Enrolment Policy and Procedures – Primary

Document Number: P0403

St Joseph's School, Hopetoun operates with the consent of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and is operated and governed by the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL).

Policy Statement

This Policy and its accompanying Procedures set out the principles and requirements:

- for families of prospective students who are seeking to enrol a child at St Joseph's School, Hopetoun
- that comply with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requirements in relation to the management of the enrolment process
- in accordance with the Enrolment Policy and Procedures for DOBCEL Schools.

St Joseph's School is:

- inclusive and welcoming to all students and their families from diverse backgrounds who share and support the philosophy, values and aims of Catholic schooling
- committed to accommodating each student's individual requirements, within the boundaries of the school's available resources.

Context

St Joseph's School aims to:

- embrace the mission of the Church by welcoming all students and families who share our vision and educational philosophy
- be authentically Catholic and faithful to the mission of the Catholic Church and thereby has a particular responsibility to provide access to education to children baptised in the Catholic faith
- provide a clear and transparent enrolment process for families
- ensure the procedures for enrolment to the school are fair, transparent and inclusive
- 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
- maintain a school culture that is safe and promotes the development of Catholic faith and values
- promote a Catholic education framework and a learning environment where students are educated and nurtured as members of a Catholic community
- 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.

Scope

This Enrolment Policy and Procedures – Primary document applies to all families of prospective students who are seeking to enrol a child at St Joseph's School and staff who are responsible for the administration of enrolment applications.

Enrolment Principles

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for enrolment the prospective student must be:

- an Australian citizen
- entitled to stay in Australia, or enter and stay in Australia without limitation
- deemed eligible and approved for enrolment by the Principal as determined at their sole discretion.

Enrolment Priorities

St Joseph's School will follow the order of enrolment priority outlined below. As a Catholic school, the priority is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children from the school's parish/s. While Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ballarat are open to families of all faith and nonreligious backgrounds, they must give priority to enrol Catholic and Orthodox children ahead of other Christian denominations, non-Christians, or children of no religious affiliation.

Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making regarding enrolment and is executed by the school Principal. While the priority of the Principal is to enrol the children of Catholic parents, where deemed appropriate, pastoral discretion may be exercised in enrolment.

The order of priority for the school is:

1. siblings of children already enrolled in the school
2. Catholic children for whom this is the closest Catholic Primary school to the child's predominant residential address
3. Catholic children for whom this is not the closest Catholic Primary school to the child's predominant residential address (for pastoral reasons, following referral of parents to the closest school and discussions between colleague Principals)
4. other children who are seeking a Catholic education with priority given to those for whom this is the closest Catholic Primary School to the child's predominant residential address.

Overseas Students

When considering the enrolment of students on visas, the school Principal will consider the application with reference to DOBCEL guidance as well as legislative requirements. The Principal or their delegate will determine whether the student is fee-liable or eligible for government funding through outlined processes.

Information To Be Collected

The school is required to collect information about parents/guardians/carers and their child, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status of students who agree to be identified and counted in the census.

Parents/guardians/carers are required to provide information about their child during the enrolment process to allow DOBCEL and the school to meet its duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements.

Commitment to Inclusivity

St Joseph's School welcomes students and other members of the school community – including parents and staff - with a varying range of academic, behavioural, cultural, lifestyle, religious and individual characteristics. The school is an inclusive community, committed to complying with its legal obligations regarding inclusivity and supports the National Disability Standards for Education. Although St Joseph's School is committed to undertaking reasonable adjustments for access requirements of an individual student, the practicalities of such will always be limited by the school's available resources.

Legislative Context

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Cth)

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992
Disability Standards for Education 2005

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 and Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017
Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic)
Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards for schools

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
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, have fully participated in a sacramental program or there is evidence of an intention to complete their sacramental journey. The definition of a Catholic includes those of both Eastern and Western Catholic Churches. In Australia, these Catholic Churches include, but are not limited to, those of the Latin (or Roman) rite, as well as Chaldeans, Maronites, Melkites, Syro-Malabars, and Ukrainians of Byzantine rite.
Catholic school	A Catholic school operated by DOBCEL is one which operates with the consent of the Bishop of Ballarat, where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.
Closest DOBCEL school	As measured by the student conveyance method - Student Conveyance Allowance System (SCAS) https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/conveyance-allowance/guidance/processing-applications-using-scas In shared care arrangements:

	• where one parent has more than 50% shared care that parent's residential address would determine the priority of enrolment. • in the case of equal (50/50) shared care the closest residential address would determine the priority of enrolment
Domestic student	Any student who is not classified as an international student.
Enrolment Agreement and Enrolment Form	The Enrolment Agreement and Enrolment Form is an agreement which parents/guardians/carers enter with DOBCEL for enrolment at the DOBCEL 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 DOBCEL to satisfy its duty of care obligations and ensure it has the relevant information about each student to determine any need for adjustments.
Individual requirements	Include 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.
Parent	A reference to 'parent' in this document includes a reference to a parent, guardian, or carer (as applicable).
Parish	Parish refers to the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries and student location is based on home address.
RI/MPJP College	Religious Institutes (RI) and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) – Catholic schools operated by a governing entity other than DOBCEL.
Schools	Unless otherwise indicated 'schools' in this policy and these procedures refers to both primary and secondary schools within the Diocese of Ballarat.

DOBCEL Principles of Governance

All DOBCEL policies are founded on and reflect DOBCEL Principles of Governance

Policy Owner	**School Principal**
Approval Date	**February 2025**

Procedures

Parents seeking to enrol their child at St Joseph's School, Hopetoun should review the school's Enrolment Policy and these procedures to understand their obligations and the process should their application to enrol their child be successful.

- The parent/guardian/carer makes an enquiry with the administration team at the school
- The parent/guardian/carer submits an Application for Enrolment Form to the school by the required date
- Structured interview with parent/guardian/carer, according to the school's enrolment policy
- If a student was previously enrolled in a school interstate, use the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note (ISDTN) to collect additional information
- If the student is an Australian citizen, continue with school enrolment process, taking into consideration the School Enrolment Policy and Procedures, privacy policies, and other relevant policies and procedures, viz
    - reviewing the student's enrolment application with reference to minimum and maximum school entry age policies
    - providing Enrolment Agreement and Parent /Guardian / Carer Code of Conduct, and Student Code of Conduct to parent/guardian/carer and student to review and sign if offered a place. Acceptance and signing of these documents is a condition of enrolment
- If the student is not an Australian citizen, obtain the student and parent/guardian/carer's visa number and refer to schedule of visa sub-classes to determine eligibility for government funding – General Recurrent Funding (GRG).
    - If the student is eligible for government funding, the Principal or delegate must ensure compliance with the Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000 (ESOS Act).
        i. Independent international students need to have their eligibility for targeted funding support as a new arrival (migrant or refugee) determined,
        ii. Certified copies of travel documents (passport, visa grant notice, Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) notice, ImmiCard) must be sighted
        iii. The funding application process for targeted new arrivals support must be completed.
    - The Principal or delegate then continues with the school enrolment process.
    - If the student is not eligible for government support, the student is classified as Full-Fee Paying Overseas Student (FFPOS) and is fee-liable. In this instance, the Principal will work with their Educational Consultant. Further supports are available on the CEVN International Students page: https://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Melb/Student-Support/Cultural-Diversity/International-Students#education-services-for-overseas-students-(esos)

The Principal has discretion whether to place a prospective student on the waiting list, offer an interview, or offer a place of enrolment. In exercising that discretion, the Principal considers a range of criteria, including but not limited to the following:

- the date a fully completed Application for Enrolment form is received (noting incomplete applications will not be processed)
- the information disclosed in the Application for Enrolment form
- the child's pre-enrolment interview and if applicable, pre-enrolment assessments
- whether the child is eligible for a priority offer of enrolment as set out in this policy
- the child's academic record and behavioural history

- whether the values and beliefs of the child's family clearly align with the vision, mission, Catholic faith and values of the school
- whether the child is a Catholic student seeking to transfer from another Catholic school
- the starting year level of the child and whether this aligns with a main year level entry point at the school
- the school's capacity, as an inclusive school, to support a prospective student's special needs in the school environment (below)
- the merits of the application, prospective student's suitability for enrolment at the school, and individual circumstances and practical implications including:
    - the number of students currently enrolled at the school
    - the prospective student's family circumstances (including the willingness of the student and their parent to comply with the school's policies and procedures)
    - the prospective student's interests and participation in extra-curricular activities (including religious activities)
    - the willingness of each family to endorse the school's vision, mission, Catholic education, and values
    - any other considerations set out in this policy.
- the impact of enrolling students on the educational and financial operations of the school including facility requirements
- the discretion of the Principal to reserve a number of places for scholarship and bursary recipients.

Enrolment of Students under the Minimum School Entry Age

Exemption for Enrolment Under Minimum School Entry Age
Under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)*, schooling is compulsory for students aged between 6 and 17 years unless an exemption from attendance has been granted. Victorian children are eligible to commence school if they are 5 years of age on 30 April in the year they start school.

If a parent is seeking to enrol their child at a younger age, a minimum age exemption is required. Exemptions are the exception rather than the norm and will be granted only when commencement of formal education is deemed to be in the child's best interests. Enrolment can proceed only with written approval by the Executive Director subject to the following minimum age exemption application criteria:

Minimum Age Exemption Application Criteria

1. Suitable academic ability as evidenced by cognitive assessment documenting an 'at or above 130' Full Scale IQ, (two standard deviations or more above the mean)
2. Evidence of enrolment in formal schooling and attendance for more than one term at an interstate or overseas school (not pre-school), and transfer documentation including evidence of appropriate academic achievement
3. Age of at least 4 years 6 months on or before 30 April in the year the student commences school as evidenced by a birth certificate or passport (in addition to meeting criterion 1 or 2)
4. Evidence from childcare, kindergarten, allied health, or other relevant professionals to support early-age entry and of detrimental impact to the longer-term interests of the child should they not attend school.

Enrolment Procedures for the School

Enrolment of students with additional learning requirements
St Joseph's School welcomes parents who wish to enrol a child with additional learning requirements and will explore available options to identify and meet these. The procedure for enrolling students with additional learning needs is the same as that for enrolling any student. When considering the enrolment of a child with additional learning requirements, St Joseph's School is required to comply with the relevant Australian and Victorian government legislation.

Enrolment of students from an interstate school
When enrolling students whose previous school was outside Victoria, St Joseph's School will 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 school to initiate and manage this procedure and be sensitive to parent/student consent requirements for the provision of information. All relevant documents and information are available on the Australian Government's Department of Education website.

Enrolment of full fee-paying overseas students (FFPOS)
Full fee-paying overseas students who wish to enrol at St Joseph's School are to refer to the Dependant Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) Application Procedure which explains the application procedure, requirements and the relevant visa classes and fees that apply.

St Joseph's School will ensure parents provide up to date evidence of their visa status from the Department of Home Affairs, including any changes to visa or citizenship status as soon as they are notified.

If the criteria are met, parents and the Principal are required to complete the Dependant Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) Application Form and submit to Executive Director for assessment and approval at ffpos@DOBCEL.vic.edu.au.

Register of Enrolments

St Joseph's School is required to keep an electronic record (Enrolment Register) of all students enrolled at the school. The register includes the following information:

- name, age, date of birth and residential address of student
- parent names and contact details
- date of enrolment
- the Victorian Student Number allocated to the student
- medical information for emergency management purposes
- emergency contact details
- sacramental information
- if applicable: home care arrangements, court orders, transfer records.
- date of leaving the school and further information concerning student's departure, where appropriate
- for students older than six years, details of previous schools or pre-enrolment situation.

The register is retained in accordance with the Records Management Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL] after the student leaves the school, and copies of information in the register are stored off-site at regular intervals.

Termination of Enrolment

In certain limited circumstances a termination of enrolment may occur. An example is where the relationship between a school and a family has irretrievably broken down due to significant and/or repeated breaches of the school's Parent Code of Conduct, the school's Enrolment Agreement, and relevant school policies. Parents are, as a condition of enrolment, expected to read, sign, and comply with the Code of Conduct, the school's Enrolment Agreement, and relevant school policies.

Parents who breach the Code of Conduct, Enrolment Agreement, and/or school 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 concerning 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 based on parental/guardian/carer conduct must be approved by the Executive Director, and such approval is provided only in the following circumstances:

- a breach of the Code of Conduct on the part of a parent has previously occurred
- 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
- a further breach of the Code of Conduct occurs, either by the parent, or by another family member in relevant circumstances.

A termination of enrolment may also occur where, on a single occasion, a parent has engaged in conduct which constitutes a serious breach of the Parent 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 may be made by the Executive Director, 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 the parent has been given any previous warnings
- procedural fairness in the decision-making process, including an opportunity for the student and their family to be heard and all relevant information considered.

Students are also, as a condition of enrolment, expected to read and comply with the school's Student Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct).

The consequences for student misbehaviour, serious and/or persistent breaches of the student code of conduct are outlined in the Student Behaviour Policy and Procedures. The Suspension, Negotiated Transfer, and Expulsion of Students Policy and Procedures detail the management of suspension, expulsion, and appeals processes.

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

Parent/Guardian/Carer Responsibilities

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

- to complete the school's Application for Enrolment Form and ensure it is returned by the due date. N.B. This does not guarantee enrolment in the school. An Offer of Enrolment Form is sent to

prospective students containing the school's Acceptance of Offer of Enrolment Form. Once the Acceptance of Offer of Enrolment Form is signed and received, the child is considered formally enrolled

- at enrolment time to inform the school of all additional individual requirements
- to be prepared to support the school in the Catholic education of their child and engage with the school community as much as possible,
- to commit to conforming with expected standards of parental behaviour as outlined in the school's Parent & Carer Code of Conduct signed upon enrolment of their child.
- to 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 Business Manager)
- to advise the Principal of any court order 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
- to provide all information requested at the time of enrolment as required from time to time.

Complaints Regarding Enrolment

St Joseph's School 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.

An appeal in relation to enrolment or termination of enrolment is to be made in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]and the Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion of Students Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]. Initial concerns can be raised with the Principal either in writing or by making an appointment for an interview.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Details
Executive Director	• Approval for exemption for enrolment under the minimum and maximum school entry age	• Written approval required. Subject to student meeting criteria outlined in these procedures
	• Decision to withdraw or terminate a student's enrolment	• Consideration of the view of the Principal and all circumstances, nature, and gravity of actions of students
Principals	• Acceptance and management of all enrolments	• Report enrolment data to Executive Director through the February and August censuses
	• Publication of school enrolment policies, procedures, agreement, enrolment pack, forms, and School Community Safety Order internal review process on school website	• Annual attestation to the Executive Director
	• Compliance with DOBCEL enrolment policies	• Annual attestation to the Executive Director with any breaches identified
	• Maintenance of Enrolment Register	• Register of enrolments of all students who have been enrolled at a school to be maintained in electronic form. The register must include all required information

- A DOBCEL secondary college identifies a variation in enrolment demand and as such streams are required to be added or subtracted from a year level
- Notify the Secondary Education Consultant at the earliest possible time.

Supporting Documentation

Internal

- Actioning Education for All: A guide for a whole of system approach to inclusive practices for Catholic Education Ballarat (DOBCEL)
- Complaints Management Policy & Procedure [DOBCEL]
- Enrolment Application Form [SCHOOL]
- Record Management Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]
- Repeating a Year Level – Information Sheet for Principals (TBC)
- Student Behaviour Policy and Procedures [School]
- Suspension Negotiated Transfer, and Expulsion of Students Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]
- Transition for Students with Diverse Needs

Forms and Templates

- Enrolment Application Form [School Form]
- Enrolment Agreement Form [School Form]
- Offer of Enrolment [School Form]
  Includes:
  - Offer of Enrolment letter template
  - Acceptance of Offer of Enrolment letter template
  - Non-Acceptance of Offer of Enrolment letter template
- Maximum Age Exemption Application Form [School Form]
- Minimum Age Exemption Application Form [School Form]
- Change of Financial Responsibility Form [School Form]
- Unsuccessful Enrolment Application Letter [School Template]
- Enrolment Planning Tool [DOBCEL]
- Parents/Guardians/Carers Code of Conduct [School Template]

Resources

- Transferring Student Data Interstate https://www.education.gov.au/transferring-student-data-interstate
- School Community Safety Order Scheme: Ministerial Guidelines (Vic Government)

Policy Owner	**School Principal**
Approval Date	**February 2025**