

New Enrolment Scheme - FAQs

What is an enrolment scheme?

An Enrolment Scheme is a means of preventing overcrowding at a school, ensuring fair and transparent processes are used to determine enrolment eligibility, and enables the Ministry of Education to make best use of the current schools in the surrounding area. Each enrolment scheme for a State school must contain a home zone with clearly defined boundaries. An enrolment scheme gives students who live in the home zone a guarantee that they can go to that school. The Enrolment Scheme also details the way in which students may enrol at a Special Programme run by the school and the [Education and Training Act 2020](#) directs how schools can select applicants who live outside the home zone if they have space.

What is a home zone?

All Enrolment Schemes for State schools include a home zone. A home zone is a clearly defined geographical area around a school, with its boundaries indicated by street names and numbers or other geographical features. It is usually presented as a description that makes it easy to identify any address as being inside or outside the zone. This may include a map to assist as a visual aid.

- Students who live inside the home zone are guaranteed a place at the school.
- Students who live outside the home zone can apply to enrol but acceptance of their application is subject to places being available to them.
- If there are places available, but more applications received than places, their acceptance is subject to the outcome of a pre-enrolment process – a ballot.

Note that for State integrated schools, a home zone may form part of the enrolment scheme, but does not guarantee eligibility to enrol at the school as there may be other factors to consider.

How is a home zone determined?

The home zone is generally determined based on a combination of; midpoints between schools, barriers to access, current neighbouring zone boundaries, contributing (feeder) school zones, and number of students within the area, as well as geographical considerations e.g. rivers and access.

A school's home zone must support the purposes and principles of Enrolment Schemes as per the Education and Training Act 2020 – this includes managing the risk of overcrowding, providing fair and transparent access to schooling, and making best use of the network of local schools.

A school's home zone must be defined by geographic boundaries, and must be described in such a way that any given address is either within or outside the home zone.

A school's home zone—

- a) must be an area for which the school is a reasonably convenient school for a student living in that area to attend; and
- b) may exclude any area for which another school is also a reasonably convenient school for a student living in that area to attend; and
- c) may exclude any area that it is desirable to exclude for the purpose of allowing the Secretary to make best use of the existing network of State schools in the area.

'Local' and 'reasonably convenient'

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.

When developing an enrolment scheme, the above interpretation of "reasonably convenient" is used by the Ministry to help determine the boundaries of the school's home zone, and to assist the school to be able to differentiate between the enrolment applications of students living inside and outside the home zone.

A "reasonably convenient" school might not be the one that is closest to where you live.

Why is an enrolment scheme needed?

The Ministry of Education believes that the school is at risk of overcrowding. 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.

Without an enrolment scheme, currently any child can enrol at the school, even if the classrooms become crowded. An enrolment scheme is the only way the school can manage enrolments to protect space for local students.

Why can't the Ministry of Education just build more classroom space?

The Ministry is responsible for managing the overall network of schools and provides classroom space for local students. The Ministry does not provide additional classroom space for students who do not live within the catchment. Therefore, if students from outside the school's catchment area continue to be able to enrol, the school will become overcrowded.

What if in-zone enrolments increase?

If more students from inside the home zone enrol at a school with an enrolment scheme, the school may become eligible for roll growth classrooms, depending on how many out of zone students the school is carrying. However, future changes in land use, transport pathways or the education network can drive a need for further changes to enrolment schemes. Enrolment Schemes are reviewed by the Ministry every at least once every three years.

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. If it is a State integrated school, 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 zone 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 new home zone 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.

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 enrolment scheme complies with the purpose and principles of enrolment schemes; that the home zone 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 schemes and that it promotes the best use of the network of State schools in the area.

If we live inside the home zone of a State school, does that school have to accept our enrolment application?

Yes.

I don’t have children attending the 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 school getting the enrolment scheme – how does this consultation affect our family?

Irrespective of a new enrolment scheme, no students currently enrolled will be disadvantaged and they will remain students of the school they are currently enrolled at.

We live in an area that is not currently within a school enrolment scheme but the consultation proposes that it would be within the school’s new enrolment scheme – what does this mean for our family?

An enrolment scheme ensures that space is available for local students and any student within the home zone is entitled to attend the school. This ensures that students are able to attend a local school that is reasonably convenient to where they live.

We live in an area that is currently within a school enrolment scheme and the consultation proposes that it would become part of a different school’s enrolment scheme – what does this mean for our family?

Irrespective of any changes to the enrolment schemes, no students currently enrolled will be disadvantaged and they will remain students of the school they are currently enrolled at.

If an address becomes part of a different school’s enrolment scheme, students not yet enrolled at a school will be able to attend the school that they will then be in-zone for.

Why are we out-of-zone for a school we are close to but in-zone for another school further away?

While one school might be geographically closer to your address, some or many combined factors might mean another school is what your family and whānau are zoned for. When the Ministry is developing enrolment scheme proposals and determining boundaries for a school’s home zone, we look at a range of factors including the distance of the school from other schools and their available capacity, whether neighbouring schools also have enrolment schemes, road safety, transport and access for students to get to school.

The Ministry might also be planning for growth in a particular area of the community and, at the same time, ensuring all children and young people can attend a school that is close to where they live.

What does it mean if there is a potential overlap in some areas, where an address can be within a zone for two schools?

In some cases, there may be areas where home zones overlap. If approved by the Ministry, students in an area where there is an overlap are able to choose what local school they want to attend.

Why does the map not just follow the roads listed in the written description?

In the past, enrolment scheme home zones were mapped to road boundaries. All new or amended enrolment scheme home zones are now drawn so as to identify which properties / addresses are within the zone.

The map is considered a visual depiction of the written description, and may be updated if there are changes to property boundaries in the future (such as when subdivision occurs).

Our children attend State integrated / private schools – what does this consultation mean for our family?

There is no change to your child attending State integrated/private schools. However, if your child wants the option to attend a State school, an enrolment scheme ensures that they are able to attend a local school that is reasonably convenient to where they live.

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

Prior to enrolment, parents/caregivers would be required to supply documentation to verify residency to the school.

Providing a false address in order to gain an in-zone place will result in the enrolment being annulled (cancelled) once discovered, and the child will have to leave the school.

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 is at or after the commencement date of the zone change.

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

If your child wants the option to attend a State school as an out of zone student, it would then be via the ballot system which may not see them being enrolled.

As per the usual process, the Boards of Trustees will determine each year how many spaces they are able to make available for out of zone applicants.

Each year, schools are required to put a notice in a medium suitable to the local area saying:

- how many out-of-zone places are likely to be available
- the closing date for applications for these places
- any ballot dates for out-of-zone places.

However, you can contact a school at any time to ask about zoning and have them send you a pre-enrolment pack which will have important dates.

Applications are currently accepted in this order:

1. First priority must be given to any applicant who is accepted for enrolment in a special programme run by the school
2. Second priority must be given to any applicant who is the sibling of a current student of the school
3. Third priority must be given to any student who is the sibling of a former student of the school
4. Fourth priority must be given to any applicant who is a child of a former student of the school
5. Fifth priority must be given to any applicant who is either a child of an employee of the board of the school or a child of a member of the board of the school
6. Sixth priority must be given to all other applicants.

Can a school change the order of priority for out of zone applicants?

No. The order of priority is set out in the Education and Training Act 2020 and cannot be changed.

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

- You can search online for schools in your area using [Find a school](#), which also tells you if a school has an enrolment scheme. If it does, applications from in-zone students will be automatically accepted when they are received.
- 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 for an out-of-zone place), and to discuss your child's transition to the school and create a plan for this if required.
- 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.
- If you live outside the zone of the school and there are not any out-of-zone places available for your children, there will be a local school with places for them.

Home zones and State integrated schools

- 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.

We live inside the home zone of my children's school, but are outside its school transport zone. Why is this? What does it mean for my children getting to and from school using school transport services?

- Home zones and transport zones are similar in that they both involve a geographic boundary; however they are not drawn using the same zoning. This is because they serve different purposes.
- A home zone provides for a student's enrolment reasonably close to where they live, and a transport zone assists to transport students where public transport is limited.
- If you live outside of your school's transport zone, you will not be eligible to access Ministry assistance and will have to look for other options for transport for your student.

See [School transport](#)

What if I have more questions?

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