



Enrolment Policy

Rationale

St Thomas More School embraces the mission of the Church by welcoming the enrolment of all students and families who share their vision and educational philosophy. Inspired and governed by the message and person of Jesus Christ, and committed to the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of each person. St Thomas More School provides Catholic education of the highest quality to its students.

Policy Statement

The Enrolment Policy aims to provide clear and consistent guidelines for the enrolment of students into St Thomas More School and is in line with Ballarat Diocesan School Advisory Council Enrolment Policy.

Catholic children living in the community of St. Patrick's Cathedral Parish will normally have the right to a place in St Thomas More School, providing there is a place available. St Thomas More School is welcoming to those families who may not be Catholic but who share the understanding of the Catholic school described above.

Principles:

- As a Catholic school, St Thomas More School has a particular responsibility to provide access to children baptised in the Catholic faith.
- St Thomas More 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.
- Students other than Catholics will be considered for enrolment provided this does not result in the exclusion of Catholic students (see enrolment criteria).
- St Thomas More School actively seeks to 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.
- All parents will be required to give an understanding that they will respect the life, nature and identity of the school.
- All students will be expected to participate fully in all aspects of school life including participation in the religious activities of the school.
- St Thomas More School is an inclusive and therefore welcoming school that accepts and supports those most in need.
- St Thomas More School will provide Catholic education that is in accordance with diocesan, state and commonwealth educational policies and standards.
- While it is important that parents appreciate their responsibility to pay such fees and levies, as are determined by St Thomas More School Advisory Council, it must be pointed out that no child will be excluded from the school or school activities because of non-payment of such fees and levies.

Enrolment Selection Criteria

Starting School: Foundation

By law, children must have turned five by the 30th April of their first year of school.

Enrolments will be allocated in the following order of priority:

- Siblings of children already enrolled in the school will be given priority
- Baptised children who are resident in the St Thomas More School parish.
- Baptised children who do not reside in the parish but are recognised as parishioners by the governing authority.
- Baptised children of Catholic families from parishes that do not have a Catholic school.
- Baptised children of Catholic families from other parishes (for pastoral reasons).
- Children not baptised from families in the parish with one parent a baptised Catholic
- Baptised children of Christian families who reside in the parish.
- Baptised children of Christian families who reside outside the parish.
- Children from a faith background other than Christian or other pastoral considerations

Other Year levels

- Catholic students who wish to transfer from another Catholic or government school will be considered as a priority according to criteria for Foundation enrolments and may take into account any additional circumstances. If it is not possible to offer a place, the school will assist in providing information regarding enrolment in nearby Catholic schools.
- Baptised students of Christian families or of other faiths who wish to transfer from a Catholic or government school will be considered according to criteria for Foundation enrolments and may take into account additional circumstances. The enrolment will depend on a place being available and does not result in the exclusion of a Catholic student. If it is not possible to offer a place, the school will assist in providing information regarding enrolment in nearby Catholic schools.
- It is expected that St Thomas More School is provided with all relevant information on a transferring student. The school may request to make contact with the student's current school.

Enrolment Procedures

- Each Catholic school is responsible for its own enrolment policy and procedures. Enrolment at a Catholic primary school does not guarantee enrolment at a Catholic secondary school.
- The principal will consult with the governing authority on all matters pertaining to enrolment.
- Annual enrolments dates, forms and procedures for Prep (Foundation) students and other year levels will be available on the school website and advertised in school and parish newsletters and community news.

- A timeline will be available indicating when enrolments forms must be lodged, interview dates, notification of enrolment outcome and acceptance date. This will be provided on school website and updated annually.
- The school will provide parents with the fees policy and procedures at the time of the enrolment enquiry (see Fees and levies).
- The principal on behalf of the governing authority will interview all parents and the child/children they wish to enrol at St Thomas More School
- Students enrolling in St Thomas More School are enrolled under the proviso that all students participate in the religious activities of the school.
- Parents wishing to transfer their child from another school will be required to complete an “Application for Enrolment when applying from another Primary School”.
- When enrolling students whose previous school was interstate, St Thomas More School will use the protocols of the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note (ISDTN).
- St Thomas More School welcomes parents who wish to enrol a child with additional learning needs. The process for enrolling students with special needs or with a disability is the same as that for enrolling any student in accordance with the Enrolment Process Flowchart. St Thomas More School will comply with the relevant Australian and Victorian Government legislation when considering the enrolment of a child with additional learning needs.
- During the process of enrolment the particular learning needs of the student will be discussed. Parents have a responsibility to disclose all factors and relevant reports that impact on the child’s learning needs and potential resource requirements.
- All prospective enrolments will require relevant documentation with their enrolment form including birth and baptism certificates, an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (primary schools), visa (if relevant) and parenting orders (if relevant). Failure to provide a History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register will result in the enrolment not being accepted.
- All information gathered will be maintained according to the Privacy Act 2000.
- A Register of Enrolments containing all necessary information will be maintained at the school.
- Any concerns about the implementation of the enrolment policy at St Thomas More School may be referred to the Catholic Education Office Ballarat for advice.

Fees and Levies

- St Thomas More School Advisory Council recommends to the governing authority the fees and levies. While it is important that parents appreciate their responsibility to pay, no child will be excluded from the school or school activities because of non-payment of such fees and levies.
- 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, it is the responsibility of the parent/s to contact the school as soon as the issue arises.
- Families may also be able to access the *Family Fee Assistance Scheme*.
- Additional fees for optional extra-curricular/special educational experiences such as private music must be paid. In some cases, an outside provider will bill the family directly.
- School fees and levy structure will be contained in the enrolment package.

Appealing an Enrolment Decision

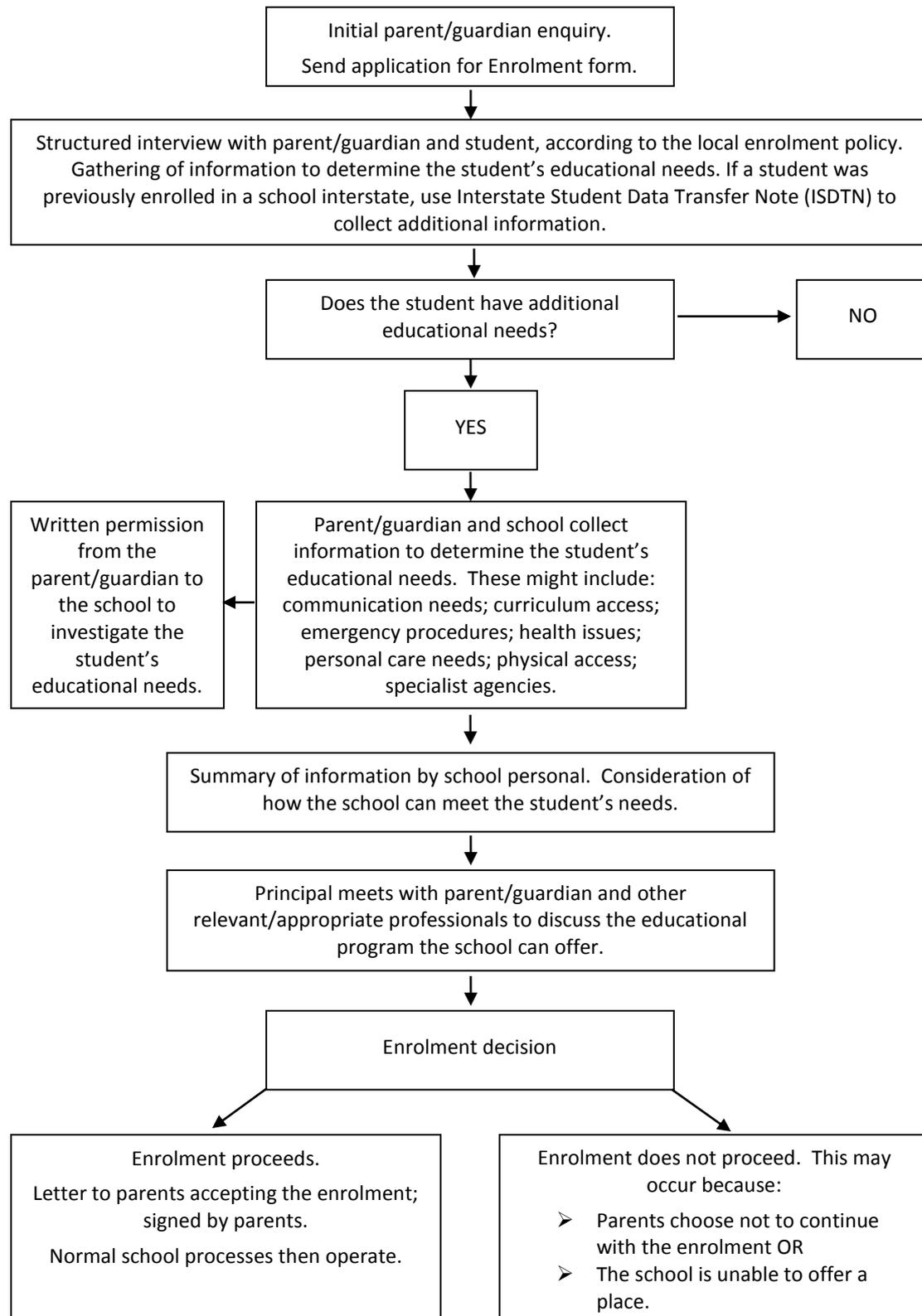
- An appeal of the enrolment decision can be made where a family believes that a breach of the school enrolment policy or a breach of the relevant legislation has occurred.
- An appeal is made to the Director of Catholic Education, PO Box 576, Ballarat VIC 3350 or director@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au or phone 03 5337 7135.
- 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.

Communication

The policy will be available on the school website with accompanying enrolment forms and timelines for the enrolment process.

Enrolment Process Flowchart

In the interests of consistency and transparency, St Thomas More School, as recommended by the Diocese of Ballarat, follows the Archdiocese of Melbourne Recommended Enrolment Process presented in the following flowchart:



Relevant Legislation

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.

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.

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.

Policy Updated: November 2018

Policy Ratified: November 2018

Policy Review: November 2023

6