



Enrolment Policy

RATIONALE

"...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)

Parents or guardians enquiring about enrolment will be provided with a clear statement about the identity and self-understanding of the school, along with the factors and procedures pertaining to enrolment.

POLICY STATEMENT

Catholic children living in the community of St. Thomas' Parish will normally have the right to a place in St Thomas' School, providing there is a place available. St Thomas' School is welcoming to those families who may not be Catholic but who share the understanding of the Catholic school described above.

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 Catholic.

PRINCIPLES

- The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat upholds the principle that all Catholic students wishing to enrol in a Catholic school will have an enrolment place.
- The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) encourages all Catholic parents to seek a place in a Catholic school for their children.
- Students other than Catholics will be considered for enrolment provided this does not result in the exclusion of Catholic students. All parents will be required to give an understanding that they will respect the life, nature and identity of the school. Once enrolled these students will have the right to complete their Primary education at the school.
- The principal will consult with the Canonical Administrator on all matters pertaining to enrolment.
- Current state and federal legislation states that the intellectual and physical capacity of the child is not a criterion of entry to the school (Appendix 1)
- By law, children must have turned five by the 30th April of their first year of school.
- While it is important that parents appreciate their responsibility to pay such fees and levies as are determined by St Thomas' School Advisory Council it must be pointed out that no child will be excluded from the school or school activities, because of non-payment of such fees and levies.

PROCEDURES

- St. Thomas' School will provide Catholic education that is in accordance with diocesan, state and commonwealth educational policies and standards.
- All students will be expected to participate fully in **all** aspects of school life.
- Enrolments will be allocated in the following order of priority:
 - Children of Catholic families who are residents of the parish.
 - Children of Catholic families who do not reside in the parish but are recognised as parishioners by the parish priest.
 - Children of Catholic families from other parishes (for pastoral reasons)
 - Children of other Christian families who reside in the parish.
 - Children of other Christian families who reside outside the parish.
 - Children of other families who reside in the parish.
 - Children of other families who reside outside the parish.

NB. Siblings of children already enrolled in the school may be given priority.

- Catholic students who wish to transfer from a Government school will be given the same opportunities and follow the same guidelines as those enrolling for the first time. (Appendix 2)
- Parents and the child/children they wish to enrol at St Thomas' School will be interviewed by the Principal on behalf of the Canonical Administrator.
- Students enrolling in Catholic schools are enrolled under the proviso that all students participate in the religious activities of Catholic schools.
- 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.
- The school will provide parents with a fees policy and procedures at the time of the enrolment enquiry.
- All prospective students will be required to present documentation stating that they have received required immunisation, this document must be from the Australian Immunisation Register, or have necessary documentation stating why they have not participated in the program.
- All information gathered will be maintained according to the Privacy Act 2000.
- A *Register of Enrolments* containing all necessary information will be maintained at the school.
- Any concerns about the implementation of the enrolment policy at St Thomas' School may be referred to the Catholic Education Office for advice.

N.B: Each Catholic school is responsible for its own enrolment policy and procedures. Enrolment at a Catholic primary school does not guarantee enrolment at a Catholic secondary school.

REFERENCES

School Vision and Mission Statements
Ballarat Diocesan Enrolment Guidelines
Relevant State and Commonwealth Legislation (Appendix 1)

APPENDIX 1

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 to 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 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 administration 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 (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, physical 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.

Enrolment of students 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 additional learning needs should be the same as that for enrolling any student, and should conform to the Enrolment Process. 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.

Disability Standards for Education (2005)

http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1103&Itemid=555

APPENDIX 2

School Enrolment Procedures in the Diocese of Ballarat

To ensure consistency and transparency in the enrolment of students in the schools of the Diocese of Ballarat, it is suggested that the following procedures for enrolment are implemented by all schools.

