

# ST BRIGID'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, OFFICER

## Early Enrolment Policy

### Rationale

The education of children is vital in their overall success as members of society. The age at which a child commences formal education is important in maximizing their opportunities for success.

The Diocese of Sale policy on Enrolment of Children Under the Minimum Age states; "The compulsory age by which a child must be enrolled in a Victorian school is the year in which the child turns 6 years of age. The minimum starting age is 4 years and 8 months. That is a child must turn 5 by 30<sup>th</sup> April in the year of school commencement."

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the school's enrolment processes are consistent with the Diocesan policy with regard to the enrolment of children under the minimum age. That is:

*"The enrolment of students under the minimum starting age is discouraged. It may happen only if:*

- *No child of legal school age misses enrolment because a child under the minimum age been enrolled*
- *The Principal and the Parish Priest have considered the evidence and determined that the child would be disadvantaged educationally if under-age enrolment were denied.*

*Acceptance of an application for early enrolment requires the approval of the Director of Catholic Education."* (Diocese of Sale policy, Enrolment of Children Under the Minimum Age)

### Implementation

Under exceptional circumstances parents/guardians may request that their child be considered for early entry to the school. The criterion for early entry to school is that failure to admit to the school will result in long term educational disadvantage to the student. School readiness is not a criterion for early school entry.

Where parents/guardians, of students turning 5 years of age after 30 April and before 30 June of the year they wish to enter school, wish to request early admission to school, they should contact the principal of the school in the first instance.

Requests for early entry will not be processed if received later than two weeks into the school year for which admission is being sought. When approached by parents seeking enrolment of a child under the minimum starting age the principal will inform the parents/guardians of the policy of the Diocese and discuss with the parents/guardians the possible disadvantages of children commencing school at a young age. If a parent/guardian, after being so advised, continues to seek enrolment then the principal will:

1. Receive the Application for Enrolment from the child's parents / caregivers and inform them that
  - a. the child can be enrolled only if that enrolment would not cause another child of school age to miss out.
  - b. the approval of the Parish Priest and Director of Catholic Education is required before the child can be enrolled
  - c. That approval will be contingent upon the recommendations contained in reports from a registered Child Psychologist and the child's pre-school/kindergarten teacher (see points below)
  - d. That, if the child is accepted, the child's progress will be assessed at the end of the preparatory year and it will be at the school's discretion as to whether or not the child repeats preparatory year .

2. Request the parents to obtain an assessment from a registered Child Psychologist. This statement should address the question as to whether the child's learning would be disadvantaged by his or her NOT beginning school early.
3. Request the parents to obtain an assessment from the child's pre-school / kindergarten teacher.
4. Request the parents to provide certified evidence of the child's date of birth.
5. Once these reports are to hand, the Principal, in consultation with the Parish Priest should determine whether or not early enrolment is appropriate. If it is determined that it is in the child's interest to accept the enrolment early, that there is capacity in the class to accept the enrolment and that parental agreement to any conditions has been obtained in writing, the Principal should submit to the Director a request for the child to be enrolled. All documentation, including reports and copies of correspondence with the parents outlining the above conditions, should accompany that request.
6. Wait until the Director's approval is received in writing before confirming the enrolment. Please note that such approval would only be given in exceptional circumstances.

The principal will access appropriate staff of the Catholic Education Office to assist with assessing the parent's request. Staff of the Catholic Education Office can assist the principal in arranging a referral to a psychologist to undertake an assessment of the child, which may include cognitive, educational and other assessments; observation of the child at home and at pre-school; consultation with pre-school staff and other relevant professionals; and consultation with the parents/guardians.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's five year review cycle or as required.

### **Ratification**

This policy was last ratified in May 2009.