



A Guide for
Choosing A Secondary
School for
Your Child





How do I choose the right secondary school for my child?

Choosing a secondary school for your child can be one of the most important decisions you make and with so many schools to choose from, it can be overwhelming. This guide will highlight areas to consider and also raise some questions you may wish to ask as you explore your options.

We believe there are six critical areas to consider when choosing a secondary school for your child:

- 1. Identify your child's educational needs.**
- 2. Be clear in what your family values are.**
- 3. Identify schools that meet your child's and family's needs.**
- 4. Explore the schools you have identified. Ask them questions! The more the merrier.**
- 5. Understand each school's enrolment process and timeline.**
- 6. Start early to give yourself time.**

1 Identify your child's educational needs

Every child is different and has different learning needs. Try to match your child's attributes and needs to a school.

- What are my child's strengths?
- What does my child enjoy doing?
- What is my child's personality type?
- Does my child require any additional learning support?

2 Be clear in what your family values are



Your family values can help guide you with your decision.

- What type of education system do we want for our child?
- Do we want a faith element for our child's education?
- What are we willing to pay for our child's education?
- What can we afford?
- What facilities do we want to see in a school?
- How far are we willing to travel?
- Is the school serviced by public transport?
- Does the school operate a bus service?
- What are the co-curricular options for my child?

3 Identify suitable schools

There are a number of factors you should consider when identifying suitable schools for your child. Here are some we believe you need to consider:

Academic Rigour

Research the school's results by visiting their website.

- How strong are the school's VCE results? What is the story behind these results?
- How do they compare to other schools in the area?
- How does the school celebrate and promote student success?
- What pathways other than VCE does the school offer?
- How many subjects are offered at VCE?
- What are the options for gifted and talented students?

Student Care

The wellbeing of students is central to their experience at school. Programs should prioritise and promote the personal, psychological and emotional growth of a young person.

When visiting a school, ask questions of teachers, staff and students. Get a sense for how the school approaches student care. Ask about structures and policies.

- How does the school approach student care and wellbeing?
- Are there counselling services available?
- Are there defined policies in place around behaviour?
- What is the process if my child has an issue at school?



Curriculum and Co-Curricular Programs

Students are given more and more choice to make personalised choices when it comes to their learning, particularly in secondary school.

- Does the curriculum cater for my child's academic, physical, spiritual, emotional, creative and personal growth?
- What learning programs does the school offer?
- What subject choices are available for students?
- What subjects do students choose at Year 7?
- What languages does the school offer?
- What is the school's sport program?
- Does the school offer music and what instruments can my child learn to play?
- Does the school have a performing arts department?
- Does the school do any musicals or productions?
- How big are the class sizes?



Facilities

Book a tour with the schools you are considering and visit the different learning environments. Explore the facilities and find out what's happening around the grounds.

- Do the facilities and spaces cater for today's learning and teaching?
- Are the spaces clean and free of litter?
- Are the spaces well equipped for effective learning?
- Are there dedicated learning areas / buildings?
- Is there a masterplan for new buildings / upgrades?
- Do the facilities cater for my child's needs?

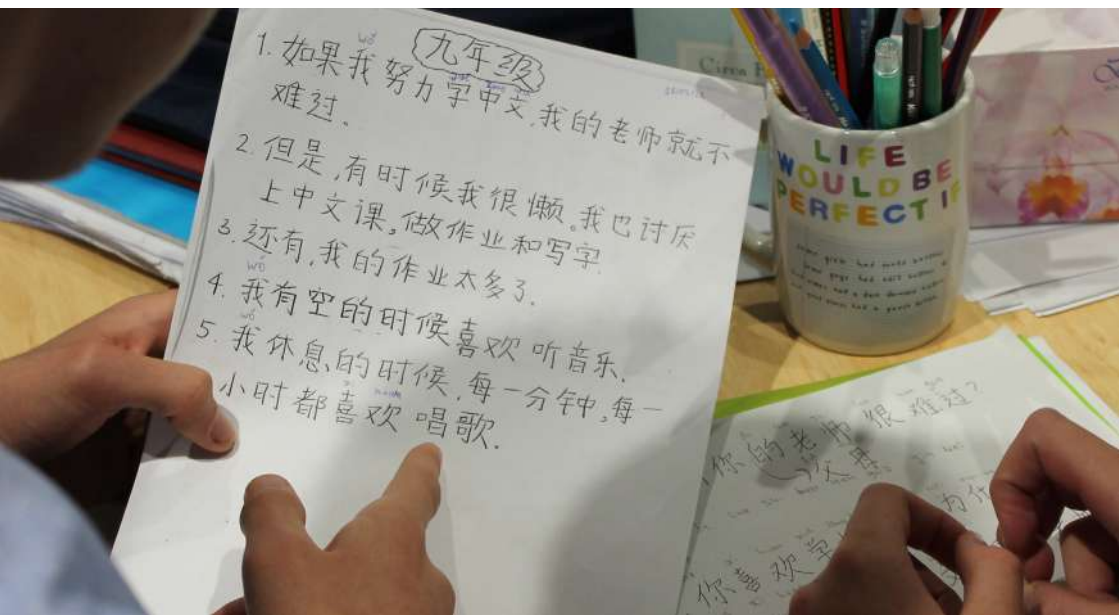
Accelerated and Enrichment Programs

Many schools provide opportunities for your child to extend their interest in a particular area. This may include accelerated learning options and programs across different year levels.

- Does the school have a program for gifted and talented students?
- How are students selected for these programs?
- What is the curriculum compared to the mainstream classes?
- Are their opportunities to do Year 11 and 12 subjects at Year 10?
- Does the school run camps and other excursions?

Tuition and Fees

- What are the current tuition fees?
- What does the tuition cover?
- What is the school's laptop policy?
- Is it covered in the tuition? Does it cover laptops?
- What are the current costs of books and uniform?
- Does the school offer any financial assistance?
- Can school fees be paid in installments?
- Is there a discount offered for more than one child?



4 Explore schools

Once you have identified the schools you deem suitable, it's time to research them more closely.

- Research online and learn more about the school.
- Ask friends, family and others in your network what they know about the school.
- Collect a prospectus or enrolment pack from the school.
- Attend information nights, open days and tours.
- Seek further information.

Melbourne Archdioceses Catholic Schools:

macs.vic.edu.au/Our-Schools/Choosing-a-School

Find My School Victoria

findmyschool.vic.gov.au

Tours and Open Days

- Find out what you can view on the day.
- Mark your calendar with key dates.
- Speak to teachers and students on your visit.
- See a classroom in action.
- Explore areas of interest and discover more.

To find out more information about schools you are considering reach out to their admissions officer or school registrar.





5 Understand the enrolment process

When should I start considering a secondary school for my child?

This depends on whether you choose to enrol your child in a Catholic, independent or government school. However, consideration should start as early as pre-school age but for Catholic education commencing your search in Grade 4 is appropriate. Enrolment deadlines, zoning and wait lists will play a role in determining how early you should commence your search.

When should I submit an application for Year 7 to a Catholic school?

Applications to Catholic schools for Year 7 open in January when students are in Grade 5. Families are encouraged to submit a completed application as early as possible. Applications will close in August of the same year.

Do I have to be Catholic to apply for a Catholic school?

No. Catholic schools have an open and inclusive enrolment policy and will accept applications from all religious backgrounds. Priority is offered to Catholic families from feeder primary schools and parishes. However, Catholic schools will also accept applications from students coming from Catholic, government and independent primary schools.

Are there fees associated with applying for a place in Year 7?

This will vary by school. However, most application fees are non-refundable.

What is the process?

Submit the relevant enrolment documents before the application closing date. Most Catholic and independent schools will also require an application fee which is non-refundable. Once your application has been processed, families may be invited to attend an interview.

When will I find out if my application has been successful?

Catholic schools will confirm places in Term 4 when your child is in Grade 5.

How are applications assessed?

Enrolment criterias will differ between schools, so reach out and request this information. One of the main criteria for Catholic schools is a family's support of the Catholic ethos regardless of religious belief.

Can I view a school's Enrolment Policy?

Yes. Most schools will make their enrolment policies available on their website or contact the school to request one.

Transition from Primary to Secondary School

- Stay connected to your school of interest.
- Follow their social media channels and get a glimpse into the school year, events, achievements and more.
- Ask about any transition program and what it looks like.
- Is there a buddy system for new students?



6 Start early

A few things to remember...

- There is no such thing as a perfect school.
- No single school will cater for all children.
- Most schools are good schools.
- Whilst choosing a secondary school for your child may seem daunting, use the information in this guide to help you gather as much information as possible to assist you with your decision.

Do your research now

- Find out your options and explore which schools are in your zone. To find out if you are zoned to a Catholic school, visit the school's website to access their enrolment policy. For government schools, visit findmyschool.vic.gov.au.

Be prepared

- Know enrolment dates.
- Save them in your calendar.
- Have your child's birth certificate and other items easily accessible when it's time to apply.
- Keep school reports - Catholic schools require Semester 1 of Grade 5 and Grade 5 NAPLAN results.

Have a back up plan

- Consider a back up plan if your child doesn't get into their first preference.
- Apply to schools before enrolments close.
- Do not wait until you get a decline from your first offer to consider your second preference.

Involve your child

- Have a conversation with your child and get their input into the decision. Ultimately they are the ones attending the school. It's important they feel a part of the process to ensure a positive transition.

Good luck with your search.



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