

Memorandum to: principals (high school, central school and schools for specific purposes); student support coordinators, district guidance officers and school counsellors
DN/11/00007

Students applying to enrol in Years 7-12 in a school outside of normal enrolment period (that is, outside of the usual movement from primary school into high school or from Year 10 into senior school Year 11)

In a recent finding, the NSW Deputy State Coroner has noted that some students who enrol in a new school outside the normal period (that is, outside of the usual movement from primary school into high school or from Year 10 into senior school Year 11) may have additional support needs (both educational and welfare needs) that are not always captured through the enrolment procedure.

The Deputy Coroner recommended that a meeting of key school personnel (for example the learning support team/student welfare team) assess all available information about students moving to a new secondary setting outside the normal periods of enrolment.

The enrolment process will be better informed when applicants disclose all relevant background information. The action taken by schools in response to the information will also help them to safely support students in the school once enrolled and contribute to ensuring the safety of everyone in the school community.

Currently principals are required to follow [Memo to Principals DN/06/00168](#) and the associated [Implementation statement on enhanced enrolment procedures](#) in certain prescribed circumstances such as where a student has a history of violence. The document [Enrolment of Students in NSW Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy](#) also details the procedures to follow in considering the enrolment of a range of students, including those with disabilities.

When enrolling a student, the enrolment policy requires principals to consider the level of support a student may require based on a number of factors. These include a student's educational needs; the expressed desires of parents and caregivers; the capacity of the system to provide the level of support services required generally and at a particular location; and the availability of support services at alternative locations.

Following consideration of the Deputy Coroner's recommendation Secondary Schools, Central Schools and Schools For Specific Purposes are required to review their enrolment procedures for students applying outside of the normal enrolment periods to ensure the school's learning support or student welfare team consider all relevant information in relation to a student's educational and welfare needs.

It is expected that, for the majority of [applications for enrolment](#), existing procedures will allow for the collection of sufficient information for the Principal to make an informed decision to enrol and the process can be completed without delay.

Supports required for students with a disability to access and participate in education activities on the same basis as all other students should also form part of these considerations, as outlined in the enrolment policy.

The purpose of the following procedure is to ensure all available information is considered and that all relevant support strategies for the enrolling student are considered and implemented as required. A suggested procedure that includes the essential elements and responsibilities follows.

Enrolment outside of the normal enrolment period

Receiving an application to enrol

Upon receiving an application for enrolment outside the normal enrolment period:

- the principal
 - o checks Enrolment Registration Number
 - o obtains the general school records for that student
 - o notifies the school counsellor
 - o ensures that the learning support or student welfare team and the school counsellor have access to the general school records of the student
 - o and facilitates a learning support or student welfare team¹ meeting.

- the school counsellor:
 - o contacts the previous school counsellor as soon as is reasonably practicable to obtain relevant information
 - o where the previous school is not known checks to see if a student counselling file exists by contacting a student counselling file clerk. If a file exists it is obtained as quickly as reasonably possible
 - o obtains any other information².

Considering all information obtained

The learning support or student welfare team:

- o considers the information including any necessary school counsellor information³
- o identifies any evident welfare needs of the new student.

Actions to follow

The learning support or student welfare team determines if needed:

- o strategies to support and assist the student
 - including an informal introductory meeting with the school counsellor,
- o contact with the Child Wellbeing unit
- o or referral to an external service.

For further information contact the Student Support Coordinator, Student Counselling and Welfare in your region.

Gregory Prior
Deputy director-general, schools
March 2011

¹ Note: For the purpose of this consideration the learning support team consists of the principal (or nominee), the school counsellor and the year advisor as a minimum. It may also include the parents, head teacher (welfare) and other school personnel such as the Aboriginal education officer.

² The school counsellor considers all available information: the general school records, the enrolment form (for example new health information), the student counselling file, if in existence; before recommending any appropriate action.

³ In the event that a school counsellor decides that it is necessary for information from the student counselling file to be disclosed to the learning support or student welfare team, that information with the material contained on the general school records should be considered.