



ENROLMENT POLICY

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ ” Matthew 19:14

Introduction

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 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 at Our Lady of Sion College must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

This policy is aligned with the Enrolment Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Melbourne as they apply to Catholic secondary schools and is also designed to be compatible with the ideals and practices of the Congregation of the Sisters of our Lady of Sion. The Charism of the Sisters is to keep alive in the Church and the world, the awareness of the Jewish heritage of Christianity and the important place of interfaith dialogue in our world. The College Mission calls us to be people who build bridges with others and remain open to change, therefore, this Enrolment Policy respects people of other faiths and cultures, and minority groups.

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 admission policies and complies with all relevant legislation. To achieve this objective, Our Lady of Sion College co-operates and collaborates with other Catholic secondary schools to ensure fair and equitable access to Catholic education 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 theology and catechesis.

Purpose

This policy provides a set of protocols to guide Our Lady of Sion College to maintain the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. Adherence to the policy ensures that all schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne achieve this goal consistent with the minimum standards required by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Principles

Inclusiveness

Our Lady of Sion College is established primarily for Catholic children from the school's priority parishes. We strive to be open and welcoming to all Catholic students, regardless of their



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background, and do everything reasonable to accommodate each student's individual needs. Our Lady of Sion College extends particular assistance to children who are poor, disadvantaged or considered most at risk. Our Lady of Sion College welcomes the enrolment of children of other Christian traditions and faiths; however, priority will be given to children from non-Catholic Eastern churches. Children from other religious traditions or of no religion will also be provided with an opportunity to enrol at Our Lady of Sion College, should they choose to apply and there is sufficient capacity within the school.

Partnership between parents/guardians/carers and school

Parents/guardians/carers are the first educators of their children. By enrolling their child at Our Lady of Sion College, parents/guardians/carers enter into a partnership with the College to promote and support their child's education, in particular their education in faith. While the school promotes access to a Catholic education through the school enrolment policy, it is the parents/guardians/carers' 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 at Our Lady of Sion College. While the first priority of the Principal is to enrol the children of Catholic parents, pastoral discretion may be exercised in enrolment decisions where deemed appropriate.

Access to information about enrolment at Our Lady of Sion College

All schools registered in Victoria, including Our Lady of Sion College, are required to have a clearly defined enrolment policy and procedures which make clear who is eligible for enrolment as a domestic student. Our Lady of Sion College must have an enrolment agreement with parents/guardians/carers which is publicly available and easily accessible to current and prospective parents/guardians/carers. The enrolment agreement must, at a minimum, include:

- codes of conduct for students, parents, guardians and carers;
- fees;
- educational services provided;
- the grounds on which enrolment can be terminated.

Priority enrolment

While Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne are open to families of all faith and non-religious backgrounds, they must aim and give priority to enrol Catholic and Orthodox children ahead of other Christian denominations, non-Christians or children of no religious affiliation. There is an agreed order of priority for enrolment at Our Lady of Sion College, which must be followed in the enrolment policy and procedures.

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 Baptism.



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Orthodox child

Orthodox refers to non-Catholic Eastern churches which includes Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and Other Orthodox.

Catholic school

A Catholic school is one which operates with the consent of the Archbishop of Melbourne, where formation and education are based on the principles of the Catholic doctrine.

Enrolment catchment area

The enrolment catchment area is a defined area from which a school enrolls students as officially designated to a school by the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools. Enrolment is subject to the maximum capacity of the school.

Priority parish

A priority parish is defined as a parish included in the catchment area of a school. Children living within a priority parish catchment area receive priority in enrolment over children who reside outside the priority parish catchment area.

Enrolment Priorities

The priority enrolment for Our Lady of Sion College is as follows:

1. Applicants who have sisters at the College or are daughters of past students.
2. Catholic or Christian children who live in our catchment area.
3. Children who attend the Catholic Primary Schools in our area.
4. Catholic or Christian children who live outside our catchment area.
5. Interested families.

Year 7 ceilings

When prioritising students for enrolment in Year 7, Our Lady of Sion College adheres to the Year 7 ceiling that is currently agreed to between the College and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS).

Information to Be Collected

At enrolment, Our Lady of Sion College is required to collect particular information about parents/guardians/ carers and their child. Parents/guardians/carers are required to provide particular information about their child during the enrolment process in order for Our Lady of Sion College to meet the duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements. Lodging an enrolment application form does not guarantee enrolment at Our Lady of Sion College. For secondary enrolments at Year 7, parents/careers/guardians are required to nominate two preferences.

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.



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Parent/Guardian/Carer Responsibilities

At the time of enrolment, Our Lady of Sion College should ensure that parents/guardians/carers understand they have a responsibility to provide ongoing support for their child's education. In particular, parents/guardians/carers should be asked to make an explicit commitment to the following responsibilities:

- When enrolling a child at Our Lady of Sion College they should complete the school's enrolment application form and ensure it is returned by the due date. This does not guarantee enrolment in the school, which is confirmed following the signing of the enrolment agreement as formal acceptance of the offer of enrolment.
- Be prepared to support the school in the Catholic education of their child and involve themselves as much as possible, as well as committing to adhering to the expected standards of parental behaviour as outlined in the school's Community Code of Belonging
- Acknowledge and commit to meeting the financial responsibilities arising from the ongoing enrolment of their child. Any difficulties in meeting this commitment should be discussed with the Principal or their delegate.
- Provide up to date evidence of visa status from the Department of Home Affairs as soon as notified where applicable.

Termination of enrolment

Parents/guardians/carers are, as a condition of enrolment expected to read, sign and comply with the Our Lady of Sion College Enrolment Agreement, the Our Lady of Sion College Community Code of Belonging and relevant school policies.

Parents/guardians/carers who breach this Code, Agreement and/or policies will be contacted by the Principal. Appropriate action, which may include limiting or reducing access to the school grounds, attending school functions, or school-based activities or setting mandatory parameters around methods and timing of communication, or imposing an immediate Ongoing School Community Safety Order is at the discretion of the Principal and other authorised persons.

In certain limited circumstances a termination of enrolment may occur where the relationship between a school and a family has irretrievably broken down as a result of significant and/or repeated breaches by a parent/guardian/carers of the school's Community Code of Belonging.

A termination of enrolment on the basis of parental/guardian/carers conduct must be approved by the Our Lady of Sion College Board, and such approval would only be provided in the following circumstances:

- a breach of the Community Code of Belonging on the part of a parent/guardian/carers has previously occurred;
- the parent/guardian/carers has, because of that previous breach, been warned that any subsequent breach of the Community Code of Belonging by them (or the family) may result in a termination of enrolment ;
- a further breach of the Community Code of Belonging by the parent/guardian/carers, or by another family member in appropriate circumstances (including where the Principal is satisfied on reasonable grounds that another family member has been warned or is otherwise aware that a warning has previously been given) occurs.



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A termination of enrolment may also occur where any parent/guardian/carer has engaged in conduct on a single occasion which constitutes a serious breach of the Parent/Guardian/Carer Community Code of Belonging (involving for example, conduct which poses a serious risk to staff or student health and safety.) In these circumstances, it will not be necessary for a warning to be given before consideration is given to terminate the enrolment.

A decision to withdraw or terminate the enrolment of a student may only be made by the Our Lady of Sion College Board upon consideration of the following:

- the view of the Principal of the school;
- an objective assessment of all presenting circumstances, including the nature and gravity of the conduct and whether any previous warnings have been provided to the parent/guardian/carer;
- the principles of procedural fairness are followed in the decision-making process, including an opportunity for the student and their parents/guardians/carers to be heard and all relevant information considered.

Before any final decision to terminate enrolment is made, the student's parents/guardians/carers will be provided with an opportunity to comment on and/or provide any relevant information for consideration in this regard.

Students are also, as a condition of enrolment, expected to read and comply with the Our Lady of Sion College Student Code of Belonging.

In cases of serious and/or persistent breaches of the Student Code of Belonging, the Student Behaviour Policy outlines the consequences for student misbehaviour. The Our Lady of Sion College policies for the Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students outline the management of suspension and expulsion appeals processes.

In accordance with applicable legislation and the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the police and/or 'Families and Children's Services' within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), and any other relevant bodies will be informed of any unlawful breaches of the code/s.

Where the College Board has determined that enrolment will be withdrawn or terminated, the Principal will inform the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Director, Learning and Regional Services.

Complaints regarding enrolment

Our Lady of Sion is required to maintain a fair, effective, and efficient complaints-handling process so that complaints about enrolment and other matters at the College can be addressed.

If a parent/guardian/carer of the student would like to make an appeal on the enrolment process, or termination of enrolment, they may consider raising the concerns with the Principal or relevant person either in writing or by making an appointment. Please ensure the relevant person/s is given a reasonable amount of time to take steps required to resolve or address the concerns. Please refer to the Our Lady of Sion College's Grievance Resolution Policy for further information.



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If the matter cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint is about the Principal of the school, complainants are advised to contact the Chair of the Board by emailing boardchair@sion.catholic.edu.au.

Related Policies and Documents:

Community Code of Belonging
Expulsion of Students Policy
Grievance Resolution Policy
Negotiated Transfer of Students Policy
Student Code of Belonging
Suspension of Students Policy

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