



Queensland School Site Selection Guide

An overview of criterion considered by all school providers in Queensland when selecting a site for a new school.



**Queensland
Government**

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This guide provides developers, design consultants and local governments with an overview of the criteria all school sectors in Queensland consider when selecting new school sites.

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

- education providers to identify appropriate sites;
- planners and developers to nominate potential school sites during planning stages of new master-planned developments; and
- consultation with local governments, developers and other stakeholders during the school site selection process.

This document is intended to provide general advice on the site requirements for the state, independent, and catholic schools. Further engagement with the relevant stakeholders is essential before finalising site selection.

What is included?

Selecting an appropriate site on which to establish a new school is an important decision for the future school and the future school community. The location, size, shape, topography and provision of services to a school site can materially affect the cost and ability to deliver the school, the operational aspects of managing the school, the ability to service the surrounding school network, student safety both within and accessing the school, and the ability to expand the school to meet future enrolment demand.

Within this guide you will find guidance on:

- general land size that the education provider would consider appropriate for the school they are intending to build
- the location and the relationship of a school site to nearby land-uses and facilities
- the ability to connect to services (transport, utilities and communication)
- the natural features of a site that would limit the ability to build a future school

What is not included?

This document is intended to provide general advice only and to serve as a guide to identify site requirements and constraints when planning for new schools. Individual schooling sectors may have more detailed site requirements and / or planning guidelines in addition to those contained in this document. For example, the Department of Education has [New School Site Selection Guidelines \(September 2022\)](#).

Furthermore, this document is focused on identifying a suitable land that can accommodate a future school. As such, the final built form and architectural design will be deferred to the individual school providers and is not detailed within this guideline.

Lastly, the site requirements for special schools and special purpose schools and facilities are not captured within this document.

School site selection criteria

Key selection criteria have been grouped where possible for ease of reference and navigation.

Location and surrounds	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Located near existing and/or proposed land uses that are conducive to supporting a school, such as other educational facilities, libraries, sporting facilities, parks, childcare facilities, community halls and pools. 2. A school site is located conveniently to the population that it is intended to serve and is within a local government planning zone that is intended for an educational establishment. 3. The site avoids areas that may be exposed to unacceptable levels of noise, unhealthy air emissions, contaminants, or other environmental nuisances. 4. Where possible, it is preferred that land is within the local government priority infrastructure area and therefore able to be connected to reticulated water, sewer, stormwater, and transport networks. 	
Land title and encumbrances	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The land is available for acquisition and preferably in single ownership. Note: Alternative land ownership arrangements, such as leases, will be considered on a case by case basis. 6. The site is generally free of easements and/or structures, unless benefitting the site, and will not place undue burden on the future school. 	
Connectivity within school network	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The site is centrally located to serve the existing and future population that the school is intended for. 	
Land constraints	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. No mining tenure beneath the site. 9. No landslip or subsidence risk 10. Avoid sites with large areas of important environmental values such as koala habitat, remnant native vegetation, natural waterways, and wetlands.* 11. The site is flood free OR where a site is affected by flood, an appropriate size building area can be shown that is flood free and an evacuation point is available outside of hazard areas. Where an evacuation point is not located on the school site, it must be located close to the school site and have direct access. Note: <i>Flood free</i> is defined as being 500mm above 1% Annual Exceedance Probability level (Q100) or in accordance with local authority requirements. 12. Site is not listed on the Contaminated Land Registers. Note: Contaminated Land Search information at https://products.des.qld.gov.au/shopping/home. 13. A basic preliminary assessment should be undertaken that considers all the constraints on the subject land and whether all constraints can be either avoided, managed, or mitigated to accommodate the future school. 	

*Clearing native vegetation or koala habitat areas are prohibited in some circumstances under the various planning and environmental legislation. For more information, please contact the Department of Resources or Department of Environment and Science.

Road and transport

14. Sites should be located with consideration to the suitability of the surrounding road network to accommodate the school including any other high traffic generating land uses in the local area. The site must be able to provide safe, accessible, and connected transport options for the future school. Factors for consideration include, but are not limited to:
- Site can be connected to pedestrian, cycle, and public transport services or these can be provided prior to school commencing.
 - Avoid site access points onto and adjoining major transport corridors.
 - Primary access points should avoid major arterial roads or minor residential streets.
 - Minimum of two (2) street frontages of at least 100m that can accommodate access and egress in a safe and efficient manner during peak periods. These must be suitable to provide for bus set-down points as well as drop-off points and access to parent and staff parking.
 - Site has direct access to roads that have capacity to cater for peak school traffic.

Utilities

15. Avoid sites within proximity to high voltage electricity transmission or distribution lines and/or substations.
- Note: The Planning Regulation 2017 requires development applications on lands with an electrical easement or within 100m of a substation to be referred to Energex/Powerlink.
16. Avoid sites within proximity to mobile telecommunications towers.
- Note: The Department of Education [Mobile telecommunications facilities procedure](#) requires a 200m set back from school site boundaries for state school facilities
17. Reticulated water, sewer and other urban services are available, or will be available prior to school commencing.
18. Services to the site have the capacity to meet future demands of the school.
19. Site is connected to electricity and telecommunication networks.

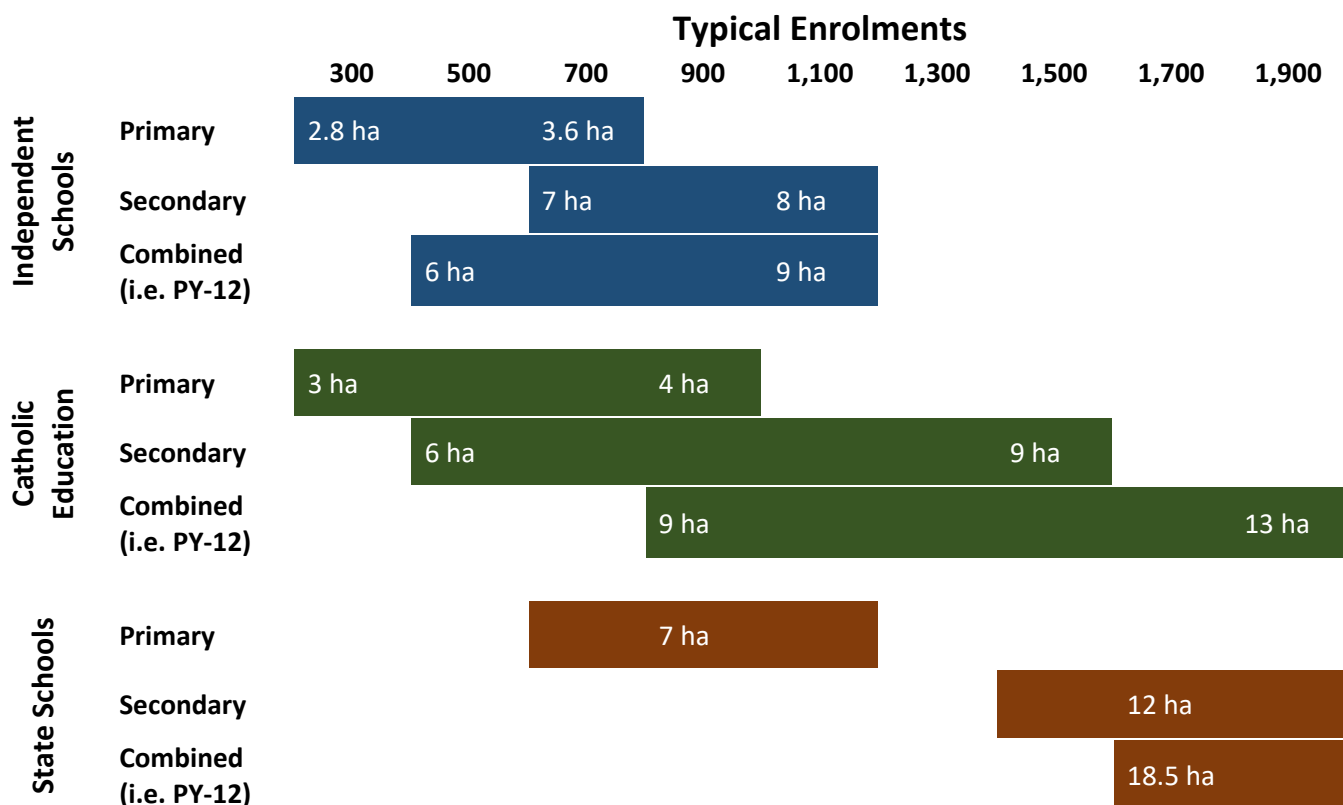
Stormwater and drainage

20. Avoid sites with over-land flow paths that manage 1 in 50 average rainfall intensity (2% ARI).
21. Avoid sites that will need on-site stormwater retention.
22. Avoid sites with slope greater than 1:20 (5%). Where the site as a whole cannot meet slope requirements, the site must have the potential to establish appropriate building platforms and area suitable for the delivery of playing ovals.

Land size and dimensions

23. Regular shape (rectangular with a ratio of width to length of 2:3)
24. Preferred land size requirements are detailed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1 – Minimum land area in greenfield areas



School sites include space for built form as well as open space for play and sporting facilities. Site size requirements will also be influenced by potential for co-location and negotiated uses of non-school owned facilities including car parking and sporting fields. Urban in-fill and other medium or high density areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Development approval

Once a school site is selected there are three pathways for gaining approval to develop a school on the site:

1. Local Government (Council) – An application is lodged with and assessed by the local council against their planning scheme under the *Planning Act 2016*.
2. Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) – An application is lodged with and assessed by EDQ for areas declared by the Queensland Government as Priority Development Areas under the *Economic Development Act 2012*.
3. Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) – An application is lodge with and is assessed by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP) and decided by the Minister under the *Planning Act 2016*.

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 underpin plan-making processes and development decisions in Queensland. Liveable Communities is a core State interest which requires that community facilities and services, including education facilities (state and non-state providers) are well-located, cost-effective, and multi-functional.

[Department of Education New School Site Selection Guidelines \(September 2022\)](#)

A guideline intended as a site selection framework to inform planning for, and selection of, new state school sites by the Department of Education, including other state government departments, local governments, and developers.

[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.

[Queensland Road Safety Technical User Volumes \(QRSTUV\): Guide to Schools](#)

defines the approach used within Queensland to review and revise infrastructure related to schools within the Queensland state-road network. This includes the [Planning for Safe Transport Infrastructure at Schools technical guidance](#) document to assist in the design and provision of effective and safe transport infrastructure solutions at schools in Queensland.

[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