

St Mary's College for the deaf (St Mary's College) is a college which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by MACS Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS).

St Mary's College is a MACSS school in which:

- prayer and liturgy are vital aspects of religious life in the college
- the pastoral care and support programs for students, families and staff are based on the teachings of the Catholic Church
- the teachings and values of the Catholic Church are paramount.

St Mary's College is a unique school providing an education to domestic students across the Archdiocese of Melbourne who are deaf and hard of hearing. Parents choose the College because of the direct teaching and support provided for their children by Teachers of the Deaf who work in partnership with five MACS schools: Holy Trinity Primary School, Wantirna South; St John's Regional College, Dandenong; Aquinas College, Ringwood; Marymede Catholic College, South Morang, Thomas Carr College, Tarneit as well as Salesian College Sunbury.

As the only Catholic specialist setting for deaf and hard of hearing students in Victoria, St Mary's College provides opportunities for students to enrol from any area within the Archdiocese of Melbourne. This means that students reside in numerous parishes and as such, any residential enrolment requirements relating to parishes are not applicable.

## Principles

### Inclusiveness

MACSS schools are established primarily for Catholic children. St Mary's College strives to be open and welcoming to all domestic Catholic students, regardless of their background, and does everything reasonable to accommodate each student's individual needs. St Mary's College welcomes deaf and hard of hearing students who have additional disabilities, come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islands or who are vulnerable.

St Mary's College is open to the enrolment of children of other Christian traditions and faiths, however, priority will be given to children from non-Catholic Eastern churches. Children from other religious traditions or of no religion are provided with an opportunity to enrol should they choose to apply and there is sufficient capacity within the college and the number of places it has been afforded by the partner school, in accordance with the Campus Collaboration Agreement with that partner school.

### Partnership between parents/guardians/carers and St Mary's College

Parents/guardians/carers are the first educators of their children. By enrolling a child in St Mary's College, parents/guardians/carers are entering into a partnership to promote and support their child's education, in particular their education in faith. While the college promotes access to a Catholic education through the college enrolment policy, it is the parent/guardian/carers' responsibility to support the college in furthering the spiritual and academic life of their child.

### Exercise of pastoral discretion in enrolment decisions

Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making with regard to enrolment at St \_\_\_\_\_

Mary's College. While the first priority of the principal is to enrol the children of Catholic parents/guardians/carers, pastoral discretion may be exercised in enrolment decisions where deemed appropriate. Enrolment decisions are made jointly by the Principal with the relevant Deputy Principal and Head of Campus to ensure transparency and equity in decision-making. As appropriate, the college consults with the partner school to consider applications for hearing impaired children who also require services or adjustments that are not required by students without a disability, and the provision of which would impose unjustifiable hardship on St Mary's College and/or the partner school.

If dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, parents can appeal by following the St Mary's College complaints process which is published on the college website.

St Mary's College reserves the right to determine who is a 'suitable' applicant by considering parents' perception of the supports and adjustments required and any limitations on the school's ability to provide such additional services or adjustments. St Mary's College values inclusivity and, in consultation with the partner school, makes every effort to accommodate students' different needs within the resources available.

## Eligibility Criteria

All students seeking to enrol with St Mary's College must meet the eligibility criteria:

- permanent bilateral hearing loss that is moderate, severe or profound - 40dB or greater averaged across the frequencies of 500Hz, 1000Hz and 2000Hz, and
- child needs assistance to communicate, and
- suitability to benefit from the specialised program offered by the school.

For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, limited access to auditory input and spoken language during early childhood years results in a range of learning challenges that impede development of literacy skills, language, social skills and executive function. St Mary's College therefore, does not accept applications for enrolment of children under the minimum age and pre-Prep/Foundation programs. If the circumstances are considered exceptional, parents may contact the principal to discuss whether enrolment may be considered and the approval process would be explained.

## Priority enrolment

There is an agreed order of priority for enrolment in MACSS schools, which must be followed in the enrolment policy and procedures. After the eligibility criteria has been met, the first priority of Catholic schools is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children.

The order of priority is:

1. Catholic children (primary applicants).
2. Catholic children who have attended a Catholic primary school (secondary applicants).
3. Siblings of children already enrolled in the school.
4. Catholic children who have not attended a Catholic primary school (secondary applicants).
5. Children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who have attended a Catholic primary school.
6. Children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who have not attended a Catholic primary school.
7. Other Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school.

8. Other Christian children who have not attended a Catholic primary school.
9. Non-Christian children who have attended a Catholic primary school.
10. Non-Christian children who have not attended a Catholic primary school.

## Definitions

### **Catholic child**

For the purpose of enrolment in a Catholic school, a child is considered to be Catholic if they are a member of the Catholic Church, usually established by a Certificate of Baptism.

### **Catholic school**

A Catholic school operated by MACSS is one which operates with the consent of the Archbishop of Melbourne, where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and where the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

### **Orthodox child**

For the purpose of enrolment in a Catholic school, a child is considered to be Orthodox if they are a member of a non-Catholic Eastern church, including Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox.

### **Parish**

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

## Parental Responsibilities

At the time of enrolment at St Mary's College, parents/guardians/carers make a commitment to provide ongoing support for their child's Catholic education. In particular, parents/guardians/carers are asked to make an explicit commitment to the following responsibilities:

- complete the college's enrolment form and ensure it is returned by the due date. This does not guarantee enrolment in the college
- be prepared to support the college in the Catholic education of their child and involve themselves as much as possible
- acknowledge and commit to meeting the financial responsibilities arising from the ongoing enrolment of their child at St Mary's College. Any difficulties in meeting this commitment should be discussed with the principal
- advise the principal of any court order/s that may exist in relation to their child, or any changes to such order/s, and provide a copy of the court order/s and any subsequent changes for the child's college file
- complete the college's Enrolment Agreement and related documents including the Codes of Conduct
- provide the college with an immunisation history statement
- read and complete the college's Enrolment Agreement and related documents including the Fees and Charges Policy and Codes of Conduct for students and parents.
- provide the college with a copy of the child's latest audiogram or Cochlear Implant Clinic report.

## Information to Be Collected

St Mary's College is required to collect and retain particular information about parents/guardians/carers and their child. Parents/guardians/carers are required to provide particular information about their child during the enrolment procedure in order for MACSS to meet its duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements. These include, but are not limited to, birth

certificate, custody arrangements, court orders, evidence of citizenship, sacramental program.

Lodging an enrolment form does not guarantee enrolment at St Mary's College.

The Enrolment Policy, Agreement, Codes of Conduct and related documents are accessible from the school's website, including the Privacy Policy. The Privacy Policy explains how the college deals with personal information. This includes any personal and sensitive information provided as part of the enrolment process and during the student's enrolment at St Mary's College.

## Education Services

St Mary's College Enrolment Agreement and Fees and Charges Schedule explain the education services covered by the fees and what costs are additional.

## Related Policies and Documentation

- Enrolment Agreement
- Pastoral Care of Students Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Codes of Conduct
- Privacy Policy