

Enrolment Schemes for a State Integrated School - FAQs

What is an enrolment scheme?

In ordinary state schools, an enrolment scheme is a tool to enable the board to avoid overcrowding or the likelihood of overcrowding. In consultation with Ministry staff, each board will determine an optimum figure around which the roll must be managed if the capacity of the school is not to be exceeded.

The boards of State integrated schools, however, have a predetermined roll management tool. This is the maximum roll¹ specified in the school's integration agreement². For some State integrated schools, the maximum roll is regularly a limiting factor, because each year they experience a situation where the number of applications from preference students³ exceeds, or comes close to exceeding, the number of spaces available.

These schools need an enrolment scheme.

Some State integrated schools can have a maximum roll that is higher than the actual capacity of the present school accommodation. If a school in this situation receives more applications than the capacity of the school can cope with, then it too needs a scheme.

In consultation with the board and the proprietor, the Ministry will make a judgement as to whether the maximum roll (or school capacity) is regularly under pressure from applications from preference students and, if necessary, will develop an enrolment scheme under [clause 4 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#).

Preference vs Non-Preference⁴ enrolments

No enrolment scheme is needed if the only problem is that there are more non-preference students applying for enrolment than the maximum number of non-preference places allowed for by the integration agreement. An enrolment scheme is needed only if the maximum roll and/or school capacity itself is under pressure from preference applicants. When there is pressure on the maximum roll and/or school capacity, the board should be mindful of the requirement in [Schedule 6](#) of the Education and Training Act 2020 that non-preference students may be enrolled only if places are available after all preference applicants have been enrolled.

Boards must be particularly careful to ensure that the offer of a place to a non-preference student does not later compromise its ability to enrol a preference student seeking enrolment at their local school. While schools will have a maximum number of non-preference enrolments they may take, many schools are unable to offer any non-preference places due to strong demand from preference applicants.

What are the purposes and principles of an enrolment scheme?

These are set out in [section 71](#) and their application to State integrated schools is explained in [clause 16](#) of Schedule 20. The purpose of an enrolment scheme in a State integrated school is:

- (a) to deal with a situation where the school has, or is likely to have, more applicants for enrolment than there are places available at the school;
- (b) to ensure that the selection of applicants for enrolment at the school is carried out in a fair and transparent manner; and
- (c) to enable the Secretary to make the best use of existing networks of state schools.

¹ "Maximum Roll" means the maximum number of students that should be enrolled for attendance at the school as prescribed from time to time under its integration agreement.

² "Integration Agreement" means an agreement entered into under [clause 5](#) of Schedule 6 of the Education and Training Act 2020. Integration means the conditions and procedures on and by which a private school may become established as part of the State system of education, and may remain part of that system, on a basis that preserves and safeguards the special character of the education that the school provides.

³ "Preference Applicants" means Applicants who meet the preference as described in the school's integration agreement. Different schools may have different requirements for proof of Preference eligibility.

⁴ "Non-preference Applicants" means Applicants who do not meet the preference as described in the school's Integration agreement.

In achieving its purpose, an enrolment scheme must, as far as possible, ensure that:

- (a) the scheme does not exclude local students; and
- (b) no more students are excluded from the school than is necessary to avoid there being more applicants for enrolment at the school than there are places available.

These must all be considered when proposing an enrolment scheme or amendment for a state integrated school.

Do State integrated schools have home zones?

In ordinary state schools, the principle of not excluding local students is covered in the requirement to specify a geographic area (the “home zone”) that gives an absolute guarantee of entitlement to enrolment to those students who live inside its boundaries.

Although a State integrated school with an enrolment scheme does not have to create a home zone (though it can choose to do so), its scheme must, as far as possible, ensure that it does not exclude local students [\[Section 71\(2\)\(a\)\]](#) and must accord priority to applicants for whom the school is a reasonably convenient school [\[Clause 16\(1\)\(b\)\]](#).

Therefore a description of the area of reasonable convenience (such as parish boundaries, for instance) may be included in the enrolment scheme. While this may have the appearance of a home zone and may appear on a map in a similar manner, this area of reasonable convenience provides a level of priority in gaining a place, rather than denoting a right to enrol.

‘Local’ and ‘reasonably convenient’

An enrolment scheme for a State integrated school must make a clear commitment to enrol students for whom the school is reasonably convenient ahead of those for whom it is not.

In the Act, a "reasonably convenient school" is defined as meaning a State school that a reasonable person living in the area in which the school is situated would judge to be reasonably convenient for a particular student, taking into account the student’s age, the distance to be travelled, the time likely to be spent travelling, the reasonably available modes of travel, common public transport routes and relevant traffic hazards.

The meaning may vary depending on whether the school is:

- a single sex or co-educational school
- an ordinary State school, a Kura Kaupapa Māori, a designated character school, a **State integrated school**, or a specialist school
- a primary, intermediate, secondary, or composite school.

A State integrated school is likely to have a wider catchment than ordinary state schools. It is important, however, that applicants “close” to the school must be a higher priority than more “distant” applicants.

What does fair and transparent mean?

One of the purposes of the legislation is to ensure that the selection of applicants for enrolment is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. The Ministry considers that, to be fair and transparent, the selection criteria must be:

- written down;
- freely available;
- unambiguous;
- consistently applied.

This means that parents should be in no doubt about the basis on which enrolment places will be offered.

Why is an enrolment scheme amendment needed⁵?

Examples of situations that might mean changes are required to your school's enrolment scheme include:

- old priority criteria may need to be refreshed
- the school may need to define the area of reasonable convenience more clearly. This could be driven by a need to provide a more specific area of reasonable convenience, or re-align the area with changes in physical boundaries or organisational features (such as parish or city council boundaries).
- a nearby school might be introducing or amending their own enrolment scheme, a new school of the same character may have opened, or a neighbouring school of the same character may have closed.

As set out in the [Education and Training Act 2020](#), the purpose of an enrolment scheme of a State school is; to avoid overcrowding, or the likelihood of overcrowding at the school; and to ensure that the selection of applicants for enrolment at the school is carried out in a fair and transparent manner; and to enable the Secretary to make the best use of existing networks of State schools.

An enrolment scheme is the only way the school can manage enrolments to protect space for local students.

Who will be managing the consultation?

Under the Education and Training Act 2020, the Ministry of Education is now responsible for managing the consultation process. The goal is to ensure that anyone in a community who might be impacted by an enrolment scheme understands what the implications might mean for them and is kept well informed whenever any aspect of a scheme changes. Everyone must have access to up-to-date, relevant, and factual information when they need it and be aware of the opportunities they have to share their views on a proposed change.

As outlined in schedule 20, clause 4 of the Act, the Ministry is required to formally consult with:

1. The board of the school
2. The parents of the students at the school
3. The people living in the area for which the school is reasonably convenient
4. The students and prospective students of the school (depending on their age and maturity)
5. The boards of other schools that could be affected by the proposed scheme
6. The proprietor of the school.

What happens after the Ministry of Education has consulted?

After consultation is finished, the Ministry of Education will collate all feedback and process this information to ensure it meets the requirements of the Education and Training Act 2020.

If the Ministry is satisfied that the enrolment scheme meets these requirements, the enrolment scheme will be approved / finalised and provided to the board. Note that it is common for minor changes to be made to the proposed enrolment scheme as a result of feedback received.

The school's board must implement the approved enrolment scheme as soon as practicable.

What is the implementation date?

This is the date that the board 'adopts' the enrolment scheme at a board meeting. It is after the Ministry has sent the approved scheme to the school. It is before the commencement date.

What is the commencement date?

The date an enrolment scheme starts (the "effective" or "start" date). The amended or new enrolment scheme applies to enrolments from this date onwards.

When will the proposed enrolment scheme start/commence?

The Ministry will work with each school to determine this date. It will be advertised widely by the school.

⁵ Note this is only applicable if an amendment is being proposed to a school's current enrolment scheme.

Who can take part in the consultation?

Anyone who wants to have their say on the proposed enrolment scheme including students, parents, local communities and neighbouring schools.

Is the enrolment scheme already pre-determined?

No. We value their community's views and realise that these decisions can affect them. Consultation is essential to ensure all ideas have been considered as well as identifying other options or implications that may emerge to assist the Ministry's decision making.

The Ministry is charged with ensuring the proposed scheme meets the requirements of the Education and Training Act 2020 including; that the amended enrolment scheme complies with the purpose and principles of enrolment schemes; that the enrolment scheme ensures that students can attend a reasonably convenient school; that it has boundaries for the home zone that overlap or align with the boundaries of the home zones of adjacent State schools with enrolment schemes⁶ and that it promotes the best use of the network of State schools in the area.

Note that the Ministry must consider the impact of the proposed enrolment scheme on schools of the same character as well as on other State and State integrated schools in the local area.

What is the difference between 'pre-enrolment' and 'enrolment'?

'Pre-enrolment' means the period in which applications for enrolment are invited and processed by a school. 'Enrolment' occurs when attendance at the school starts and the student is first marked as present on the school roll.

Therefore, enrolment scheme changes apply to students whose enrolment (first day of attendance) is at or after the commencement date of the enrolment scheme change.

If we live inside the area of reasonable convenience of a State integrated school, does that school have to accept our enrolment application?

If you meet the requirements of the special character as set out by the proprietor and apply through the enrolment scheme process, you may be accepted for enrolment if spaces are available.

I don't have children attending the State integrated school getting an enrolment scheme, can I still take part in the consultation?

Anyone who wants to have their say on the proposed enrolment scheme can do so even if they don't have children attending the school.

My children attend the State integrated school needing a new or amended enrolment scheme – how does this consultation affect our family?

No students currently enrolled at the school will be disadvantaged and they will remain students of the State integrated school they are currently enrolled at.

However, younger siblings yet to be enrolled may be impacted by the proposed enrolment scheme. Please read the information and proposal carefully.

Our children attend a State school – what does this consultation mean for our family?

There is no change to your children attending a State school. However, if your children want the option of attending a State integrated school, this consultation might affect you.

Our children attend a private school – what does this consultation mean for our family?

There is no change to your children attending a private school. However, if your children want the option of attending a State integrated school, this consultation might affect you.

⁶ As applicable for a State integrated school

I've never enrolled a child at a State integrated school with an enrolment scheme – what do I need to know about doing this?

Please contact the school for further information about their enrolment process, including deadlines for enrolment applications.

Prior to enrolment, parents/caregivers would be required to supply documentation to verify residency to the school. Providing a false address or other false information in order to gain an 'in-zone' or higher priority place will result in the enrolment being annulled (cancelled) once discovered, and the child will have to leave the school.

I want to enrol my children at a State integrated school with an enrolment scheme, but we live outside the area of reasonable convenience – what do I do?

Please contact the school for further information about their enrolment process.

If your child wants the option to attend a State integrated school but you do not live in the area of reasonable convenience, it is likely there is an option to do so but it would be at a lower priority than those children who do live locally. Please read the priority order proposed in the enrolment scheme to find out where your child would fit within the order of priorities.

Can a State integrated school change the order of priority in their enrolment scheme?

This would constitute an amendment to the enrolment scheme. If a State integrated school wishes to change the order of priority, the Ministry of Education will engage with the school to discuss the proposed changes. If the proposed changes are determined to better meet the requirements of the Act, the Ministry will proceed to consultation on changes to the enrolment scheme.

We have just moved into a new area and have missed the advertised deadlines for a State integrated school's pre-enrolment applications. What do we need to do to ensure our children are enrolled at school?

- Before enrolling your child, we recommend that you contact, or visit, the school you intend to enrol your child at to verify your eligibility to enrol, or confirm the process to apply to enrol, and to discuss your child's transition to the school and create a plan for this if required.
- Every student has a local State school at which they have an absolute right to enrol. Enrolment at other schools (including State integrated schools) is likely to be subject to an application process.
- You can search online for schools in your area using [Find a School](#), which also tells you if a school has an enrolment scheme. The Find a School website shows home zones for State (not integrated) schools, and may also show the area of reasonable convenience for State integrated schools.
 - Please note that for State (not integrated) schools, applications from in-zone students will be automatically accepted when they are received and students can start attending immediately.
 - Applications for enrolment at a State integrated school are likely to need to follow the school's application process.
- For State integrated schools, there are likely to be deadlines for pre-enrolment applications some months prior to the student's start date at the school. Similarly, for State (not integrated) schools, out-of-zone applications received outside of an advertised pre-enrolment period cannot be accepted unless the school has out-of-zone places available or until a new ballot is held.
- You can contact the State integrated school to find out their next pre-enrolment period and discuss how to get on the waiting list.

State schools and State integrated schools summary

- Enrolment schemes for State integrated schools are different to those for State schools.
- State integrated schools have a maximum roll set in the school's integration agreement.
- State integrated schools don't necessarily have home zones. There are a number of ways a State integrated school might determine their selection criteria.
- A State integrated school has to cater for students whose parents or caregivers meet the school's special character requirements and, if there's room left for other students, the school is able to enrol a small number of non-preference students who don't meet the special character requirements.

School Transport assistance

- School transport assistance is available if certain criteria are met. Students must meet all three eligibility criteria to get school transport assistance.
- The school must be;
 - The closest State or State integrated school where the student can enrol (for students attending a State integrated school, the school must be the closest school of its type. For example, the closest Catholic school if Catholic education is chosen), and
 - Students must live more than a certain distance from the school, and
 - There must be no "suitable" public transport options.

See [School Transport Eligibility](#)

What if I have more questions?

Please contact us on Canterbury.EnrolmentSchemes@education.govt.nz