

The Victorian Student Number

Information for students

*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 up to the age of 25 in Vocational Education and Training Organisations. The number, which is unique to each student, will be used as a key identifier on a student's records, and will remain with the student throughout his or her education, until reaching the age of 25 at which point the student's VSN will be retired. The VSN is nine digits long, randomly assigned, and tied to stable information about the student (name, date of birth, gender).

Why is the VSN being introduced?

The introduction of the Victorian Student Number 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?

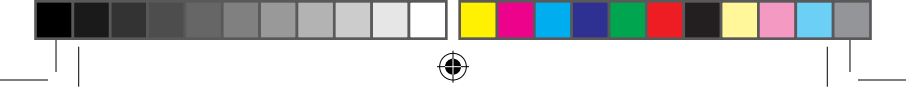
In a large and diverse education system such as Victoria's, a standard, centrally assigned student number is the best way to identify individual students. Using a reference number to collect and store data helps avoid the errors and confusion when names are misspelled, changed, or mistaken for other 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, exit notifications, VSN notifications and Student results statements/ results summaries;
- 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 a built in component of 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 exit from each school and institution 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 will be strictly limited and 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 is 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 students entitled to see the information stored on the VSN system about themselves?

Yes. The system will not change the rules governing access to and disclosure of personal information and protection of privacy.



What does the School and the VET Sector think of the new system?

Skills Victoria, the TAFE groups, ACE providers, 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 and institutions. There has been broad support from the education sector in general for the introduction of the VSN.

How can I find out more?

For further information about the VSN, visit the Victorian Education website at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/vsn/students.htm>