

# Wellbeing criteria guidelines for out of area enrolment applications.

Understanding how we assess your child's wellbeing needs when you apply for a school outside your local area.

When families apply for enrolment at a school outside their Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) due to *individual circumstances, based on student wellbeing* (wellbeing reasons), we consider:

- whether the information provided gives compelling reasons why a child's interests may lie at a school other than their PEA school; and
- whether they need to attend the family's preferred out of area school for their wellbeing needs to be met.

Out of area enrolments for wellbeing reasons are assessed within the Education Directorate before being considered by schools. This helps us manage school capacity by supporting in-PEA enrolments while ensuring children who need an out of area enrolment most are prioritised.

This guide outlines the kinds of information that can help us understand your child's needs. Families do not need to provide all the information provided as examples below. This information also helps your PEA school support your child's wellbeing needs, if the out of area enrolment is not accepted.

## Safety

Your local school is committed to providing a safe learning environment. ACT public schools recognise all children have the right to attend schools that are safe, secure and free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.

Read more about [Keeping children safe](#), [Behaviour at school and bullying](#), and [Online safety and security](#).

Information you can provide that helps us understand your child's needs includes information on:

- safety concerns with specific people connected to the school
- ongoing bullying or harassment that has not improved with school support
- court orders or safety plans affecting who your child can have contact with
- access to disability- or health-related safety adjustments
- trauma triggers linked to the local school or nearby community
- access to a culturally safe learning environment.

**Evidence to provide us can include:** parent statements, safety plans, court documents, police records, agency advice, and professional reports.

## School engagement (including attendance)

ACT public schools offer supports to help children learn and thrive at school. If you have any questions or concerns about your child, always contact the school in the first instance. Many issues can be resolved with help from the classroom teacher or principal.

Read more about [Student support and wellbeing](#).

Information you can provide that helps us understand your child's needs includes information on:

- long periods of refusal, avoidance, or non-attendance when a child becomes overwhelmed by anxiety, distress or sensory overload and is unable (not unwilling) to attend
- emotional distress, anxiety or shutdowns when attending school
- significant peer or social factors that affect child's sense of belonging
- impact of current or past plans or adjustments.

**Evidence to provide us can include:** letters or reports from health professionals, information from past schools and family statements describing what happens day-to-day.

## Access to adjustments (school supports)

Schools make reasonable adjustments for students who need them, and these may include adjustments to instruction, curriculum, assessment, and the physical and sensory environment.

Read more about how we support [Students with disability](#).

Information you can provide that helps us understand your child's needs includes information on:

- the physical environment of a school making it difficult for a child to move around safely or comfortably, even with access to ramps, lifts or other accessibility features
- specialist transport needs make getting to the local school particularly difficult or stressful for a child
- the distance between a local school and treatment or therapy before, during or after school cause significant disruption to a child's school day
- complex medical needs require specific facilities or trained staff
- requirements such as the need for school fencing or being away from busy roads to keep a child safe
- the availability of specialist programs that a child relies on, such as small group programs
- social connections with a current peer group are critical to a child having a successful transition to a new school.

**Evidence to provide us can include:** therapy or medical reports, NDIS plans, learning profiles, adjustment plans and parent statements.

## School as a protective factor (safe place)

Local schools can provide children and their families with stability, routine and support when circumstances outside school are having an impact on wellbeing.

Information you can provide that helps us understand your child's needs includes information on:

- family stress, illness, or changes that affect access and/or attendance
- unstable accommodation or frequent moves
- community or cultural pressures making it hard to attend the local school
- overwhelming environments in the local area that affect your child's wellbeing
- the need for predictable routines, strong relationships or wraparound supports.

**Evidence to provide us can include:** parent statements, statements from families or support services, housing or caseworker documents, or professional reports.

If you are experiencing [domestic and family violence](#) or [homelessness](#), or need [support for legal matters](#) in the ACT, there are services that can help.

If you at any time hold immediate concerns for your safety or your family's safety, please contact the police on 131 444 or visit any ACT Policing Station. In any life-threatening situations please call police on Triple Zero (000).

## What helps your application

You don't need all types of evidence. The most helpful information is:

- a concise explanation of the specific reasons your local school may not be in your child's best interests
- a summary of the in-school adjustments your child needs to be safe, happy and engaged
- any professional advice already available
- details about what has been tried before, and what has or hasn't worked
- explanations of why another school may help your child feel safer, more settled, or more able to learn.

## Our commitment

We assess each application carefully and respectfully, using the information available to us, including what you provide. Our goal is to understand your child's needs and make a decision that supports their safety, wellbeing and engagement in learning. To help with this decision we may contact you, your child's current/previous school, your local school and/or your preferred school for more information.

Need help? Contact the Enrolment Helpline: [education.enrolment@act.gov.au](mailto:education.enrolment@act.gov.au) or **02 6205 5429**