ST FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL
ENROLMENT CRITERIA

• Priority for enrolment is given to baptised Catholic students.

• Enrolments are also invited for children from Catholic families where a parent/sibling is Catholic.

• The family should normally be residents of the Parish or worship at our Church or be willing to be members of the Parish.

• The parents/guardian, as the prime educators of their children in faith, must demonstrate a commitment to upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church in practical ways and agree to support the school in all aspects of the child’s education.

• Other circumstances such as applications for non-Catholic students will be considered.

• Enrolments are also dependent on places available in the particular Year(Grade) Level.

• The parish priest and the school principal will interview all new families before offering a place in the school.

• We are fortunate to have Holy Trinity Primary School Eltham North, our sister school within our parish boundaries. Each school has a catchment area for enrolments to which we normally adhere.

• If you live in another neighbouring parish such as Eltham, Diamond Creek, Greensborough etc., please contact the respective school principals or parish priests to find out more about their parish school, after which you are most welcome to submit an enrolment application at St Francis Xavier if you still decide.

• NB: In peak times when we have more enrolment applications than availability of places at the one school, we may also need to make enrolment places available at the other school to provide the child with a Catholic education within our parish. The parish priest and the two principals would then discuss this matter.

• The parish priest remains the final authority in accepting an enrolment application.

NB: A Prep child must turn FIVE years old by the 30 April in their Prep year.

CATHOLIC SECONDARY COLLEGES
Within the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the parishes forming a college’s designated catchment are referred to as Priority Parishes. We are fortunate that we are a priority Parish for several excellent secondary colleges that our children attend in Year Seven.

• Catholic Ladies’ College Ltd Eltham Girls’ College
• Our Lady of Mercy College Heidelberg Girls’ College
• Whitefriars College Donvale Boys’ College
• Parade College Bundoora Boys’ College
• Marcellin College Bulleen Boys’ College
• Loyola College Watsonia (dependent on availability of places) Co-educational
Enrolment for Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

RATIONALE

Catholic education is intrinsic to the mission of the Church. It is one means by which the Church fulfils its role in assisting people to discover and embrace the fullness of life in Christ. The Australian bishops established Catholic schools in the 1860s as a key instrument of catechesis and sacramental preparation for Catholic children. Catholic schools continue to offer a broad, comprehensive curriculum imbued with an authentic Catholic understanding of Christ and his teaching, as well as a lived appreciation of membership of the Catholic Church.

This CEOM Enrolment Policy establishes that the first priority of a Catholic school is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children. This reflects the historical context of Catholic education in Australia, as well as confirming the participation of the Catholic school in the Church's mission. As a result, formation and education in a Catholic school must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

To support the view that Catholic schools are primarily for Catholic children, this policy and accompanying procedures establish an expectation that schools will work towards and/or maintain the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. This policy also outlines the roles of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) and schools in working together to achieve this goal.

In keeping with the concern to ensure that Catholic schools are accessible for all Catholic families, this CEOM Enrolment Policy promotes a consistent and transparent approach to the establishment and implementation of local school enrolment policies. It is envisaged that in order to achieve this objective, cooperation and collaboration will be required between schools and, where appropriate, between regions.

This policy also supports the special relationship that continues to exist between the Catholic Church and the non-Catholic Eastern Churches, based on a belief in the same sacraments and a close nexus in understanding about theology and sacraments. This CEOM Enrolment Policy is also intended to ensure that, when enrolling students, Catholic schools are compliant with relevant Victorian and Australian Government legislation.¹

INCLUSIVENESS

Catholic schools have been established primarily for Catholic children and Catholic schools should strive to be open and welcoming to all Catholic students, regardless of their background and needs, and do everything possible to accommodate a student’s individual needs. Schools should extend particular assistance to children who are poor or disadvantaged or considered most at risk. Catholic schools should welcome children of other Christian traditions and other faiths who seek what Catholic education has to offer, with a priority given to children from non-Catholic Eastern Churches.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL

Parents, as the first educators of their children, enter into a partnership with the Catholic school 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 local school enrolment policy, parents should also assume a responsibility for maintaining this partnership by supporting the school in furthering the spiritual & 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 in a Catholic school. Therefore, while bearing in mind that their first priority is to Catholic parents, parish priests and principals of Catholic schools should be able to exercise some flexibility with respect to enrolment decisions where pastoral discretion may be deemed necessary.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT ENROLMENT IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Information concerning the local school enrolment policy, enrolment criteria and processes should be publicly available and easily accessible by current and prospective parents. As part of its minimum standards for school registration, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requires all schools to have a clearly defined enrolment policy.

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 Catholic Baptism.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL
A Catholic school is one which operates with the consent of the diocesan Bishop and is one where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

CATCHMENT AREA FOR SCHOOLS
For the purpose of enrolment, the school catchment is the parish or group of parishes, as defined by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM), from which the school draws the majority of its enrolments and to which the school gives priority of enrolment. For the majority of primary schools this will be the parish to which the school belongs. In those parishes with more than one primary school the catchment for each school is determined by the parish in consultation with the CEOM.

PARISH
For the purpose of enrolment, the ‘parish’ is the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries.

PROCEDURES
LOCAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT
School communities must develop local school enrolment policies which are consistent with this CEOM Enrolment Policy and include all the necessary elements outlined in the Procedures for Development and Dissemination of Local School Enrolment Policies: Primary Schools

ACHIEVING A HIGH LEVEL OF CATHOLIC ENROLMENT
Catholic schools are expected to maintain and/or work towards the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. If a school does not have a high level of Catholic and non-Catholic Eastern Church enrolments, it must attempt to increase its percentage by establishing a realistic target.

ENROLMENT PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES IN SCHOOLS
Information in local school enrolment policies about enrolment processes should be clear and unambiguous. The procedures should be comprehensive and cover all categories of enrolment including minimum school age entry. Appendix 4 provides advice on the following Enrolment Processes and Procedures in Schools:

- Recommended enrolment process process flow chart
- Enrolment of children under the minimum school entry age
- Year 7 enrolment
- Enrolment of children with additional learning needs
- Enrolment of students from interstate
- Relevant legislation to be considered when enrolling students in Catholic schools.