



St Mary MacKillop
Catholic Parish
ORAN PARK

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING CHANGES TO FUTURE ENROLMENT FORMS

Monday 30th January 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

While the increasing number of families requesting enrolment at St Justin's Catholic Primary School is a sign not only of the vitality of our parish and school, but the reputation our school has in the wider community, it also brings with it a challenge: namely, how to equitably and fairly assess all enrolment applications, mindful that we are at a point when the number of enrolments of baptised Catholics is exceeding the school's enrolment quota.

While we might all like our parish school to build more classrooms or to employ more staff to cater for every child that wants to enrol, this is simply not possible – especially in the light of the limited financial resources given to our school (and all Catholic schools) by the Federal and State Governments.

As all of you who have enrolled children at St Justin's Catholic Primary School know first hand, when enrolling at our school, families are required to complete an enrolment application. This application, among other things, does seek information regarding the name of the parish *the child seeking enrolment and their family attend*; the name of the Parish Priest and a small box to indicate parish involvement. The application also asks for details regarding the Sacraments the child has received, including the Sacrament of Baptism. While this information is useful, this 'factual information' does not provide us with a clear picture of the faith practice of a family or more specific information about a family's involvement in our parish of St Mary MacKillop Oran Park, of which St Justin's Catholic Primary School is a ministry. Hence the need for this 'extra form' that we have entitled a 'Family Profile'.

Attaching a 'Family Profile' form to a generic enrolment form (used for all primary schools in a Diocese) has become a common practice in many parish primary schools around the country and has been found very helpful to ensure that the Principal and Parish Priest have all the information they need to assess applications.

Along with a copy of this new form, you will find attached a copy of the *Enrolment Policy & Procedures for Catholic Parish Primary Schools of the Diocese of Wollongong*. We felt it was important that this policy (that has always been freely available) be once again circulated to all families, as it highlights two *presumptions* that are often made by families seeking enrolment:

- Firstly, that the priority in enrolment is given in the following order: children who (*irrespective of if they are Catholic or not*) already have a sibling at the school, then children of practicing Catholic families who do not have a sibling at the school
- Secondly, that if you are baptised Catholic you should automatically be given a place at the school.

As you will see from the *Enrolment Policy and Procedures*, both these presumptions are not correct.

For being a parish school, and hence a work/ministry of St Mary MacKillop Parish, priority in enrolment for St Justin's Catholic Primary School must be given to children of practicing Catholic families who (whether they have a sibling at the school or not) are involved in the life of St Mary MacKillop Parish, Oran Park.

In other words, being a parish school, and hence a work / ministry of St Mary MacKillop Parish, priority in enrolment for St Justin's Catholic Primary School must be given to children of practicing Catholic families who **(whether they have a sibling at the school or not)** are involved in the life of St Mary MacKillop parish, Oran Park. Also priority must be given to practicing Catholic families who whether they live in the formal boundary of the parish or not have made the decision to be parishioners of St Mary MacKillop Parish, Oran Park. In other words, simply because a child is baptised, does not mean 'automatic entry' into the school; a child's baptism must be reflected by the child and their family in their involvement in the life of the parish, ie. through their 'faith practice' and participation in Mass and their sharing in the various works and ministries of the parish.

Any families who saw last year's version of the FAMILY PROFILE FORM will note a new addition for Kindergarten 2018 enrolments, and that is, we are asking how long a family has sustained their current Mass practice. We found that some people ticked 'weekly' attendance at Mass but it then became clear that their weekly attendance was only during the enrolment period and as soon as they received a position at the school or were placed on the waiting list, this faith practice dropped off.

This also sadly applied to Parish Planning Giving where someone said on the FAMILY PROFILE FORM they contributed to planned giving but they then pulled out of financially supporting the Parish as soon as the enrolment process was ended.

Due to the large number of enrolments, the consistency of a family's faith practice (ie. sharing their God given gifts of time, talent and financial treasure) will be taken into account.

As stated at the outset of this letter, the 'Family Profile' form (that will need to be completed for all future enrolments at St Justin's Primary School) will offer all families seeking to enrol their child at St Justin's the opportunity to provide valuable information that will assist us as we assess applications.

For more information on this new 'Family Profile' or enrolment policy & procedures, do not hesitate to contact either the school or the parish office.

May God bless you and your family as we begin a new school year.

Fr.


Fr David Catterall
PARISH PRIEST



Mr John Milgate
PRINCIPAL