



# Our Lady of Perpetual Help - Ringwood

## *ENROLMENT POLICY*

### **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.

Our Lady's School exists to promote and educate in the Catholic faith and to foster Christian ideals. At Our Lady's School, participation in school life is seen as part of the experience of a Catholic community and this experience should be made available according to the placement criteria.

This policy and related documentation are accessible from the Our Lady's School website.

### **AIMS**

- To ensure a consistent and transparent approach to the school enrolment process, in line with the Catholic Education Office (Melbourne) Enrolment Policy 2.4 (revised in January 2009).
- To abide by the principles of inclusiveness; partnership between parents and school; exercise of pastoral discretion in enrolment decisions; and access to information about enrolment in a Catholic school; as per the CEM Enrolment Policy.
- To maintain and/or work towards the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment.

### **ENROLMENT PRIORITIES**

The following list provides an agreed order of priority for enrolment in Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese. 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). Siblings of children already enrolled in the school should be given a priority.
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.

\*For pastoral reasons, non baptised children may be accepted as candidates for enrolment.

### **APPLICATION FOR ENROLMENT**

The Application for Enrolment form should contain a statement which ensures that parents / guardians acknowledge that the school is a Catholic school in which:

- prayer and liturgy are vital aspects of religious life in the school;
- the pastoral care and support programs for students, families and staff are based on the teachings of the Catholic Church; and
- the teachings and values of the Catholic Church are paramount.

### **NOTES**

- For the benefit of your child, and so that the school can confidently meet a child's additional needs, parents are requested to share any relevant information on the Enrolment Form or at the Enrolment Interview.
- All students accepted for enrolment have the right to complete their education at our school. Acceptance by another Catholic school does not automatically follow from enrolment at this Catholic school.
- All parents requesting enrolment will be required to attend an interview with the School

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Principal, accompanied by their child. Parents may also be required to meet with the Parish Priest.

- The ability of parents to pay school fees will not be used as a criterion for non-acceptance of a child enrolling at Our Lady's School. Parents are requested to provide the school with any relevant financial information when seeking enrolment. This aligns with our Fees Policy.
- Upon successful enrolment, parents must undertake to support the ethos of Our Lady's School contained in the policies developed by the school and based upon those of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Catholic Education Melbourne.

### **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Schools should ensure that at the time of enrolment, parents understand their responsibilities in providing ongoing support for their child's Catholic education. In particular, parents/guardians should be asked to make an explicit commitment to the following responsibilities:

1. All parents/guardians enrolling their children in a Catholic school should complete the school's Application for Enrolment form and return it by the due date. This does not guarantee enrolment in the school.
  2. Parents/guardians must be prepared to support the school in the Catholic education of their children and involve themselves as much as possible.
  3. Parents/guardians must recognise and be prepared to meet their financial responsibilities for the ongoing enrolment of the child. (Any difficulties in this regard should be discussed with the Principal.)
  4. 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.
  5. Parents/guardians must supply the school with a Health Immunisation Certificate.
- Schools should 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. (Refer to CECV Policy 1.25 – School Fees.)

### **ENROLMENT PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES**

Communication within the parish, school and wider community regarding enrolment occurs regularly. Information regarding the process of Application for Enrolment is available on the school website, via the school and parish Newsletters, in the local newspaper at key times early in the year, at various local kindergartens and childcare centres, or an Enrolment Pack can be mailed to the person enquiring. Applications for Enrolment are only accepted in the year prior to the child commencing school. An *Enrolment and Transition Timeline* is provided for parents to clarify interviews, notification of acceptance or non acceptance, kinder visits and Transition visits.

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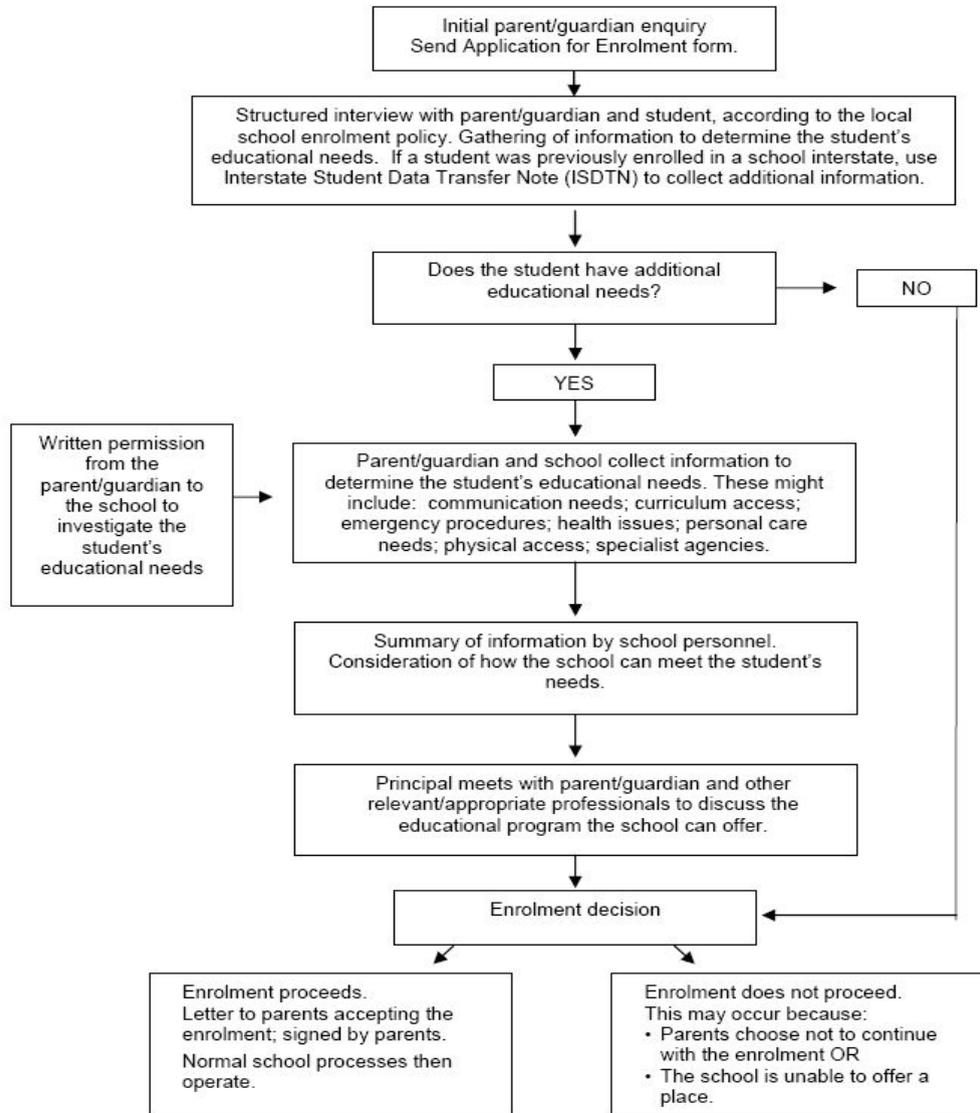
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CEOM Policy 2.4: Enrolment for Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

### Enrolment Processes and Procedures in Schools

#### 1. Recommended Enrolment Process

In the interests of consistency and transparency, it is recommended that schools follow the Archdiocese of Melbourne Recommended Enrolment Process presented in the following flowchart.



#### 2.1 Enrolment under minimum school entry age

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The minimum starting age for a child to be enrolled in a Victorian school is four years and eight months, i.e. a child must turn five by 30 April in the year of starting school.

The enrolment of students under the minimum starting age is not recommended.

In those situations where,

- i) a parent seeks enrolment of a child under the minimum starting age; and
  - ii) the Principal agrees to enrolling the child in the school if approval were granted,
- the approval of the Director of Catholic Education is required, before enrolment under the minimum starting age can occur.

**Appendix 6 (see Principal or CEOM website), *Application for Early Age Entry to School*** will need to be submitted to the Director by the Principal for approval to be sought. Supporting documentation from appropriate health or educational professionals detailing substantive reasons for early school entry must be attached to the application, as well as a letter from the parent(s) requesting an exemption from the policy.

It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to provide all appropriate documentation to the Principal for submission to the Director for consideration.

Approval for early age enrolment will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

#### **4 Enrolment of children with additional learning needs**

Catholic schools are expected to welcome parents who wish to enrol a child with additional learning needs and do everything possible to accommodate the child's needs. The process for enrolling students with special needs should be the same as that for enrolling any student, and should conform to the Recommended Enrolment Process (refer to flowchart).

Primary and secondary schools should collaborate to ensure coordination and consistency of policy and processes. Schools are required to comply with the relevant Australian and Victorian Government legislation when considering the enrolment of a child with additional learning needs in a Catholic school.

#### **5 Enrolment of students from interstate**

When enrolling students whose previous school was interstate, all schools must use the protocols of the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note (ISDTN). This is a mandatory requirement of the Australian Government. It is the responsibility of the enrolling school to initiate and manage this process, and be sensitive to parent/student consent requirements for the provision of information. All relevant documents and information are available at the MCEETYA website <[www.mceetya.edu.au/transfernote](http://www.mceetya.edu.au/transfernote)>.

#### **6 Relevant legislation to be considered when enrolling students in Catholic schools**

##### ***The Victorian Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007.***

The regulations impose a requirement on a registered school to have a clearly defined enrolment policy that complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws. Referred therein is the main legislation affecting school enrolments. Each school must be familiar with the relevant provisions of this legislation and, if appropriate, prepare policies for administration and enforcement of relevant procedures.

##### ***Equal Opportunity Act 1996 (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 administration as a student.

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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 (Cwlth).***

Under this federal 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, neurological or learning disability, psychical disfigurement, and the presence in the body of a disease-causing organism. Relevant for enrolments, it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability, or a disability of any of the other 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 Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 (Cwlth).***

This legislation governs how schools must handle personal information collected as part of the enrolment process. Schools will have adopted a Privacy Policy to reflect their acts and practice in management of personal information in compliance with the legislation. Schools should also determine what is the necessary information for collection, provide information about collection and, where necessary, obtain consents to the collection, use and disclosure of that information. For these purposes, schools should include in enrolment forms an information collection notice, which should also be contained in the school's Privacy Policy and where applicable should be located on the school's website.

***CEOM January 2009 (Revised)***

### **Appendix 3 ~ Procedures to assist schools to achieve a high level of Catholic enrolment**

Catholic schools are expected to maintain and/or work towards the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. Many schools already have a very high level of Catholic enrolment and those schools should ensure that they continue with appropriate strategies to maintain that level and increase it if possible. These schools will have a Catholic and non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolment of 90% or more of their total enrolment based on a rolling average of enrolment data from the last 3 years. Many schools have a level of Catholic and non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolment which is less than 90% and they are asked to work strenuously towards increasing that percentage. The base percentage of Catholic and non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolment will be a rolling average of the last 3 years' enrolment data. If a school has a percentage of less than 90% it must attempt to increase its percentage by establishing a realistic target. In discussion with Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM), through the School Improvement Framework process, schools that do not achieve their enrolment targets will be asked to demonstrate the efforts they have made, set a new target and establish strategies to achieve this target.

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Schools that believe it will be impossible to achieve a higher level of Catholic and non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolment are asked to provide information in relation to this to the Director of Catholic Education, who will refer it to the Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee for advice before responding to the particular school community.

Reporting by schools on their Catholic/non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolment numbers and strategies to increase this percentage will form part of the Annual Census Collection process. The CEM will monitor these data annually.

***CEOM January 2009 (Reviewed)***

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