We are Victoria’s education and training regulator

We register and regulate Victorian schools and non-school senior secondary providers.

We approve schools and organisations to deliver courses to international students, and we oversee student exchange programs.

We register and regulate apprenticeships and traineeships, and some vocational education and training organisations.

We register and regulate home schooling.

What we expect from you

As a school, you need to:
• be registered with us
• abide by the minimum standards for school registration
• submit an annual report to be published on the State Register
• submit an application to us if you need to amend your school’s registration
• advise us when you change your school’s details.

What we do for you

Our School and Senior Secondary Education Unit:
• manages school registrations
• provides support and advice
• reviews schools
• provides up-to-date guidelines and other information on our website.

Minimum standards

We regulate the minimum standards for school registration to ensure quality schools through:
• good governance
• strong financial management
• effective curriculum
• sound teaching practices
• safe environments for children.

Contact and information

• 9637 2806
• vrqa.schoo ls@education.vic.gov.au
• Subscribe to our e-News: www.vrqa.vic.gov.au
As a school Principal, you have certain responsibilities in relation to your school’s registration. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) regulates all schools in Victoria.

We are an independent statutory authority that works to ensure all schools are quality schools. Quality schools come from good governance, strong financial management, an effective curriculum, sound teaching practices, and a safe environment for children.

To access the resources mentioned in this guide, see the list of documents and links on the back.

## Registration

Every school in Victoria must be registered with the VRQA.

In order to maintain their registration, schools need to meet minimum standards which are set out in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the Act) and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (the Regulations). These standards establish the requirements for schools.

Any school providing senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12) must also meet the minimum standards to provide a senior secondary course.

We also regulate schools that enrol overseas students, and have oversight of student exchange programs in Victoria.

## Standards, guidelines and other requirements

Our guidelines are intended to help schools understand the requirements of the minimum standards for the registration of schools and other requirements under the Act and the Regulations. These minimum standards relate to:

- school governance
- enrolment and monitoring attendance
- curriculum and student learning
- student welfare
- teacher requirements
- school infrastructure
- not-for-profit status.

There are also specific requirements in relation to:

- child safe standards
- bushfire preparedness
- anaphylaxis management
- financial management
- fit and proper persons requirements
- enrolling international students.

## Child safe standards

Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out the requirements of the child safe standards for schools. These standards require schools to have a culture of child safety in the school environment and demonstrate the Government’s ‘zero tolerance’ for child abuse in Victorian schools.

Compliance with these standards is assessed through the initial registration process, and afterwards at the time of the cyclical school review. For resources that can help your school meet the standards, see the documents and links on the back of this guide.

As Principal, you are responsible at an operational level for implementing child safety policies and practices.

Schools need to be mindful of the diversity of students when promoting a culture of safety in the school environment. This means considering the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.
Bushfire preparedness

We have published guidelines to assist registered schools to be prepared in the event of a bushfire. All schools must comply with these guidelines as a condition of their registration. For example, your school needs to maintain and review your bushfire preparedness arrangements as part of your emergency management plan. Schools on the Bushfire At-Risk Register must meet additional requirements. This includes any school with campuses, school camps, or other facilities at high risk of fire danger.

The Bushfire At-Risk Register is maintained by the Department of Education and Training (DET).

Anaphylaxis management

Ministerial Order No. 706 requires that any registered school that has enrolled a student/s at risk of anaphylaxis must have a School Anaphylaxis Management Policy in place.

We have prepared a checklist to help schools assess their anaphylaxis policy against the Ministerial Order. To access the checklist, see the documents and links on the back of this guide.

Financial management

It is our job to ensure independent schools are financially viable and meet the not-for-profit requirements for registered schools.

Guidance to help schools understand the not-for-profit requirements and how we conduct financial capability assessments, is available to download. We have also worked with Somerset Education to produce a brochure on financial sustainability, common causes of financial stress, and methods for diagnosing financial health.

To access the guidance and brochure, see the documents and links on the back of this guide.

Fit and proper person requirements

As a Principal of an independent school, you need to complete a Fit and Proper Person Declaration and ensure that other responsible persons at your school complete the form. This form covers a number of areas including things such as whether you have been found guilty of an offence or if you have ever been bankrupt.

A responsible person is defined in the Regulations as:

- the proprietor (the individual or all persons involved in directing the school)
- each governing body member and each person who is conferred responsibility in the school governance structure for managing the school or its finances
- the Principal
- any other person who by the person's conduct assumes a position of authority over the governance or management of the school

The completed declarations should be kept at your school so they can be provided upon request. To access the declaration form, see the documents and links at the end of this guide.

International students, CRICOS registration and student exchange

Any independent school wanting to enrol international students must go through a two-part approval and registration process.

First, you must apply to the VRQA for approval to deliver a course to an approved number of international students at a specific location. Approval may be granted for up to five years.

Once approved, you must be registered as a provider on the Commonwealth Department of Education’s Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). The VRQA will make a recommendation to the Commonwealth about whether you should be registered.

This two-part process is not required to enrol exchange students through an approved student exchange organisation (SEO). You should only accept exchange student enrolments from a VRQA-approved SEO. Your school may wish to apply for approval as an SEO.
School reviews

We review registered independent schools periodically to make sure minimum standards are being met. These reviews are undertaken on a five-year cyclical basis, but may occur at any time.

We review schools against the minimum standards for school registration and other requirements under the Act.

When your school is due for review, we use a risk-based approach to determine the compliance focus for the review. Your school may be subject to a desk audit where we review school documentation or we may also require a site audit where one of our contracted reviewers visit your school. We may also conduct a Financial Capability Assessment.

Our School Compliance Framework explains our approach to monitoring compliance through school reviews. You will be invited to a briefing to learn more about your review.

Independent school review readiness tool

Our readiness tool will help you self-assess your school’s compliance with the minimum standards to:

- guide you through the requirements for each standard
- detail the evidence required
- provide a link to relevant lines and publications
- allow you to note whether you currently meet requirements or need to provide further evidence.

Amending your school’s registration

Applications to amend a school’s registration close on 30 June every year. This covers things such as including an additional campus or year level, relocating a school or campus or including an additional senior secondary qualification. You must apply to us to amend the details of your school’s registration using the relevant application form on our website.

The form contains check lists that will help you collate the evidence required to be included with your application. You will need to submit the application form, completed checklist and evidence to us. To access the form, see the documents and links on the back of this guide.

Changing school details on the State Register

The VRQA maintains a register of all schools in Victoria called the State Register. Check our State Register to see if your details are up-to-date.

If you need to change the details of your school on the State Register, you must notify the VRQA in writing within 30 days of any change. This includes the details of your school’s governing body, school council, legal entity, religious affiliation or Principal. If you wish to change your schools proprietor, you must make an application to the VRQA.

Submitting school annual reports

Schools must provide an annual report for publication on the State Register.

Independent schools should email a Word and PDF version of their report directly to us.

School annual reports are due by 31 August each year. The VRQA will send a reminder each year to submit your annual report for inclusion on the State Register.
Documents and links

School registration
  • Guidelines to the minimum standards and other requirements for registration of schools
  • Application to amend a school registration – independent schools (with evidence checklists)
  • Fit and proper person declaration
  • Declaration of a school’s not-for-profit status
  • Declaration for senior secondary schools
  • Declaration for all new schools
  • Request to change religious and other affiliation
  • Independent school review readiness tool
  • School Compliance Framework
    www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/school-reviews

Child safe standards
  • Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools
  • The standards

International education
  • CRICOS registration
  • Student exchange

Anaphylaxis management
  • Ministerial Order No. 706 – Anaphylaxis Management in Victorian Schools
  • Anaphylaxis checklist
  • Victorian Department of Education and Training website
    www.education.vic.gov.au
  • Royal Children’s Hospital Anaphylaxis Advisory
    www.rch.org.au/allergy/advisory/Anaphylaxis_Support_Advisory_Line/

Bushfire preparedness
  • Victorian Department of Education and Training website
    www.education.vic.gov.au
  • Guidelines for bushfire preparedness – registered schools

Financial management
  • Guidance – school financial capability assessment
  • Financial Capability Assessment (Schedule 1)
  • Financial management for independent schools brochure

General
  • School education
    www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools
  • VRQA publications