

## 3.5.1 ENROLMENT POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out the enrolment process for families that apply for enrolment at Mount Evelyn Christian School (**the School**) and clarifies who is eligible for enrolment as a student. Parents and guardians of students (collectively referred to as **parents** throughout this policy) may wish to consider this policy prior to applying for enrolment at the School.

The defined term “**disability**” has the same meaning in this policy as it does under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).

### PREAMBLE

The School takes into account the Christian value of love for all of God’s people and is committed to caring for all students, including students with a disability or additional needs, while acting as responsible stewards of the School’s resources so as to maintain a sustainable and vibrant community.

### RATIONALE

This policy is the practical implementation of Governance Policy 3.5 Enrolment. This policy guides the implementation of enrolment procedures and upholds the vision and mission that the School holds as a response to God’s call for Christians to submit all areas of life to him. This necessarily leads to the principle of priority for Christian families who wish to enrol their children at the School.

This policy embodies biblical values of grace and justice upon which School enrolments are based.

This policy sets out the School’s approach to assessing applications for enrolment, including for students with a disability or additional needs, consistent our values.

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### 1. Key Principles

During the enrolment process, the School will seek to:

- welcome and consider all enrolment applications without undue delay, with confidentiality and with open communication between the School and parents;
- proceed applications to the interview stage, according to the enrolment process and discretion of the Principal;
- only enrol students in Prep who have turned 5 by 30 April in the year they are starting school;
- prioritise enrolments in accordance with clause 7 below;
- consider the welfare of the whole School community, the School’s Christian ethos and the capacity of the School to cater for the individual needs of each prospective student when deciding whether to make an offer of enrolment;
- collect all information required as part of our compliance obligations (in line with clause 2 below); and

- ensure that only those legally responsible for a prospective student authorises the prospective student's enrolment, particularly in cases of separated or divorced families. For further information, refer to the section on Enrolment in MECS Policy 3.3.1 "Parental Authority – Decision Making responsibilities in separated families".

## 2. Disclosure

When assessing enrolment applications prior to enrolment:

- the School has a right to request information (**Student Information**) from parents about prospective students (at the cost of parents), including (but not limited to):
  - academic information;
  - school reports;
  - medical reports;
  - information in relation to learning needs, including (but not limited to) specialist reports (such as reports from occupational therapists, social workers and NDIS support workers);
  - birth certificates or passports;
  - Visa information, when applicable;
  - immunisation status certificates;

**Note:** The certificate must be a copy of that provided by the Australian Immunisation Register. Copies of the child's Maternal Child and Health record are not sufficient. Alternatively, parents must provide a 'Conscientious Objection form' or 'Contra-indication form' signed by a doctor. Students moving from the MECS kindergarten to the MECS primary school shall be required to provide an up-to-date Immunisation status certificate indicating that they have received all required immunisations for school age.

**Note:** For kindergarten children, the collection of required documentation is reflective of the requirements under the "No Jab, No Play" legislation (January 2016), which stipulates that an immunisation status certificate be provided that indicates that the child is:

- up to date with vaccinations for their age;
- on a vaccine catch-up schedule; or
- has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.
- other information for kindergarten enrolments, as required under the specific kindergarten legislation;
- all information and data required for various educational authority data collection obligations; and
- medical and emergency information for each student and, where relevant, action plans for anaphylaxis, asthma and any other medical conditions rated as severe; and
- parents must meet the School's request within any reasonable period of time specified by the School so that the School can assess the enrolment

application to which the Student Information relates in a timely manner.

In line with clause 6 below, the School may use Student Information to assess the needs of prospective students with disabilities or additional needs, and any adjustments to the school program that may be required.

During enrolment:

- the School has a right to request further Student Information from parents about students (at the cost of parents); and
- parents must meet the School's request within any reasonable period of time specified by the School so that the School can continue to meet the educational needs of students.

### **3. Enrolment of students with disabilities or additional needs**

The School will consider enrolment applications relating to students with disabilities or additional needs in accordance with clause 6 below.

### **4. Payment of Enrolment Acceptance Fee**

- Following the acceptance of an enrolment by the Principal, parents shall be asked to sign an Acceptance Form and a Partnership Agreement, outlining their and the School's obligations throughout the education of their child/ren at the School.
- At the time of returning the Acceptance form, an Enrolment Acceptance fee will be payable by each new family. An enrolment position shall not be secured until this payment has been received. The Enrolment Acceptance fee amount shall be set by the Board and can be varied by the Board from time to time without notice.

### **5. Acceptance of enrolment**

If an enrolment application for a prospective student is accepted, then the School will notify the prospective student's parent(s) of this outcome in writing.

### **6. Reasons why an enrolment application may be refused**

An enrolment application for a prospective student may be refused in circumstances where:

- there is no vacancy for the prospective student;
- the application is not a whole family application;
- the parents of the prospective student are not committed to the School's philosophy as identified in the MECS Focus on Identity document; or
- the reason for the application is not consistent with the School's philosophy.

Additionally, an enrolment application for a prospective student with a disability or additional needs may be refused if:

- the prospective student requires adjustments in order to participate in or derive any substantial benefit from the School's educational program; and
- either:
  - the adjustments are not reasonable;
  - the prospective student could not participate in or derive any substantial benefit from the School's educational program even after the adjustments are made; or

- the adjustments would cause unjustifiable hardship to the School.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, the School will consider:

- the prospective student's circumstances, including the nature of the prospective student's disability;
- the nature of the adjustment(s) required to accommodate the prospective student's disability;
- the effect on the prospective student of making the adjustment, including the effect on the prospective student's ability to:
  - achieve learning outcomes;
  - participate in courses or programs; and
  - work independently;
- the effect on the School, School staff, other students or any other person of making the adjustment, including:
  - the financial impact of making the adjustment; and
  - the number of people who would benefit from or be disadvantaged by making the adjustment;
- the consequences for the School of making the adjustment;
- the consequences for the prospective student of not making the adjustment; and
- any relevant action plan made under Part 3 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth).

In assessing whether a particular measure or adjustment for a particular student is reasonable, the School will consider the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth), as amended from time to time.

Where the School:

- has insufficient information to assess the adjustments or supports that would be required to effectively support a prospective student with a disability or additional needs; or
- determines that a prospective student with a disability or additional needs would require adjustments that are not reasonable or would cause unjustifiable hardship to the School;

the School may decline to offer a position to the prospective student, seek further Student Information, and/or defer consideration of the enrolment application.

The School will notify the prospective student's parent(s) of this outcome and the reason(s) why the School has declined or deferred consideration of the application.

The School may consult with the Class Teacher, Year Level and Cluster Coordinators, Assistant Principals and/or Education Support Coordinators when considering an application for enrolment. The Principal (or their delegate) has authority to decide whether an enrolment application is declined or deferred.

Where additional needs and adjustment are identified during the enrolment process, an initial 'pre-interview' meeting will take place with parents, the relevant Assistant Principal or Year Level/Cluster Coordinator and the relevant Education Support

Coordinator to discuss the requirements and feasibility of an enrolment at the School, and to explore the potential for effective partnership with the parents. Parents are required to provide all relevant Student Information at this meeting and may be required to provide further Student Information prior to allow the School to consider in consultation with the Student and parents all necessary supports and reasonable adjustments.

## **7. Priority of Enrolment Positions**

If the number of enrolment applications for a particular year level received by the School exceeds the number of available positions for that year level, then prospective students will be offered enrolment in accordance with the categories listed below (ordered from most prioritised (1) to least prioritised (5)).

Additionally, in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic), the School may give preference to prospective students of Christian faith (or prospective students with at least one parent of Christian faith) (referred to as “Christian families” in **Column A** below) over prospective students who are not of Christian faith (or prospective students whose parents are not of Christian faith) (referred to as “non-Christian families” in **Column B** below).

<b>Column A</b> Christian families	<b>Column B</b> Non-Christian families
1. Sibling to current student	1. Sibling to current student
2. Children of past student	2. Children of past student
3. Related to current staff member (e.g. grandchildren)	3. Related to current staff member (e.g. grandchildren)
4. Full family application (including if there is only one child)	4. Full family application (including if there is only one child)
5. Single student application (siblings at a different school)	5. Single student application (siblings at a different school)

When considering enrolment applications, the Principal or their delegate must have regard to the Board's goal to preserve the School's Christian ethos by maintaining a proportion of Christian families that is at least 80%.

Where two or more applications, in consideration of the above categories, have equal priority and the position cannot be filled from a higher category, the earliest date of application for enrolment will take precedence.

## **8. Enrolment Applications from Independent Minors**

Occasionally the School may be approached by a prospective student wishing to enrol as an independent minor, who does not legally require the permission of parents to enrol. These applications shall be considered on a case-by-case basis and are at the discretion of the Principal.

When considering these applications, the Principal must have regard to relevant facts and circumstances, including:

- the support networks the prospective student has in place;
- the prospective student's level of maturity;
- the prospective student's capacity and commitment to pay fees;
- the emotional and mental state of the prospective student; and
- whether the School can support the prospective student academically and emotionally.

Should a prospective student's application be accepted, the prospective student will be required to sign the applicable Acceptance form and Partnership Agreement for Independent Minors, which require joint signing with an adult witness who can attest to the prospective student having read all relevant documents and form and understood what they are committing to.

## **9. Expectations of parents**

Once a student is offered a place, parents are expected to sign an enrolment agreement and partnership agreement which includes obligations to support the aims and ethos of the School, and which imposes standards of behaviour on parents. The Executive has the authority, in consultation with the Board, to take action against parents who fail to fulfil their obligations under the Partnership Agreement from the School community. Without

limitation, this may include issuing a warning to those parents and expelling those parents from the School community.

## 10. Families leaving the School

- **Notice of departure:** Where a family leaves the School, the School expects the family to provide in writing to the Principal one full term's (i.e., at least 9 weeks) formal notice of their intention to withdraw their child/ren from the school;
- **Charging fees in lieu of notice of departure:** Where a full term's notice is not given, pro rata fees will be charged based on amount of notice given. Exemption of this may only be given at discretion of Executive;
- **Exit procedures:** Where a family leaves the School, the School expects them to complete the appropriate exiting procedures before their child/ren exits the school.

## ENROLMENT GUIDELINES

- The Principal retains the right to accept or reject an application for enrolment on reasonable grounds.
- The School does not give reasons for unsuccessful applications for enrolment except as provided in clause 6 or where required by law.
- When it is indicated on the Application for Enrolment form, or becomes evident during the enrolment process, that there is only nominal involvement (e.g. weddings, funerals etc) in a non-Christian religion the enrolment process may proceed at the discretion of the principal.
- Families are encouraged to enrol all children of school age at the same time. In the case of a family wishing to enrol their child/ren more than 12 months ahead of commencement, some restrictions may apply.
- In the absence of a court order, the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) gives both parents equal responsibility for the education of their child (or children). Therefore, enrolment applications and the Partnership Agreement must be signed, where possible, by both parents, even if the parents are separated. Refer to the section on Enrolment in MECS Policy 3.3.1 "Parental Authority – Decision Making responsibilities in separated families".
- The Enrolments Manager shall check the parent names on the birth certificate required with all applications. Should the names not match those on the enrolment application, further explanation is to be sought from the applicants.
- It is not the School's responsibility, nor would it be wise, to get involved in split family disagreements about the education of their child (or children). The School will comply with legal requirements and prioritise its duty of care to students in any decision.

## AUTHORISATION

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**Date Approved:** 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2023

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**Review Date:** August 2025

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<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Principal
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<b>Contact Person:</b>	Principal
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