

# St Thomas the Apostle Enrolment Policy – Primary



St Thomas the Apostle is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

St Thomas the Apostle is a MACS school in which:

- prayer and liturgy are vital aspects of religious life in the school
- 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.

## Principles

### Inclusiveness

MACS schools are established primarily for Catholic children. St Thomas the Apostle strives to be open and welcoming to all Catholic students, regardless of their background, and does everything reasonable to accommodate each student's individual needs.

St Thomas the Apostle 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 in MACS schools, should they choose to apply and there is sufficient capacity within the school.

### Partnership between parents/guardians/carers and St Thomas the Apostle

Parents/guardians/carers are the first educators of their children. By enrolling a child in St Thomas the Apostle, parents/guardians/carers are entering into a partnership to promote and support their child's education, in particular their education in faith. While the school promotes access to a Catholic education through the school enrolment policy, it is the parent/guardian/carers' responsibility to support the school 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 Thomas the Apostle. 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. The local school enrolment committee will formally endorse all enrolment decisions to ensure transparency and equity in decision-making.

## Priority enrolment

There is an agreed order of priority for enrolment in MACS schools, which must be followed in the enrolment policy and procedures. As systemic Catholic schools, the first priority of MACS schools is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children.

The order of priority for MACS primary schools is:

1. Catholic children who are residents of the parish
2. siblings of children already enrolled in the school
3. Catholic children who are not residents of the parish but are recognised as parishioners by the parish priest
4. Catholic children from other parishes (for pastoral reasons)
5. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who are residents of the parish
6. children from non-Catholic Eastern churches (i.e. Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox and other Orthodox) who reside outside the parish
7. other Christian children who are residents of the parish
8. other Christian children who reside outside the parish
9. non-Christian children who are residents of the parish
10. non-Christian children who reside outside the parish.

## 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 and have fully participated in a sacramental program or, there is evidence of an intention to complete their sacramental journey.

### **Enrolment catchment area**

The enrolment catchment area is a defined area from which a school enrolls students as officially designated to a school by MACS. The parish for St Thomas the Apostle is St Thomas the Apostle, Greensborougfh North. In parishes with more than one primary school, the catchment for each school is determined by the parish in consultation with MACS.

Enrolment is subject to the maximum capacity of the school.

### **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 Thomas the Apostle, 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 school's enrolment form and ensure it is returned by the due date. This does not guarantee enrolment in the school
- be prepared to support the school in the Catholic education of their child and involve themselves as much as possible as well as committing to adhering to the expected standards of parental/guardian/carer behaviour as outlined in the school's Parent/Guardian/Carer Code of Conduct
- acknowledge and commit to meeting the financial responsibilities arising from the ongoing enrolment of their child at St Thomas the Apostle. Any difficulties in meeting this commitment should be discussed with the principal
- advise the principal of any court order, parenting or custodial arrangement/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 school file
- provide the school with an immunisation history statement.

## Termination of enrolment

Parents/guardians/carers are, as a condition of enrolment, expected to read and comply with the St Thomas the Apostle Parent/Guardian/Carer Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct).

Should any parent/guardian/carer: (a) repeatedly breach the Code of Conduct (after the parent/guardian/carer, or the family collectively, has been warned that any further breach may result in a termination of enrolment); or (b) engage in conduct on a single occasion which constitutes a serious breach of the Code of Conduct (involving for example, conduct which poses a serious risk to staff or student health and safety), the circumstances may result in a termination of their child's enrolment.

A decision to withdraw or terminate the enrolment of a student in these circumstances may only be made by the Director, Learning and Regional Services upon consideration of each of the following:

- the view of the principal of the school
- an objective assessment of all presenting circumstances.

Before any final decision as to termination of enrolment is made, the student's family will be provided with an opportunity to comment on and/or provide any relevant information for consideration in this regard.

## Information to be collected

St Thomas the Apostle is required to collect particular information about parents/guardians/carers and their child. Parents/guardians/carers are required to provide particular information about their child during the enrolment process in order for MACS and the school to meet the duty of care obligations and to satisfy government requirements. Lodging an enrolment form does not guarantee enrolment at St Thomas the Apostle.