

**Reviewed: September 2020**

**Future Review: 2023**

## **ST. MARY’S ENROLMENT POLICY**

 *“…Catholic schools are still central to the mission and work of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat today and to the life quality of students and their families. Inspired and governed by the message and person of Jesus Christ, and committed to the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of each person, they provide education of the highest quality to their communities. In line with the self-understanding of the Church, they are welcoming to all who share their educational philosophy. Through their distinctive educational style, Catholic schools make an irreplaceable contribution to the intellectual, ethical and spiritual wellbeing of their own community and of Australian society.”*

*(Awakenings Core Document 2005,p16)*

.

**RATIONALE**

**To provide a just and equitable system for the acceptance of students into St. Mary’s School.**

St Mary’s School aims to:

* Develop a sense of community and provide an environment where gospel values can be seen in action
* Assist families in the Parish with the faith education of their children
* Foster a sense of belonging to the Parish and the extended Church into school
* Provide a comprehensive education within the Catholic context that develops the whole child
* Provide a faith engendered environment which is accessible to all Catholic children in the Parish

**POLICY STATEMENT**

St Mary’s embraces the mission of the Church by welcoming the enrolment of all students and families who share their vision and educational philosophy.

**1.0** St Mary’s strive to be authentically Catholic and faithful to the mission of the Catholic Church.

**2.0** St Mary's School is open to all who are willing to commit to support the philosophy, values and aims of Catholic schooling. While there is an invitation to all, the practicalities of being able to accommodate enrolments beyond current physical facilities may be limited by the available resources.

* As a Catholic school, St Mary’s has a particular responsibility to provide access to children baptised in the Catholic faith.
* As a catholic school, St Mary’s has a responsibility for being inclusive and therefore welcome, accept and support those most in need.
* Catholic schools seek actively to engage families and carers as partners in their child’s education process and the life of the school in an atmosphere of co-responsibility and co-accountability.
* In diocesan locations where multiple Catholic schools co-exist, there will be ongoing dialogue and co-consideration of enrolment processes.

.

**DEFINITIONS**

“Catholic Families” are defined as families in which at least one parent is a Catholic or in which the child being enrolled has been baptised

**PRINCIPLES**

# Enrolment Selection Criteria

**1.1 Starting School: Prep**

By law, children must have turned five by 30 April of their first year of school.

Enrolments will be allocated in the following order of priority:

* Siblings of children already enrolled in the school
* Baptised Catholic children who are resident in the parish.
* Baptised children of Catholic families from parishes that do not have a Catholic school.
* Baptised children of Catholic families from other parishes
* Children not baptised from families in the parish with one parent a baptised Catholic
* Children from another Christian tradition where adult baptism is active in that tradition
* Children baptised in another Christian tradition who reside in the parish
* Children from a faith background other than Christian or other pastoral considerations.

**1.2 Other Year Levels**

Catholic students who wish to transfer from another Catholic or government school will be considered as a priority according to the criteria for Prep enrolments and schools may take into account any additional circumstances. If it is not possible to offer a place, the school will assist in providing information regarding enrolment in nearby Catholic schools.

Baptised students of Christian families or of other faiths who wish to transfer from another Catholic or government school will be considered according to the criteria for Prep enrolments and schools may take into account additional circumstances. The enrolment will depend on a place being available at the school and does not result in the exclusion of a Catholic student. If it is not possible to offer a place, the school will assist in providing information regarding enrolment in nearby Catholic schools.

It is expected that parents/guardians provide the school with all relevant information on a transferring student. The school may request to make contact with the student’s current school.

**Enrolment of Students under the Minimum School Entry Age**

The minimum starting age for a child to be enrolled in a Victorian school is four years and eight months as 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 the rare situation where a parent/guardian seeks enrolment of a child under the minimum starting age the school will make an assessment of the child’s readiness for school. In the event that a child satisfies the readiness assessment and the school principal supports the enrolment, final approval needs to be obtained from the Director of Catholic Education before the enrolment can proceed.

Application for Director’s approval needs to be completed on the “Application for Early Age Entry to School” proforma (Appendix 3).

Supporting documentation from appropriate health or education professionals detailing substantive reasons for early school entry must be attached to the application, as well as a letter from the parent(s)/guardian(s) requesting an exemption from the policy.

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

**1.4 Out of Home Care, School enrolment responsibilities (outside normal enrolment timelines) in accordance with Out of Home Care Education Commitment Partnering Agreement, 2018**

If Child Protection or Department of Health and Human Services is involved St Mary’s will :

* (If a place is available), Enrol a student without delay – any delay of more than one day must be endorsed by the Director of Catholic Education
* Ensure that accurate information regarding out-of-home care status is recorded in the school’s student information record-keeping mechanism
* Liaise with the student’s previous school or early childhood education service to ensure the transfer of relevant information including the Individual Education Plan
* If necessary, establish a Student Support Group in the first week of the student’s enrolment
* Support the student to stay at the school or maintain a connection with their school if a change must occur
* When a student leaves the school, provide appropriate information to the new school regarding the student’s learning and support needs to ensure a smooth transition

**1.5 Enrolment of Students with Additional Learning Needs**

St Mary’s welcome parents who wish to enrol a student with additional learning needs and do everything possible to accommodate the student’s needs. The process for enrolling students with additional needs is the same as that for enrolling any student, in addition to liaising with the Learning Diversity Leader and if necessary the CEOB as part of the enrolment process. **During the process of enrolment the particular learning needs of the student will be discussed. Parents have the responsibility to disclose factors that impact on the child’s learning needs.**

**1.6 Enrolment of Students from Interstate**

When enrolling students whose previous school was interstate, St Mary’s uses the protocols of the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note (ISDTN). and understands 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.

**CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS**

* No Catholic child will be denied the right to be enrolled at St. Mary’s School, owing to the parent’s genuine inability to pay full fees.
* The enrolment of Non-Catholic children must not exclude any Catholic child from enrolling at St Mary’s School, in accordance with CECV policy.
* The enrolment of non-Catholic children will depend on the school’s ability to accommodate students and class sizes.
* Non-Catholic parents will be asked to undertake that the nature, life and identity of St Mary’s School will be respected and that their child will participate in class RE activities as well as liturgical celebrations.

**The Parish Priest has the right to vary these criteria for pastoral reasons that are confidential to the Parish Priest and the Principal.**

# Relevant Legislation

* Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992
* Disability Standards for Education 2005
* Privacy Act 1988 and the Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017
* Commission for Children and Young People Act (Vic) 2012
* Children Youth and Families Act (Vic) 2005
* Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) 1996
* Health Records Act (Vic) 2001

# Key Related Documents

* St Mary’s Fees and Levies Policy
* Family Fee Assistance
* Privacy Policy
* Out of Home Care Education Commitment (Partnering Agreement) 201