

# ENDEAVOUR HILLS SPECIALIST SCHOOL

## Enrolment Policy

### BACKGROUND

Endeavour Hills Specialist School is a new Government specialist school providing educational programs for students with disability and high needs who have autism and/or an intellectual disability. The school welcomes students from 5 to 18 years of age.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School has special entry criteria approved by the Minister for Education. The school has been designed with flexibility to allow it to operate to meet the diverse needs of students with autism and/or intellectual disability.

By law in Victoria all children aged between 6 and 17 years must be enrolled at a registered school or registered for home schooling unless they have a reasonable excuse.

School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with a comprehensive educational program and access to support networks. It also helps to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and active participation in their local community.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify entry eligibility criteria for students seeking enrolment at Endeavour Hills Specialist School and the evidence required to support enrolment.

It is intended to provide clarity for the local community on the entry criteria and ensure a smooth and supported transition for enrolling students.

### Scope

Enrolment at Endeavour Hills Specialist School is based on a student's educational needs. Subject to capacity, student intake may be at any stage of the year, providing the student is of school age and satisfies the eligibility criteria.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following entry eligibility criteria have been specified and approved by the Regional Director, South Eastern Victoria Region (as the Minister's delegate), in accordance with section 2.2.16(b) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

The eligibility criteria have been carefully considered and determined based on data analysis of Endeavour Hills Specialist School's surrounding area indicating a need to support enrolments of students who fit the following criteria.

Students seeking to enrol must have either:

- 1.1 a diagnosis for **Autism Spectrum Disorder** from a registered paediatrician/psychiatrist;  
and
- 1.2 limitations 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;  
and

- 1.3 limitations in language skills established by a comprehensive speech pathology assessment demonstrating a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean.

or

- 2.1 a diagnosis for **Intellectual Disability** from a registered psychologist;  
and
- 2.2 a full-scale score of two standard deviations or more below the mean score on a standardised intelligence quotient (IQ) test;  
and
- 2.3 limitations 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;  
and
- 2.4 a history and evidence of an ongoing condition with an expectation of continuation during the school years.

The Department will provide an external enrolment verification process to support the school in confirming students meet the above eligibility criteria.

Applications from students who do not satisfy 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 individual needs. The Regional Director, South Eastern Victoria Region has overall authority for approving enrolments for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria. Approved enrolments may be subject to specific conditions, such as an annual review.

## PRIORITY ORDER OF PLACEMENT

In the event that there is a larger number of applications than the number of places available, Endeavour Hills Specialist School will limit enrolments to meet the designated capacity of 288 places. The number of available places has been determined in proportion to the school's design and capacity, comprising 144 autistic students, 72 students with mild intellectual disability and 72 students with moderate to profound intellectual disability.

Where there are insufficient places at the school for all students who seek entry, **students who meet the eligibility criteria** will be enrolled according to the following priority order of placement:

1. Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.
2. Students who reside nearest to the school.

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.

## Enrolment on compassionate grounds

In exceptional circumstances, a student may be enrolled in Endeavour Hills Specialist School based on compassionate grounds. This is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement. The school will assess and make a determination for applications on compassionate grounds on a case-by-case basis.

## EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

To support a student's application for enrolment, the following evidence should be provided:

### For students with autism:

1. a multidisciplinary diagnosis provided by professionals with experience and knowledge in the assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder that includes:
  - a) a comprehensive report from a child psychiatrist or paediatrician;
  - b) a signed report from a psychologist providing an assessment of adaptive behaviour (not more than 12 months old);
  - c) a signed report from a speech pathologist containing a current comprehensive speech pathology assessment (not more than 12 months old) and where appropriate, an occupational therapist.

### For students with an intellectual disability:

1. a signed psychologist's report from within the last 24 months reporting the results of an IQ test and assessment of adaptive behaviour if the primary disability is intellectual disability;  
or
2. a statement from a paediatrician (or other medical specialist) if the student has profound disabilities including intellectual disability.

If a student does not have a current assessment, the school may refer the student to Assessments Australia to enable the assessment to be completed.

In addition, where demand exceeds places available at Endeavour Hills Specialist School, the school may ask for any or all of the following documentation to support the enrolment application and an assessment against the priority order of placement:

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 license or health care card.

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

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

### Verification of permanent address

When assessing enrolment applications under the priority order of placement, Endeavour Hills Specialist School may 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) checking whether the landline contact phone number provided is registered to the residence provided on the enrolment form;
- d) 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.

## APPEAL PROCESS

Parents/carers are able to appeal against Endeavour Hills Specialist School's decision not to provide a placement. This can occur in relation to placements at any age level and the following process applies:

### 1. Appeal to the school's placement committee and/or Principal

Appeals are to be made in writing and lodged with the Principal.

The school's decision will be communicated to the parent/carer in writing. In assessing the appeal, the school will check to ensure compliance with the priority order of placement, and the processes for verifying permanent address, as appropriate.

### 2. Appeal to the Regional Director, South Eastern Victoria Region

If the appeal at the school level is unsuccessful and parents/carers are not satisfied that their appeal has been adequately considered, they are able to escalate this by lodging an appeal in writing to:

Regional Director, South Eastern Victoria Region  
PO Box 5, Dandenong, VIC 3175

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Endeavor Hills Specialist School enrolment policy will be made available to the school community on the school's website.

## EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy was last updated on 16 July 2021.

This policy is subject to review by the school Principal on an annual basis, prior to the enrolment process commencing each year. Proposed updates will be made on a needs basis, with any proposed changes relating to entry criteria and priority order of placement requiring approval from the Regional Director, South Eastern Victoria Region.