



ENROLMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

Niddrie Autistic School is a government school that provides an early years educational program for students with autism from prep to grade 3.

This policy adheres to the DET's criteria for the Program for Students with a Disability (PSD) under the ASD category.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify entry eligibility criteria and evidence required for students seeking enrolment at Niddrie Autistic School. It is intended to provide clarity for the local community on the entry criteria and ensure a smooth and supported transition for enrolling students.

This policy also clarifies the circumstances in which a student may partake in a dual enrolment with another educational setting.

Scope

Enrolment at Niddrie Autistic School is based on a student's educational needs. Subject to availability of places, 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 meet the eligibility criteria for the program for students with a disability, ASD category.

Students seeking to enrol must have either:

- a diagnosis for Autism Spectrum Disorder from a registered pediatrician/psychiatrist; and
- 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
- limitations in language skills established by a comprehensive speech pathology assessment demonstrating a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean

Student must also:

- be at least five (5) years of age, by 30th of April of the year in which enrolment is requested.
- 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.

Enrolment Process

When an enrolment enquiry is received, the parent/guardian will be invited to book a place in a school tour via the school reception.

Tours are run by the Principal and Prep Coordinator. An information pack will be provided for those expressing interest in enrolment. This will include:

- a. Enrolment Expression of Interest Form
- b. A copy of the Enrolment Policy.

On receipt of an Enrolment Expression of interest form, the student will be added to the data base.

Niddrie Autistic School is a Prep-Grade 3 school. The school offers an intensive program that focuses on the individual needs of the student rather than their placement in a particular year level. However, the student's age on enrolment is a relevant factor in the number of years a student will attend our school. For example:

- Students who enrol in or before the year they turn 6 are eligible to attend the school for the full 4 years (prep- 3).
- Students who enrol in the year they turn 7 are eligible for 3 years of the program, and so forth.

Our school staff will work with parents on enrolment to advise how many years their child is eligible to attend the program for. On enrolment, parents will sign an acknowledgment of a short-term intensive program which will detail the year their child will transition from Niddrie Autistic School to their local Primary or Specialist School.

Transfer Students

If the prospective student meets criteria for the PSD under the ASD category, a transfer to Niddrie Autistic School will be considered, providing NAS is deemed the most suitable educational pathway for the student and a place is available.

If the prospective student has not yet met the criteria for the PSD under the ASD category 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

1. Parents who have a preference for their child to attend NAS should;
 - Complete an **expression of interest form** for their child,
 - Attend a **school tour**.
2. Complete a PSD ASD application at their **closest Victorian government school**, this should occur in term 3 to avoid delays. <https://www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au/>

If the child has a formal diagnosis of autism from a multidisciplinary team, NAS will direct parents to contact their **closest Victorian government school** to complete the additional assessments required and submit their PSD application as early as possible.

If the child does not have a formal diagnosis of autism from a multidisciplinary team, then Niddrie Autistic School will again direct parents to contact their closest local school for advice on support that may be provided at the school level.

This initial contact with the **closest Victorian government school** serves a number of purposes but most importantly it begins the development of a relationship to a school that the student may either proceed with enrolment with or be transitioned to, at a later stage following an enrolment at NAS.

Dual Enrolment

Students are expected to attend at 1.0/full-time unless arrangements have been made with the principal to attend an alternate educational program.

Programs not recognised as educational settings should be attended outside school hours and should not impact on student attendance.



Where a student has had their time fraction reduced for the purpose of transition or other programs a full-time place may not be available during the remainder of that school year. For further information on transitions, see Transition Policy.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss program requirements for their child with each of the prospective schools to identify which days are most appropriate for the child to attend each of the settings. However, it is usually recommended that the child attends each of the schools on consecutive days for less disruption (ie Mon-Wed in one school, Thurs-Fri in another).

One implication of a part time enrolment in a Special School setting is access to the specialist school transport service. As a general rule, a student is eligible for transport if they attend the special setting 3 or more days per week, however this should be discussed with the school.

Where a student is dual enrolled, the two schools are encouraged to hold joint SSG meetings with the family to ensure a coordinated approach to the child's learning.

If the parents/guardians wish to alter the time fraction or dual enrolment arrangement, this should be done in negotiation with the schools and is usually preferable at the completion of individual school terms to allow for appropriate staffing and planning to occur within the schools.

Priority Enrolment

Where there are insufficient places at NAS for all eligible students who seek entry, enrolments are prioritised in the following order of placement:

1. Siblings
2. Prep enrolments before 28/02 each year (prep enrolments after this date fall into the transfer category)
3. Students who reside in the DTA
4. All other students in order of closeness of their home to the school

In exceptional circumstances, a student may be enrolled in Niddrie Autistic 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.

Enrolment Review

Students enrolling at Niddrie Autistic School do not necessarily remain at the school for full 4 years of the program. Student enrolment is in consultation with families during SSG meetings to determine if NAS remains the most suitable educational pathway for the student. If the child's family decide that their child would benefit to a greater extent from programs in an alternate setting, including mainstream, specialist or SDS schools, the school will work in collaboration with the family to determine the best educational pathway for students at any given time. Niddrie Autistic School teachers will support the process by providing information about the students strengths and needs and will facilitate the necessary assessment for entry requirements into specialist and SDS schools.

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 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 Niddrie Autistic 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 Western 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 Western Region
PO Box 2141
Footscray VIC 3011

Communication

Niddrie Autistic School 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 in April 2022. This policy is subject to review by the school Principal on an annual basis, prior to the enrolment process commencing each year

Ratified at School Council	2 nd May 2022
Review Date	Term 2, 2023

