

Queensland School Site Selection Guide

Providing developers, design consultants and local governments with an overview of the considerations for the selection of school sites for all school sectors in Queensland.

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This guide provides developers, design consultants and local governments with an overview of the considerations for the selection of school sites for all school sectors in Queensland.

Selecting the most appropriate site for a school is an important consideration for a school system and the school community.

The location, size, shape, topography and provision of services to a school site can materially affect the educational program and opportunities for students. Site selection must be based not only on current needs but also on projected needs.

It is acknowledged that many stakeholders have an interest in school site selection. This guide has been developed to support:

- schooling providers to identify appropriate sites
- planners and developers to allocate schools sites during master-planning for new developments
- consultation with local governments, developers and other stakeholders during the school site selection process

This guide is organised in two stages.

Stage one – defines the essential criteria of area and general placement used to identify potential sites.

Stage two – provides more details regarding site considerations and preferences used to test the suitability of any proposed school sites.

This document is intended to provide general advice on the site requirements for the state, independent and Catholic primary and secondary schools. Individual schooling sectors may have site requirements and / or planning guidelines in addition to those contained in this document. The site requirements for special schools and special purpose schools and facilities are not captured within this document.

All schooling sectors in Queensland apply best-practice built-form design criteria and therefore school design considerations are not in scope for this guide.

Stage 1 Essential criteria

Site size

The following table provides indicative site size requirements in hectares for each schooling sector by student population. Shaded cells represent the most common site size requirements for each sector based on typical school student populations.

| Greenfield | State Education Hectares | | | Catholic Hectares | | | Independent Indicative Hectares | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|-------------------|-----------|------|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Primary | Secondary | P-12 | Primary | Secondary | K-12 | Primary | Secondary | K-12 (75%) |
| 301-400 | | | | 3.0 | | | 2.8 | | |
| 401-500 | | | | 3.0 | | | 3.0 | | |
| 501-600 | 7.0 | | | 3.5-4.0 | 6.0-8.0 | | 3.2 | | 6.0-7.0 |
| 601-700 | 7.0 | | | 3.5-4.0 | 6.0-8.0 | | 3.4 | 7.0 | 8.0 |
| 701-800 | 7.0 | | | 3.5-4.0 | 6.0-8.0 | | 3.6 | 7.0 | 8.0 |
| 801-900 | 7.0 | | | 3.5-4.0 | 6.0-8.0 | | | 7.6 | 8.8 |
| 901-1100 | 7.0 | 12.0 | 18.5 | | 7.0-9.0 | 9-11 | | 8.0 | 9.0 |
| 1101-1500 | | 12.0 | 18.5 | | 7.0-9.0 | 9-11 | | | |
| 1501-1800 | | 12.0 | 18.5 | | | 9-11 | | | |
| Urban infill | <i>Case-by-case decision. Learnings from new inner-city schools in Brisbane will inform future decisions on new school sites. Site size requirements will also be influenced by potential for colocation and negotiated use of non-school owned sporting and play facilities.</i> | | | | | | | | |

Key site criteria

- Centrally located to student catchment area and evenly distributed
- Co-location with sporting and community facilities and precincts
- Regular shaped block
- 75% of land 500mm above a 1% AEP flood level.
- Minimum of two street frontages
- Pedestrian, cycle and public transport potential
- Proposals for a co-located/combined primary and secondary school can provide additional flexibility over the life of a school and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis

Stage 2 Considerations/preferences

| | Standard characteristics | State | Catholic | ISQ |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------|-----|
| Site | • Regular shape (rectangular with a ratio of width to length of 2:3) | √ | √ | √ |
| | • Slope less than 1 in 20 (80%) but allows natural gravity flow drainage | √ | √ | √ |
| | • Majority of site at least 500mm above Q100 levels | √ | √ | √ |
| | • Generally free of easements and any other constraints to development such as: - land on the contaminated land register - land subject to landslip or subsidence risk - easements, unless benefiting the site - overland flow, including the need for on-site stormwater retention - bushfire risk - acid sulphate soils - coastal hazard | √ | Desired | √ |
| | • Land suitable for infrastructure and foundations | √ | √ | √ |
| | • No mining tenure beneath the site | √ | √ | √ |
| Colocation and neighbouring activities | • Neighbouring facilities benefiting and appropriate e.g. other educational facilities, libraries, community facilities and precincts, child care facilities, pools, sporting facilities, minor retail businesses, parking, housing | √ | √ | √ |
| | • Community useable facilities (halls, sporting facilities) generally located close to accessible roads | √ | Desired | √ |
| | • Location of early years and specialised educational facilities on the site – independent accessibility | √ | √ | |
| | • Avoid major transport corridors - Maximum 48dB(A) L10 (1hr) centre of the classroom during school hours | √ | Desired | √ |
| | • Minimise boundary sharing with residential properties | √ | √ | √ |
| | • Avoid industrial or emission generating businesses | √ | √ | √ |
| Land availability | • Available for acquisition and preferably in single ownership | √ | | √ |
| | • Vacant and free of redundant structures | √ | | √ |
| Zoning | • Not included in a zone prohibiting school use. | √ | Desired | √ |
| | • Consistent with planning instruments and policy documents | √ | | √ |
| Drainage and stormwater | • Stormwater infrastructure to support 1 in 20-year Average Recurrence Interval (ARI) rainfall intensity | √ | | √ |
| | • Back-up overland flow paths to manage 1 in 50 ARI rainfall intensity | √ | | √ |
| Road infrastructure and transport | • Minimum 2 street frontages to accommodate access, parking, set-downs and vehicle (car and bus) queuing | √ | Desired | √ |
| | • Public roads adequate for peak school traffic and avoid minor residential streets | √ | √ | √ |
| | • Site accessible from multiple directions | √ | √ | √ |

| | Standard characteristics | State | Catholic | ISQ |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------|-----|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road infrastructure and associated works located within road reserve e.g. retaining walls. | √ | | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid access to major transport corridors | √ | Desired | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central to urban school population existing and future for efficient transport options (TMR) | √ | | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public or private transport services are available or can be provided | √ | √ | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus and car set-down zones to be separate | √ | Desired | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and convenient integrated pedestrian and cyclist pathways with external connections | √ | √ | √ |
| Ecological flora and fauna | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remnant native vegetation on the edges of the property may be retained as well as shade trees internal to the site will be considered | | | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid sites with large areas of important features and values such as wetlands and koala habitat | √ | Desired | √ |
| Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sewer, water and other urban services available, or in sequence with planned timing of the school | √ | √ | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service has capacity to meet future demands. | √ | √ | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical services to accommodate an additional capacity of 25% | √ | √ | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of fibre and telecommunication | | √ | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra provision of fibre and telecommunication | √ | √ | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal distance from major overhead power lines to site boundary to be minimum of 100m | √ | √ | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile telecommunications towers a horizontal distance of at least 200m from site boundary | √ | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gas connection where available | √ | Desired | √ |
| Proximity to school population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central to school population existing and future | √ | Desired | √ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High schools central/proximate to feeder primary schools | √ | √ | √ |
| Co-location of schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of impact to roads and traffic flow in the precinct | √ | √ | √ |

Next Steps

Once a school site is selected there are three pathways for development approval:

1. Development approval by local government authority (LGA) – application is assessed by the individual LGA against their planning scheme.
2. Approvals by Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) – application is assessed by EDQ for areas declared by the Queensland Government as Priority Development Areas.
3. Ministerial infrastructure designation – application is assessed and decided by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning.

Queensland schooling sectors are committed to consultation and collaboration with local governments through-out the site selection and development approval processes, regardless of the process selected.

Contacts

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Relevant publications

The following documents may provide further detailed information relevant to the selection of school sites.

[State Planning Policy July 2017](#)

The State Planning Policy July 2017 outlines the guiding principles that should underpin plan-making processes and development decisions in Queensland.

[Department of Education Design Standards for DoE Facilities 2014](#)

The design standards are to assist design consultants and delivery professional in the design and delivery of educational facilities

[Planning for Safe Transport Infrastructure at Schools](#)

Technical guidance for the provision of effective and safe transport infrastructure at schools

[Traffic and Road Use Management Volume 2 – Guide to Road Safety](#)

This document is intended to provide a single point of reference for any organisation or authority involved with, or seeking information about, traffic management and road safety at schools

[Queensland Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices - Part 4 Speed controls](#)

This manual outlines factors to be considered in determining an appropriate speed limit for a particular length of road

[Crime Prevention through Environmental Design \(CPTED\)](#)

A guide to encourage developers and local councils to design with CPTED in mind.

[Economic Development Queensland - Community Facilities - PDA Guideline No 11 2015](#)

A guideline outlines the standards for the planning and provision of community facilities in Priority Development Areas in Queensland