



Enrolment Policy

Rationale

While every effort is made to accommodate all students applying to enrol at Northcote High School, this is not always possible. The demand for places at Northcote High School regularly exceeds availability and the school may only be able to enrol students for whom it is the designated neighbourhood school.

References

Department of Education (DET) Placement; Admissions; Enrolment Policies
DET Permanent Address Guidelines

Definitions

DET defines the designated neighbourhood school as the school that is nearest the student's permanent residence, unless the regional director:

- needs to restrict new enrolments at a school
- has designated the neighbourhood boundaries for the school.

For the purposes of this policy, the nearest school is measured by a straight line from the student's permanent residence.

The school can provide written advice as to whether Northcote High School is the nearest school for a specific address.

Permanent residence is the address at which a child permanently resides at the time of enrolment. If a child resides at multiple addresses, the child's 'permanent residence' is the address at which the child spends the majority of their weekdays.

A student considered to have a permanent address in the neighbourhood area is expected to live with his or her parents/carers. Staying with a relative or friend does not qualify as guardianship and is not a criterion for permanent address unless supported by relevant legal documentation.

Permanent residence does not mean ownership of a business in the area, or a financial interest in a property in the area unless it is the property that the family lives in.



Implementation

DET priority order of placements is applied for enrolments to Northcote High School:

1. Students for whom the school is the designated neighbourhood school.
2. Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.
3. Where the regional director has restricted the enrolment, students who reside nearest the school.
4. Students seeking enrolment on specific curriculum grounds*
5. All other students in order of closeness of their home to the school.
6. In exceptional circumstances, compassionate grounds.

* 'Curriculum Grounds' means that the application must demonstrate what specific program at Northcote High School is not available at the designated neighbourhood school, and why this is vital for the educational needs of the student. A Curriculum Grounds Claim Application form, articulating the reasons for the application, must be submitted with the Application for Enrolment. These forms are available on the school website and from the General Office.

Verification of permanent residence in the neighbourhood area

Evidence of permanent residence within the school's designated neighbourhood area will be requested for all applications seeking a place based on residential criteria. DET Permanent Address guidelines will be followed. It is the responsibility of the family to provide satisfactory evidence to the school to demonstrate their permanent residence. The enrolment application may not be accepted if the requested information/documentation is not provided.

To assist in verifying permanent residence, the school may ask for the following documentation to be provided:

Original or certified copies of:

1. Rental agreements or unconditional contracts of sale
plus
2. A copy of two of the following:
 - electoral enrolment confirmation
 - council rates notices
 - other official documentation that demonstrates permanent residency at that address such as a driver's licence or health care card.

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

On request, parents/carers may also be required to complete a statutory declaration confirming the student is living in the address provided in the enrolment application and that the arrangement is genuine and intended to be permanent.

If the school has concerns about the duration of a rental agreement being provided as proof of permanent address, the school will consult with the family to ensure that the school has provided reasonable consideration to the family's living circumstances.

When assessing enrolment applications, Northcote High School may make the following enquiries to verify the information provided about a student's permanent residence:

- Checking the electoral roll at an Australian Electoral Commission office or the Victorian Electoral Commission head office
- Checking with a real estate agent
- Checking whether the contact landline phone number provided is registered to the residence provided on the enrolment form
- 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.

Note: If, after reasonable enquiries, the Principal does not accept that the address provided on the enrolment application form is the genuine permanent residence of the student, the enrolment application may not be successful.

If the school decides to refuse enrolment based on these grounds, the school will ensure reasons are provided to the parent/carer for not accepting the address and ensure the parent/carer is aware that they may appeal this decision to the school's placement committee. The parent/carer may escalate the appeal to the regional director if the matter cannot be resolved at the school level.

Northcote High School will ensure enrolment practices do not unfairly disadvantage students who are unable to provide proof of permanent address because of their individual circumstances. This is particularly relevant to students experiencing homelessness, family violence or recently arrived immigrants or refugees. In these cases, the school will seek advice from the regional office before refusing an enrolment application on the basis that the student is unable to provide proof of permanent residence.

Changes to address after an enrolment offer is made

Subject to any changes to Department enrolment policy, if, after a placement offer is made to the student, the student's permanent residence changes or it comes to light that the address provided on the application form was not the genuine permanent residence for the student, Northcote High School may withdraw a placement offer in the following circumstances:

- The placement offer made to the student expressly stated that the offer may be withdrawn prior to the first day of attendance¹ if the student's permanent place of residence changes or the school becomes aware that the address provided on the application form was not the genuine permanent residence for the student; and
- The new address is not within the designated neighbourhood area for the school.

¹ Note – this may be subject to change pending further consideration of legislative requirements.

How to apply

Commencing Year 7

All Year 7 applications from students at Government Primary Schools are made according to the Department of Education Placement process whilst the child is in Grade 6. This is managed in the first instance by the child's Primary School.

Grade 6 students attending Catholic or Independent primary schools apply directly to Northcote High School using the relevant Enrolment Application form, available from the Northcote High School office or website. The same enrolment timeline applies for students applying from Catholic or Independent Schools as for students from Government Schools.

For places in Years 8-12, or mid-year Year 7 entry

Applications are to be made directly to the school and are considered in accordance with the school's processes and DET policies and guidelines. Applications are made using the Northcote High School Enrolment Enquiry form, available from the office or website.

Appealing non-placement

Appeals over non-placement can be made according to DET guidelines. Appeals would generally be made in the first instance to the school placement committee. The parent/carer may escalate the appeal to the regional director if the matter cannot be resolved at the school level.

The process and timeline for appeals regarding Year 7 placement is set out in the DET placement process.

The Northcote High School placement committee comprises a minimum membership of:

- The Principal (or nominated representative)
- An Assistant Principal (or nominated representative)
- A parent member of School Council

This policy was ratified by School Council in May 2018.