

The Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) Enrolment Procedures for Schools contains specific policy direction and procedures for the enrolling of students into MACS primary and secondary schools.

Purpose

This document outlines MACS Board-approved procedures relating to the enrolment of students in primary and secondary schools.

The procedures reflect the mandatory requirements for MACS schools under the minimum standards for school registration pursuant to the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.) and *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.). These requirements are set out within the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) *Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration*.

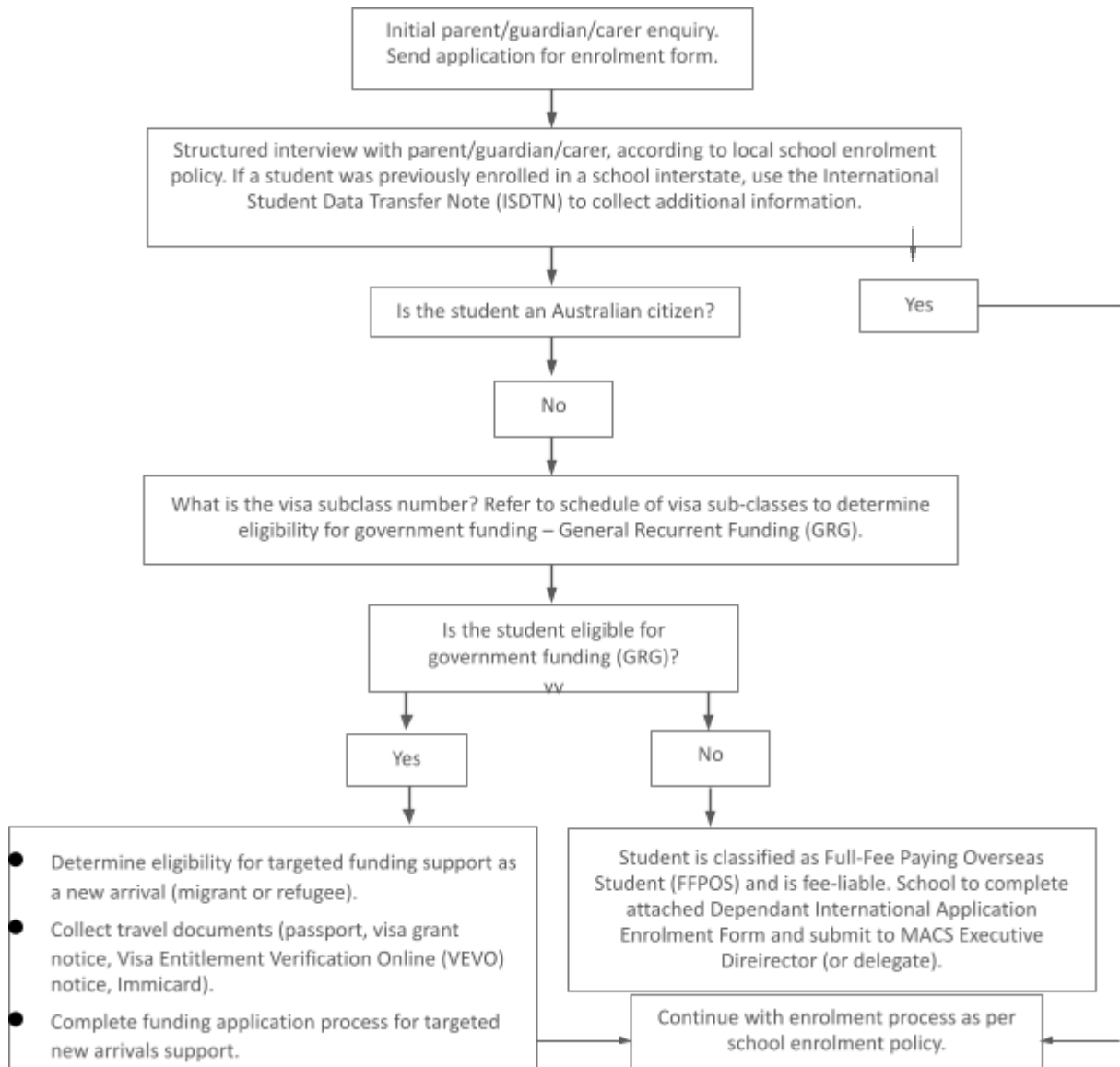
Parents seeking to enrol their child in a MACS school should review the enrolment policies and procedures to understand the enrolment procedure and their obligations if the application to enrol their child is successful. A reference to 'parent' in this document includes a reference to a parent, guardian or carer (as applicable).

Scope

These procedures apply to all primary and secondary schools that are owned, operated and governed by MACS.

Mandated Enrolment Procedure

To ensure consistency and transparency, MACS schools are required to follow the enrolment procedure presented in the following flow chart.



Enrolling children under the minimum school entry age and pre-Prep/Foundation programs

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

Minimum age exemption application criteria

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)

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

Student will be aged at least 4 years 6 months on or before 30 April in the year they commence school as evidenced by a birth certificate or passport (in addition to meeting criteria 1 or 2)

Evidence from childcare, kindergarten, allied health or other relevant professionals that support early-age entry and the detrimental impacts to the longer-term interests of the child were they not to attend school.

Minimum age exemption application process

The parent/guardian/carer should contact the principal to seek advice about the minimum age exemption procedure. Note additional support (e.g. an interpreter) can be provided upon request.

The principal will determine if there is sufficient evidence to meet the aforementioned minimum age exemption application criteria.

The principal will submit an application to the MACS Regional General Manager for approval by the MACS Executive Director or a delegate. The application should include:

- a minimum age exemption application form
- a supporting letter from the parent/guardian/carer(s) requesting an exemption for enrolment under minimum school entry age
- supporting documentation from appropriate health or educational professionals detailing cognitive assessment results (IQ at or above 130) and substantive reasons for early school entry
- if relevant, 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 (e.g. school report).

Pre-Prep/Foundation programs

These procedures do not support the promotion of pre-Prep/Foundation programs which provide two years of schooling at the Foundation level. Indeed, repetition of a school year at any level has not been proven to create the opportune conditions for future learning development, and is often detrimental

to future progress and not recommended. A child's perceived lack of readiness for school in the Foundation year may be caused by developmental needs, which would be better identified and addressed through flexible arrangements that cater for the needs of every child from the point of school entry, i.e. the Foundation year.

Year 7 enrolment

In enrolling students at Year 7, secondary colleges that share priority parishes are required to collaborate to ensure all applicants are offered a place at a MACS secondary college. Collaboration aims to be open and transparent and consistent with local school enrolment policies and practices.

Secondary colleges must comply with the upper limit ceiling for Year 7 enrolments for each MACS school, and take into account the priority parishes for each school together with the agreed timeline for the Year 7 enrolment procedure. If, during the annual applications assessment for Year 7 enrolment, a college receives applications above the ceiling limit, an application may be made to MACS to request an additional stream of students for Year 7.

The MACS Executive Director will consider the advice received from the Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee (AEC) to either approve or not approve the proposed enrolment increase and the length of time it will remain in place.

Enrolment of students with additional learning needs

We welcome parents who wish to enrol a child with additional learning needs and explore available options to fully understand and accommodate the child's needs. The procedure for enrolling students with additional learning needs is the same as that for enrolling any student. There is collaboration between primary and secondary MACS schools to ensure coordination and consistency of policy and procedures. We are required to comply with the relevant Australian and Victorian government legislation when considering the enrolment of a child with additional learning needs.

Enrolment of students from interstate

When enrolling students whose previous school was interstate, we 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 procedure, and be sensitive to parent/student consent requirements for the provision of information. All relevant documents and information are available from the Education Council's website www.educationcouncil.edu.au/EC-Reports-and-Publications/EC-ISDTN/EC-ISDTN--.

Dependent full-fee paying overseas students

Parents who are studying, or planning to study, in Victoria and wish to enrol their child as a full-fee paying overseas student (FFPOS) are to refer to the Dependent Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) Application which explains the application procedure and requirements and the relevant visa classes and fees that apply.

Enrolment Procedures for Secondary Schools

Each MACS secondary college will build a relationship with primary schools, both Catholic and government, in their priority parishes to ensure that prospective parents are fully aware of the opportunities that exist at that school.

MACS secondary colleges will not advertise or actively seek enrolments other than in their priority parishes.

It is essential that families are allowed, where choice is available, to indicate their preference for one secondary college and still remain eligible for a first-round offer from the secondary college of second choice, if they are unable to be accommodated by the secondary college of first choice. Such applicants will be a resident of a priority parish for the secondary college of second choice. An offer should not be made to a family who has accepted an enrolment place at another Catholic secondary college.

Where two or more secondary colleges share a priority parish, parents/guardians/carers are afforded a greater degree of choice, but it is essential that the schools work in partnership to develop a process for handling applications made to more than one secondary school.

Procedures for determining offers

1. Exchange lists of applicants in electronic form with neighbouring secondary colleges, with applicants listed in alphabetical order, and containing the following information:
 - name
 - religion
 - gender
 - current school
 - residential address
 - parish of residence
 - sibling and/or parent connection.
2. Identify students with applications to more than one Catholic secondary college.
3. Communicate with surrounding secondary colleges to confirm applicants to more than one college and establish an agreed process to determine the order of preference of secondary colleges. Generally applicants who do not belong to a priority parish should not be considered further by that college. However, during the consultative process it is necessary to ensure such applicants are made an offer by a secondary college which is a priority parish for that college.
4. Share the outcome of these processes to establish a revised list of applicants who have nominated the secondary college as their first preference.
5. Rank the reduced list of students according to the criteria outlined in the enrolment policy of each college.
6. Identify students who did not receive a first-round, or realistically, a second-round offer and who have an application at another secondary college.
7. Communicate the names of these applicants to neighbouring secondary colleges for which they have lodged an application and for which they are a resident of a priority parish with the expectation that the student would receive a first-round offer from the secondary college of second choice.
8. Exchange lists of offers with neighbouring secondary colleges (including the same details as in 1).
9. Maintain a waiting list of applicants who have not accepted an offer at another Catholic secondary college.
10. Liaise with neighbouring Catholic secondary colleges before making second-round offers to ensure that each applicant receives one offer only.