

## Enrolment Policy

### 1. Rationale

*“...Catholic schools are still central to the mission and work of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat today and to the life quality of students and their families. Inspired and governed by the message and person of Jesus Christ, and committed to the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of each person, they provide education of the highest quality to their communities. In line with the self-understanding of the Church, they are welcoming to all who share their educational philosophy.”* (Awakenings Core Document, 2005, p 16)

The Mercy Regional College enrolment policy has been developed to assist the Principal in the assessment of the potential students’ suitability for enrolment at the College for vacancies that exist at any time for any year level.

Mercy Regional College invites enrolments from any potential student who is comfortable with, and prepared to support, the ethos of the College as outlined in the Mission and Vision Statement. Both student and parents/guardians are expected to respect and fully support the Catholic nature and practices of the College. These include formal Religious Education program, class and College Masses, retreats and reflection days and prayer.

### 2. Policy Statement

The enrolment policy of Mercy Regional College is based upon the following beliefs:

- That parents/guardians are the first educators of children and have the obligation and right to choose an education for their children consistent with their own beliefs and values;
- By virtue of their baptism, all Catholic children are entitled to a Catholic education; and
- Any and all potential students will be considered for enrolment provided their enrolment does not result in the exclusion of Catholic students.

### 3. Policy Guidelines

- Each year, the Mercy Regional College Board, will set the maximum enrolment numbers for the intake of Year Seven students and for Years 8 – 12 annually.
- All enrolments are subject to the discretion of the Principal and each enrolment decision must take into account the best interests of all concerned.
- The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and the Diocese of Ballarat recognize that Catholic schools are first and foremost for Catholic students.
- No child can be excluded from enrolment solely on the basis of gender, race, religion, physical or intellectual ability.

- No child will be excluded from enrolment at the College due to an inability to pay school fees. Parents will be given an opportunity to make arrangements with the Principal for alternate payment arrangements or, in certain circumstances, reductions in fee payments.
- Students with special needs are welcome at the college and provided appropriate resources and finances are available to meet specific learning, emotional and physical needs of the student.
- The following criteria reflect the order of priority for enrolments at Mercy Regional College:
  - Students who are baptised Catholics
  - Students with siblings attending the College
  - Students attending Catholic Primary schools
  - All other students

However, all enrolments at Mercy Regional College are at the discretion of the Principal and specific pastoral concerns may cause him or her to override this order.

- In matters of enrolment, the Principal may seek the advice of the College's Canonical Administrators, the Catholic Education Office Ballarat or other persons and/or institutions.
- The Principal (or Principal's delegate) will interview all or some of the applicants to fill potential or actual vacancies in year levels at the College.
- Those wishing to enrol at the College must complete the Mercy Regional College Enrolment Application form and pay a deposit of \$100.

#### **4. Transfers**

- Students transferring from other Catholic schools will be expected to provide a recent report from their previous school and the school may be contacted for a reference.
- Students from other Catholic schools will generally be accepted subject to the above.
- Students seeking to transfer from local or other secondary colleges will be offered enrolment subject to availability and a check of previous reports and reference.
- Where a student requests enrolment from another college following a dispute or any other significant reason, the Principal may offer a provisional enrolment which would be subject to periodic review. The provisional enrolment would include an agreement signed by the student, parents/guardians, Head of School and Principal of Mercy Regional College.
- When enrolling students whose previous school was interstate, Mercy Regional College will use the protocols of the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note (ISDTN).

#### **5. Notification of Enrolment**

- Parents/Guardians of applicants for enrolment will be notified in writing by the College of acceptance of that enrolment, or otherwise.
- Where applications for enrolment exceed the number of places at any year level, a waiting list will be created for those students who are unsuccessful in gaining initial enrolment at the College.

#### **6. 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.

## **7. Communication**

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

## **8. Sources**

- Mercy Regional College Mission and Vision Statements
- Relevant State and Commonwealth Legislation
- BDSAC Ballarat Diocesan Enrolment Policy 2015

## Appendix 1

### Relevant legislation to be considered when enrolling students in Catholic Schools

***The Victorian Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017.*** The regulations impose a requirement on a registered school to have a clearly defined enrolment policy that complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws. Referred therein is the main legislation affecting school enrolments. Each school must be familiar with the relevant provisions of this legislation and, if appropriate, prepare policies for administration and enforcement of relevant procedures.

***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 admission 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 (Cwlth).*** 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, physical disfigurement, and the presence in the body of a disease-causing organism. Relevant for enrolments, it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability, or a disability of any of the other person's associates, by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student; or in the terms and conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student. However, it is not unlawful to refuse or fail to accept a person's application for admission as a student in an educational institution where the person, if admitted as a student by the educational authority, would require services or facilities that are not required by students who do not have a disability and the provision of which would impose unjustifiable hardship on the educational authority.

***Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 (Cwlth).*** 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 what is 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.

### Enrolment of students with additional learning needs

Catholic schools are expected to welcome parents who wish to enrol a child with additional learning needs and do everything possible to accommodate the child's needs. The process for enrolling students with special needs should be the same as that for enrolling any student, and should conform to the Enrolment Process. Primary and secondary schools should collaborate to ensure coordination and consistency of policy and processes. Schools are required to comply with the relevant Australian and Victorian Government legislation when considering the enrolment of a child with additional learning needs in a Catholic school.

## Appendix 2

### School Enrolment Procedures in the Diocese of Ballarat

To ensure consistency and transparency in the enrolment of students in the schools of the Diocese of Ballarat, it is suggested that the following procedures for enrolment are implemented by all schools.

