



# BUYING INTO THE CLASSROOM

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How school catchments  
shape property markets







## INTRODUCTION

Education isn't just a priority for Melbourne families – it's often the defining factor in where they choose to live. When a family is looking to buy a home, delivering the best educational outcomes for their children frequently drives their purchasing decisions. One of the most evident signs is in property prices around high-performing school catchments.

Analysing REIV's median property prices for the 12 months to March 2025 against Better Education's rankings of Victoria's top-performing public secondary schools, determined by median VCE scores, a clear trend emerges – schools play a demonstrable role in property values, particularly in tightly coveted public catchments.

Better Education is a valuable resource for real estate professionals, providing clear, data-driven rankings of schools based on NAPLAN, VCE, and ATAR results. It allows users to compare academic performance across suburbs, enabling informed conversations with buyers and investors who prioritise access to high-performing schools.



# WHERE FAMILIES ARE PAYING THE BIGGEST PREMIUMS FOR HOUSES

The difference in property prices within school zones versus those within 1km outside can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, illustrating just how far families will go to secure a top-tier public education.

SCHOOL (BETTER EDUCATION RANK)	PREMIUM	DIFFERENCE	IN-ZONE MEDIAN	1KM OUTSIDE CATCHMENT
Williamstown High School (21st)	35.1 per cent	\$495,000	\$1,905,000	\$1,410,000
Glen Waverley Secondary College (9th)	29.7 per cent	\$481,000	\$2,100,000	\$1,619,000
Frankston High School (24th)	19.9 per cent	\$160,000	\$965,000	\$805,000
Auburn High School (32nd)	18.8 per cent	\$450,000	\$2,850,000	\$2,400,000
Albert Park College (27th)	18.7 per cent	\$287,000	\$1,825,000	\$1,538,000
Mount Waverley Secondary College (41st)	15.0 per cent	\$209,999	\$1,609,999	\$1,400,000
Princes Hill Secondary College (16th)	14.9 per cent	\$220,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,480,000
Balwyn High School (8th)	14.7 per cent	\$327,000	\$2,550,000	\$2,223,000
McKinnon Secondary College (6th)	14.5 per cent	\$225,000	\$1,775,000	\$1,550,000
East Doncaster Secondary College (11th)	13.4 per cent	\$196,500	\$1,667,500	\$1,471,000

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

The difference in property prices within school zones versus those within 1km outside can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, illustrating just how far families will go to secure a top-tier public education.

## **WILLIAMSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL**

Williamstown High School, ranked 21st on Better Education's list, tops the table with a \$495,000 (35.1 per cent) premium on houses inside its zone. Its combination of bayside lifestyle and strong public schooling makes it highly desirable.

## **GLEN WAVERLEY SECONDARY COLLEGE**

Glen Waverley Secondary College, ranked 9th academically, shows a nearly 30 per cent markup, suggesting prestige and proven academic outcomes go hand-in-hand with price uplift.

## **FRANKSTON HIGH SCHOOL**

Frankston High School emerged as a 'value performer', with a lower median house price of \$965,000, whilst still reflecting a robust 20 per cent difference from nearby properties. It's the only sub-\$1 million median house zone in the top 10, making it highly attractive for middle-income families seeking quality education.

# WHERE APARTMENTS COMMAND A PREMIUM

While the premium for apartments isn't as dramatic as for houses, the data still shows buyers are willing to pay considerably more for the right address, especially in the eastern suburbs.

SCHOOL (BETTER EDUCATION RANK)	PREMIUM	DIFFERENCE	IN-ZONE MEDIAN	1KM OUTSIDE CATCHMENT
East Doncaster Secondary College (11th)	36.8 per cent	\$277,500	\$1,032,500	\$755,000
Balwyn High School (8th)	29.7 per cent	\$272,500	\$1,190,000	\$917,500
Williamstown High School (21st)	26.9 per cent	\$182,500	\$860,000	\$677,500
Albert Park College (27th)	24.4 per cent	\$162,500	\$827,500	\$665,000
Vermont Secondary College (22nd)	19.9 per cent	\$153,888	\$928,888	\$775,000
Koonung Secondary College (22nd)	14.4 per cent	\$94,210	\$750,000	\$655,790
Frankston High School (24th)	10.2 per cent	\$53,500	\$580,000	\$526,500
Camberwell High School (33rd)	9.3 per cent	\$74,500	\$875,000	\$800,500
Brunswick Secondary College (30th)	8.9 per cent	\$62,500	\$766,500	\$704,000
Ashwood High School (36th)	6.8 per cent	\$59,000	\$921,000	\$862,000

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

The difference in property prices within school zones versus those within 1km outside can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, illustrating just how far families will go to secure a top-tier public education.

## **EAST DONCASTER SECONDARY COLLEGE**

East Doncaster Secondary College leads with a 36.8 per cent median unit price premium, reversing its rank positioning in the house segment. This suggests that more modest homebuyers are competing fiercely for units in the area, particularly downsizers and first-home buyers who prioritise school access.

## **BALWYN HIGH SCHOOL**

Balwyn High School again features as an avid overperformer. It's the only school from Better Education's Top 10 to make the unit list, and its \$1.2 million-unit median price reflects strong demand from high-income households who can't quite stretch to a house.

## **WILLIAMSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL**

Williamstown High School continues to shine, ranking in the top three for its house and unit premiums, making it a clear standout in terms of cross-market performance.

# COMMENTARY

Properties located within desirable school catchment zones continue to command significant price premiums, reflecting the strong influence of education on real estate values. Williamstown High School tops the list, with houses within the zone achieving a median price of \$1,905,000 - \$495,000 more than comparable properties just 1km outside the boundary. This represents a 35.1 per cent premium. Glen Waverley Secondary College follows closely, with a 29.7 per cent premium, while Frankston High School demonstrates a notable 19.9 per cent uplift. These figures highlight the substantial impact that access to quality public education has on house values, making school zones a critical consideration for both homebuyers and investors.

The data further reveals significant price premiums for properties located within top school zones, particularly in the unit and apartment market. East Doncaster Secondary College leads with a 36.8 per cent premium – units within the zone sell for \$277,500 more than those just 1km outside. Similarly, Balwyn High School commands a \$272,500 premium (29.7 per cent). Even schools with smaller price gaps, such as Ashwood High School and Brunswick Secondary College, still show meaningful premiums, reinforcing the strong influence of school zoning on apartment and unit values.

While the above data may suggest that families must purchase homes in high-priced areas to access some of the top-performing schools, there are also more affordable options available. Some schools featured in the top 20 are located in suburbs that offer excellent value for money. Frankston High School stands out, offering a more affordable in-zone median house price of \$965,000. Likewise, the catchment zone for the East Doncaster Secondary College comes in at a median house price of \$1,667,500, offering a more accessible entry point compared to high-demand zones such as Auburn High School or Balwyn High School, where in-zone median prices exceed \$2.5 million. These areas represent a compelling balance between educational opportunity and affordability.

Notably, the catchment zone for Dromana Secondary College indicates a significant undervaluation, with the median house price within the zone being \$390,000 lower (23.1 per cent) than those just 1 km away, suggesting a strong opportunity for capital growth as demand catches up. Similarly, the areas around Koonung Secondary College (10.8 per cent), Braybrook College (10.2 per cent), and Montmorency Secondary College (7.7 per cent) are likely to show strong growth over the years as the schools establish their reputations and attract greater demand from families. These gaps present a compelling narrative to attract buyers and investors seeking long-term returns.



# WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

- Catchment zones are a tangible asset, and homebuyers are willing to pay a premium for them. In the cases above, zoning appears to create a property microeconomy, pushing prices well above those of surrounding streets.
- Top academic performance doesn't always correlate with the highest property premiums. Instead, buyers seem to be weighing up a combination of factors, likely including location, lifestyle, accessibility, and overall school reputation.
- Units are catching up, and in some areas, outperforming houses on a percentage basis. As affordability tightens, unit buyers are increasingly school-savvy.

## TAKEAWAYS FOR BUYERS, SELLERS, AND AGENTS

Whether you're buying, selling, or advising prospective clients, understanding the dynamic between education and property is critical:

- Buyers should be aware that zoning boundaries can play an important role in property values.
- Sellers within prized zones have a powerful point of differentiation.
- Agents and investors should pay close attention to emerging school zones, like Frankston and East Doncaster, which combine heightened affordability with growing reputations.

With top-performing schools scattered across Melbourne's east, west, and bayside regions, there's no single hot spot. Instead, a citywide pattern of education-led demand continues to emerge.

# APPENDICES

## 1. SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	PREMIUM	DIFFERENCE	IN-ZONE MEDIAN	1KM OUTSIDE CATCHMENT
Albert Park College	18.7 per cent	\$287,000	\$1,825,000	\$1,538,000
Ashwood High School	-2.9 per cent	-\$49,500	\$1,650,500	\$1,700,000
Auburn High School	18.8 per cent	\$450,000	\$2,850,000	\$2,400,000
Balwyn High School	14.7 per cent	\$327,000	\$2,550,000	\$2,223,000
Blackburn High School	-4.0 per cent	-\$56,940	\$1,350,000	\$1,406,940
Box Hill High School	7.0 per cent	\$100,888	\$1,550,888	\$1,450,000
Braybrook College	-10.2 per cent	-\$90,000	\$790,000	\$880,000
Brunswick Secondary College	-1.7 per cent	-\$27,500	\$1,600,000	\$1,627,500
Camberwell High School	8.7 per cent	\$211,500	\$2,637,500	\$2,426,000
Coburg High School	0.6 per cent	\$8,000	\$1,267,500	\$1,259,500
Doncaster Secondary College	-2.5 per cent	-\$37,056	\$1,462,944	\$1,500,000
Dromana Secondary College	-23.1 per cent	-\$390,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,690,000
East Doncaster Secondary College	13.4 per cent	\$196,500	\$1,667,500	\$1,471,000
Elevation Secondary College	5.6 per cent	\$38,500	\$720,000	\$681,500

SCHOOL	PREMIUM	DIFFERENCE	IN-ZONE MEDIAN	1KM OUTSIDE CATCHMENT
Elisabeth Murdoch College	4.8 per cent	\$39,750	\$869,750	\$830,000
Elwood College	-3.8 per cent	-\$79,500	\$2,020,500	\$2,100,000
Frankston High School	19.9 per cent	\$160,000	\$965,000	\$805,000
Glen Waverley Secondary College	29.7 per cent	\$481,000	\$2,100,000	\$1,619,000
Koonung Secondary College	-10.8 per cent	-\$200,000	\$1,650,000	\$1,850,000
McKinnon Secondary College	14.5 per cent	\$225,000	\$1,775,000	\$1,550,000
Melba Secondary College	-0.9 per cent	-\$10,000	\$1,050,000	\$1,060,000
Montmorency Secondary College	-7.7 per cent	-\$87,500	\$1,050,000	\$1,137,500
Mount Waverley Secondary College	15.0 per cent	\$209,999	\$1,609,999	\$1,400,000
Northcote High School	-3.4 per cent	-\$55,000	\$1,565,000	\$1,620,000
Princes Hill Secondary College	14.9 per cent	\$220,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,480,000
Ringwood Secondary College	3.0 per cent	\$30,000	\$1,030,000	\$1,000,000
St Albans Secondary College	-4.9 per cent	-\$35,000	\$680,000	\$715,000
University High School	1.6 per cent	\$22,500	\$1,395,000	\$1,372,500
Vermont Secondary College	3.7 per cent	\$46,500	\$1,297,500	\$1,251,000
Williamstown High School	35.1 per cent	\$495,000	\$1,905,000	\$1,410,000

## APPENDICES

### 2. APARTMENTS

SCHOOL	PREMIUM	DIFFERENCE	IN-ZONE MEDIAN	1KM OUTSIDE CATCHMENT
Albert Park College	24.4 per cent	\$162,500	\$827,500	\$665,000
Ashwood High School	6.8 per cent	\$59,000	\$921,000	\$862,000
Auburn High School	-0.5 per cent	-\$4,000	\$736,000	\$740,000
Balwyn High School	29.7 per cent	\$272,500	\$1,190,000	\$917,500
Blackburn High School	-3.3 per cent	-\$30,000	\$881,000	\$911,000
Box Hill High School	-1.7 per cent	-\$12,000	\$700,000	\$712,000
Braybrook College	4.7 per cent	\$29,000	\$640,000	\$611,000
Brunswick Secondary College	8.9 per cent	\$62,500	\$766,500	\$704,000
Camberwell High School	9.3 per cent	\$74,500	\$875,000	\$800,500
Coburg High School	0.3 per cent	\$2,500	\$722,500	\$720,000
Doncaster Secondary College	-28.4 per cent	-\$251,250	\$634,750	\$886,000
Dromana Secondary College	-4.4 per cent	-\$40,000	\$860,000	\$900,000
East Doncaster Secondary College	36.8 per cent	\$277,500	\$1,032,500	\$755,000
Elevation Secondary College	-2.4 per cent	-\$12,000	\$479,000	\$491,000

SCHOOL	PREMIUM	DIFFERENCE	IN-ZONE MEDIAN	1KM OUTSIDE CATCHMENT
Elisabeth Murdoch College	-9.4 per cent	-\$59,000	\$571,000	\$630,000
Elwood College	-3.9 per cent	-\$28,000	\$685,000	\$713,000
Frankston High School	10.2 per cent	\$53,500	\$580,000	\$526,500
Glen Waverley Secondary College	-11.8 per cent	-\$120,000	\$900,000	\$1,020,000
Koonung Secondary College	14.4 per cent	\$94,210	\$750,000	\$655,790
McKinnon Secondary College	-7.9 per cent	-\$75,000	\$875,000	\$950,000
Melba Secondary College	-12.2 per cent	-\$92,500	\$665,000	\$757,500
Montmorency Secondary College	-2.3 per cent	-\$17,500	\$730,000	\$747,500
Mount Waverley Secondary College	6.3 per cent	\$60,000	\$1,010,000	\$950,000
Northcote High School	-3.2 per cent	-\$23,000	\$700,000	\$723,000
Princes Hill Secondary College	-12.1 per cent	-\$97,000	\$703,000	\$800,000
Ringwood Secondary College	-18.7 per cent	-\$145,250	\$630,000	\$775,250
St Albans Secondary College	-5.3 per cent	-\$28,500	\$509,000	\$537,500
University High School	-5.6 per cent	-\$37,000	\$625,000	\$662,000
Vermont Secondary College	19.9 per cent	\$153,888	\$928,888	\$775,000
Williamstown High School	26.9 per cent	\$182,500	\$860,000	\$677,500





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