



ENROLMENT POLICY

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ ” Matthew 19:14

Introduction

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 first priority of a Catholic school is to provide a Catholic education for Catholic children. This priority reflects the historical context of Catholic education in Australia, as well as confirming the participation of Catholic schools in the mission of the Church. As a result, formation and education at Our Lady of Sion College must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

This policy is aligned with the Enrolment Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Melbourne as they apply to Catholic secondary schools and is also designed to be compatible with the ideals and practices of the Congregation of the Sisters of our Lady of Sion. The Charism of the Sisters is to keep alive in the Church and the world, the awareness of the Jewish heritage of Christianity and the important place of interfaith dialogue in our world. The College Mission calls us to be people who build bridges with others and remain open to change, therefore, this Enrolment Policy respects people of other faiths and cultures, and minority groups.

To ensure that Catholic schools are accessible for all Catholic families, this policy promotes a consistent and transparent approach to establishing and implementing local school enrolment admission policies and complies with all relevant legislation. To achieve this objective, Our Lady of Sion College co-operates and collaborates with other Catholic secondary schools to ensure fair and equitable access to Catholic education for families.

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 theology and catechesis.

Purpose

This policy provides a set of protocols to guide Our Lady of Sion College to maintain the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. Adherence to the policy ensures that all schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne achieve this goal consistent with the minimum standards required by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Principles

Inclusiveness

Our Lady of Sion College is established primarily for Catholic children from the school's priority parishes. We 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. Our Lady of Sion College extends particular assistance to children who are poor, disadvantaged or considered most at risk. Our Lady of Sion College welcomes 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 will also be provided with an



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opportunity to enrol at Our Lady of Sion College, should they choose to apply and there is sufficient capacity within the school.

Partnership between parents and school

Parents/guardians/carers are the first educators of their children. By enrolling their child at Our Lady of Sion College, parents/guardians/carers enter into a partnership with the College 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 school enrolment policy, it is the parents/guardians/carers' responsibility to support the school in furthering the spiritual and academic life of their child.

Exercise of pastoral discretion in enrolment decisions

Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making with regard to enrolment at Our Lady of Sion College. 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.

Access to information about enrolment at Our Lady of Sion College

All schools registered in Victoria, including Our Lady of Sion College, are required to have a clearly defined enrolment policy and procedures which make clear who is eligible for enrolment as a domestic student. Our Lady of Sion College 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 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.

Priority enrolment

While Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne are open to families of all faith and nonreligious 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. There is an agreed order of priority for enrolment at Our Lady of Sion College, which must be followed in the enrolment policy and procedures.

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

Orthodox child

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

Catholic school

A Catholic school 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.



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Enrolment catchment area

The enrolment catchment area is a defined area from which a school enrolls students as officially designated to a school by the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools.

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.

Enrolment Priorities

The priority enrolment for Our Lady of Sion College is as follows:

1. Catholic children who are residents of a designated priority parish and have attended a Catholic Primary school in one of those parishes.
2. Applicants who have sisters at the College.
3. Applicants who are daughters of past students.
4. Applicants who are relatives of members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion.
5. Catholic children who are residents of a designated priority parish and have not attended a Catholic school.
6. Catholic children from other parishes.
7. Children from non-Catholic Eastern churches who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish.
8. Children from non-Catholic Eastern churches who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish.
9. Other Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish.
10. Other Christian children who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish.
11. Non-Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish.
12. 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, Our Lady of Sion College must adhere to the Year 7 ceiling that is currently agreed to between the College and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). Secondary Colleges cannot enrol Year 7 students beyond the Year 7 ceiling without the express consent of the MACS Executive Director.

Information to Be Collected

At enrolment, Our Lady of Sion College is 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 Our Lady of Sion College to meet the duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements. Lodging an enrolment application form does not guarantee enrolment at Our Lady of Sion College. For secondary enrolments at Year 7, parents/careers/guardians are required to nominate two preferences.

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.



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Parental Responsibilities

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

- When enrolling a child at Our Lady of Sion College they should complete the school's enrolment application form and ensure it is returned by the due date. This does not guarantee enrolment in the school.
- 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 Code of Belonging
- 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 or their delegate.
- Advise the principal or their delegate 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.

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 Code of Belonging.

A termination of enrolment on the basis of parental/guardian/carer conduct must be approved by the Our Lady of Sion College Board, and such approval would only be provided in the following circumstances:

- a breach of the Code of Belonging 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 Belonging by them (or the family) may result in a termination of enrolment
- a further breach of the Code of Belonging 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 Belonging (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 terminate the enrolment.

A decision to withdraw or terminate the enrolment of a student may only be made by the Our Lady of Sion College Board 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.



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Where the College Board has determined that enrolment will be withdrawn or terminated, the Principal will inform the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Director, Learning and Regional Services.

Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee

The Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee provides advice to the MACS 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 MACS Executive Director. The core membership of the Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee includes:

- the Chair, appointed by the MACS Executive Director
- one MACS 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 MACS Chief Planning and Infrastructure Officer.

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

Relevant Legislation Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)

The Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.) require a registered school to have a clearly defined enrolment policy that complies with all applicable state and Commonwealth laws. The Principal must be familiar with the relevant provisions of this legislation and, as appropriate, ensure application of this enrolment policy.

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)

This legislation prohibits discrimination by an educational authority against a person in deciding who should be admitted as a student, in the terms on which the authority admits a person as a student, or by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student. *However, an exception is provided for an educational authority that operates an educational institution wholly or mainly for students of a particular sex, religious belief, age or age group, such that it may exclude from that institution people who are not of the particular sex, religious belief, age or age group. All other discrimination in enrolment of students is prohibited.*

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Under this legislation, discrimination based on disability is unlawful. It applies to school authorities and their employees. The definition of disability is broad and includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, and neurological or learning disability, as well as physical disfigurement and the presence in the body of a disease-causing organism. Relevant for enrolments, it is unlawful for



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an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability, or a disability of any of the person's associates, by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student, or in the terms and conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student. However, it is not unlawful to refuse or fail to accept a person's application for admission as a student in an educational institution where the person, if admitted as a student by the educational authority, would require services or facilities that are not required by students who do not have a disability and the provision of which would impose unjustifiable hardship on the educational authority.

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

This legislation governs how schools must handle personal information collected as part of the enrolment procedure. The Our Lady of Sion College Privacy Policy is available on the school's website and in applicable forms and school documentation.

Related Policies

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) guidelines Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) policies

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