Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Enrolment Variation Procedures

for MACS Schools

1. Purpose

To outline the criteria, evidence requirements and decision-making processes for considering and approving variations to student enrolments in Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) schools.

2. Scope

These procedures apply to all MACS schools, including specialist schools operated by MACS subsidiary Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools (MACSS) and school boarding premises operated by MACS schools.

These procedures cover the following enrolment variations:

- acceleration
- year level retention
- minimum age exemption for early entry to school
- maximum age exemption to continue enrolment at school.

The enrolment of international students (those holding a subclass 500 visa) is governed by *Dependent and Temporary Full-fee Paying Overseas Students Application Procedure*.

3. Legislative requirements

Under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), schooling is compulsory for children from the age of 6 until they turn 17. Exceptions and exemptions from minimum and maximum school age requirements are available in limited circumstances.

In Victoria:

- a child is eligible to commence school if they turn five years of age on or before 30 April in the year they start school
- students aged 13 years and over must be enrolled in a secondary school setting
- exemptions from minimum or maximum age requirements may be granted only where the circumstances meet legislative criteria and are supported by appropriate evidence.

These procedures operate under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) and are to be read alongside the MACS policies listed in section 12.

4. Enrolment variations

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) provides exemptions from enrolment in specific circumstances, assessed on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, parents and carers, in partnership with the school, may apply to vary their child's enrolment or year level.

The following enrolment variations apply in MACS schools:

- year level acceleration
- year level retention
- minimum age exemption for early entry to school
- maximum age exemption to continue enrolment at school.

Enrolment variations require a school-led decision-making process, overseen by the principal, followed by MACS review and endorsement. The only exception is non-year level acceleration, which is determined at the school level.

Applications will not be considered if they do not meet the required criteria, lack supporting documentation or do not have the principal's endorsement.

5. Acceleration

5.1. Overview

Acceleration may be an effective way to meet the learning needs of high-ability students. It can provide the level of challenge they require, increase engagement and enhance motivation. Acceleration may also support students' social connection by enabling them to learn alongside peers with similar abilities.

Acceleration may take different forms. Some forms are approved at the school level; others require MACS approval.

When considering acceleration, the principal should reflect on:

- what assessment data, cognitive assessments and diagnostic reports indicate about the student's readiness
- which form of acceleration best suits the student's needs and aligns with the school's structures
- the student's social and emotional maturity, including their readiness to learn with older peers and manage increased expectations
- the supports the school can provide, such as mentoring, wellbeing or organisational assistance
- how progress and wellbeing will be monitored once acceleration begins.

Where a student is transferring from another school, the principal may also consult with the previous school.

In every case, the principal should work in partnership with the student, their parents and carers, and relevant professionals, with a focus on the student's best interests.

5.2. Forms of acceleration and required approval

Table 1 sets out each form of acceleration and the responsible approving authority.

Table 1: Forms of acceleration and required approval

Form	Approval
Early age entry into school (see section 7.1: Minimum School Age Exemption)	Director, Education Excellence
Year level acceleration	Director, Education Excellence
Accelerating in individual subjects	Principal
Early access to Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) studies	Principal
Providing learning materials above year level expectations	Principal
Compacting the curriculum by removing content already mastered	Principal

5.3. Year level acceleration

In exceptional circumstances, a student identified as gifted, with a Full-Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ) of 130 or above, may be considered for year level acceleration. This may occur on school entry or at any stage from Prep to Year 11. Each decision must reflect a holistic assessment of the student's best interests, strengths, needs and readiness.

Before recommending year level acceleration, the principal must consider the other forms of acceleration outlined in Table 1.

5.3.1 Criteria and supporting documentation

A student may be considered for year level acceleration when all required criteria are met and supported by the documentation set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Criteria and supporting documentation for year level acceleration

Criteria	Supporting documentation
Age requirements The student meets the following age requirements: • a child younger than 4 years and 6 months cannot be enrolled in a primary school • a student aged 13 years or over must be enrolled in a secondary school • a person aged 18 or older must not enrol in or attend a school unless an exception or exemption applies.	• An approved form of identification: birth certificate, passport or ImmiCard. • If the student is seeking early or late entry to school, they must meet the *relevant VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration.* • For students younger than 4 years and 6 months, refer to section 7: Exemptions from Minimum and Maximum Age Requirements.
Cognitive assessment The student has achieved an FSIQ score at or above 130 (2 standard deviations or more above the mean).	• A cognitive assessment confirming the FSIQ score, administered: – using a suitable, age-appropriate tool (e.g. Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Fifth Edition (WISC-V)) – after the child has attained the age of 4 years – by an educational psychologist registered with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
Ability and learning needs The student has: • demonstrated high academic performance or giftedness in one or more curriculum areas • evidence of diverse learning needs that exceed current year level expectations.	• Academic records and teacher reports demonstrating giftedness in one or more areas of the curriculum.
Best interests of the student The student's social, emotional, academic and developmental readiness must support acceleration.	• Observations, assessments, reports and documented discussions addressing the student's: – social and emotional development and maturity – learning disposition, attitude and wellbeing – peer relationships and ability to adapt to an older cohort – gifted ability in one or more curriculum areas – academic readiness (literacy, numeracy, language and communication). • Minutes of Program Support Group (PSG) meetings showing consultation with the student and their parents and carers. • Consideration of whether the student has previously accelerated a year level.

Criteria	Supporting documentation
Independent professional advice An independent and suitably qualified professional confirms that acceleration is appropriate.	• A supporting letter or report from an independent, suitably qualified professional (e.g. medical practitioner, educational psychologist, allied health professional). • Other relevant allied health assessments where available and applicable.
Previous school information (if applicable) Required only for a student transferring from another school, interstate or overseas.	• Completed Interstate Student Data Transfer Note and Protocol. • Letter from the previous principal detailing the school name, dates of enrolment, year level, attendance records and academic ability.

5.3.2 Application process

1. **Initiation of request:** A request for year level acceleration may be initiated by teachers, parents and carers, or through a Program Support Group (PSG). The principal or nominated staff member then begins a formal review.
2. **Establishment of the School Review Committee:** The principal forms a School Review Committee of at least three staff members, including the principal or nominated staff member and the Learning Diversity Leader. The committee maintains detailed minutes to support transparency, accountability and consistent decision-making.
3. **School Review Committee evaluation:** The committee reviews the application against the criteria, also considering any existing adjustments and alternative enrichment options; current research on year level acceleration; and the views of parents and carers, and the student where appropriate.
4. **Completion of the application form:** The School Review Committee completes the *Student Year Level Acceleration Application Form* and attaches all supporting documentation.
5. **Principal endorsement:** The principal confirms whether the minimum criteria have been met and supporting documentation is attached; indicates whether the school supports the committee's recommendation; and provides written reasons for the decision.
6. **Submission to MACS:** The endorsed application and supporting documentation is submitted to eav@macs.vic.edu.au by the due date.

5.4. Non-year level acceleration

For all forms of acceleration that do not involve a change to the student's year level, the principal determines the outcome at the school level. These decisions must still consider the student's best interests and the views of relevant stakeholders.

6. Year level retention

6.1. Overview

Students should typically progress to the next year level with their peer group. Retention should only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there is strong evidence that it is in the student's best interests.

Students who are at risk should receive targeted, evidence-based interventions informed by a detailed diagnostic evaluation of their individual needs. A range of supports should be considered to address each student's unique learning needs, strengths, talents and interests.

Examples of exceptional circumstances where retention may be considered include significant illness, personal or family circumstances, or relocation.

Research shows that repeating a year level rarely leads to long-term academic benefit and may have negative effects on a student's confidence, wellbeing and engagement. Schools must therefore implement targeted interventions and supports before considering retention. Further evidence on year level retention in the Australian context is available through the Evidence for Learning website.

A student may only repeat a single year level across their entire schooling. For example, a child who has already repeated a 4-year-old kindergarten year cannot be retained again during primary or secondary school.

A student may be approved for year level retention when all required criteria are met and the *Student Year Level Retention Application Form* is submitted with all supporting documentation by the specified due date.

6.2. Criteria and supporting documentation

Table 3: Criteria and supporting documentation for year level retention

Criteria	Supporting documentation
Age requirements A student aged 13 years or over must be enrolled in a secondary school. A person aged 18 or older must not enrol in or attend a school unless an exception or exemption applies.	• An approved form of identification: birth certificate, passport or ImmiCard. • If the student is seeking late entry to school, they must meet the relevant Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Guidelines. • For students older than the maximum age requirements, refer to section 7: Exemptions from Minimum and Maximum Age Requirements.
Targeted learning supports and interventions Retention is only considered where the student has participated in documented learning supports and targeted interventions that have been implemented, monitored and evaluated over time.	• Academic records or teacher reports showing ongoing academic difficulty in one or more curriculum areas. • Documentation of learning supports and targeted interventions (such as a Personalised Learning Plan, Behaviour Support Plan, or targeted literacy and numeracy supports), including duration, frequency and progress.
Best interests of the student Retention must clearly align with the student's social, emotional, academic and developmental needs.	• Observations, assessments or reports addressing challenges with: – social and emotional development and maturity – academic delay in language, communication, literacy or numeracy – diverse learning needs in one or more curriculum areas – peer relationships and adapting to their cohort. • Minutes of PSG meetings showing consultation with the student and their parents and carers.

Criteria	Supporting documentation
Risk of long-term disadvantage There must be clear evidence that progressing to the next year level is likely to cause long-term educational or emotional disadvantage.	• Observations, assessments or reports outlining concerns about the impact of progression. • Minutes of PSG meetings. • Academic evidence showing ongoing difficulty despite interventions.
Circumstances impacting schooling (if applicable) Retention may be considered where the student has experienced significant disruption to their schooling.	• Documentation supporting the relevant circumstances (e.g. medical records, court orders, evidence of reduced attendance, suspension or youth justice involvement).
Independent professional advice An independent and suitably qualified professional must support the case for retention.	• A supporting letter or report from an independent, suitably qualified professional (e.g. medical practitioner, educational psychologist, allied health professional). • Other relevant allied health assessments where available and applicable.
Previous school information (if applicable) Required only for a student transferring from another school, interstate or overseas.	• Completed Interstate Student Data Transfer Note and Protocol. • Letter from the previous principal detailing the school name, dates of enrolment, year level, attendance records and academic ability.

6.3. Application process

1. **Initiation of request:** A request for year level retention may be initiated by teachers, parents and carers, or through a Program Support Group (PSG). The school then begins a formal review.

2. **Establishment of the School Review Committee:** The principal forms a School Review Committee of at least 3 staff members, including the principal and the Learning Diversity Leader. The committee maintains detailed minutes to support transparency, accountability and consistent decision-making.

3. **School Review Committee evaluation:** The committee reviews the application against the criteria, also considering any existing adjustments and alternative interventions; current research on year level retention; and the views of parents and carers, and the student where appropriate.

4. **Completion of the application form:** The School Review Committee completes the *Student Year Level Retention Application Form* and attaches all supporting documentation.

5. **Principal endorsement:** The principal confirms whether the minimum criteria have been met and supporting documentation is attached; indicates whether the school supports the committee's recommendation; and provides written reasons for the decision.

6. **Submission to MACS:** The endorsed application and supporting documentation is submitted to eav@macs.vic.edu.au by the due date.

7. Exemptions from minimum and maximum age requirements

Exemptions from minimum and maximum school age requirements are uncommon and must not be treated as standard practice. Principals must bear this in mind when making enrolment decisions, including when a child begins school, transitions from primary to secondary school, or prepares to finish school or move to another setting.

When considering an exemption application, the principal must balance the needs and best interests of the child or young person with the needs of other students. Each application must be assessed individually, with decisions made fairly, consistently and with integrity.

While principals may assess and endorse applications, all exemptions require approval from a MACS committee chaired by the Director, Education Excellence.

7.1. Minimum age exemption for early entry to school

7.1.1 Overview

A minimum age exemption is required when a child will be younger than 5 years of age on or after 1 May in the year they start school and does not meet any of the exception criteria below. Minimum age exemptions are rare and are not routine practice.

Principals must consider both the individual circumstances and the broader needs of other students when assessing applications.

7.1.2 Minimum age exception criteria

A child may be enrolled without a *Student Minimum Age Exemption Application Form* if they meet one of the following exception criteria:

- A child who is five years of age or older by 30 April in the year of enrolment may be enrolled in and attend a MACS school, including to undertake a course of primary education or a program or course approved in writing by the Minister.
- A child who is under five years of age on 30 April in the year of enrolment may enrol in or attend a MACS school solely for the purpose of participating in short-term Prep transition programs that prepare pre-schoolers for primary school, or early education programs in special developmental schools as approved by the Minister.

7.1.3 Criteria and supporting documentation

Table 4: Criteria and supporting documentation for minimum age exemption

Criteria	Supporting documentation
Age requirement The child must be at least four years and 6 months of age on or before 30 April in the year they commence primary school.	• An approved form of identification: birth certificate, passport or ImmiCard.
Cognitive assessment • The child has achieved an FSIQ score at or above 130 (two standard deviations or more above the mean), preferably using the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition, Australian and New Zealand (WPPSI-IV A&NZ), including the 10 subtests required to calculate the FSIQ and Primary Index Scales, administered after the child has attained the age of 4 years.	• A cognitive assessment confirming the FSIQ score, administered by an educational psychologist registered with AHPRA.

Best interests of the child There must be clear evidence that the child's social, emotional, academic and developmental readiness supports early entry, and that the child may experience negative effects if early entry is not approved.	• Supporting letter from a childcare facility, kindergarten or allied health professional (e.g. psychologist, speech pathologist) detailing the child's social, emotional and academic readiness. • The letter should include observations of academic, language, communication, literacy and numeracy skills; observations of social and emotional development; and an assessment of the risk of long-term academic disadvantage if early entry is not approved.
Previous school information (if applicable) Required only for a child transferring from another school, interstate or overseas.	• Completed Interstate Student Data Transfer Note and Protocol. • Letter from the previous principal detailing the school name, dates of enrolment, year level, attendance records and academic ability. • Proof that the academic program at the previous school was equivalent to the Foundation (Prep) program offered by Victorian schools.

7.1.4 Application process

1. **Initiation of request:** The principal receives a request for a minimum age exemption from parents or carers.
2. **Meeting with parents and carers:** The principal explains the process and requirements for the minimum age exemption.
3. **Establishment of the School Review Committee:** The principal forms a School Review Committee of at least three staff members, including the principal and the Learning Diversity Leader. The committee maintains detailed minutes to support transparency, accountability and consistent decision-making.
4. **School Review Committee evaluation:** The committee reviews the application against the criteria.
5. **Completion of the application form:** The School Review Committee completes the *Student Minimum Age Exemption Application Form* and attaches all supporting documentation.
6. **Principal endorsement:** The principal confirms whether the criteria have been met and supporting documentation is attached; indicates whether the school supports the committee's recommendation; and provides written reasons for the decision.
7. **Submission to MACS:** The endorsed application and supporting documentation is submitted to eav@macs.vic.edu.au by the due date.

7.2. Maximum age exemption to continue enrolment at school

7.2.1 Overview

A person aged 18 or older must not be enrolled in, attend or participate in any program or course conducted by a MACS school unless an exception or exemption applies.

7.2.2 Maximum age exception criteria

A student may be enrolled without a *Student Maximum Age Exemption Application Form* if they meet one of the following exception criteria:

- the student will turn 18 during the year and is enrolled in an accredited senior secondary course (e.g. VCE, VCE Vocational Major (VCE VM), International Baccalaureate (IB)) or an accredited foundation secondary course (e.g. Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC))
- the student will turn 19 during the year and is enrolled in and completing an accredited senior secondary or foundation secondary course within that same year
- the student will turn 20 during the year, is enrolled at a MACS school outside the metropolitan area solely to complete an accredited senior secondary or foundation secondary course within that year, and there is no TAFE institute or other registered education or training organisation (other than another government school) within 50 km of the school that offers such a course, or that offers an equivalent course through a distance education program for which the student is eligible.

7.2.3 Maximum age exemption (application required)

A maximum age exemption must be sought where the student does not meet the exception criteria above. Applications fall under three categories: special circumstances, English language, and other circumstances. Each category has specific requirements.

Table 5: Criteria and supporting documentation for maximum age exemption

Category	Criteria	Supporting documentation
A: Special circumstances	• A student who is unable to complete Year 10 before turning 18, and will be under 20 years of age on 31 December of the year they complete Year 10, due to circumstances that have prevented them from schooling.	• Approved identification (birth certificate, passport or ImmiCard). • Proof of address. • Medical records, court orders or other documents verifying the circumstances that prevented schooling (e.g. serious illness or injury, parental or carer responsibilities, detention in a youth justice facility). • Most recent school reports or assessments detailing the student's academic and social needs, expected school completion and transition.
B: English language	• A person aged between 18 and 21 seeking to transfer from a government English language school or centre into Year 10 at a MACS school. • Subject to approval by the Director, Education Excellence.	• Approved identification (birth certificate, passport or ImmiCard). • Proof of address. Most recent school reports or assessments detailing the student's academic and social needs, expected school completion and transition. • Letter from the principal or coordinator endorsing the transfer from the English language school or centre.

Category	Criteria	Supporting documentation
C: Other	**C1:** A person aged between 18 and 21 where the exemption will enable them to participate in a specific course or program approved by the Director, Education Excellence. **C2:** A person aged between 18 and 21 where the Director, Education Excellence is satisfied it would be unreasonable in the circumstances not to grant the exemption.	• Approved identification (birth certificate, passport or ImmiCard). • Proof of address. • Most recent school reports or assessments detailing the student's academic and social needs, expected school completion and transition. • Letters of support, assessment details or references relevant to the application.

7.2.4 Application process

1. **Review of possible exemption:** The school reviews the student's enrolment and considers whether a maximum age exemption is required for students aged between 18 and 21 who are completing a senior course or have submitted an enrolment application.

2. **Principal endorsement:** The principal or nominated staff member consults with the student, parents and carers, and PSG members to confirm whether the criteria for one of the maximum age exemption categories have been met, and ensures all required documentation is attached.

3. **Submission to MACS:** The endorsed application and supporting documentation is submitted to eav@macs.vic.edu.au by the due date.

8. Processing applications for enrolment variation

8.1. MACS Office review

A MACS committee, chaired by the Director, Education Excellence, reviews the application and provides an outcome to the principal within 21 days. The committee comprises MACS staff with the expertise required to make an informed decision and may include additional specialist staff where applications involve cultural considerations, for example, learning consultants supporting newly arrived refugee students, or education officers for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students. The Director, Education Excellence will notify the relevant General Manager (Region) of the outcome.

8.2. New information

Where new information becomes available, parents and carers may send it to the principal within 14 days of that information emerging. The principal will then forward it to the Director, Education Excellence for consideration.

8.3. Informing parents and carers

The principal advises parents and carers formally of the decision via a PSG meeting and establishes shared goals for the student's educational program; arranges for parents and carers to sign a consent form confirming the decision; and advises parents and carers of the complaints resolution process under the *Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools* or the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.

9. Other enrolment variations

The following enrolment variations are addressed in separate MACS procedures:

- modified timetable procedures, contained in the *Attendance Policy for MACS Schools*
- dual enrolment, contained in the *Dual Enrolment Procedures.*

9.1. Exemption from enrolment

Under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), schooling is compulsory for students from the age of 6 until they turn 17, unless an exemption has been granted. Exemptions from attendance and enrolment may be approved in specific circumstances and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Schools must follow the Department of Education's student exemption processes when considering an exemption from enrolment.

Table 6: Exemption from enrolment – circumstances and authorisation requirement

Circumstances	Authorisation required
Child turns 6 (compulsory school age) while attending kindergarten	General Manager (Region) (GMR)
Student has completed Year 10 and will participate in approved education, training or employment on a full-time basis	Principal
Student has not completed Year 10 and will participate in approved education, training or employment on a full-time basis	GMR
Student is employed or seeking employment during school hours in the entertainment industry	Principal
Leaving school is in the best interests of the student	GMR following consideration by the Principal

Further information is available on the Department of Education's website.

Where a student seeks to leave school early under these provisions, the principal must notify MACS by emailing pathways@macs.vic.edu.au.

10. Application dates and processing timelines

Schools must submit enrolment variation applications with all required supporting documentation by the dates listed below. All endorsed applications must be emailed to the address specified for that category.

Type of application	Form required	Application due	Email to
Minimum age (Pre-Foundation)	Student Minimum Age Exemption	As required	eav@macs.vic.edu.au
Year level acceleration (F–10)	Student Year Level Acceleration	Term 4, Week 5	eav@macs.vic.edu.au
Retention (F–5)	Student Year Level Retention	Term 4, Week 5	eav@macs.vic.edu.au
Retention (Year 6)	Student Year Level Retention	Term 3, Week 1	eav@macs.vic.edu.au

Type of application	Form required	Application due	Email to
Retention (Secondary)	Student Year Level Retention	Term 4, Week 5	eav@macs.vic.edu.au
Maximum age	Student Maximum Age Exemption	As required	eav@macs.vic.edu.au
Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS)	Dependent and Temporary FFPOS	As required	ffpos@macs.vic.edu.au

11. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in these Procedures can be found in the Glossary of Terms.

Exemption

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) allows exemptions from school attendance and enrolment in specific circumstances. An exemption may be granted under:

- Ministerial Order 705: Exemption from school attendance and enrolment to participate full-time in approved education, training and/or employment
- Ministerial Order 713: where a child will turn six (compulsory school age) while attending kindergarten
- Ministerial Order 714: Exemption to allow employment in the entertainment industry
- Ministerial Order 715: Exemption from school attendance and enrolment where leaving school is in the best interests of the student.

Refer to the Department of Education guidance on Exemption from School Attendance and Enrolment for further information.

12. Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Student Year Level Retention Application Form

Student Year Level Acceleration Application Form

Student Maximum Age Exemption Application Form

Student Minimum Age Exemption Application Form

Related MACS policies and documents

Attendance Policy for MACS Schools
Enrolment Policy for MACS Schools
Enrolment Application Procedures for MACS Schools
Full-Fee Paying Overseas Student (FFPOS) Application Procedure

Resources

Gifted and Talented students: A resource guide for Teachers in Victorian Catholic Schools (2019)
Teaching and Learning Toolkit, Evidence for Learning, The Education Endowment Foundation

12. Policy information

Sponsoring executive	Director, Education Excellence
Policy owner	Chief of Regional Operations
Approving authority	Director, Education Excellence
Assigned board committee	Education Strategy and Policy
Approval date	4 July 2026
Risk rating	Extreme
Review by	September 2030
Publication	CEVN, school website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Enrolment
Supporting documents	Enrolment Application Procedures Enrolment Variation Procedures Concessional Fees Program Procedures Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools Suspension Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures
Superseded documents	Enrolment Agreement – Template for primary schools Enrolment Agreement – Template for secondary schools Enrolment Application Form – Template for primary schools Enrolment Application Form – Template for secondary schools Enrolment Policy – Template for primary schools Enrolment Policy – Template for secondary schools Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools Enrolment Variations Guidelines Student Acceleration and Retention Policy Student Acceleration and Retention Policy for MACS Schools