



Procedure

School Enrolment Management Plans (School EMP) procedure

Version: 7.5 | **Version effective:** 09/09/2024

Audience

Department-wide

Purpose

The [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#) (the Act), allows the Chief Executive (Director-General) to implement a School EMP for a particular school, including an Independent Public School (IPS), to ensure students living within the school's catchment area are able to enrol.

A School EMP is implemented in a school which is nearing its enrolment capacity, in order to prioritise enrolment places for students living within the school's catchment area, or those meeting specific criteria detailed in the School EMP document. Only if sufficient capacity is available after meeting these criteria, and ensuring capacity is reserved for projected in-catchment enrolment growth, is a Principal able to enrol out-of-catchment students, including in Programs of Excellence (PoEs).

This procedure assists in avoiding enrolment spikes from out-of-catchment students, which results in the oversupply of infrastructure in some schools and underutilisation of infrastructure in neighbouring schools. Where a school has a School EMP in place, the Department of Education's (the Department) priority is to provide and maintain facilities, including Prep buildings, to meet in-catchment student demand.

Overview

The Department requires the Principals of state schools, including IPS, which are nearing enrolment capacity to strictly manage enrolments within existing infrastructure provisions. This procedure:

- outlines the protocols for why School EMPs are to be implemented and how they are to be managed in Queensland state schools;
- outlines the responsibilities of Principals and Regional Directors to ensure student enrolments meet the obligations of the Act and the criteria set out in the School EMP document.
- enforces the Department's position that Principals are required to manage enrolments within existing infrastructure provisions, unless enrolment growth is from within the school's catchment.

Responsibilities

Principal

- Must adhere to the Act regarding the implementation and management of a School EMP.
- Are accountable to ensure the school's enrolments do not exceed the Student Enrolment Capacity (SEC), unless enrolment growth is from within the approved school's geographic catchment.
- Ensure, where the school was identified in the annual School EMP Assessment, the required documentation is submitted to the Regional Director prior to the end of Term 2.
- Assess all enrolment applications to determine if an applicant is eligible to enrol under the gazetted School EMP and other eligibility criteria stated in the Act.
- Make decisions regarding all enrolment applications taking into consideration in-catchment student number forecasts, current enrolments, potential siblings of out-of-catchment enrolments, available spare capacity and planning for the impact of future enrolment applications throughout the school year to ensure the school can accommodate in-catchment students.
- Limit out-of-catchment enrolments in the entry year level (i.e., Prep or Year 7) to prevent enrolment peaks in the following years.
- Principals are to contact their Regional Office to request a formal distance check to be conducted by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) through consultation with their Regional Office, where it is proposed a prospective out-of-catchment child will walk to school resulting in the school being closer to their residence.

Regional Directors/Assistant Regional Directors

- Regional Directors/Assistant Regional Directors have a key role to play in monitoring school enrolments, including IPS, in accordance with the provisions laid out in this procedure and in supporting schools to appropriately plan and actively manage enrolments.
- These actions are key to assisting the Department in the management of assets and resources within available budget.
- Regional Directors are required to:
 - notify schools identified through the annual School EMP Assessment, by the end of Term 1, of the requirement to implement or update a School EMP by the end of Term 2.
 - ensure that schools required to implement a School EMP are aware of, and adhere to, the required process and timelines for approval and submission of their School EMP.
 - review and approve the School EMP for each state school, including IPS.
 - monitor compliance with published School EMPs to ensure out-of-catchment enrolments are managed within existing capacity.
- Regional Directors/Assistant Regional Directors also have a key role in identifying and managing enrolment pressures across geographic areas with a view to maximising asset utilisation.

Infrastructure Services Division

- Co-ordinate an annual School EMP Assessment (a state-wide analysis) to identify schools required to implement, rescind or update a School EMP.
- Provide to Regional Directors a region-specific report detailing the schools identified in the annual School EMP Assessment by the end of the second week in March.
- Support Regional Directors/Assistant Regional Directors/Principals to develop, implement and manage School EMPs.
- Monitor School EMPs across the state.
- Monitor schools' compliance with the School EMP procedure and inform the Deputy Directors-General Infrastructure Services and Schools and Student Support of non-compliance.
- Use data from School EMP analyses to inform the Capital Works program of in-catchment enrolment growth and published SECs to assist in the consideration of additional infrastructure.
- Provide advice to Regional Directors/Assistant Regional Directors in relation to the introduction of a School EMP at a new school, to coincide with the initial enrolment intake.
- Liaise with QGSO on behalf of regions and Principals in relation to catchment maps and distance checks.

Deputy Directors-General Infrastructure Services and Schools and Student Support

- Ensure protocols are in place to manage appropriate utilisation of state school assets.
- Oversight compliance with the School EMP procedure, update Executive Leadership Team (ELT) regarding non-compliance issues and recommend appropriate actions, whenever necessary.
- Consider requests from Regional Directors to exempt specific school/s from implementing a School EMP.

Director-General

- Oversight the implementation and impact of the School EMP procedure and initiate action or review where required.

Process

1. Identifying schools to implement, update or rescind a School EMP

Each year ISD conducts a state-wide analysis of school utilisation rates, the annual School EMP Assessment, based on Day 8 data to identify schools which are nearing capacity. The analysis will inform Regional Directors which schools in their region are required to implement, rescind, or update a School EMP, as follows:

- The trigger for implementing a School EMP is a utilisation rate of 80% or higher and trending upwards;
- The trigger point for a School EMP to be rescinded is a utilisation rate of 70% or lower and trending downwards;
- Schools with Programs of Excellence which have added/removed programs or changed program details will be required to update their School EMP; and
- Schools that have experienced a capacity change (increase or decrease) and are still at or over a utilisation rate of 80%, will also be required to update their School EMP.

Exemptions: Rural or provincial schools that do not have neighbouring schools within a radius of 55km are automatically exempt from implementing a School EMP, irrespective of the utilisation rate.

Regional Directors may consider requesting an exemption to implement a School EMP at a particular school if they consider that one is not required. In these cases, the Regional Director will submit an Exemption Form and forward it to ISD for approval by the DDG Infrastructure Services.

Where an approved education program is expected to increase student numbers at a school (EQI program, unique local or cluster circumstances, provision of infrastructure to meet future in-catchment growth), a school may reserve enrolment capacity to meet the forecast need, as approved by the Regional Director.

New schools/additional infrastructure: All new schools will open with a School EMP in place. Additional infrastructure is provided to meet current and projected in-catchment needs. Advice should be sought from the Regional Infrastructure Manager before accepting out-of-catchment enrolments where additional capacity is provided.

2. Completing the School EMP

After a school has been notified by the Regional Director that it has been identified in the annual School EMP Assessment to implement or update a School EMP, the Principal will complete and submit the necessary paperwork for approval. The Regional Director will review and approve the School EMP and submit it to ISD. All new and updated School EMPs, for schools identified in the annual School EMP Assessment, are to be submitted to ISD for gazettal by the end of Term 2.

The provisions of the School EMP will take effect upon gazettal and the Principal is required to make enrolment decisions in line with the School EMP. A School EMP does not replace other departmental procedures (e.g., [Cancellation of enrolment procedure](#)).

3. Identifying students living within catchment

All students whose principal place of residence is within the school's relevant catchment area are entitled to enrol at the school (subject to the Act).

Under the Act, the student must be living within catchment at the time of enrolment application in order to be eligible to enrol at a school with a School EMP.

Proof of residency requirements: Parents or legal guardians who wish to enrol their child at the school are required to demonstrate that the student's principal place of residence is within the catchment area. Current proof of residency at the address indicated can be provided as follows:

- One primary source – a current lease agreement, rates notice, or unconditional contract of sale, and
- One secondary source – a utility bill (e.g., electricity, gas) showing this same address and parent's/legal guardian's name

If the Principal is not satisfied that the documentation provided by an applicant adequately demonstrates that the address stated is the student's principal place of residence, then the Principal may request further sources of proof of residency. Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Additional utility bills (e.g. water bill) or a series of bills at for the same address over a sequential period to demonstrate continued/ongoing residency
- Electoral Roll verification letter
- Mobile phone statement (with current address details)
- Statutory Declaration
- Driver's licence (with current address details)
- Bank statement (showing current address details; financial details are not required)
- Tax Assessment Notice (financial details are not required)
- Documents demonstrating recent change of address/re-location to within the school's catchment area (e.g. proof of sale or termination of lease for the previous principal place of residence in a different catchment).

In addition to the documents listed above, students living with a relative/other person within catchment must provide the following:

- Properly sworn Statutory Declaration from the student's parent/legal guardian; and
- Properly sworn Statutory Declaration from the person/s the student will be residing with in-catchment.

The Principal may also request additional pieces of proof of residency and interview/s with all parties to discuss the living arrangement.

4. Identifying other students who are entitled to enrol as if in-catchment

A School EMP identifies the following groups of students who are entitled to enrol, even though they may reside outside the school's catchment area:

- Children and young people who are subject to child protection orders that grant guardianship or custody to the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety Services).
- Siblings** of current students at a school who reside outside of the catchment are entitled to enrol at the school, (excluding siblings of out-of-catchment students accepted into Programs of Excellence and siblings of students who were placed at the school as a result of exclusion from another school). Where a state school has both a primary and secondary campus, siblings are only entitled to enrol in the same campus as the currently enrolled student.
- Students whose parent or legal guardian is employed by the school.
- Students who live outside the catchment area and are verified with a disability can enrol at the school to attend the specific disability program if it is the closest program to their home and meets their individualised needs.
- Students whose principal place of residence is further than 55km to their nearest state school are entitled to enrol at any neighbouring school.
- Students who (during school term) reside at the school's purpose-built boarding facility.
- Students who have been excluded from a school, if approved by the Regional Director.

- Students in remote/regional locations who access a School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) bus service, provided by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), to travel to their closest school, as determined by the DTMR bus route.

** To be accepted “as if in-catchment” under the sibling provision, the:

- applicant must meet the definition of sibling in the School EMP procedure;
- enrolled sibling must not have been enrolled in a Program of Excellence at the school (i.e., siblings of PoE students are not automatically entitled to enrol); and
- intended enrolment commencement and/or attendance of the sibling must be concurrent with the attendance of a current student for the application for enrolment to be valid. For example; if the student will be commencing in 2016 but the current enrolled sibling finishes at the school, or school campus, in 2015, then the application for enrolment will not be valid.

5. Considering out-of-catchment enrolment applications

Applications for enrolment from any other person, not meeting the criteria outlined above is an out-of-catchment enrolment application. A Principal cannot enrol out-of-catchment students unless there is sufficient spare capacity to do so after ensuring capacity is left available for current and future students living in-catchment and students entitled to enrol as if in-catchment. Students from outside the catchment area applying for enrolment are placed on a waiting list. These applications for enrolment are assessed in order of receipt within the following order of groupings:

1. For P-12 schools:
 - Primary school-aged siblings of students currently enrolled in the secondary campus.
 - Secondary school-aged siblings of students currently enrolled in the primary campus.
 - Students who live within the primary catchment, but upon enrolment would be attending the secondary campus.
 - Students who live within the secondary catchment, but upon enrolment would be attending the primary campus.
2. For secondary schools with a wider catchment area for Years 10/11-12:
 - Students who live within the senior secondary catchment but seek enrolment within junior secondary year levels (i.e. to assist in the continuity of education provision).
3. For schools with a Program of Excellence:
 - Students who satisfy the school's criteria for placement in a Program of Excellence and the defined number of places has not been filled by in-catchment enrolments.

Please note: Siblings of out-of-catchment students who have enrolled in the school's Program of Excellence are not automatically entitled to enrol; they will be assessed as per the “Out-of-catchment criteria” listed above. However, it should be noted that once a sibling of a Program of Excellence student has been accepted for enrolment, any further siblings will be entitled to enrol as per the sibling criteria listed above in the “Identifying other students who are entitled to enrol as if in-catchment” section).

6. Compliance

ISD will monitor compliance with the School EMP procedure, on behalf of the Director-General and Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

Schools that enrol out-of-catchment students to a level that is likely to exceed the SEC will be advised by Regional Directors.

Where there is strong evidence of non-compliance with the procedure or an existing School EMP:

- Principals will be asked to explain reasons behind the acceptance of out-of-catchment enrolments that have the potential to compromise the school's SEC;
- Following consideration of the response, Principals may be sent a letter from the DDG Infrastructure Services/DDG Schools and Student Support, addressing the need to comply with the School EMP. The letter will reiterate that additional infrastructure is only provided to state schools that require it for in-catchment enrolment growth;
- Persistent refusal to comply with the provisions of the Act, this procedure and School EMP provisions, will result in further consideration by the Director-General.

Other information

Annual review of school catchment areas

All Queensland state schools (including IPS) have a catchment area. However, catchment boundaries are only enforced when a school has a School EMP in place.

Each year the QGSO reviews and updates, if necessary, state school catchment areas to take into account any local changes to road conditions, new or closed schools and changes to approved year levels.

Catchment areas are determined using equidistance principles. The QGSO calculates the equal distance to and from the main entrances of neighbouring schools using trafficable road networks. The resultant area that best matches this distance and follows individual land/lot/parcel boundaries is the equidistant catchment boundary.

On occasion due to unique local circumstances the Regional Director can consider approving changes to the boundary, in consultation with all affected principals, creating a negotiated catchment boundary.

Once approved, all catchment boundaries remain in place until the next annual review.

Where an out-of-catchment student intends to walk to and from school, via a designated public walkable route, enrolment applications may be considered by the Principal on a case-by-case basis. In these cases, the Principal must request a formal distance check be conducted by QGSO through consultation with the Regional Office and Infrastructure Services Division. This provision does not apply to schools that have a negotiated catchment area.

Fees

Under the Department's [User charging procedure](#), a principal of a state school with an approved School EMP, is able to charge a fee for recouping costs of enrolment processing (subject to consultation with the Parents and Citizens' Association) where:

- the School EMP permits the enrolment of a student living outside the catchment area based on cultural, sporting or academic merit, and
- the significant number of prospective students living outside the catchment area and applying to enrol results in abnormal administrative costs to the school, for example, enrolment examination supervision and marking.

For more detailed information about the process, please refer to the [School EMP – Operational Guidelines](#).

Definitions

Term	Definition
School EMP	<p>A School EMP is a legislative instrument stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school's catchment area; • the school's enrolment capacity for persons whose principal place of residence is outside the catchment area; and • the requirements for enrolment at the school to be satisfied by a person whose principal place of residence is outside the catchment area.
Student Enrolment Capacity	<p>A school's Student Enrolment Capacity (SEC) is the number of students the school can accommodate within the existing learning spaces in the school. The Principal is required to maintain enrolments at or under the published SEC.</p> <p>The SEC is listed in each School EMP. For primary schools, along with P-9, P-10 and P-12 schools, a separate maximum enrolment capacity for Prep Year, which requires purpose-built classrooms is listed.</p> <p>Where in-catchment enrolments are projected to increase in the short-to-medium term, the SEC is provided in a multi-year format to take into account planned infrastructure delivery.</p>
Utilisation rate	<p>The utilisation rate is calculated by dividing the school's total enrolment numbers by the SEC and is expressed as a percentage.</p>
Catchment area	<p>A catchment area is the defined geographical area from which a state school is to have its core intake of students. There are two types of catchment areas, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equidistant catchment area – is calculated by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) using equidistance principles. The QGSO calculates the equal distance to and from the main entrances of neighbouring schools, using trafficable road networks. The resultant area that best matches this distance and follows individual land/lot/parcel boundaries is the equidistant catchment boundary. Major geographic obstacles (e.g., highways, railway lines, mountain ranges, state forest and national parks) are taken into account; however, public walkways and public transport networks are not.

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiated catchment area – is where the catchment boundaries have been adjusted to account for unique local circumstances, with approval from the Regional Director and in consultation with neighbouring schools. <p>State schools which provide both primary and secondary education will have separate respective catchment areas. A small number of state secondary schools have multiple catchment areas as a result of limited year level offerings at neighbouring schools.</p>
In-catchment students	Those students who reside within a school's defined catchment area and those others entitled to enrol as if in-catchment according to the criteria listed within the School EMP.
Sibling	Each of two or more children having one or both parents in common.
Program of Excellence (PoE)	A specialist education program, as approved by the Regional Director, for high-performing students in a specific subject area (e.g. Academic, Music, Sport, Maths).
Short-term	A period of time up to and including three (3) years.
Medium-term	A period of time beyond three (3) years up to and including five (5) years.

Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#) Chapter 8, Part 3

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil

Supporting information for this procedure

- [School Enrolment Management Plan \(School EMP\) - Operational Guidelines](#)
- [School Enrolment Management Plan template](#)
- [Proposal to develop a Program of Excellence](#)

Other resources

- [Additional resources for schools and regional offices - forms, template letters and flowcharts](#) (DoE employees only)

- [Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools procedure](#)

Contact

For further information, please contact:

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20/12/2017

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

Nil

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