Enrolment and Admissions Policy

St Paul's College takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)

1. Context

A registered school is required to have clear enrolment policies that comply with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws including those relating to discrimination and the duty to make reasonable adjustments, equal opportunity, privacy, immunisation and the Australian Consumer Law. They must include:

- who is eligible for enrolment

- enrolment agreement with parents or guardians which complies with all State and Commonwealth laws, including the Australian Consumer Law. The agreement must be publicly available and cover, at a minimum:

    - codes of conduct for students, and parents and guardians

    - fees

    - educational services provided

    - the grounds on which the agreement may be terminated

2. Background

Paul's College is a non-systemic Catholic school and member of Independent Schools Victoria, providing education for students aged 5 to 18 years with a wide range of needs including intellectual, physical, profound multiple and sensory disabilities, autism and complex medical needs.

Established in 1957, St Paul's is a warm, accepting community which welcomes and respects children and families of all faiths with a strong commitment to our core values of compassion, accountability, respect and courage. We believe all children have the right to an educational program of the highest standard and we do this by adapting the new Victorian Curriculum, ensuring what we provide is relevant, functional and meets the needs of each member of our school community.

Our highly skilled multidisciplinary team comprises teachers, speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, music therapist, school nurse and assistants. Focusing on communication, we are committed to working in partnership with families, enabling students to develop their full intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual potential. We also support families who may wish to have dual enrolment so their child can integrate into their local community

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3. Enquiries

Parents/carers of children who are considering enrolment are invited to contact St Paul's College Principal to ascertain if their child meets the enrolment eligibility criteria for St Paul's College and to organise a personalised tour of the school. Student enrolment and admission may take place at any time during the school year.

4. Enrolment Criteria

St Paul's College has specific criteria for enrolments which establish eligibility against the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) which informs the individualised adjustments necessary for each student. NCCD defined areas of disability are physical, cognitive, sensory and social/emotional.

In order to assess eligibility, current, signed, written reports are to be provided as follows:

- Autism spectrum disorder: Paediatrician or Psychiatrist, Speech Pathologist, Psychologist

- Physical disability: Paediatrician or relevant medical specialist

- Complex Medical: Paediatrician or relevant medical specialist

- Intellectual disability: Psychologist

- Severe language disorder: Speech Pathologist and Psychologist

- Severe behaviour disorder: Psychologist

- Visual impairment: Ophthalmologist or Educational Vision Assessment Clinic
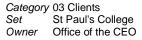
- Hearing impairment: Audiologist

5. Enrolment Agreement

An Enrolment Agreement with parents or guardians which covers codes of conduct, fees, educational services provided, and the grounds on which the Enrolment Agreement may be terminated is publicly available on the school website.

Parents and guardians are also able to access enrolment forms, the parent payment policy and a schedule of charges for the school.

6. Information required includes

- date of birth (note: evidence of date of birth can be official, such as a birth certificate or where this is not able to be produced, unofficial, such as a doctor's note attesting to a child's age).

- names and addresses of the student and enrolling parent or carer

- details of medical and other conditions that may require special consideration

- emergency telephone numbers, including a nominated doctor

- an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register

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- the name of the previous school/kindergarten/early childhood service

Note: all children enrolling in Prep will require an immunisation certificate available from the local council. This must be presented at enrolment. A child is deemed to be immunised when she/he has received immunisations against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Poliomyelitis, Measles and Mumps.

7. Pre-enrolment meeting

A pre-enrolment meeting will be held for all students prior to commencing at St Paul's College. A joint team of teaching staff and allied health staff will meet with parents/carers to assess educational, medical and therapy needs. This ensures appropriate class placement and the implementation of programs to address individual student needs. Parents may invite a case manager or advocate to attend this meeting.

The agenda will include presentation of reports, discussion of the child's strengths and challenges, support offered at the school and the level of adjustment needed to ensure a successful transition into the school and a positive response to programs offered.

Where possible, staff will contact early intervention/pre-school or transferring school staff to discuss student needs and obtain reports and supporting documentation. St Paul's College staff may visit the child in their current educational setting. This process assists staff to better understand each child's individual needs.

Student intake may be offered at any stage of the year for students between of 5 and 18 years of age.

The enrolment process may include a 1 to 2 day immersion placement prior to the school's acceptance of enrolment.
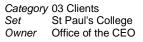
8. Eligibility

The Principal is responsible for assessing eligibility in relation to the school's enrolment criteria and approving the admission of:

- individuals who are of compulsory school age, i.e. those aged between 6 and 17 years; and
- individuals who fall within an exception under the Regulations.

Individuals who fall outside of the compulsory school age may attend school only if they fall within an exception under the Regulations or are granted an exemption. However, there are exceptions for:

- children who are at least 5 years of age by 30 April of the year of enrolment, and are enrolling in a course of primary education; and
- certain categories of students aged 18 or over who are enrolling in or completing an accredited senior secondary course.

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9. Approving admission:

Enrolment decisions are made by the Principal of St Paul's College on the basis of whether or not a student is considered able to respond positively to the programs, class placement suitability, and the expertise we have to offer.

The following considerations form in part the basis for these decisions:

- The student's individual learning needs

- The student's emotional readiness and willingness to attend and participate in school programs

- The student's previous attendance, participation, avoidance, exclusion from previous schools

- The present 'student mix' at St Paul's College in relation to staff/student safety and wellbeing

Should a student's presenting issues require more resources than St Paul's is able to provide then an application for enrolment is not able to be accepted.

10. Dual School Enrolment

Families may request that their child be dual enrolled i.e. attend both their local primary/secondary school and St Paul's College. The nature of the time fraction the student attends each school will be based on their needs and may change e.g. a student may attend his/her local school for 3 days a week and St Paul's College 2 days a week. .

Staff at St Paul's College liaise closely with staff from the mainstream school to support those students with a dual enrolment. Individual Education plans and Student Support Groups are undertaken collaboratively with involvement of staff from both schools the student attends.

Where there is a potential change of enrolment status for students who are currently enrolled at St Paul's College and with a mainstream partner school there is a 6 x week transition process which commences from the start of Term 3 each year. During the following weeks of that term, the enrolment status of the student will change to permanent enrolment at the mainstream school. This process maintains the integrity of class groups at St Paul's College and ensures that the child's peer group has the opportunity to be prepared in the process. This may involve social stories and other strategies to allay anxiety and the impact of change.

11. Transport

Students who live within the designated bus transport zone for St Paul's College are eligible for chaperoned bus transport to and from school.

12. Victorian Student Number (VSN)

The Victorian Government has legislated and implemented a Victorian Student Number (VSN) for students in Victoria.

Since 2009 the VSN is a student identification number that has been assigned by the Department of Education and Training (DET) to all students in government and non-government schools, and to students below the age of 25 undertaking Vocational Education and Training with a TAFE, Registered Training Organisation or Adult and Community Education (ACE) provider (referred to collectively as VET Providers).

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13. Related legislation

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017
- Family Law Act 1975
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

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