

Policy 2.4

Enrolment for Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

PURPOSE

This policy, and accompanying procedures, provides a set of protocols to guide schools to maintain the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. The policy also outlines the roles of Catholic Education Melbourne and schools in working together to achieve this goal.

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.

The Australian bishops established Catholic schools in the 1860s as a key instrument of catechesis and sacramental preparation for Catholic children. Catholic schools continue to offer a broad, comprehensive curriculum imbued with an authentic Catholic understanding of Christ and his teaching, as well as a lived appreciation of membership of the Catholic Church.

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 in a Catholic school must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne are primarily for Catholic children, so should strive for the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. Catholic Education Melbourne and schools are expected to work together to achieve this goal.

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 policies, and complies with all relevant legislation. To achieve this objective, schools are required to cooperate and collaborate to ensure fair and equitable access to Catholic schools 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 understanding about theology and sacraments.

Policy 2.4 adheres to the [minimum standards](#) required by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

PRINCIPLES

Inclusiveness

Catholic schools are established primarily for Catholic children. Each school should 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. Schools should extend particular assistance to children who are poor, disadvantaged or considered most at risk.

It is important for schools to develop strategies to raise the percentage of Catholic children attending Catholic schools. Then, if appropriate, Catholic schools should welcome the enrolment of children of other Christian traditions and faiths; however, priority will be given to children from non-Catholic Eastern churches.

Partnership between parents and school

Parents are the first educators of their children. By enrolling their child in a Catholic school, parents enter into a partnership with the school to promote and support their child's education, in particular their education in faith. While the school promotes access to a Catholic education through each school's enrolment policy, it is the parents' 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 in a Catholic school. While the first priority of parish priests and principals of Catholic schools is to enrol the children of Catholic parents, pastoral discretion may be exercised in enrolment decisions where deemed appropriate.

Access to information about enrolment in a Catholic school

All schools registered in Victoria are required to have a clearly defined enrolment policy and to ensure that the enrolment policy, enrolment criteria and enrolment processes are publicly available and easily accessible to current and prospective parents.

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 Catholic Baptism.

Catholic school

A Catholic school is one which operates with the consent of the diocesan bishop, where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and where the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

Catchment area for schools

For the purpose of enrolment, the school catchment is the parish or group of parishes, as defined by Catholic Education Melbourne, from which the school draws the majority of its enrolments and to which the school gives priority of enrolment. For the majority of primary schools, this will be the parish to which the school belongs. In parishes with more than one primary school, the catchment for each school is determined by the parish in consultation with Catholic Education Melbourne. For secondary schools, it will be those parishes designated as 'priority parishes' by Catholic Education Melbourne.

Parish

For the purpose of enrolment, the parish is the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries.

APPLICATION PROCESS

There is an enrolment application process at the school level. Please contact your school of interest for further information.

PROCEDURES

1. Local school enrolment policy development

Each school community develops its own school enrolment policy which is consistent with Catholic Education Melbourne's Enrolment Policy 2.4 (including the procedures in [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#)) and compliant with the law. Parents seeking to enrol their child in a Catholic school should review the local school policy to understand the enrolment process and their obligations if the application to enrol their child is successful.

2. Information to be collected

Parents are required to provide particular information about their child during the enrolment process, both at the application stage and if the school offers the child a place. Please note that lodgement of the Enrolment Form does not guarantee enrolment at the school. The information collected is required for the school to meet its duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements. Refer to the [Enrolment Form and Explanatory Statement](#) on the CEVN website <https://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au> under *Compliance / Enrolment Procedures* for more information.

3. Achieving a high 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. Refer to [Appendix 3](#) for information.

4. Enrolment processes and procedures

For parents seeking enrolment of a child who is below the minimum school age entry, information on the process is available at [Appendix 4](#) and an application form is available at [Appendix 6](#).

Advice on further school enrolment processes and procedures is also available in [Appendix 4](#). This information includes:

- recommended enrolment process flow chart
- enrolment of children under the minimum school entry age and pre-Prep programs
- Year 7 enrolment
- enrolment of children with additional learning needs
- enrolment of students from interstate
- relevant legislation to be considered when enrolling students in Catholic schools.

5. Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee

The Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee advises the Executive Director of Catholic Education Melbourne on matters concerning enrolments, enrolment practice of schools, Year 7 ceiling levels and priority parish arrangements. Refer to [Appendix 5](#) for further information and membership of the Committee.

EXTERNAL REFERENCES

[VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration – January 2019](#)

Responsible Director	Megan Ioannou
Policy owner	Planning Unit
Approving body/individual	Col Mackin
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POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Related documents	Appendix 1: Enrolment Policy Development – Procedures for Primary Schools Appendix 2: Enrolment Policy Development – Procedures for Secondary Schools Appendix 3: Procedures to Assist Schools to Achieve a High Level of Catholic Enrolment Appendix 4: Enrolment Processes and Procedures in Schools Appendix 5: Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee Appendix 6: Application for Early Age Entry to School Enrolment Form and Explanatory Statement Enrolling your Child in a Catholic Secondary School Secondary Schools Protocols for Implementing the Enrolment Policy in the Archdiocese of Melbourne