

The Victorian Student Number

Information for parents



Every child, every opportunity

What is the Victorian Student Number (VSN)?

The VSN is a student identification number that will be assigned by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to all students in government and non-government schools, and students in Vocational Education and Training Institutions. The number, which is unique to each student, will be used as a key identifier on a student's school records, and will remain with the student throughout his or her education, until reaching the age of 25. The VSN is nine digits long, randomly assigned, and tied to identifying information about the student (name, gender, date of birth).

Why is the VSN being introduced?

The introduction of the VSN will provide the capability to accurately detect patterns of student movement through, and departure from, the Victorian education and training system. It will greatly improve the collection and analysis of timely and accurate data about education in Victoria.

Why do students need to have a VSN?

In a large and diverse education system such as Victoria's, a standard, centrally assigned student number is the best way to identify individual students. Using a reference number to collect and store data helps avoid the errors and confusion when names are misspelled, changed, or mistaken for other similar names.

Most Australian states either have already or are intending to introduce a student number, and the practice is common in many other countries, including New Zealand and Canada.

Where will the VSN appear?

The VSN will appear:

- on common student communications, such as enrolment confirmations and report cards, and
- on applications made by the student for enrolment in new schools or institutions.

Why does the Government need information on students?

The Department collects information to track improvements made to the education system, to identify areas that require further improvement, and to analyse trends and identify future needs. The VSN will simply improve the accuracy, reliability and completeness of this information, providing a better basis for assessing needs and developing policies to meet them. The improved quality of information will also result in more accurate reporting to the community on the state's education system.

Will the privacy of personal information be protected?

Yes, security is built in to the VSN system and the number itself. The student records maintained in the VSN system contain minimal information about each student – name, date of birth, and gender together with the date of admission and date of exit from each school attended. The VSN system is not a collection point for other student data such as academic achievements and outcomes, health or welfare information. Because the number is randomly assigned, personal information about the student cannot be inferred from it.

Access to the data in the VSN system is strictly limited, and the database itself will be maintained in a fully secure environment. The information will be used only for educational purposes and the ways in which the VSN can be used are prescribed by legislation. The legislation also includes criminal offences for use of the data for other than the prescribed purposes. Commonwealth and State Privacy Principles have also been used to guide the design of the VSN system.

Are parents and students entitled to see the information stored on the VSN system about the student?

Yes. A student (and the student's parents, if the student is under the age of 18) may request a copy of the information held in the VSN system relating to that student.

What do schools think of the new system?

Schools, other education organisations and education experts have been regularly consulted during the development and design of the VSN. Care has been taken to minimise the administrative demands that the VSN places on schools. There has been broad support from the education sector in general, for the introduction of the VSN.

How can I find out more?

Visit www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/vsn/parents.htm or send an email question to: victorian.student.register@edumail.vic.gov.au