



## ST MARY'S COLLEGE ENROLMENT POLICY

St Mary's College Enrolment policy is based on the policy guidelines set down by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM).

### **Policy 2.4 Enrolment for Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne**

#### **Rationale**

**Catholic education is intrinsic to the mission of the Church. It is one means by which the Church fulfils its role in assisting people to discover and embrace the fullness of life in Christ.**

The Australian bishops established Catholic schools in the 1860s as a key instrument of catechesis and sacramental preparation for Catholic children. Catholic schools continue to offer a broad, comprehensive curriculum imbued with an authentic Catholic understanding of Christ and his teaching, as well as a lived appreciation of membership of the Catholic Church. This CEOM Enrolment Policy establishes that the first priority of a Catholic school is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children. This reflects the historical context of Catholic education in Australia, as well as confirming the participation of the Catholic school in the Church's mission. As a result, formation and education in a Catholic school must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

To support the view that Catholic schools are primarily for Catholic children, this policy and accompanying procedures establish an expectation that schools will work towards and/or maintain the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. This policy also outlines the roles of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) and schools in working together to achieve this goal.

In keeping with the concern to ensure that Catholic schools are accessible for all Catholic families, this CEOM Enrolment Policy promotes a consistent and transparent approach to the establishment and implementation of local school enrolment policies. It is envisaged that in order to achieve this objective, cooperation and collaboration will be required between schools and, where appropriate, between regions.

This policy also supports the special relationship that continues to exist between the Catholic Church and the non-Catholic Eastern Churches, based on a belief in the same sacraments and a close nexus in understanding about theology and sacraments.

This CEOM Enrolment Policy is also intended to ensure that, when enrolling students, Catholic schools are compliant with relevant Victorian and Australian Government legislation.<sup>1</sup>

## **Principles**

### **Inclusiveness**

Catholic schools have been established primarily for Catholic children and Catholic schools should strive to be open and welcoming to all Catholic students, regardless of their background and needs, and do everything possible to accommodate a student's individual needs. Schools should extend particular assistance to children who are poor or disadvantaged or considered most at risk.

With a significant proportion of Catholic children in other than Catholic schools, it is important that strategies be developed to raise the percentage of Catholic children in Catholic schools. Then, if appropriate, Catholic schools should welcome children of other Christian traditions and other faiths who seek what Catholic education has to offer, with a priority given to children from non-Catholic Eastern Churches.

### **Partnership between parents and school**

Parents, as the first educators of their children, enter into a partnership with the Catholic school to promote and support their child's education, in particular their education in faith. While the school promotes access to a Catholic education through the local school enrolment policy, parents should also assume a responsibility for maintaining this partnership by supporting the school in furthering the spiritual and academic life of their children.

### **Exercise of pastoral discretion in enrolment decisions**

Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making with regard to enrolment in a Catholic school. Therefore, while bearing in mind that their first priority is to Catholic parents, parish priests and principals of Catholic schools should be able to exercise some flexibility with respect to enrolment decisions where pastoral discretion may be deemed necessary.

### **Access to information about enrolment in a Catholic school**

Information concerning the local school enrolment policy, enrolment criteria and processes should be publicly available and easily accessible by current and prospective parents. As part of its minimum standards for school registration, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requires all schools to have a clearly defined enrolment policy.

## **Definitions**

### **Catholic child**

For the purpose of enrolment in a Catholic school, a child is considered to be Catholic if they are a member of the Catholic Church, usually established by a Certificate of Catholic Baptism.

### **Catholic school**

A Catholic school is one which operates with the consent of the diocesan Bishop and is one where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

### **Catchment area for schools**

For the purpose of enrolment, the school catchment is the parish or group of parishes, as defined by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM), from which the school draws the majority of its enrolments and to which the school gives priority of enrolment. For the majority of primary schools this will be the parish to which the school belongs. In those parishes with more than one primary school the catchment for each school is determined by the parish in consultation with the CEOM. For secondary schools it will be those parishes designated as '**priority parishes**' by the CEOM.

### **Parish**

For the purpose of enrolment, the 'parish' is the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries.

## **Procedures**

### **1. Local School Enrolment Policy Development**

School communities must develop local school enrolment policies which are consistent with this CEOM Enrolment Policy and include all the necessary elements outlined in the Procedures for Development and Dissemination of Local School Enrolment Policies: Primary Schools ([Appendix 1](#)) and Procedures for Development and Dissemination of Local School Enrolment Policies: Secondary Schools

([Appendix 2](#)). As a basic condition of school registration, the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic.) require schools to have an enrolment policy. Schools will make this publicly available.

### **2. Achieving a High Level of Catholic Enrolment**

Catholic schools are expected to maintain and/or work towards the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. If a school does not have a high level of Catholic and non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolments, it must attempt to increase its percentage by establishing a realistic target. Refer to Procedures to Assist Schools to Achieve a High Level of Catholic Enrolment ([Appendix 3](#)).

### **3. Enrolment Processes and Procedures in Schools**

Information in local school enrolment policies about enrolment processes should be clear and unambiguous. The procedures should be comprehensive and cover all categories of enrolment including minimum school age entry. [Appendix 4](#) provides advice on the following Enrolment Processes and Procedures in Schools:

- Recommended enrolment process process flow chart
- Enrolment of children under the minimum school entry age and pre-prep programs ([Appendix 6](#) is an Application for Early Age Entry to School – for approval by the CEOM.)
- Year 7 enrolment
- Enrolment of children with additional learning needs
- Enrolment of students from interstate
- Relevant legislation to be considered when enrolling students in Catholic schools.

### **4. Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee**

An Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee will be established to advise the Director of Catholic Education on the implementation of this CEOM Enrolment Policy. Matters for which the Committee is responsible and the proposed membership of the Committee are described in [Appendix 5](#).

**CEOM January 2009 (Revised)**

## St Mary's College Enrolment Process and Procedures

### Background

St Mary's College is situated in Seymour, 109 kilometres north east of Melbourne. It is a rural community, predominantly with families of Australian/Anglo background. The school is situated 9 kilometres from the Puckapunyal ADF base and provides a Catholic education option for many of these families.

There are two pre-schools in Seymour and along with a number of other smaller pre-schools provide approximately 35 preps for enrolment each year. At Year 7 the College enrolls approximately 45 students each year. Most of these students transition from Year 6 as well as a number of students from local primary schools in the district including Puckapunyal, Broadford, Avenel, Nagambie, Yea and Tallarook.

Currently, at the end of Year 10, some students go on to boarding school and some to the local government secondary school. The majority of St Mary's Year 10 students transition into Year 11 Assumption College, Kilmore. St Mary's College and Assumption College have worked closely on developing a smooth transition for students moving from Year 10 to Year 11.

The College currently has an enrolment of 400 and operates with 10 primary multi-age classes and 8 secondary single level classes.

### Enrolment Procedures

The following list provides an agreed order of priority for enrolment in Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese. Some schools may wish to elaborate on this list. In doing so, they should ensure that any local criteria are published widely and enrolments made within acceptable timeframes. The list should accompany the local school enrolment policy as a guide to parents. The order of priority is:

1. Catholic children who are residents of the parish.
2. Catholic children who do not reside in the parish but are recognised as parishioners by the Parish Priest.
3. Catholic children from other parishes (for pastoral reasons).
4. Children from non-Catholic Eastern churches who reside in the parish.
5. Children from non Catholic Eastern churches who reside outside the parish.
6. Other Christian children who reside in the parish.
7. Other Christian children who reside outside the parish.
8. Non-Christian children who reside in the parish.
9. Non-Christian children who reside outside the parish.

**Note:** Siblings of children already enrolled in the school should be given priority.

## **Parental Responsibilities**

Parents share in the educational responsibilities of their children and this includes in providing ongoing support for their child's Catholic education. In particular, parents /guardians are expected to make an explicit commitment to the following responsibilities:

1. Parents/guardians must be prepared to support the school in the Catholic education of their children and involve themselves as much as possible.
2. Parent/guardians must recognise and be prepared to meet their financial responsibilities for the ongoing enrolment of their child. (Any difficulties in this regard should be discussed with the Principal).
3. Parents/guardians must advise the Principal of any Court Order(s) that may exist in regard to the child, or any changes to such court Order(s) and provide a copy of the Court Order(s) and any subsequent changes for the child's school file.
4. Parents/guardians must supply the school with a Health Immunisation Certificate.

At St Mary's College we strive to be welcoming and inclusive and to collaborate with parents as partners in the education of their child, while making every effort to ensure a Catholic education is accessible to every Catholic family through the provision of family-friendly fee policies and fee relief.

Reviewed March 2015

Next Review March 2018

## ENROLMENT PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

Process

