

BUNGAREE PARISH SCHOOLS



ENROLMENT POLICY

Reviewed: May 2018
Ratified: May 2018
Review May 2022

PURPOSE:

The Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council Enrolment Policy has been developed to provide Catholic schools and colleges in the Ballarat Diocese with clear and consistent guidelines that will inform individual school enrolment policies and practices. All policies should reflect the dignity of the human person and be respectful of all those who wish to engage in the educational mission of the Catholic Church.

RATIONALE:

All diocesan Catholic primary and secondary schools are central to the mission and work of the Catholic 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)

POLICY STATEMENT:

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

PRINCIPLES:

- 1.0 Catholic schools, established and maintained 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. The governance entities in each individual school community are the responsible authorities for that school community.
- 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. Individual primary and secondary school enrolment policies will clearly articulate an agreed process for enrolment thus ensuring procedural transparency.
- 3.0 A Catholic school has a particular responsibility to provide access to children baptised in the Catholic faith.

- 4.0 Catholic schools have a responsibility for being inclusive and therefore welcome, accept and support those most in need.
- 5.0 Catholic school enrolment policies should reflect the teaching and values of the church and be cognisant of guidelines issued by the Catholic Education Commission Victoria, Religious Institutes and/or ministerial public juridic persons and/or the Ballarat Diocese.
- 6.0 Catholic schools seek to actively 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.
- 7.0 In diocesan locations where multiple Catholic schools co-exist there should be ongoing dialogue and co-consideration of enrolment processes.

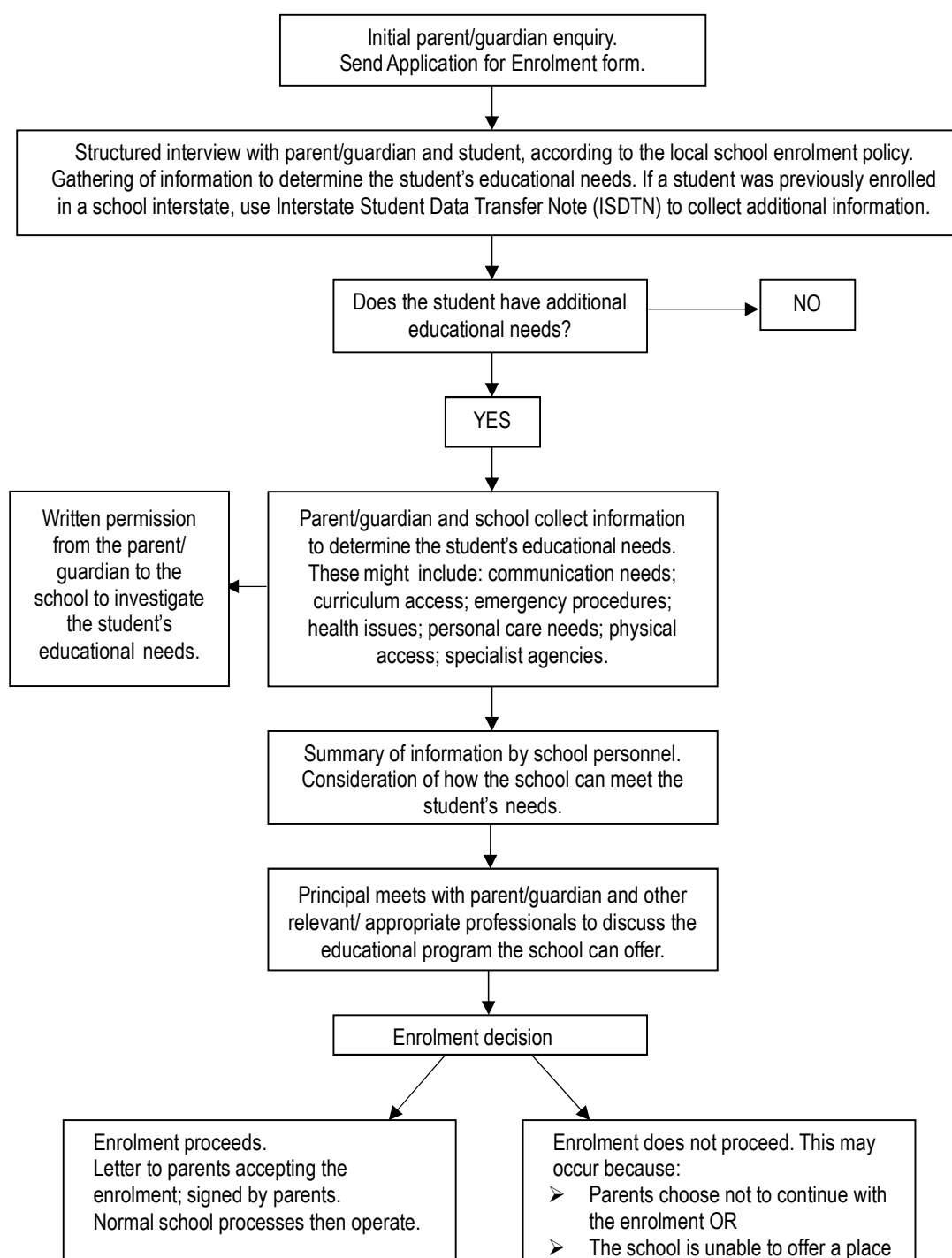
As of 28 February 2018, new amendments to the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation now impact acceptable documentation for school entry immunisation requirements.

- An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is the only form of documentation acceptable as proof of a child's immunisation status.
- By law, primary schools are now required to request and record information on the immunisation status of students prior to enrolment.
- Documents produced by GPs or other immunisation providers will no longer be sufficient as a form of evidence. Homeopathic immunisation is not a recognised form of immunisation, and therefore cannot be listed on an immunisation status certificate.
- Parents or guardians must provide an immunisation status certificate to the school regardless of whether the child is or is not immunised.

ENROLMENT PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES IN SCHOOLS:

1.0 Recommended Enrolment Process

In the interests of consistency and transparency, it is recommended that schools in the Diocese of Ballarat follow the Archdiocese of Melbourne Recommended Enrolment Process presented in the following flowchart:



2.0 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 2)

Supporting documentation from appropriate health or educational professionals detailing substantive reasons for early school entry must be attached to the application, as well as a letter from the parent(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.

3.0 Out of Home Care, School enrolment responsibilities (outside normal enrolment timelines) in accordance with Out of Home Care Partnering Agreement, 2012

If Child Protection is involved schools are expected to:

- If a place is available, enrol a child or young person without delay – any delay of more than one day must be endorsed by the Ballarat Diocesan, Catholic Education Director
- Ensure that accurate information regarding out-of-home care status is recorded in the school's student information record-keeping mechanism
- Liaise with the child or young person'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 child or young person's enrolment
- Support the child or young person 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 child or young person's learning and support needs to ensure a smooth transition

The Ballarat Diocesan Catholic Education Office will:

- Facilitate the timely and effective enrolment of each child and young person in out-of-home care by providing advice and support to schools
- Work with schools and Department of Human Services to resolve any enrolment difficulties in a timely manner

4.0 Enrolment of Children with Additional Learning Needs

Catholic schools are expected to welcome parents who wish to enrol a child with additional learning needs and do everything possible to accommodate the child's needs. The process for enrolling students with special needs should be the same as that for enrolling any student, and should conform to the Recommended Enrolment Process (refer to flowchart). Primary and secondary schools should collaborate to ensure coordination and consistency of policy and processes. Schools are required to comply with the relevant Australian and Victorian Government legislation when considering the enrolment of a child with additional learning needs in a Catholic school.

5.0 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

6.0 Fees

The setting of fee levels and other compulsory charges in Catholic primary schools and secondary colleges is the responsibility of the school, taking into account the allocation of government funds. The school offers a number of methods for paying fees to reduce any financial burden and to assist financial planning.

If a family is experiencing difficulty in meeting the required fee payment, the student should not be excluded.

Families enrolling in diocesan primary schools may also be able to access the 'Family Fee Assistance Scheme'. (Appendix 3)

7.0 Appealing an Enrolment Decision

- 7.1 An appeal of the enrolment decision can be made where a family believes that a breach of the school enrolment policy or a breach of the relevant legislation has occurred
- 7.2 An appeal is made to the Director of Catholic Education, PO Box 576, Ballarat VIC 3350 or director@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au or phone 03 5337 7135
- 7.3 The Director of Catholic Education will investigate the matter, consider if a breach has occurred and make a recommendation to the Principal if this is the case

8.0 Relevant Legislation to be considered when enrolling students in Catholic Schools

8.1 The Victorian Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007

The regulations impose a requirement on a registered school to have a clearly defined enrolment policy that complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws. Referred therein is the main legislation affecting school enrolments. Each school must be familiar with the relevant provisions of this legislation and, if appropriate, prepare policies for administration and enforcement of relevant procedures.

8.2 **Equal Opportunity Act 1996 (Vic)**

This legislation prohibits discrimination by an educational authority against a person in deciding who should be admitted as a student, in the terms on which the authority admits a person as a student, or by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for administration as a student. However, an exception is provided for an educational authority that operates an educational institution wholly or mainly for students of a particular sex, religious belief, age or age group, such that it may exclude from that institution people who are not of the particular sex, religious belief, age or age group. All other discrimination in enrolment of students is prohibited.

8.3 **Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwith) & Disability Standards for Education 2005**

Under this federal legislation, discrimination based on disability is unlawful. It applies to school authorities and their employees. The definition of disability is broad and includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disability, psychical disfigurement, and the presence in the body of a disease-causing organism.

Relevant to enrolments, it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability or the disability of any of the other person's associates:

- By refusing or failing to accept the persons application for admission as a student; or
- In the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student.

However it is not unlawful if the school or institution is specifically for children / students with a particular disability and person wishing to enrol does not have that disability or if the child / student requires services or facilities which would be an unjustifiable hardship for the educational authority.

See the Disability Discrimination (Appendix 4) & Disability Standards (Appendix 5) Fact Sheets for more information.

8.4 **Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 (Cwith)**

This legislation governs how schools must handle personal information collected as part of the enrolment process. Schools will have adopted a Privacy Policy to reflect their acts and practice in management of personal information in compliance with the legislation. Schools should also determine the necessary information for collection, provide information about collection and, where necessary, obtain consents to the collection, use and disclosure of that information. For these purposes, schools should include in enrolment forms an information collection notice, which should also be contained in the school's Privacy Policy and where applicable should be located on the school's website.

8.5 **Out of Home Care**

Additional enrolment information regarding the enrolment of overseas students, visa eligibility, full fee paying and mature age school entry is available through the CECV or CEOB upon request.