Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools

Purpose

The Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools contains specific directions applicable to the enrolment of domestic students in MACS primary and secondary schools, including specialist schools operated by MACS subsidiary, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools (MACSS).

The procedures reflect the mandatory requirements for enrolment in 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 school's enrolment policy and these procedures to understand their obligations and the procedure should their application to enrol their child be successful. A reference to 'parent' in this document includes a reference to a parent, guardian, or carer (as applicable).

Enrolment procedures for MACS schools

To ensure consistency and transparency, MACS schools are required to follow this mandated enrolment procedure.

The parent/guardian/carer makes an enquiry with the administration team at the school

1. The parent/guardian/carer submits an application for enrolment form to the school
2. Structured interview with parent/guardian/carer, according to the school's enrolment policy
   (a) If a student was previously enrolled in a school interstate, use the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note (ISDTN) to collect additional information.
3. If the student is an Australian citizen, continue with school enrolment process, taking into consideration the school enrolment policies and procedures, privacy policies, and other relevant policies and procedures.
   (a) Review the student's enrolment application with reference to minimum and maximum school entry age policies
   (b) As part of the process, the principal or delegate provides enrolment agreement, 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.
4. 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).
   (a) If the student is eligible for government funding, the principal or delegate must comply with the Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000 (ESOS Act). for independent international students and determine eligibility for targeted funding support as a new arrival (migrant or refugee), collects travel documents (passport, visa grant notice, Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) notice, ImmiCard), and completes funding application process for targeted new arrivals support. The principal or delegate continues with the school enrolment process.
   (b) If the student is not eligible for government support, the student is classified as Full-Fee Paying Overseas Student (FFPOS) and is fee-liable. The principal completes attached

Dependent International Application Enrolment Form with the application lodgment fee and submits to MACS at ffpos@macs.vic.edu.au for assessment.

Please refer to the Mandated Enrolment Procedures flowchart (Appendix 1).

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 Executive Director (or the delegate of 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. 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)
4. 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

1. 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.
2. The principal will determine if there is sufficient evidence to meet the minimum age exemption application criteria.
3. The principal will apply to the relevant regional general manager for approval by the Executive Director (or their 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).

If the criteria are met, parent/guardian/carer(s) are required to complete the Minimum Age Exemption Application Form (link) and submit to the principal for submission to the MACS Regional Offices.

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.

Enrolling students at Year 7

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 consider 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 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 consideration of the maximum age exception and exemption

Generally, a person who is aged over 18 years must not be enrolled at, or allowed to attend, a MACS school, or participate in any program or course conducted unless they:

- have been granted an exemption by the Executive Director or delegate
- fall within an exception to the maximum age requirements.

Maximum Age Exception Criteria

The principal of a MACS school may enrol a student (without completion of this form), where either of the following exception criteria are met:

- the student will turn 18 during the year of enrolment in an accredited senior secondary course, such as the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM), the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) (according to the VCAA's 2023 teach out arrangements), the International Baccalaureate (IB), Vocational Education and Training (VET) or an accredited foundation secondary course, for example, Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC).
- the student will turn 19 during the year of enrolment for the sole purpose of completing an accredited senior secondary course in that year, accredited foundation secondary course in that year, or the student is expected to successfully complete their course in the year of enrolment based on the current course plan and assessment information.

Maximum Age Exemptions

An exemption must be sought where the student does not meet the exception criteria outlined above. There are three categories for maximum age exemption: Special Circumstances, English Language, and Other exemption as approved by Executive Director's delegate. Each category has specific requirements which must be met if a person is to be eligible for an exemption.

Applying for a Maximum Age Exemption

After determining the appropriate maximum age exemption category, the application form must be completed and submitted to the regional general manager.

1. Section 1 must be completed by the person seeking the exemption, or their parent/guardian/carer.
2. Section 2 must be completed by the principal of the college the person wishes to attend. Together with all supporting documents, this should be forwarded to the regional general manager.
3. Section 3 must be completed and signed by the Director, Learning and Regional Services.

The person, or their parent/guardian/carer, should inform the college if they require assistance, including an interpreter, to support them to understand the exemption process. Note: if a person is eligible for an exemption in more than one category, they must submit a separate application form for each exemption.

If the criteria are met, parent/guardian/carer(s) are required to complete the Maximum Age Exemption Application Form (link) and submit to the principal for submission to the regional office.

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 an interstate school

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 on the Australian Government's Department of Education website: https://www.dese.gov.au/collections/interstate-student-data-transfer-note-and-protocol-non-government-schools

Enrolment of full fee-paying overseas students (FFPOS)

Full fee-paying overseas students who wish to enrol at MACS schools are to refer to the Dependant Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) Application Procedure (link) which explains the application procedure and requirements and the relevant visa classes and fees that apply. All relevant information pertaining to visa classes are available from the Australian Government website: https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing

Please ensure parents/guardians/carers provide up to date evidence of visa status from the Department of Home Affairs, including any changes to visa or citizenship as soon as notified.

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

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.

Roles, responsibilities, and reporting

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Accept and manage all enrolments	Report enrolment data to Executive Director through the February and August censuses
Principal	Determine if sufficient evidence exists to support minimum age exemption for enrolment	Submit application to the relevant regional general manager for approval by the Executive Director (or delegate)
Principal	Determine if sufficient evidence exists to support maximum age exemption for enrolment	Submit application to the relevant regional general Manager for approval by the Executive Director (or delegate)
Principal	Determine if student has a visa class that falls under Full Fee Overseas Paying student	Submit application to General Manager, Learning Diversity for assessment and approval by the Executive Director (or delegate) at ffpos@macs.vic.edu.au

Delegations and authorities

Role	Description of power/function	Limitations/conditions	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Executive Director (or delegate)	Approval of proposal to increase Year 7 enrolment ceiling in a MACS secondary school	Consider advice from the Archdiocesan Enrolment Committee	Chief Planning and Infrastructure Officer maintains register of approved Year 7 ceilings and updates the Executive Director annually
Executive Director (or delegate)	Exemption for enrolment under the minimum school entry age	Prior written approval of the Executive Director (or delegate, Director, Learning and Regional Services)	All approved exemptions to minimum school entry age to be reported to the MACS Executive Director
Executive Director (or delegate)	Exemption for enrolment under the maximum school entry age	Principal to send completed application form and all supporting documents to the relevant Regional General Manager for approval by the Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)	
Executive Director (or delegate)	Approval for students who are Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS)	Prior written approval of the Executive Director (or delegate, Director, Learning and Regional Services	

Definitions

Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese Schools Ltd (MACS)

MACS is a reference to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, and / or its subsidiaries, MACSS and/or MACSEYE (as the context requires).

MACS school or school

A school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by MACS, directly or through MACSS (as the context requires). References to schools or MACS schools also includes boarding premises of schools operated by MACS and specialist schools operated by MACSS.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS)

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of MACS established to conduct and operate specialist schools.

Parish

Parish refers to the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries and student location is based on home address.

Priority parish

A priority parish is defined as a parish included in the catchment area of a school. Children living within a priority parish receive priority in enrolment over children who reside outside the priority parish catchment area.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Appendix 1: Mandated Enrolment Procedures Flowchart

Related MACS policies and documents

Consent to Transfer Information Form
Dependant Full Fee-Paying Overseas Students Application Procedure
Enrolment Agreement – Primary Schools
Enrolment Agreement – Secondary Schools
Enrolment Form – Primary Schools
Enrolment Form – Secondary Schools
Enrolment Policy for MACS schools
Enrolment Policy – Primary Schools
Enrolment Policy – Secondary Schools
Family Occupation Index – Parent/Guardian/Carer Occupation GroupsMaximum Age Exemption Application Form
Minimum Age Exemption Application Forms
Photography and Recording Permission Form – Schools – Template
Parents/Guardians/Carers Code of Conduct
Repeating a Year Level Application Form – Template
Standard Collection Notice – Template
Student Acceleration Application Form
Student Acceleration and Retention Policy for MACS Schools
Student Acceleration and Retention Policy – Template for Schools
Student Code of Conduct

Related policies and documents

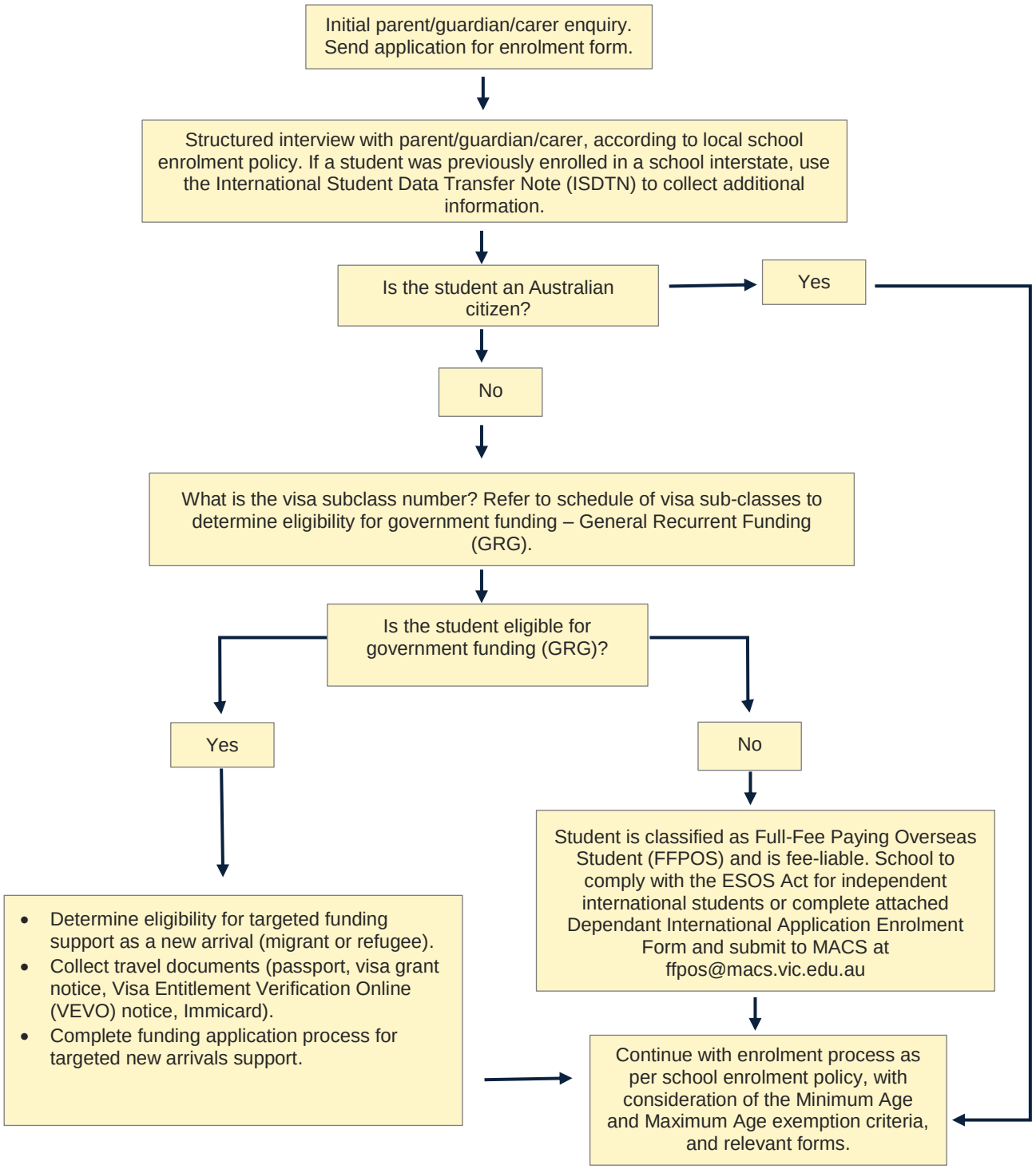
Australian Government - Interstate Data Transfer Note for non- government schools

Legislation and standards

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Cth)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
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 (Cth)Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards for schools

Policy information table

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Procedure owner	General Manager, Learning Diversity
Approving authority	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Assigned board committee	Education Strategy and Policy
Approval date	10 May 2023
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	May 2025
Publication details	CEVN, school website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Enrolment of Students
Related documents	Refer to Supporting Documents list above
Superseded documents	Enrolment Procedures for Schools – v1.0 – 2021

Appendix 1: Mandated Enrolment Procedure