



Enrolment Policy

Reviewed: August 2019

Ratified: Ratified 2019

Next Review: 2022

Rationale

The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) Enrolment Policy has been developed to provide Catholic schools and colleges in the Ballarat Diocese with clear and consistent guidelines that will inform school enrolments.

Background

All Catholic primary and secondary schools are central to the mission and work of the Diocese of Ballarat 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 well-being of their own community and of Australian society (Awakenings, 1998).

Each Catholic school in the Ballarat Diocese “participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. In this way Catholic schools are at once places of evangelisation, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in the lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds. The ecclesial nature of the Catholic school, therefore, is written in the very heart of its identity as a teaching institution” (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997, n.19).

Definition of Governing Authority

Where the term, Governing Authority is used in this policy it refers to the proprietor of the school and/or the person delegated to supervise the Principal.

For DOBCEL schools, this is the Director of Catholic Education as Chief Executive Officer of DOBCEL

Policy

Ballarat diocesan schools embrace the mission of the Church by welcoming the enrolment of all students and families who share their vision and educational philosophy.

- 1.0** Catholic schools, established, maintained and governed by the Ballarat Diocese, or in partnership with Religious Institutes and/or ministerial public juridic persons, strive to be authentically Catholic and faithful to the mission of the Catholic Church.
- 2.0** A Catholic 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 available resources.
 - A Catholic school has a particular responsibility to provide access to children baptised in the Catholic faith.
 - Catholic schools have 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.

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 Catholic children who do not reside in the parish but are recognised as parishioners by the Parish Priest
- Baptised children of Catholic families from parishes that do not have a Catholic school.
- Baptised children of Catholic families from other parishes (for pastoral reasons).
- 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 baptised in another Christian tradition who reside outside the parish
- Children from a faith background other than Christian or other pastoral considerations.
- At the discretion of the Principal

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.

1.3 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 schools are expected to:

- (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
- 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
- The Catholic Education Office Ballarat will:
 - Facilitate the timely and effective enrolment of each student in out-of-home care by providing advice and support to schools
 - Work with schools, Child Protection and Department of Health and Human Services to resolve any enrolment difficulties in a timely manner.

1.5 Enrolment of Students with Additional Learning Needs

Catholic schools are expected to 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 should be the same as that for enrolling any student, and should conform to the Enrolment Process in addition to liaising with the Learning Diversity Leader at CEOB as part of the enrolment process. Primary and secondary schools are expected to collaborate to ensure coordination and consistency of policy and processes when students are in transition. Schools are required to comply with the relevant Australian and Victorian Government legislation Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 when considering the enrolment of a student with additional learning needs in a Catholic school.

1.6 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.

Relevant Legislation

- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Privacy Act 1988 and 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

- DOBCEL Fees and Levies Policy
- Family Fee Assistance
- Privacy Policy
- Out of Home Care Education Commitment (Partnering Agreement) 2018