Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Mercy College Enrolment Policy

Introduction

Mercy College is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated, and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

As a MACS college:

- prayer and liturgy are vital aspects of religious life in the college
- the pastoral care and support programs for students, families and staff are based on the teachings of the Catholic Church
- the teachings and values of the Catholic Church are paramount.

Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements for enrolment in our school in line with the Enrolment Policy for MACS schools.

Scope

This policy applies to all families seeking to enrol students at Mercy College.

Principles

The following principles underpin this policy:

- MACS colleges are established primarily for Catholic children, Mercy College strives to be open and welcome to all Catholic students regardless of their background and does everything reasonable to accommodate each student's individual needs.
- Enrolment of children of other Christian traditions and faiths is open; however, priority will be given to children from non-Catholic Eastern churches.
- Children from other religious traditions, or no religion, are provided with the opportunity to enrol at our school should they choose to apply and there is sufficient capacity within the school.
- Parents/guardians/carers are the first educators of their children. By enrolling a child in our college, parents/guardians/carers are entering into a partnership to promote and support their child's education, in particular their education in faith. While the college promotes access to a Catholic education through the school enrolment policy, it is the responsibilityof parents/guardians/carers to support the school in furthering the spiritual and academic life of their child.

Policy

Priority enrolment

Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making regarding enrolment at Mercy College. While the priority of the principal is to enrol the children of Catholic parents/guardians/carers, pastoral discretion may be exercised in enrolment decisions where deemed appropriate.

Where established, the local college enrolment committee will formally endorse all enrolment decisions to ensure transparency and equity in decision-making. Where a local school enrolment committee is not established, the principal will endorse all enrolment decisions.

Order of priority

There is an agreed order of priority for enrolment in MACS schools, which must be followed in the enrolment policy and procedures. As systemic Catholic schools, the priority of MACS schools is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children.

The order of priority for MACS secondary colleges is:

1. Catholic children who are residents of a designated priority parish and have attended a Catholic primary school in one of those parishes
2. siblings of children already enrolled in the school
3. Catholic children who are residents of a designated priority parish and have not attended a Catholic primary school
4. Catholic children from other parishes (for pastoral reasons)
5. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
6. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
7. other Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
8. other Christian children who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
9. non-Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish
10. non-Christian children who have not attended a Catholic primary school and are residents of a priority parish.

Overseas Students

When considering the enrolment of students on visa, principal of Mercy College will consider the application with reference to MACS policy and procedures as well as legislative requirements. The principal or delegate is to determine whether the student is fee-liable or eligible for government funding through outlined processes.

Parent/Guardian/Carer responsibilities

At the time of enrolment, parents/guardians/carers make a commitment to provide ongoing support for their child's Catholic education. Parents/guardians/carers are asked to make an explicit commitment to the following responsibilities:

- Complete the school's enrolment 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/guardian/carer behaviour as outlined in the school's Parent/Guardian/Carer Code of Conduct.
- Acknowledge and commit to meeting the financial responsibilities arising from the ongoing enrolment of their child at Mercy College. Any difficulties in meeting this commitment should be discussed with the principal.
- Advise the principal of any court order, parenting or custodial arrangement/s that may exist in relation to their child, or any changes to such order/s, and provide a copy of the court order/s and any subsequent changes for the child's school file.
- Provide the school with an immunization history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register.

- 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 [insert College name] Enrolment Agreement, Mercy College Parent/Guardian/Carer Code of Conduct (**Code of Conduct**), 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 or Ongoing School Community Safety Order is at the discretion of the principal and other authorised persons.

A termination of enrolment on the basis of parental/guardian/carer conduct must be approved by the Director, Learning and Regional Services, and such approval would only be provided in the following circumstances:

(a) a breach of the Code of Conduct on the part of a parent/guardian/carer has previously occurred

(b) the parent/guardian/carer has, because of that previous breach, been warned that any subsequent breach of the Code of Conduct by them (or the family) may result in a termination of enrolment

(c) a further breach of the Code of Conduct by the parent / guardian / carer, or by another family member in appropriate circumstances (including where the principal is satisfied on reasonable grounds that that other family member has been warned or is otherwise aware that a warning has previously been given) occurs.

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 Code of Conduct (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 termination of enrolment.

A decision to withdraw or terminate the enrolment of a student in these circumstances may only be made by the Director, Learning and Regional Services upon consideration of each 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 family/guardians/carers to be heard, all relevant information considered.

Before any final decision to terminate enrolment is made, the student's family 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 Mercy College Student Code of Conduct (**Code of Conduct**).

In cases of serious and/or persistent breaches of the student code of conduct, the Student Behaviour Policy outlines the consequences for student misbehaviour. The Mercy College policies and procedures for the Suspension, Negotiated Transfer, and Expulsion of Students outline the management of suspension and expulsion and appeals processes.

In accordance with applicable legislation and the school'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.

Complaints regarding enrolment

Mercy College is required to maintain a fair, effective and efficient complaints-handling process so that complaints about enrolment and other matters at the school 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, consider raising the concerns to 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 the steps required to resolve or address the concerns. Please refer to Mercy College's complaints handling policy or guidelines for further information.

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 relevant MACS Regional Office. Alternatively, parents/guardians/carers may lodge a complaint online and read the Complaint Handling Policy for MACS Schools at https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/Contact-Us/Complaints.aspx.

Information to be collected

Our school is required to collect information about parents/guardians/carers and their child. Parents/guardians/carers are required to provide information about their child during the enrolment process in order for MACS and the school to meet the duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements. Schools are required to confirm that a student agrees to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to be counted in the census.

Procedures

Please refer to the Enrolment Procedures in MACS schools.

School-based processes and guidelines

Definitions

Catholic child

For 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 and have fully participated in a sacramental program or, there is evidence of an intention to complete their sacramental journey.

Enrolment Agreement and Enrolment Form

The Enrolment Agreement and Enrolment Form is an agreement parents/guardians/carers enter with MACS for enrolment at the particular MACS school. The Enrolment Agreement stipulates the terms and conditions of enrolment and the way in which the school seeks to work in collaboration with families. Schools 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 form outlines the information that must be collected by the principal of each school, to enable MACS to satisfy its duty of care obligations and ensure it has the relevant information about each student to determine any need for adjustments.

Enrolment catchment area

The enrolment catchment area is a defined area from which a school enrols students as officially designated to a school by MACS. The parish for [College name] is [Parish name]. In parishes with more than one primary school, the catchment for each school is determined by the parish in consultation with MACS. Enrolment is subject to the maximum capacity of the school.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS)

MACS is a reference to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, and / or its subsidiaries, MACSS and/or MACSEYE (as the context requires).

Orthodox child

For enrolment in a Catholic school, a child is considered to be Orthodox if they are a member of a non-Catholic Eastern church, including Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox.

Parish

Parish refers to the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries and student location is based on home address.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Consent to Transfer Information Form
Dependant Full-fee Paying Overseas Students Application Procedure - Schools
Mercy College Enrolment Agreement – Secondary Schools
Mercy College Enrolment Form – Secondary Schools
Enrolment Policy for MACS Schools
Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools
Mercy College Enrolment Processes
Family Occupation Index – Parent/Guardian/Carer Occupation Groups
Maximum Age Exemption Application Form- template
Parents/Guardians/Carers Code of Conduct
Photography and Recording Permission Form – Schools
Repeating a Year Level Application Form Standard Collection Notice- template
Student Acceleration Application Form
Student Code of Conduct

Related MACS policies and documents

Concessional Fees Policy
[insert school] Complaints Handling Policy
Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools
Guidelines for Schools- Suspension, Negotiated Transfer, and Expulsion
Privacy Policy
Recordkeeping Policy for MACS Schools
School Community Safety Order Scheme – Internal Review Process
School Suspension of Students Policy
School Negotiated Transfer of Students Policy
School Expulsion of Students Policy
Student Acceleration and Retention Policy for MACS Schools
Student Acceleration and Retention Policy – Template for Schools

Related policies and documents

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

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.)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards for schools

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