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| Naming rules for places in Victoria |
| Quick guide for schools |

# Naming rules and schools

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| School names can recognise and reflect culture, heritage and landscape. Appropriate naming is essential to identify locations for managing emergencies and to help people easily find the school. This guide is an excerpt from *Naming rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2016* (the naming rules). |

**Key principles of the naming rules that apply to the naming of schools**

## Principle (A) Ensuring public safety

School names must not create risk to public safety or operational safety for emergency response, or cause confusion for transport, communication and mail services.

Principle (B) Recognising the public interest

When determining the school name, its long-term effect on the wider community needs to be considered.

Principle (C) Linking the name to place

School names should be relevant to the local area. Names that link the name to the place could relate to Aboriginal culture and occupation of the land, local flora and fauna, Australian war contributions, European exploration and settlement, local geography and geology, significant events, the cultural diversity of past and current inhabitants, or patterns of land use and industrial/mineral/agricultural production.

Principle (D) Ensuring names are not duplicated

School names must not duplicate another name within a 5, 15 and 30km radius, irrespective of locality and/or council boundaries. Duplicates are considered to be two (or more) names within close proximity, or names that are identical or have similar spelling or pronunciation. A school being named after the locality in which it is situated may see multiple schools using the same locality name. These are not considered duplicates as long as the education provision is different. VICNAMES – the Register of Geographic Names will be used to check for duplicate school names.

Principle (E) Names must not be discriminatory

School names must not discriminate and/or cause offence on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality or gender.

Principle (F) Recognition and use of Aboriginal  
languages in naming

The use of Aboriginal languages in the naming of schools is encouraged, subject to agreement from the relevant Traditional Owner group(s). Victoria has a rich Aboriginal history, with 38 Aboriginal languages representing the diversity of Aboriginal cultural heritage and connection to Country. The uniqueness of language is based on location; each language is deeply rooted to the land and offers an ideal opportunity to connect a name to a place.

Principle (G) Dual names

Dual naming may be appropriate for use in the naming of schools, which would see an Aboriginal name and a non-Aboriginal name assigned.

Principle (H) Using commemorative names

Naming often commemorates a person, event or place. Examples include recognising Aboriginal people or cultural events, or following a theme such as Australian war contributions. When considering a commemorative name, the following points apply.

* When deciding on the assignment of a commemorative name, consider the person’s achievements, relevant history and association to the area, and the significance of the family/person to the area/land. For example, a family that has been associated with an area for at least 50 years.
* The names of people who are still alive should be avoided because community attitudes and opinions can change over time. In exceptional circumstances, if the Department of Education and Training (DET) wishes to name a school after a living person, the Registrar of Geographic Names will need to provide an exemption from this principle.
* A commemorative name applied to a school should only use the surname of a person, not first or given names.
* The initials of a given name are not to be used in any instance.

Principle (I) Using commercial and business  
names

Schools should not be named after:

* commercial businesses
* trade names
* estate names
* non-profit organisations.

Exceptions can apply if the business or organisation has had an association with the area over a substantial period of time and is held in high regard by the community. In these circumstances, the Registrar of Geographic Names will need to provide an exemption from this principle.

Principle (J) Language

* School names, except when they are proper nouns, must be written in standard Australian English or a recognised format of an Aboriginal language local to the area.
* The name should be easy to pronounce, spell and write, and not exceed three words and/or 25 characters.
* ‘The’ is not a suitable prefix in naming of any school. For example, The South Melbourne Primary School is not acceptable.
* The apostrophe must be deleted from proposed names written with a final ’s and the possessive ’s should not be included in the first instance.
* Abbreviations are not allowed with exception of ‘St’ (saint).
* For the purposes of consistency, names starting with Mc or Mac must not have a space included between the Mc or Mac and the rest of the name. For example, MacKenzie Primary School.
* A name cannot be a numeric value. For example, 1st South Melbourne Primary School, or 2018 Springside College.
* The school should use an appropriate school provision. For example, Primary, Secondary, P6, P-12 etc.

Principle (K) Directional names to be avoided

Cardinal directions (north, south, east and west) are not to be used, unless named after the locality. For example, North Melbourne Primary School.

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**Section 4: Features**

A feature is considered to be a unique geographical place or attribute that is easily distinguished within the landscape. For example, a feature can be a school, park, building, or prominent structure.

DET must ensure that a school’s name conforms to all relevant principles outlined above, as well as the relevant requirements outlined below.

Feature type

The feature type should be included in a school’s name and located after the school’s name. This is to minimise possible confusion over the feature type to which the name applies. For example, Primary School, Secondary College, P6 College, P-12 High School etc.

Locational names

If choosing a name based on location, the school name should be given the name of the official locality. If the name of a locality is used to define and locate a school name, e.g. Woodvale Primary School, the locality’s name should appear first in the school’s name.

History

Information about why a school name was chosen will help ensure historical information is available to future generations and provide transparency in the naming process. Historical information should be submitted to VICNAMES, the Register of Geographic Names.

**Further information**

The Department of Education and Training (DET) School Naming policy is available in the School Policy and Advisory Guide at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/naming.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/naming.aspx). Or contact DET’s School Operations and Governance Unit, Regional Services Group, on (03) 9637 3432 or by email at [theguide@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:theguide@edumail.vic.gov.au)

The full version of the naming rules is at: [www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/namingplaces](http://www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/namingplaces) or you can contact the Office of Geographic Names on (03) 9194 0282 or email [geo.names@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:geo.names@delwp.vic.gov.au).