challenges, **Fine Motor Skills** - The need for adaptations on a frequent bases, **Safety** - The need for intensive supervision to ensure safety e.g. Road safety, stranger danger – vulnerability, absconding, **Self-care** – toileting, eating, dressing.

Evidence must be provided by a psychologist, a speech pathologist, and a paediatrician, with experience and knowledge in the assessment of Autism.

External professionals are able to request the Professional Guidelines – ASD, ID or Complex Communication Needs, directly from the Regional Disability Coordinator Outer East. Requests must include a signature line or letterhead that clearly states the professional's role.

N.B. Speech, OT and Vineland assessments must be less than 12 months old.