

## ENROLMENT POLICY

### GUIDING SCRIPTURE

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it (Proverbs 22:6).

### PURPOSE

This policy ensures a consistent, transparent and fair enrolment process is undertaken when assessing enrolment applications, which reflect the Christian values of the school. They provide practical guidance when assessing enrolment applications in the context of anti-discrimination legislation, ensuring that decisions are made in a way that respects and protects human rights.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all parent(s)/ guardian(s) and students applying to St John's Lutheran School for enrolment.

### DEFINITIONS

Under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*, the following types of **discrimination** are prohibited:

**Direct discrimination** on the basis of an attribute happens if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with an attribute less favourably than another person without the attribute is or would be treated in circumstances that are the same or not materially different.

**Indirect discrimination** on the basis of an attribute happens if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a term:

- (a) with which a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply; and
- (b) with which a higher proportion of people without the attribute comply or are able to comply; and
- (c) that is not reasonable.

**Discrimination in the area of education:**

An education authority must not discriminate:

- (a) in failing to accept a person's application for admission as a student; or
- (b) in the way in which a person's application is processed; or
- (c) in the arrangements made for, or the criteria used in, deciding who should be offered admission as student; or
- (d) in the terms on which a person is admitted as a student.

## POLICY STATEMENT

St John's Lutheran School, as a school which is owned and operated by the Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District, is an inclusive and welcoming place of learning. A priority for enrolments is to ensure that St John's Lutheran School creates a community that will both nurture and support Christians in their faith and reveal the gospel of Christ to all members. The school offers its Christian education programs to all applicants without discrimination provided that:

- (a) Through enrolment procedures, parents/guardians seeking enrolment for their child/children undertake to support willingly and freely, the Lutheran ethos and Christian education, stated aims and values of St John's Lutheran School;
- (b) Adequate space and resources are available to support each child's learning journey, including the resources to support any special needs of the child/ children.

Enrolment priorities will be determined from time to time by the School Council.

Priorities may include the following in whatever order is determined:

- (a) Children who are active members of St John's Lutheran Church, Kingaroy
- (b) Children from families who are active members of a Lutheran Church
- (c) Children who are active members of other Christian churches, other than Lutheran
- (d) Children who have no association with a Christian church
- (e) Siblings of existing students and children of former students
- (f) The order in which applications are received in each priority area
- (g) The resources available to meet any special needs of the child/ children.

## PROCEDURES

*All steps taken to comply with these procedures should be documented in writing, including records of discussions with parent(s)/ guardian(s).*

### 1. Information Required from Parents/ Guardians about a Potential Student

St John's Lutheran School will require knowledge of a potential students' additional social/ emotional, behavioural or additional learning or support needs that are pertinent to the student (i.e., speech/language, occupational therapy, psychologist or audiologist) and/or other current medical issues (such as allergies, asthma, diabetes and information about any other physical or psychological impairment) for the purposes set out in clauses 1.1 and 1.2 below:

- 1.1 St John's Lutheran School will require this information for the purposes of caring for their student's needs and ensuring they can monitor any particular issues once the student commences at St John's Lutheran School. This information should be restricted to any medical information/condition that the school would need to monitor.
- 1.2 This information will also be required to assess if St John's Lutheran School has the capacity to provide the appropriate level of support and/or facilities for the student. This information should only be used in the decision-making process for selecting a student for enrolment in accordance with the enrolment procedures set out below.

The residency status and/or country of birth of a potential student should not be used in the decision-making process for selecting a student for enrolment unless it is relevant to immigration laws or learning needs of the child (e.g., if non-English speaking).

A potential student's family situation, medical background, learning support requirements and social background should not affect St John's Lutheran School's decision to accept student's enrolment unless:

- (a) There has been a thorough and documented consideration/assessment of what special services/equipment/devices would be required to meet the potential student's needs and if there are any reasonable adjustments that can be made (including the costs and other effects of meeting the student's needs or making reasonable adjustments);
- (b) St John's Lutheran School has consulted with the potential student's parents/guardians about the potential student's needs and any reasonable adjustments;
- (c) After considering the potential student's needs and consultation with the parents/guardians it has been determined that St John's Lutheran School cannot meet the potential student's needs, cannot make any reasonable adjustments and/or it would cause unjustifiable hardship to make the reasonable adjustments; and
- (d) The reason why St John's Lutheran School would not be able to provide those services are thoroughly documented and communicated to the potential student's parents/guardians.

All objections to enrolments will be thoroughly documented including the reasons for the rejection and the process undertaken (which should be in accordance with the enrolment procedure) in reaching the decision.

The collection, use and disclosure of information about a child is protected by the provisions of the school's Privacy Policy.

## **2. Application for Enrolment**

The parent(s)/ guardian(s) are to apply for enrolment of a prospective student by completing and submitting the *Application for Enrolment*, which contains questions about the prospective student's educational needs and other aspects of the prospective student's circumstances.

St John's Lutheran School must acknowledge receipt of the *Application for Enrolment* form in writing to the parent(s)/ guardian(s).

St John's Lutheran School must ensure that a prospective student with a disability or other barrier (e.g., parents have limited English) is able to apply for enrolment at St John's Lutheran School on the same basis as a prospective student without a disability or barrier. A prospective student's parent(s)/ guardian(s) are to be advised to contact the school if they have any barriers to completing the enrolment process (e.g., such as language barriers). Staff involved in the enrolment process are expected to demonstrate through attitude and practice a commitment to non-discrimination, consistent with legislative obligations and the application of our core values, through taking positive action to address any barriers whenever practicable. Actions may include providing enrolment information in electronic form or in a different language.

This application must be submitted to the school Registrar together with the following to support the application:

- The non-refundable application fee
- Copies of relevant documents as outlined in the *Application for Enrolment*.

Payment of an application fee does not guarantee enrolment of the student at St John's Lutheran School.

### 3. Assessment of Application

All applications for enrolment will be considered on their own merit.

Once a completed *Application for Enrolment* and associated documentation has been received by the school, it is necessary to assess the application to determine if any additional information is required. If the application reveals potential learning, physical or other disabilities or barriers to attendance at St John's Lutheran School it will be necessary to obtain more information to determine the educational and physical needs of the prospective student and whether St John's Lutheran School can accommodate those needs.

The school has the right to request further information (including medical and other records) and/or an interview from the parent/guardian and/or request that the potential student undergoes any relevant assessment activities to determine the potential student's additional educational and/or physical/ emotional/ mental health needs. These assessments will be at the expense of the parent/guardian.

The school may choose to seek legal advice in relation to an application.

St John's Lutheran School reserves the right not to offer any child a place at the school, withdraw an offer, or to defer an enrolment offer at its discretion, if it becomes aware that a parent/guardian has withheld any relevant information from their application.

### 4. Enrolment Strategy

When reviewing each application, St. John's must consider whether it will be able to:

- Provide adequate resources to meet any special needs of the applicant, including any reasonable adjustments to ensure students with disability are able to participate in education on the same basis as students without disability, and without discrimination (refer to *Section 6 Consideration of Reasonable Adjustments*);
- Provide to the applicant an education which is commensurate with the school's standards and ideals;
- Obtain an appropriate level of funding from the government in relation to the applicant;
- Equip its teachers with the information and training necessary to educate the applicant; and
- Maintain the standards of education and well-being of all students.

Whilst maximum class size is limited to 30 students there will also be a minimum number of students required to operate a single class. If at any time numbers drop below 16 students or rise above 28, alternative class groupings may be considered. These new arrangements would usually commence at the beginning of a new term.

### 5. Consultation

If St John's Lutheran School has been notified about a prospective student's disability, the school must consult with the prospective student's parent(s)/ guardian(s) about whether the disability may affect the prospective student's enrolment at St John's Lutheran School.

## 6. Consideration of Reasonable Adjustments

Under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth)*, St John's Lutheran School must consider any reasonable adjustments that may be implemented to ensure that the prospective student can seek admission to St John's Lutheran School on the same basis as a prospective student without a disability, and without experiencing discrimination, taking into account all relevant circumstances and interests, including:

- (a) the prospective student's disability;
- (b) the views of the prospective student or their parent(s)/guardian(s);
- (c) the effect of the adjustment on the prospective student, including the effect on the prospective student's:
  - (i) ability to achieve learning outcomes;
  - (ii) ability to participate in courses or programs; and
  - (iii) independence;
- (d) the effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including St John's Lutheran School, staff and other students; and
- (e) the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

Before making an adjustment for the prospective student, St John's Lutheran School must consult with the prospective student's parent(s)/guardian(s) about:

- (a) whether the adjustment is reasonable;
- (b) the extent to which the adjustment would allow the prospective student to:
  - (i) apply for enrolment at St John's Lutheran School;
  - (ii) participate and use St John's Lutheran School's facilities and services;
  - (iii) participate in learning experiences;
  - (iv) access support services; and
  - (v) participate in learning activities;on the same basis as a student without a disability; and
- (c) whether there is any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the prospective student.

St John's Lutheran School is not required to implement adjustments that are not reasonable.

What is considered a reasonable adjustment will depend on the needs of the prospective student and should be considered on an individual basis. However, some adjustments which may be considered include:

- (a) removal of physical barriers (e.g., installing ramps);
- (b) provision of course materials in different formats (e.g., electronically);
- (c) provision of interpreters (e.g., Auslan/sign language);
- (d) alternative assessments; and
- (e) provision of a private room to sit examinations.

It is important not to make assumptions about the needs of a prospective student with a disability. If necessary, the school is to obtain an independent assessment about the prospective student's needs. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must be advised at the commencement of the enrolment process if they will be responsible for the cost of an independent assessment.

If St John's Lutheran School is assessing whether an adjustment to the course or program in which the prospective student proposes to be enrolled in is reasonable, St John's Lutheran School is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

Reasonable adjustments must be provided in a reasonable time.

## **7. Unjustifiable Hardship**

St John's Lutheran School will not be required to implement an adjustment that is otherwise reasonable if the implementation of that adjustment will impose an unjustifiable hardship on St John's Lutheran School.

In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, all relevant circumstances of the particular case are to be taken into account including:

- (a) the nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by any persons concerned (this includes other students and staff);
- (b) the effect of the disability on persons concerned;
- (c) the financial circumstances and the estimated amount of expenditure required to be made by the person claiming unjustifiable hardship; and
- (d) the availability of financial and other assistance.

## **8. Notification of Decision**

All offers of place are made at the discretion of the Principal of St John's Lutheran School.

Once a decision has been made about whether an application for enrolment at St John's Lutheran School is accepted or rejected, the prospective student's parent(s)/guardian(s) should be advised of the decision in writing (including reasons for the decision) as soon as reasonably practicable.

The notice should also provide the prospective student's parent(s)/guardian(s) with details of who they should contact if they are unhappy with St John's Lutheran School's decision.

## **9. Offer of Enrolment**

When an offer of enrolment is made, parents/ guardians and students are asked to complete all necessary documentation, which includes but is not limited to, the *Enrolment Contract*. Enrolments are confirmed on receipt of the necessary documentation including the *Enrolment Contract*.

## **10. Termination of Enrolment by the School**

Enrolment may be terminated by St John's Lutheran School if:

- St John's Lutheran School expel the student from the school;
- Mutual trust and cooperation between the school and parent/carer breaks down;
- The parents/carers are in breach of the *Enrolment Contract*, and they fail to remedy the breach within a reasonable time after written notice from the school requiring them to do so.

## **11. Withdrawal of Enrolment by the Parent/Guardian**

Notice of a students' withdrawal or cancellation of enrolment from the school must be provided in writing by the parent/guardian to the Principal, giving one term's notice before the withdrawal or cancellation date. If the required written notice is not provided to the school, the parent/guardian may be liable to pay the school an amount equal to one term's fees in lieu of such notice.

<b>Communication of this Policy</b>	This policy shall be communicated to the school community via the school website and in the Enrolment Package.
<b>Legislation / References:</b>	Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth) Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth) Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth) Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)