

ENROLLING STUDENTS UNDER 17

This fact sheet explains a training provider's role and responsibilities when enrolling a student under 17 in the *Skills First* program.

BACKGROUND

All children and young people in Victoria aged from 6 to 17 years are legally required to be at school unless they've been granted an exemption from school attendance and enrolment ('exemption').

You can only enrol a student who will be under 17 when their program starts in Skills First training if they have an exemption. The only exception is if they are enrolling in a School-Based Apprenticeship/Traineeship (SBAT) or a Head Start Apprenticeship/Traineeship (HSAT).

THE EXEMPTION PROCESS

Depending on the student's circumstances, exemptions are granted by a school principal or the Department of Education and Training (the Department)'s Regional Director.

You cannot ask for an exemption on a student's behalf. The exemption process must be managed by the student's school and should involve the student and their parents/carers. You don't have a formal role in this process. However, you can advise the school or parents/carers about suitable and appropriate training options for the student.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

An exemption can only be approved if the training is:

- on a full-time basis of at least 25 hours a week; or
- a combination of training and employment for an average of at least 25 hours a week.

You must notify the student's previous school and the relevant Department Regional Office if a student under 17 makes any changes to their enrolment, such as disengaging or exiting, changing to part-time, or reducing program hours to below 25 hours a week.

EVIDENCE OF EXEMPTION

You must sight and retain a copy of their exemption before enrolling students who will be under 17 when their program starts.

You must not enrol a student who cannot provide evidence of their exemption. Instead, you should advise them to contact their school to either get a copy of an existing exemption or begin the exemption process. You can give the student a letter of offer to support this process.

As explained below, the evidence you need to sight and retain is different depending on the student's circumstances. See Table 1 for a summary.

Student is enrolled in a Victorian school

Student has completed Year 10

If the student under 17 has completed Year 10, you can enrol them after sighting and retaining an exemption granted by their school principal – this could be in the form of a completed Exemption From School Application Form, endorsed by the school principal.

A Department Regional Director may also grant an exemption if a school principal's refusal to grant an exemption has been referred to the Department for review.

Student has not completed Year 10

If the student under 17 hasn't completed Year 10, you can only enrol them after sighting and retaining an exemption granted by the relevant Department Regional Director – this could be in the form of either a letter or a certificate.

An Exemption From School Application Form alone is insufficient evidence of an exemption for a student who has not completed Year 10.

Student is not enrolled in a Victorian school

Where a student under 17 is not currently, or has never been, enrolled in a Victorian school (for example, they're home-schooled, or from overseas or interstate), you should tell the student and their parents/carers to contact the relevant Department Regional Office to request an exemption.

You can give the student a letter of offer to support this process and offer any other assistance.

Contact details for each Department Regional Office are listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Table 1: summary of the exemption documents you must check, sight and retain before enrolling a student under 17.

If the student:	You must sight and retain:	And ensure that it:
has completed year 10	a copy of the signed and completed endorsement page from the 'Exemption From School Application Form'; OR correspondence or a certificate signed by the School Principal or a Department Regional Director.	identifies the Training Provider and the training to be undertaken; OR
has not completed year 10	correspondence or a certificate signed by the Department Regional Director.	
is not currently, or has never been, enrolled in a Victorian School (for example, students enrolled in home schooling, or students who have moved to Victoria from interstate or overseas)	correspondence or a certificate signed by the Department Regional Director.	identifies the relevant employer if the student is to undertake a full-time Apprenticeship /Traineeship.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Letters of offer

You can give a student a letter of offer to support their exemption process. Students can attach this letter to their Exemption From School Application Form.

If you choose, you can undertake all or part of a Pre-Training Review with the student so that you can issue a letter of offer that explains why the training would be suitable and appropriate for the student. This will help the school principal or Department Regional Director decide whether enrolment in training is in the student's best interests. They may decide not to grant an exemption until they have seen a letter of offer.

Approval is needed to change program or training provider

An exemption only applies to the specific training provider and program listed on the exemption letter or certificate.

All changes to a student's program, program hours or training provider while under 17, must be formally agreed by the original approver of the exemption – either the school principal or Department Regional Director. You must sign and retain this formal approval of changes to the student's exemption before you update details of their enrolment.

Students who want to enrol in a further program

A student who completes their program, is still under 17, and wants to enrol in another program with you, will need a new exemption for the new program. You should contact the Department Regional Office for advice on the best way to achieve this new exemption.

Students who take longer to complete training

You don't need to get further documentation if the student takes longer to complete the training than indicated on the exemption, provided their enrolment remains full-time.

Students who stop attending or complete training

You must write to the relevant Department Regional Office and the student's previous school (where relevant) to advise if a student under 17 stops attending, disengages from, or completes their training. The previous school will support the student by talking to them about alternative pathways to education, training and employment.

Contacting our Regional Offices

When telling us about a student under 17, you should email the Youth Pathways and Transitions Team at the relevant Department Regional Office. Contact emails are listed below.

Victorian region	Email
North East	pathways.transitions.nev@education.vic.gov.au
North West	pathways.transitions.nwv@education.vic.gov.au
South East	pathways.transitions.sev@education.vic.gov.au
South West	pathways.transitions.swv@education.vic.gov.au

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find more information about the requirements for school enrolment and the process for seeking school exemptions on the [Department's website](#).

You can submit an enquiry through [SVTS](#)