Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Enrolment Policy for MACS schools

Purpose

This policy, and accompanying procedures, ensure schools maintain the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment consistent with requirements of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Scope

This policy applies to all MACS schools, being schools that are owned, operated and governed by MACS or through its subsidiary, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools (MACSS), and as contextualised for the circumstances, offering and the needs of the student cohort of each specialist school by a directive of the board.

Principles

The following principles underpin this policy:

- MACS schools are established primarily for Catholic children from the school's priority parish or parishes;
- MACS encourages and supports schools to extend assistance to children who are poor, disadvantaged or considered most at risk;
- MACS considers it important for schools to develop strategies to raise the percentage of Catholic children attending Catholic schools;
- MACS and its schools are open to the enrolment of children of other Christian traditions and faiths, however, priority will be given to children from non-Catholic Eastern churches;
- Children from other religious traditions or of no religion should also be provided with an opportunity to enrol in Catholic schools, should they choose to apply and there is sufficient capacity within the school;
- By enrolling their child in a Catholic school, parents/guardians/carers enter a partnership with the school to promote and support their child's education, in particular their education in faith. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians/carers to support the school in furthering the spiritual and academic life of their child;
- Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making about enrolment in a MACS school.

Policy

Schools are required to have a clearly defined enrolment policy and procedures which make clear who is eligible for enrolment as a domestic student.

Schools must also have an enrolment agreement with parents/guardians/carers which is publicly available and easily accessible to current and prospective parents/guardians/carers. The enrolment agreement must, at a minimum, include:

- codes of conduct for students, parents, carers, and guardians
- fees
- educational services provided
- the grounds on which enrolment can be terminated.

Schools should strive to be open and welcoming to all Catholic students, regardless of their background, and do everything reasonable to accommodate each student's individual needs.

While the first priority of the principal is to enrol the children of Catholic parents, pastoral discretion may be exercised in enrolment decisions where deemed appropriate.

Enrolment priorities

Schools must followed the order of enrolment priority outlined below. As systemic Catholic schools, the first priority of Catholic schools is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children from the school's priority parish/s. Schools can elaborate on this list but must ensure that any local criteria are published widely so that enrolment places are offered within acceptable timeframes. The list should be attached to the school's enrolment policy as a guide to parents/guardians/carers.

While Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne are open to families of all faith and non-religious backgrounds, they must aim and give priority to enrol Catholic and Orthodox children ahead of other Christian denominations, non-Christians or children of no religious affiliation.

MACS primary schools

The order of priority for MACS primary schools is:

1. Catholic children who are residents of the parish
2. siblings of children already enrolled in the school
3. Catholic children who are not residents of the parish but are recognised as parishioners by the parish priest
4. Catholic children from other parishes (for pastoral reasons)
5. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who are residents of the parish
6. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and Other Orthodox) who reside outside the parish
7. other Christian children who are residents of the parish
8. other Christian children who reside outside the parish
9. non-Christian children who are residents of the parish
10. non-Christian children who reside outside the parish.

MACS secondary colleges

The order of priority for MACS secondary colleges is:

1. Catholic children who are residents of a designated priority parish and have attended a Catholic primary school in one of those parishes
2. siblings of children already enrolled in the school
3. Catholic children who are residents of a designated priority parish and have not attended a Catholic primary school
4. Catholic children from other parishes (for pastoral reasons)
5. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
6. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
7. other Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish

8. other Christian children who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
9. non-Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
10. non-Christian children who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish.

Year 7 ceilings

When prioritising students for enrolment in Year 7, all MACS secondary colleges must adhere to the Year 7 ceiling that is currently agreed to between the college and MACS. Secondary colleges cannot enrol Year 7 students beyond the Year 7 ceiling without the express consent of the Executive Director.

Overseas Students

When considering the enrolment of students on visa, each principal of a MACS school is required to comply with MACS procedures and legislative requirements. Each school will determine a student's eligibility for government funding and where not eligible, consider the Dependant Full-Fee Paying Overseas Student (FFPOS) application process.

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.

Parental Responsibilities

At the time of enrolment, each school should ensure that parents/guardians/carers understand they have a responsibility to provide ongoing support for their child's Catholic education. In particular, parents/guardians/carers should be asked to make an explicit commitment to the following responsibilities:

- When enrolling a child in a MACS school they should complete the school's enrolment form and ensure it is returned by the due date. This does not guarantee enrolment in the school, which is finalised following the signing of the enrolment agreement as formal acceptance of the offer of enrolment.
- Be prepared to support the school in the Catholic education of their child and involve themselves as much as possible, as well as committing to adhering to the expected standards of parental behaviour as outlined in the school's Parent / Guardian / Carer Code of Conduct.
- Acknowledge and commit to meeting the financial responsibilities arising from the ongoing enrolment of their child. Any difficulties in meeting this commitment should be discussed with the principal.
- Advise the principal of any court order or custodial arrangement/s that may exist in relation to their child, or any changes to such order/s, and provide a copy of the court order/s and any subsequent changes for the child's school file.
- Provide the school with an immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register
- Provide evidence of visa status from the Department of Home Affairs as soon as notified where applicable.

Termination of enrolment

In certain limited circumstances a termination of enrolment may occur where the relationship between a school and a family has irretrievably broken down as a result of significant and/or repeated breaches by a parent/guardian/carer of the school's Parent / Guardian / Carer Code of Conduct **(Code of Conduct)**, the school's Enrolment Agreement, and relevant school policies. Parents/guardians/carers are, as a condition of enrolment, expected to read, sign, and comply with the Code of Conduct, the school's Enrolment Agreement, and relevant school policies.

Parents/guardians/carers who breach the Code of Conduct, Enrolment Agreement, and/or school policies will be contacted by the principal. Appropriate action, which may include limiting or reducing access to the school grounds, attending school functions or school-based activities or, setting mandatory parameters around methods and timing of communication, or imposing an Immediate or Ongoing School Community Safety Order is at the discretion of the principal and other authorised persons.

A termination of enrolment on the basis of parental/guardian/carer conduct must be approved by the Director, Learning and Regional Services, and such approval would only be provided in the following circumstances:

- a breach of the Code of Conduct on the part of a parent/guardian/carer has previously occurred
- the parent/guardian/carer has, because of that previous breach, been warned that any subsequent breach of the Code of Conduct by them (or the family) may result in a termination of enrolment
- a further breach of the Code of Conduct by the parent / guardian / carer, or by another family member in appropriate circumstances (including where the principal is satisfied on reasonable grounds that that other family member has been warned or is otherwise aware that a warning has previously been given) occurs.

A termination of enrolment may also occur where any parent/guardian/carer has engaged in conduct on a single occasion which constitutes a serious breach of the Parent / Guardian / Carer Code of Conduct (involving for example, conduct which poses a serious risk to staff or student health and safety.) In these circumstances, it will not be necessary for a warning to be given before consideration is given to termination of enrolment.

A decision to withdraw or terminate the enrolment of a student may only be made by the Director, Learning and Regional Services upon consideration of the following:

- the view of the principal of the school
- an objective assessment of all presenting circumstances, including the nature and gravity of the conduct and whether any previous warnings have been provided to the parent/guardian/carer
- the principles of procedural fairness are followed in the decision-making process, including an opportunity for the student and their family/guardians/carers to be heard, all relevant information considered.

Before any final decision as to termination of enrolment is made, the student's family will be provided with an opportunity to comment on and/or provide any relevant information for consideration in this regard.

Students are also, as a condition of enrolment, expected to read and comply with the school's Student Code of Conduct (**Code of Conduct**).

In cases of serious and/or persistent breaches of the student code of conduct, the Student Behaviour Policy outlines the consequences for student misbehaviour. The school's Suspension, Negotiated Transfer, and Expulsion of Students Policy and procedures outlines the management of suspension and expulsion and appeals processes.

In accordance with applicable legislation and the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the police, 'Families and Children's Services' within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), and/or any other relevant bodies will be informed of any unlawful breaches of these codes.

Complaints regarding enrolment

All MACS schools are required to maintain a fair, effective, and efficient complaints-handling process so that complaints about enrolment and other matters at the school can be addressed.

If a parent/guardian/carer of the student would like to make an appeal on the enrolment process, or termination of enrolment, parents/guardians/carers can raise the concerns to the principal or relevant person either in writing or by making an appointment. Please ensure the relevant person/s is given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address the concerns. Please refer to the school's complaints handling policy and/or guidelines for further information.

If the matter cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint is about the principal of the school, complainants are advised to contact the relevant MACS Regional Office. Alternatively, parents/guardians/carers may lodge a complaint online and read the MACS Complaint Handling policy at https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/Contact-Us/Complaints.aspx.

Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee

The Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee provides advice to the Executive Director on enrolment matters such as:

- Catholic/non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolments for each school and the strategies undertaken by schools to attain and/or maintain a high level of Catholic enrolment
- identifying and assisting schools which are experiencing difficulty in increasing and/or maintaining enrolment of Catholic students
- requests by schools relating to their inability to increase their Catholic / non-Catholic Eastern Church percentage
- monitoring and assisting secondary schools in terms of the Year 7 enrolment ceilings and priority parish arrangements
- strategies to assist in the resolution of any complaints by schools concerning the enrolment practices of other schools
- establishing a higher profile for Catholic education so that all Catholic families are aware of and welcomed by the appropriate Catholic school.

All committee positions are nominees of the Executive Director. The core membership of the Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee includes:

- the Chair, appointed by the Executive Director
- a regional general manager
- one representative of RI/MPJP schools
- two representatives of MACS secondary colleges
- a representative of MACS primary schools
- one parish priest
- the Chief Planning and Infrastructure Officer.

Appointments to further augment the core membership of the committee are made at the discretion of the Executive Director, as required.

Information to be collected

At enrolment, MACS schools are required to collect particular information about parents/guardians/ carers and their child. Parents/guardians/carers are required to provide particular information about their child during the enrolment process in order for MACS and the school to meet the duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements. Lodging an enrolment form does not guarantee enrolment at the school. For secondary enrolments, students are required to nominate two preferences. Schools are required to confirm that a student agrees to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to be counted in the census.

Roles, responsibilities and reporting

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
MACS board	Define the catchment area for each MACS school	
Executive Director	Determines nominees for Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee positions	
Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)	Approval for exemption for enrolment under the maximum school entry age	Written approval required. Subject to student meeting criteria outlined in these procedures
	Approval for exemption for student retention	Written approval required. Subject to student meeting criteria outlined in these procedures
Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee	Advice to the Executive Director on enrolment matters	
Local Enrolment Committee (or Principal where Local Enrolment Committee is not established)	Endorse enrolment decisions made at the school	
Principal	Accept and manage all enrolments	Report enrolment data to Executive Director through the February and August censuses
	Publish enrolment policies, procedures, agreement, enrolment pack, forms, and School Community Safety Order internal review process on school website	Annual attestation to the Executive Director
	Ensure compliance with MACS enrolment policies	Annual attestation to the Executive Director with any breaches identified
	Catholic/non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolment numbers and strategies to increase this percentage	Through annual census data collection
	Adopt strategies to increase the percentage of Catholic / non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolment numbers	Through annual census data collection process

Delegations and authorities

Role	Description of power/function	Limitations/conditions	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Executive Director	Approval of Year 7 enrolment in excess of approved ceiling level	Prior written approval of the Executive Director following advice from the Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee	Chief Planning and Infrastructure Officer maintains register of approved Year 7 ceilings and updates the Executive Director annually
Executive Director (or delegate, Director, Learning and Regional Services)	Exemption to minimum age of school entry	Principal to send completed application form and all supporting documents to the relevant Regional General Manager for approval by the Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)	All approved exemptions to minimum school age to be reported to the Executive Director.
Executive Director (or delegate, Director, Learning and Regional Services)	Exemption to the maximum age, year-level acceleration, and retention	Principal to send completed application form and all supporting documents to the relevant Regional General Manager for approval by the Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)	N/A
Director, Learning and Regional Services	Decision to withdraw or terminate a student's enrolment following parental breach of code of conduct	Consideration of the view of the principal and all circumstances, nature, and gravity of actions of student	
Principal (or Acting Principal)	Decision to expel a student aged 9 or older	Only on prescribed grounds in accordance with prescribed procedures, in line with the School Expulsion policy, with guidance from regional general manager	Mandatory reporting to the Regional General Manager prior to expulsion
Director Learning and Regional Services	Decision to expel a student aged 8 or younger	Only on prescribed grounds in accordance with prescribed procedures, in line with the School Expulsion policy, in consultation with MACS Learning Diversity or Student Wellbeing Unit	
Executive Director (or delegate)	Approval for students who are Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS)	Prior written approval of the Executive Director (or delegate, Director, Learning and Regional Services	

Procedures

Procedures for the enrolment of students in MACS schools are documented separately. Schools are required to have a local enrolment policy and procedure aligned with the directives in this policy.

Definitions

Catholic child

For 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 Baptism, and have fully participated in a sacramental program or there is evidence of an intention to complete their sacramental journey.

Catholic school

A Catholic school operated by MACS is one which operates with the consent of the Archbishop of Melbourne, where formation and education are based on the principles of the Catholic doctrine.

Enrolment Agreement and Enrolment Form

The Enrolment Agreement and Enrolment Form is an agreement parents/guardians/carers enter with MACS for enrolment at the particular MACS school. The Enrolment Agreement stipulates the terms and conditions of enrolment and the way in which the school seeks to work in collaboration with families. Schools must have an Enrolment Agreement with parents/guardians/carers which is publicly available and easily accessible to current and prospective parents/guardians/carers.

The enrolment form outlines the information that must be collected by the principal of each school, to enable MACS to satisfy its duty of care obligations and ensure it has the relevant information about each student to determine any need for adjustments.

Enrolment catchment area

The enrolment catchment area is a defined area from which a school enrols students as officially designated to a school by the MACS board.

For the majority of primary schools, this will be the parish to which the school belongs. In parishes with more than one primary school, the catchment for each school is determined by the parish in consultation with MACS. For secondary colleges, it will be those parishes designated as priority parishes by MACS.

Orthodox child

Orthodox refers to non-Catholic Eastern churches which includes Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and Other Orthodox.

Parish

Parish refers to the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries and student location is based on home address.

Priority parish

A priority parish is defined as a parish included in the catchment area of a school. Children living within a priority parish catchment area receive priority in enrolment over children who reside outside the priority parish catchment area.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Consent to Transfer Information Form
Dependant Full-fee Paying Overseas Students Application Procedure - Schools
Enrolment Agreement- Primary Schools
Enrolment Agreement – Secondary Schools
Enrolment Form – Primary Schools
Enrolment Form – Secondary Schools
Enrolment Policy – Primary – Template for Schools
Enrolment Policy – Secondary – Template for Schools
Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools
Family Occupation Index – Parent/Guardian/Carer Occupation Groups
Maximum Age Exemption Application Form

Minimum Age Exemption Application Form
Photography and Recording Permission Form – Schools – Template
Parents/Guardians/Carers Code of Conduct
Repeating a Year Level Application Form – Template
Standard Collection Notice – Template
Student Acceleration Application Form
Student Code of Conduct
[insert any school developed guidelines or processes]

Related MACS policies and documents

Concessional Fees Policy
[insert school] Complaints Handling Policy
Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools
Guidelines for Schools – Suspension, Negotiated Transfer, and Expulsion
Privacy Policy
Recordkeeping Policy for MACS Schools
School Community Safety Order Scheme – Internal Review Process
School Suspension of Students Policy
School Negotiated Transfer of Students Policy
School Expulsion of Students Policy
Student Acceleration and Retention Policy for MACS Schools
Student Acceleration and Retention Policy – Template for Schools

Related policies and documents

Australian Government - Interstate Data Transfer Note for non- government schools Legislation and standards

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Cth)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)
Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000 (Cth)
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards for schools

Policy information

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Learning Diversity
Approving authority	Executive Director
Assigned board committee	Education Strategy and Policy
Approval date	10 May 2023
Risk Rating	High
Date of next review	May 2025
Publication	CEVN, MACS website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Enrolment of Students
Supporting documents	Refer to Supporting Documents list above
Superseded documents	MACS Enrolment Policy – v1.0 – 2021
New policy	