Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

# Enrolment Policy

MACS schools

## 1. Introduction

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) is a company limited by guarantee, established in 2021 by the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne to assume responsibility for the governance and operation of MACS schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. MACS subsequently established Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS) to deliver educational services to children with diverse needs, and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Early Years Education (MACSEYE) to provide early years care and education services.

The Statement of Mission set out in the MACS Constitution, and in the constitutions of its subsidiaries, MACSS and MACSEYE, articulates the Archbishop's expectations of Catholic education within the Archdiocese. It provides an essential context and foundation for the organisation, and for the direction that the MACS Board must observe in pursuing the company's objects.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that all policies and procedures relating to the operations of MACS and its subsidiaries are consistent with the Statement of Mission, the company's objects, and any directions issued by the Archbishop from time to time.

## 2. Background

This policy and all enrolment procedures align with MACS' commitment to child safety and wellbeing. They adhere to the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the MACS Child Safety and Wellbeing Framework, and all relevant legal and regulatory requirements. Enrolment practices are transparent, just and designed to uphold the dignity, safety and best interests of every child.

Enrolment practices are guided by the Enrolment Application Procedures, which set out the admission requirements for schools. Any local documentation supporting enrolment must be publicly available, and enrolment places must be offered within acceptable timeframes.

## 3. Purpose

To support the Catholic identity and evangelising mission of MACS and to meet the requirements of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), this policy establishes a consistent, transparent and fair system-wide approach to enrolment across all MACS schools. It sets out the principles, requirements and processes that govern admissions and enrolment, including application procedures, enrolment agreements, codes of conduct and enrolment priorities. Together with supporting procedures and guidance documents, it promotes consistent enrolment decision-making and practice across all MACS schools.

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to the enrolment of domestic students in MACS schools, including specialist schools operated by the MACS subsidiary, MACSS, and school boarding premises operated by MACS schools.

International students and their families should refer to the Dependant and Temporary Full-Fee Paying Overseas Student (FFPOS) Procedure.

## 5. Principles

- Parents and carers are recognised as the first educators of their children. By enrolling their child in a MACS school, parents and carers enter a partnership with the school and parish(es) to promote and support their child's Catholic education.

- Enrolment practices reflect and uphold MACS' mission and vision. Families seeking enrolment are expected to understand and support a Catholic educational environment.
- Schools acknowledge the broader mission of the Church by welcoming all families who seek a Catholic education. Where a school is at capacity, priority will be given to baptised children of Catholic families living within a priority parish catchment area over children who reside outside the priority parish catchment area.
- Schools uphold just, transparent and consistent enrolment processes that support access for all families. In keeping with Catholic Social Teaching, enrolment practices are attentive to the needs of families who may be experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability, while ensuring that all applicants are considered through the same clear and objective criteria.
- Enrolment processes apply the Catholic principle of stewardship, prioritising the responsible use of school and system resources, and contributing to strong, connected school communities.

# 6. Enrolment policy, procedures and processes

All MACS schools must use this policy and its accompanying procedures. The principal is responsible for accepting and managing enrolments in accordance with the applicable timelines.

This policy is to be publicly available to current and prospective parents and carers. The enrolment process is set out in Appendix 1 of the *Enrolment Application Procedures*.

## Enrolment Application Form

Parents and carers must complete the approved *Enrolment Application Form* to apply for enrolment at a MACS school. Submission of the form does not guarantee a place. When applying for enrolment at a MACS secondary college, parents and carers may nominate up to two preferred schools.

## Enrolment Agreement

When an offer of enrolment is made, parents and carers must complete and sign the *Enrolment Agreement.* By signing, they formally accept the offer of enrolment at the school.

The *Enrolment Agreement* is available on individual school websites. It covers:

- educational services provided
- Codes of Conduct for Students and for Parents and Carers
- fees and charges
- enrolment requirements
- grounds for termination of enrolment.

As a condition of enrolment, parents and carers agree to comply with all relevant MACS policies and procedures, including meeting their financial obligations for their child's ongoing enrolment. Where school fees and charges remain unpaid, MACS has procedures in place to recover the debt.

## Codes of Conduct

As a condition of enrolment, parents and carers must read, sign and comply with the *Code of Conduct – Parents and Carers.*

Both the *Code of Conduct – Parents and Carers* and the *Code of Conduct – Students* are available on the MACS website (macs.vic.edu.au) and individual school websites. The codes are also available in selected community languages on request.

Where a parent or carer breaches the Code of Conduct, the principal may take any steps lawfully available to address the behaviour, including terminating the student's enrolment.

# 7. Parent and carer responsibilities

Parents and carers enrolling a child in a MACS school must:

7.1 Complete the *Enrolment Application Form* and *Enrolment Agreement* and return them to the school by the due date.

7.2 Provide accurate and complete information about the child during the enrolment process and throughout the period of enrolment. This includes disclosing information on diagnoses, medical conditions and health needs.

7.3 Support the school in the Catholic education of their child and engage with the school community as much as possible.

7.4 Adhere to the expected standards of behaviour set out in the school's *Code of Conduct – Parents and Carers*.

7.5 Meet the financial responsibilities arising from the child's enrolment. Any difficulties in meeting this commitment should be discussed with the principal or nominated staff member.

7.6 Advise the principal of any court order or parenting arrangement that may affect the child, provide a copy for the school file, and notify the school promptly of any subsequent changes.

7.7 Provide a current immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register.

7.8 Provide information on any additional learning needs, including any requirements for support with personalised care, mobility, language, social skills, welfare, behaviour or curriculum adjustments.

7.9 Provide evidence of visa status from the Department of Home Affairs as soon as notified, where applicable.

7.10 Work with the principal and school staff to support their child's attendance, in accordance with the *Attendance Policy for MACS Schools*.

7.11 Respect the principal's authority to make decisions in relation to this policy.

# 8. Collection of information at the time of enrolment

Parents and carers applying to enrol a child at a MACS school will be asked to provide personal information about the child, parents and carers. This information allows the school to meet its duty of care obligations, support the child's learning and wellbeing, and satisfy government reporting requirements.

Parents and carers must ensure that all information provided during the enrolment process is accurate and complete.

This includes providing a completed *Enrolment Application Form* with the following information:

8.1 evidence of the child's date of birth (for example, birth certificate or passport)

8.2 religious denomination, including a Certificate of Baptism where applicable

8.3 previous school records and reports, where applicable

8.4 full names and contact details for the child, parents and carers, including home, work and mobile telephone numbers and email addresses

8.5 names and contact details of emergency contacts (other than parents and carers)

8.6 residence arrangements

8.7 languages spoken or heard at home

8.8 nationality and/or citizenship, including visa subclass where applicable

8.9 doctor's name and contact number

8.10 up-to-date diagnoses, medical conditions, health needs and immunisation history, including up-to-date medical/health information, where relevant

8.11 information on any additional learning needs, including any requirements for support with personalised care, mobility, language, social skills, welfare, behaviour or curriculum adjustments

8.12 current parenting agreements or court orders, including any child protection or family violence intervention orders

8.13 confirmation of whether the student identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, for census reporting purposes.

After lodgement of the *Enrolment Application Form*, school staff may request additional information.

Parents and carers will receive a copy of the *Privacy Policy* and *Privacy Collection Notice – Students and Parents* at the time of enrolment. These documents explain how personal information is collected, used and disclosed.

# 9. Enrolment variations

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) allows exemptions from enrolment requirements in certain circumstances, determined on a case-by-case basis.

In some circumstances, parents and carers may seek to vary their child's enrolment or year level. Any such variation requires approval from the MACS Enrolment Variation Committee, chaired by the Director, Education Excellence.

The **Enrolment Variation Procedures** cover the following variations:

- Minimum age exemption for early entry to school
- Maximum age exemption for continued enrolment at school
- Year level acceleration
- Year level retention.

Refer to the *Enrolment Variation Procedures* for eligibility criteria, required documentation and application processes.

# 10. Discontinuation of enrolment

## Withdrawal of enrolment

A parent may withdraw their child's enrolment at any time by notifying the school in writing. The following notice periods apply:

- If the student is to leave at the end of a term, notice must be given before the first day of that term.
- If the student is to leave during a term, notice must be given before the first day of the preceding term.

## Early leavers

Students are required by law to remain enrolled in schooling until the age of 17, unless an exemption has been granted. Under *Ministerial Order 705: Exemption from school attendance and*

*enrolment*, *Ministerial Order 714: Exemption to allow employment in the entertainment industry*, or *Ministerial Order 715: Exemption from school attendance and enrolment*, a student who has not completed Year 12 may be granted an exemption in exceptional circumstances where one or more of the following applies:

- the student has completed Year 10, or has not completed Year 10 but will participate in approved education, training, employment, or a combination of these, on a full-time basis
- the student is employed or seeking employment during school hours in the entertainment industry
- it is in the student's best interests to leave school.

Depending on the applicable exemption category, exemptions are granted by the MACS Director, Education Excellence, the relevant Victorian Department of Education Regional Director, or the school principal. Applications must be submitted using the appropriate Department of Education form. For further information and to access the relevant forms, refer to the Department of Education (DE) guidance: *Exemption from School Attendance and Enrolment*.

Where a student seeks to leave school early under these provisions, the principal must notify MACS by emailing pathways@macs.vic.edu.au and provide a copy of the relevant application form and any supporting documentation.

### Termination of enrolment

The school may terminate a student's enrolment where the relationship between the parent and the school has broken down irretrievably due to a breach of the:

- Code of Conduct – Parents and Carers
- Code of Conduct – Students
- any other requirement of the Enrolment Agreement or associated procedures.

For further information, refer to the *Enrolment Application Procedures* and the *Student Behaviour Support Policy*.

## 11. Complaints regarding enrolment

Principals must maintain a fair, effective and efficient process for handling complaints, including those related to enrolment decisions.

Parents and carers who wish to discuss an enrolment decision or raise a concern may do so in writing or by contacting the school to arrange an appointment with the principal.

If the matter cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint is about the principal, parents and carers may contact their relevant MACS Regional Office or lodge a complaint through the MACS website.

For further information, refer to the *Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools* at macs.vic.edu.au.

## 12. Review and monitoring

MACS ensures policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to maintain relevance and compliance. This policy is reviewed every four years.

## 13. Roles and reporting responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility | Reporting requirement |
|---|---|---|
| MACS Board | Define the catchment area for each MACS school | |
| Director, Education Excellence | Approval for exemption for enrolment under the minimum and maximum school entry age | Written approval required.<br>Subject to student meeting criteria outlined in *Enrolment Variation Procedures* |
| Director, Education Excellence | Approval for exemption for student retention | Written approval required.<br>Subject to student meeting criteria outlined in the *Enrolment Variation Procedures* |
| Local Enrolment Committee (or Principal where Local Enrolment Committee is not established) | Endorse enrolment decisions made at the school | |
| Principal | Accept and manage all enrolments | Report enrolment data to Executive Director through the February and August censuses |
| Principal | Publish enrolment policies, procedures, agreement, forms, and School Community Safety Order internal review process on school website | Annual attestation to the Executive Director |
| Principal | Ensure compliance with MACS enrolment policy | Annual attestation to the Executive Director with any breaches identified |
| Principal | Adopt strategies to increase enrolment numbers | Through annual census data collection process |

## 14. Procedures

The *Enrolment Application Procedures for MACS Schools* outline how this policy must be implemented and provides instructions for enrolling a domestic student in a MACS primary, secondary, combined or specialist school.

The *Enrolment Variation Procedures for MACS Schools* outline the criteria, evidence requirements and decision-making processes for considering and approving variations to student enrolments in MACS schools.

The *Dual Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools* outline the circumstances and processes for enrolling a student at a MACS school while they are also participating in another recognised form of education.

See ‘Related policies and documents’ section for supporting documents and relevant forms to support the enrolment of students in MACS schools.

## 15. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this policy are available in the Glossary of Terms.

**Enrolment Agreement**

The Enrolment Agreement is a formal agreement between a parent and MACS that sets out the terms and conditions of enrolment, including how the school and family will work together. Schools

must have an Enrolment Agreement in place with parents, and it must be publicly available and easily accessible to current and prospective families.

**Enrolment Application Form**

The Enrolment Application Form sets out the information that each school principal must collect to enable MACS to meet its duty of care obligations and to ensure it holds the relevant information about each student, including any need for reasonable adjustments.

**Priority parish (parish catchment)**

A priority parish is a parish within the catchment area of a school. Children who reside within a priority parish catchment area receive priority consideration for enrolment over children who reside outside that area.

**Parish and parish boundaries**

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne is divided into parishes, each led by a parish priest who is appointed by and accountable to the Archbishop. Most Catholic parishes in Melbourne are defined by geographical boundaries, with a family's principal place of residence used to determine parish residency.

# 16. Related policies and documents

## Supporting documents

Enrolment Application Procedures for MACS Schools
- Appendix 1: Enrolment Process for MACS Schools
- Appendix 2: Enrolment Process for FFPOS Students

Enrolment Agreement for MACS Schools
Enrolment Application Form
Schools Family Occupation Index – Parent/Guardian/Carer Occupation Groups Form
Enrolment Variation Procedures for MACS Schools
Student Maximum Age Exemption Application Form
Student Minimum Age Exemption Application Form
Student Year Level Acceleration Application Form
Student Year Level Retention Application Form
Code of Conduct – Parents and Carers
Code of Conduct – Students
Dual Enrolment Procedures for MACS schools

## Related MACS policies and documents

Attendance Policy for MACS Schools
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools
Concessional Fee Procedures (Primary schools only)
Consent to Transfer Information Form
Consent to Share Information with Third Parties Form
Debt Recovery and Management Procedures
Duty of Care Policy for MACS Schools
Photography and Recording Permission Form
Privacy Policy
Privacy Collection Notice – Students and Parents
Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures
Student Behaviour Support Policy for MACS Schools
Student Health Support Policy

## Resources

Australian Government - Interstate Data Transfer Note for non- government schools

# 17. Legislation and standards

*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Cth)
*Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
*Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth)
*Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
*Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic)
*Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000* (Cth)
*Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
*Health Records Act 2001* (Vic)
Ministerial Order 706 – *Anaphylaxis Management in Victorian Schools*
Ministerial Order 1359 – *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*
*Ministerial Order 705 – Exemption from School Attendance and Enrolment*
*Ministerial Order 714 – Exemption to allow for employment in the entertainment industry*
*Ministerial Order 715 – Exemption if leaving school is in the best interests of the child*
*Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
*Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth)
*Australian Education Regulations 2013* (Cth)
*Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
*Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
*Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration*

# 18. Policy Information

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|---|---|
| **Responsible executive** | Director Education Excellence |
| **Policy owner** | Chief of Regional Operations |
| **Approving authority** | MACS Board |
| **Assigned board committee** | Education Strategy and Policy |
| **Approval date** | 14 September 2026 |
| **Risk rating** | Extreme |
| **Review by** | September 2030 |
| **Publication** | MACS website, CEVN, Gabriel, school website |

| **POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION** | |
|---|---|
| **Assigned framework** | Enrolment |
| **Supporting documents** | Enrolment Application Procedures<br>Enrolment Variation Procedures<br>Dual Enrolment Procedures<br>Concessional Fees Procedures<br>Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools<br>Recordkeeping Policy for MACS Schools<br>School Community Safety Order Scheme – Internal Review Process School<br>Suspension Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Procedures |
| **Superseded documents** | Enrolment Agreement – Template for primary schools<br>Enrolment Agreement – Template for secondary schools<br>Enrolment Application Form – Template for primary schools<br>Enrolment Application Form – Template for secondary schools<br>Enrolment Policy – Template for primary schools<br>Enrolment Policy – Template for secondary schools<br>Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools<br>Enrolment Variations Guidelines<br>Student Acceleration and Retention Policy<br>Student Acceleration and Retention Policy for MACS Schools |