

## ENROLMENTS POLICY

### 1 Preamble

- 1.1 Rossbourne School (the **School**) is an independent, co-educational, non-denominational secondary school for students identified as being neuro divergent.
- 1.2 The School caters to the needs of students who find social and academic success within a mainstream school difficult because of neuro-developmental challenges.
- 1.3 The School is dedicated to enhancing the life chances of its students by putting them at the centre of learning, and creating opportunities to develop independence, social connection, resilience, and respectful relationships.

### 2 Purpose and scope

- 2.1 The School runs an educational program for students from Years 7 to 12 which:
  - (a) is based on the individual needs of students; and
  - (b) for Years 7 to 10 is referenced to the *Victorian Curriculum Foundation to 10* priorities and standards;
  - (c) for Years 11 and 12 is referenced to the Victorian Pathways Certificate / the Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major;
  - (d) is implemented through a personalised planning process;
  - (e) prepares students for inclusion into mainstream settings, such as TAFE level training programs (where suitable);
  - (f) believes that all students can reach their unique potentials through carefully designed programs in a safe, yet challenging environment.
- 2.2 This policy sets out the principles and requirements for families of prospective students who are seeking to enrol a child at the School, including specifically the School's approach to inclusivity.

### 3 Aim and Key Principles

- 3.1 Through this policy, the School aims to:
  - (a) Maintain an open and fair procedure for the enrolment of students seeking enrolment to the School.
  - (b) Ensure the procedure for enrolment to the School is fair, transparent and not unlawfully discriminatory.

- (c) Explain clearly to prospective parents/guardians (referred to as **parents** for convenience) the School's enrolment process (from enquiry to enrolment).
- (d) Ensure that the School can provide for the educational needs of all its students in a manner that reflects the School's duty of care obligations.
- (e) Ensure the School maintains its core values.
- (f) Ensure the School complies with its commitments to supporting students with differing and varying needs, including by making reasonable adjustments where appropriate, and providing a pastoral and learning environment that supports their known diagnoses.
- (g) Comply with the requirements of the *Education Training and Reform Act 2006* (Vic) (as amended or replaced from time to time), and other relevant legislation.
- (h) Ensure that procedures are in place for the management, storage and retrieval of enrolment data, including in relation to the child's identity, immunisation and visa status (for further detail, refer to clause 17).

3.2 To assist in achieving the above aims, the School has allocated the following responsibilities:

#### BOARD

- Ensure the School meets its legal and regulatory responsibilities –including those which relate to inclusivity.
- Review and endorse this policy.
- Review and set the annual tuition fees on an annual basis and otherwise as required.

#### PRINCIPAL

- Establish and implement an enrolment policy and procedure that is open, fair and complies with all school registration and other applicable legislation.
- Final decision-maker in relation to enrolment decisions

#### ADMISSIONS

- Ensure compliance with this policy.
- Ensure enrolments are compliant with the School's Constitution.
- Provide prospective parents with the necessary information about the enrolment processes.

#### PARENTS

- Read and comply with this policy.
- When seeking enrolment of a prospective student, complete the application for enrolment form as contained in the School's enrolment documentation (available on the School's website).

- Disclose their child's additional needs (including those which are diagnosed, undiagnosed and suspected), or information which may otherwise be relevant to the School providing an education to the child, the child's welfare, or the education and welfare of other students.

## **4 Entry Points**

4.1 The main enrolment entry points into the School are traditionally Year 7.

Parents may apply for a place at the School for their child at anytime, provided that their child meets the eligibility criteria and has a need for a special education placement.

4.2 Places of enrolment are offered at other levels if vacancies exist.

4.3 Parents may apply for a place at the School for their child at any time from the child's birth.

4.4 In determining the school-readiness of a child, which is assessed against the School's commitment to inclusivity, the following are examples of factors that will be considered:

- (a) Separation: Is the child ready to separate from the parent for a day?
- (b) Physical independence: Can the child manage their toileting, own clothes and belongings independently on a regular basis?
- (c) Education: Has the child completed primary education in another mainstream or special educational practice?
- (d) Social maturity: Is the child ready to be part of a large group with approximately 12 children and one teacher? Can the child interact with other children and adults? Can the parent and the child cope with a wide cross-section of the community with different values and behaviours?
- (e) Confidence: Is the child able to ask for help and assistance when required?
- (f) Language: Is the child able to communicate sufficiently in order to be understood (including with staff and other students during class and in the playground)?

English as an Additional Language (**EAL**) students must demonstrate satisfactory English skills, as determined by screening tests and any pre-enrolment interview, to ensure a prospective student will be able to meaningfully benefit from the School's education program.

## **5 Eligibility Criteria**

5.1 To be eligible for enrolment, the prospective student must be either:

- (a) an Australian citizen;

- (b) entitled to stay in Australia, or enter and stay in Australia without limitation; or
- (c) deemed eligible and approved for enrolment by the Principal as determined at their sole discretion.

## **6 Entry policy**

- 6.1 The School offers an educational program to students with certain additional needs, whose academic abilities fit between mainstream secondary schools and government special schools, including identified learning difficulties.
- 6.2 The School's aim is to equip students with the skills to be successful in TAFE level training programs upon graduation, via a Victorian Pathways Certificate / Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major.
- 6.3 The School otherwise has an open entry policy. The School is committed to being inclusive, and therefore welcomes, accepts and supports those most in need. However, the School may:
  - (a) Offer bursaries to specific groups of students, including for hardship.
  - (b) Determine enrolments based on its ability to provide educational services to the particular student.
  - (c) Apply the priorities for enrolment set out in clause 7.7 of this policy.

## **7 Admission Process**

- 7.1 Families of prospective students are encouraged to:
  - (a) Browse the School's website.
  - (b) Book a tour of the School and register their child for the waitlist by completing the Expression of Interest Form at the tour.
  - (c) Review this policy, and other policies and procedures available on the School's website, to fully understand the vision, mission and values that will frame a student's education at the School.

### If invited to submit an application

- 7.2 If required, complete the application form available at the school

- 7.3 Comply with the request for documentation:

- (a) Any required documentation mentioned in the form (including the child's birth certificate or passport, current immunisation certificate from Medicare and if applicable, school reports, visa grant notice, relevant court and parenting orders).
- (b) Supply the following documentation:
  - (1) a recent cognitive assessment (WISC V);

- (2) recent medical evidence confirming the child's additional needs diagnosis and the need for specialist education placement.
- (3) speech assessments; and
- (4) where applicable, any other relevant medical assessments (completed within the past two years).

7.4 The application process enables the School to receive information from a range of sources – including the prospective student and the prospective student's parents, current school and former school(s) – which is used to assist the School in:

- (a) considering whether it can meet the child's behavioural, educational and welfare needs (including with regard to the School's duty of care obligations); and
- (b) deciding whether to exercise its discretion to offer a place of enrolment.

7.5 Each completed application for enrolment form and accompanying documents will be considered by the School on a case-by-case basis.

#### Waiting lists and priority of enrolment

7.6 The School ultimately has discretion whether to place a prospective student on the School's waiting list, offer an interview, or offer a place of enrolment.

7.7 In exercising that discretion, the School takes into account a range of criteria, including but not limited to the following:

- (a) The information disclosed in the required documentation.
- (b) The child's pre-enrolment assessments and, pre-enrolment interview.
- (c) Whether the child is eligible for a priority offer of enrolment as:
  - (1) a sibling of a current student (noting that siblings will be prioritised provided an application for enrolment form is submitted within 26 months of the start of the school year they are due to commence);
  - (2) alumni, or children of alumni of the School; or
  - (3) the child of a permanent staff member.
- (d) The child's behavioural history.
- (e) Whether the values and beliefs of the child's family clearly align with the vision, mission and values of the School.
- (f) The starting year level of the child and whether this aligns with a main year level entry point at the School.
- (g) The School's capacity, as an inclusive school, to support a prospective student's additional needs in the School environment (see below).

- (h) The merits of the application, prospective student's suitability for enrolment at the School, and individual circumstances and practical implications including the:
- (1) number of students currently enrolled at the School;
  - (2) prospective student's family circumstances (including the willingness of the student and their parent to comply with the School's policies and procedures);
  - (3) prospective student's interests and participation in extra-curricular activities;
  - (4) reasonableness of the adjustments required to facilitate the prospective student's education (including their personalised plan);
  - (5) School's resources and capacity to deliver an education to the student in accordance with its educational model;
  - (6) prospective student's willingness and ability to comply with the School's behavioural standards;
  - (7) prospective student's willingness and ability to derive a benefit from the School's educational model;
  - (8) prospective student's school-readiness;
  - (9) willingness of each family to endorse the School's vision, mission and values; and
  - (10) any other considerations set out in this policy.

7.8 A number of places may be kept for scholarship and bursary recipients, and also for enrolments at the Principal's discretion.

## **8 Pre-enrolment interview**

8.1 If and when appropriate, the School will invite a prospective student and their parents to attend a pre-enrolment interview with senior staff members (eg Principal, Deputy Principal, School Section Leader).

8.2 For families seeking entry to the School, this interview will:

- (a) enable the School to understand the prospective student's strengths, weaknesses, school readiness and additional needs, as well as what they and their family can contribute to the life of the School; and
- (b) enable the prospective student and their family to better understand the School and its approach to delivering an educational curriculum model, which is underpinned by a child's personalised plan.

- 8.3 Families will be asked to provide the School with a number of documents, including a copy of the prospective student's current school reports (if applicable) and other assessment documentation.
- 8.4 Prospective students may be interviewed, either in person or by telephone, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other platforms as appropriate.
- 8.5 Attending a pre-enrolment interview does not guarantee a place at the School, and is not an offer of enrolment.
- 8.6 If for any reason in the School's absolute discretion, the School forms the opinion, as a result of the pre-enrolment interview that it would be inappropriate for a child to be enrolled at the School, the School may terminate the enrolment process (or if the child is already enrolled, the enrolment agreement).

## **9 Two day Trial**

- 9.1 After the above process has occurred, the prospective student may be invited to attend a two day trial at the School.
- 9.2 The trial will see the prospective student placed in a class similar to where they may be enrolled to enable them to experience the School's educational programs and be observed and assessed by School teachers and specialist staff.
- 9.3 The purpose of the observation is to allow the School to understand the prospective student's needs and challenges, and supports required to facilitate their participation in the School's educational program.
- 9.4 Attending a trial at the School does not guarantee a place at the School, and is not an offer of enrolment.

## **10 Assessment**

- 10.1 The prospective student's application will then be reviewed by the School's Enrolment Panel
- 10.2 If for any reason in the School's absolute discretion the School forms the opinion, as a result of the pre-enrolment process and two day trial, that it would be inappropriate for a child to be enrolled at the School, the School may terminate the enrolment process (or if the child is already enrolled, the enrolment agreement).

## **11 Offer of Enrolment**

- 11.1 At all times, the Principal has absolute discretion to make the final decision about whether an offer of enrolment should be made to a prospective student.
- 11.2 Any offer of enrolment made by the School will be made in writing.
- 11.3 It is not the School's practice to disclose a prospective student's place on the waiting list, or provide specific feedback regarding the timing of an offer of enrolment (or, where no offer is made, the reasons for this).

11.4 An offer of enrolment may be accepted in the form approved by the School from time to time, subject to the following:

- (a) An offer of enrolment will not be accepted until both parents (or where supported by a court order or otherwise agreed at the School's absolute discretion, one parent) have agreed to be bound by the School's Terms and Conditions of Enrolment and any other terms set out in the offer of enrolment (including payment of the Enrolment Fee and return of requested documents by the stated deadline).
- (b) Acceptance of the offer must be provided within 7 days unless the School's offer states otherwise.
- (c) Acceptance of an offer must be accompanied by payment of the non-refundable Enrolment Fee. This fee is non-refundable and does not form part of the enrolled student's tuition fees.
- (d) An offer may be withdrawn by the School, regardless of the availability of places where:
  - (1) Information provided to the School is found to be withheld, false or misleading.
  - (2) There is a significant change in the circumstances of the student or their family, which impacts the School's capacity to reasonably accommodate the student.
  - (3) The offer of enrolment is not accepted on the terms provided by the School.
  - (4) The Principal exercises their reasonable discretion to withdraw the offer.

11.5 Details about all the School's tuition fees and course levies, and other charges and levies, imposed by the School for that school year (collectively, the **School Fees**) and the terms on which School Fees must be paid are set out in the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment published by the School. A copy of the current Terms and Conditions of Enrolment is available on the School's website.

11.6 If parents accept an offer of enrolment but the child does not subsequently begin schooling at the School, the parents will forfeit the Enrolment Fee and any tuition fees paid in advance to the School, unless one term's written notice is provided.

## **12 Defer, Refuse or Vary an Offer of Enrolment**

12.1 Parents must notify the School in writing if they wish to defer, refuse or vary an offer of enrolment. This must occur by the date stated in the offer of enrolment, otherwise fees will be payable in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment.



- 12.2 Parents who wish to vary the date of entry for their child's enrolment (either to another date in the same school year or to a subsequent intake year), understand that:
- (a) Notice must be given to the School in accordance with clause 12.1.
  - (b) The School in its absolute discretion may or may not agree to that request.
  - (c) If the School agrees to the parents' request, the child will be placed on a waiting list for the preferred year of enrolment and the offer of enrolment issued will be terminated. The School makes no guarantee that a place will be available for the child on their preferred commencement date.
  - (d) Should a place be available for their child to commence enrolment at a later date of entry, parents must sign an updated copy of the School's Terms and Conditions of Enrolment and otherwise comply with the School's enrolment requirements at that time.
  - (e) The School may or may not in its absolute discretion require the payment of a further Enrolment Fee.

### **13 Appealing an enrolment decision**

- 13.1 Parents may appeal an enrolment decision in accordance with the School's *Complaints and Grievances Policy*. A copy of the School's *Complaints and Grievances Policy* can be found on the website.

### **14 Period of enrolment**

- 14.1 Once an offer of enrolment has been made and accepted, a child's enrolment is ongoing and will remain in place until such time as:
- (a) a child's enrolment is withdrawn or otherwise ends in a manner provided for in the School's Terms and Conditions of Enrolment; or
  - (b) a child completes a Year 12 education at the School.

### **15 Orientation**

- 15.1 Orientation and induction takes place for all new students and their families, and includes:
- (a) Orientation afternoon.
  - (b) Student orientation on commencement.
  - (c) Information sessions and feedback opportunities.

### **16 The School's commitment to inclusivity**

- 16.1 The School is an inclusive school and welcomes students and other members of the school community – including parents and staff - with a varying range of academic, behavioural, cultural, lifestyle, religious and additional needs.

- 16.2 In this policy, additional needs includes allergies, health conditions, physical or intellectual disabilities, behavioural or learning challenges or difficulties, learning support requirements and needs of a medical, psychological, health or dietary nature.
- 16.3 The School is committed to complying with its legal obligations regarding inclusivity, and supports the National Disability Standards for Education and is an inclusive community. However, the School is not necessarily able to cater to every prospective student's needs.
- 16.4 The School must be satisfied that it is equipped to adequately respond to a student's needs, and ensure they are able to meaningfully derive from the educational program on offer. In this regard, the process of offering enrolment is informed by the availability of places, as well as the suitability of programs and support levels in relation to a child's needs (and the child's level of school-readiness, if applicable). This consideration is both in relation to an individual child and also, broadly with regard to the School's resources and capacity to support the needs of a cohort of students.
- 16.5 The School also reserves the right to set and enforce reasonable standards of dress, appearance and behaviour. Whilst the School will comply with its legal obligations, the School may not be able to facilitate an enrolment in circumstances where:
- (a) A child poses a threat, or presents a risk of harm to a member of the School community (including staff, students and parents).
  - (b) The child exhibits behaviours that significantly interfere with, or compromise with the teaching and learning experiences of others in the classroom, or social integration in the playground.
  - (c) The child exhibits behaviours (including violent or sexualised behaviours) that otherwise have an emotional or psychological impact on others.
  - (d) The child does not have, or does not effectively respond to strategies or supports recommended from qualified medical professionals, to assist the child to self-regulate and best support their positive experiences at school.
- 16.6 Accordingly, prior to an offer of enrolment being made parents must inform the School of all needs a prospective student has which may be relevant to the education or welfare of the child (or which may impact upon the education or welfare or others).
- 16.7 If a parent fails to promptly inform the School of a student or prospective student's needs, or any significant change in those needs, this damages the trust and confidence required for an effective enrolment relationship between the School and the family of an enrolled student. In such circumstances the School, in its absolute discretion, may refuse to make an offer of enrolment (or, if the enrolment has already commenced, immediately terminate the enrolment of the student in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment).
- 16.8 Where a parent promptly informs the School about a student or prospective student's needs, or any significant change in those needs, the School will act in accordance with applicable laws and its Terms and Conditions of Enrolment.

## 17 Register of Enrolments

- 17.1 The School keeps a register of enrolments of all students who have been enrolled at the School in electronic form. The register includes the following information:
- (a) Name, age, date of birth and residential address of student.
  - (b) Parent names and contact details.
  - (c) Date of enrolment.
  - (d) The student's Victorian Student Number.
  - (e) Medical information for emergency management purposes.
  - (f) Emergency contact details.
  - (g) If applicable: Home care arrangements, court orders, transfer records.
  - (h) Date of leaving the School and details concerning student's departure, where appropriate.
  - (i) Details of previous schools or pre-enrolment situation.
- 17.2 The register is retained for a period (in accordance with the School's *Record Retention Policy*) after the student leaves the School, and copies of information in the register are stored on-site at regular intervals.

POLICY HOLDER	UPDATED	RATIFIED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD	REVIEW DATE
Principal	June 2024 On advice from Russell Kennedy Lawyers	February 2024	February 2026 Every 2 years thereafter in accordance with the Schools review cycle. Or as required.