



## Enrolment Policy 2021

### Rationale

All Department of Education Training (DET) policies and protocols apply to the enrolment processes at Jacana School for Autism (JSA). Given the unique nature of the school and the high demand of enquiries for placements, this policy provides protocols for priority enrolment consideration. This also provides guiding principles should the demand for placements exceed available spaces. The school has been designed with flexibility to allow it to operate to meet the diverse needs of students with autism. 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

JSA supports inclusive education and encourages all families to also explore mainstream enrolment options for their child. JSA has a catchment within the North Western Victoria Region, mainstream schools and students' families to support integration and inclusive education for students with autism. Please refer to our Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify entry eligibility criteria for students seeking enrolment at Jacana School for Autism 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 Jacana School for Autism 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 for Enrolment

To be eligible for enrolment, students must have a diagnosis of autism by a multi-disciplinary team and be eligible for funding under the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) criteria of the Department's Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD).

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

A cognitive (IQ) assessment is also a local requirement for enrolment at JSA to enable priority placement of students in consideration for a range of school options for individuals.

For further information please refer to the Department website:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psd.aspx>

- Students must be at least five (5) years of age, by 30th of April of the year in which enrolment is requested.
- The student must be an Australian citizen or hold appropriate visas. Information regarding enrolment of overseas students may be obtained from the International Studies Unit (03) 9637 2202.

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- As of 2019, Students must reside within the North Western Victoria Region (NWVR) of the Department and the corresponding Designated Transport Area (DTA) to be eligible for a placement.
- As an enrolment ceiling is in operation (as approved by the NWV Director), students who are eligible to enrol and for whom JSA is deemed the most suitable school will be placed on a prospective enrolment list.

## **Enrolment Process**

Upon receipt of an enrolment enquiry, the parent/guardian will be directed book a place in a school tour via the school reception. Tours are held throughout the year and dates are displayed on the school website.

Tours are run by the Student Transition Coordinator, at which an information pack will be provided for those seeking possible enrolment. This will include:

- Prospective Enrolment Student Information Form
- A copy of the Enrolment Policy.
- A Prospective Enrolment Student Information Form
- A JSA prospectus
- Other relevant school documents.  
This is reviewed annually and may include (but is not limited to):
  - PBS Information
  - JSA School Expected Behaviours
  - Autism Home Handbook
  - Therapy services information etc.

On receipt of a completed Prospective Enrolment Student Information Form, the student will be added to the data base.

## Transfer Students

If the prospective student is already eligible for PSD-Autism, a transfer to JSA will be considered, providing JSA is deemed the most suitable educational pathway for the student, a place is available, and they live within the DTA.

If the prospective student has not yet been deemed eligible for PSD-Autism and is already enrolled in a State Government mainstream school, the mainstream school is responsible for coordinating the PSD application. If the student is not enrolled in a State Government mainstream school, the prospective student must enrol at the mainstream school closest to their home and the mainstream school will be responsible for coordinating the PSD application.

## Foundation (Prep) Students

Prospective foundation students will be placed on a prospective enrolment list. Parents/carers (usually with the support of their Early Childhood Intervention Services) need to provide the assessments listed in Eligibility for Admission in this policy. If assessments are required, students may be referred to an NWVR psychologist or speech therapist (the Student Support Services Network) for the student to be assessed and eligibility determined. This takes place through a local mainstream primary school.

***Enrolments are not activated until the PSD-Autism application is approved and a place is confirmed. If the process is not completed by the end of the academic year, or in time for the Prep Orientation Sessions, a provisional place may be offered until one can be confirmed.***

As part of the PSD application process a Student Support Group Meeting (SSG) is scheduled and an Education Needs Questionnaire (ENQ) will be completed. JSA will run this SSG ENQ on behalf of the family; however, it may also be completed at the local primary school if preferred. These will take place only when all documentation is received and deemed acceptable and commence from September each year.

Key stakeholders of the SSG are as follows: parent/carer, parent advocate/Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) key worker, Principal or delegate and a department representative. The ENQ summary page and supporting documentation are then forwarded to the Student Wellbeing Branch of the Department. A Department panel determines eligibility for PSD. Following the determination of the panel the school is then notified of the decision

regarding the application. If the student is deemed eligible for the PSD, the enrolment may proceed providing JSA is deemed the most suitable educational pathway and a place is available.

Foundation (Prep) students participate in the Orientation Program in November/December of the year before they commence school. Transition Programs will be negotiated for students transferring across school settings.

### **Student Support Group**

The Student Support Group will monitor and evaluate the students' educational needs/accompanying program. The Student Support Group represents a partnership in the educational planning process between parents/carers, student and school.

### **Program for Students with Disabilities Funding Review**

Once a student has been accepted into the PSD program, the resources allocated accompany the student until DET mandatory funding review at 11 or 12 years of age (year 6 approximately).

### **Priority Enrolment**

Priority enrolment is given to siblings who meet the eligibility criteria and have an IQ score that deems them ineligible for any other alternative school placements, such as Special or SDS school options.

### **Enrolment Review**

Students enrolling at JSA do not necessarily remain at the school for the entire length of their school education. Student enrolment is reviewed if/when needed in consultation with families in SSG meetings to determine if JSA remains the most suitable educational pathway for the student. If it is deemed that a student would benefit to a greater extent from programs in an alternate setting, including mainstream, specialist or SDS schools, this recommendation will be made to parents/carers and the school will work in collaboration to determine the best educational pathway for students at any given time.

Enrolment is reviewed over time:

- To ensure each student is accessing the most beneficial and relevant educational program;
- To ensure each student is continuing to benefit from the autism specific educational environment and programs;
- To ensure as many places as possible are available for students in need, who have not accessed the program and would benefit from the program.
- To promote inclusion and ensure that wherever possible students are supported to participate in a mainstream educational pathway.

### **Appeal Process**

Parents/carers are able to appeal against Jacana School for Autism'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, North Western 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, North Western Victoria Region

Locked Bag 2001, Coburg, VIC 3058

### **Communications**

Jacana School for Autism enrolment policy will be made available to the school community in the following ways;

- Available publicly on our school's website

- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

### **Evaluation and Review**

This policy was last updated on 8<sup>th</sup> November 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, North Western Victoria Region.

<b>Ratified at School Council</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
<b>Review Date</b>	Term 4, 2024