

Enrolment and Fees Policy and Procedure

Effective	June 2025
Review	June 2027
Owner	Principal
Approver	The Sycamore School Governing Body

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about the School's enrolment and fees policy and procedure, including the enrolment application process.

2 Applicability or Scope

This policy and procedure is to be followed by a person who fills the role with a \boxtimes .

\boxtimes	Staff (all employees (full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term, casual or relief), apprentices/trainees, host employees, people doing work experience or vocational placement)
	Directors
	Contractors
\boxtimes	Parents/Carers
\boxtimes	Students/Young People
	Visitors
	Volunteers
	Others

3 **Definitions/Acronyms**

Behaviours of concern	Behaviours may include actions that a student displays that pose harm and	
	safety to themselves or others, or that may be considered socially	
	inappropriate.	
Collaborative Education	At The Sycamore School the Collaborative Education Team (CET) for each	
Team (CET)	class comprises the class Teacher and the Education Support Officer.	
Criteria	Refers to the specific symptom-based diagnostic criteria used to determine	
DSM-5 and ICD-11	whether a person meets the formal diagnosis for a mental health or	
	neurodevelopmental condition. Each disorder in the DSM-5 includes:	
	Diagnostic criteria (e.g., specific symptoms, how long they've lasted, level	
	of impairment)	

	Severity specifiers (e.g., mild, moderate, severe)		
	Subtypes or specifiers (e.g., "with or without language impairment")		
	Differential diagnoses (to distinguish between similar conditions)		
	Associated features (e.g., typical age of onset, risk factors).		
	The ICD-11 (International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision) is a		
	global system developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to		
	classify and code health conditions, including autism. It serves as a		
	standard reference for healthcare professionals worldwide.		
Enrolment Application	When referring to the Enrolment Application Form within this policy the		
	form is a digital form through our third-party enrolment platform		
	Digistorm.		
Enrolment Contract	The Enrolment Contract is a legal arrangement where the school is		
	entering into a contract with the parents/carers for the provision of		
	services.		
Enrolment Review	A team of school staff typically consisting of the Behaviour Specialist, Social		
Committee	Worker and Head of Teaching and Learning.		
Meet and Greet	Meet and Greet meetings are for you and your child to come to School,		
	meet the Collaborative Education Team (CET), see the classroom, and have		
	an opportunity to discuss how the School can best support your child's		
	transition to The Sycamore School to set them up for a great start.		
School Observation	The School's Behavioural Support team attends the student's current		
	education setting to observe the student in their current school		
	environment, e.g. classroom and other areas to see how they learn and		
	interact with others. The duration of a school observation is approximately		
	1-1.5hrs.		
Staggered Start	Refers to individualised adjustments to start enrolment such as reduced		
	hours to support the student's transition to the school. Adjustments are		
	determined in collaboration with the CET, parents/carers and the support		
	team.		
Suitability and Support	A meeting for parents/carers and the student with members of the		
Meeting	Enrolment Review Committee.		
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4 Policy

Enrolment at The Sycamore School involves an enrolment application and an enrolment process. The purpose of this document is to assist the School to develop and implement an application and enrolment policy and process which provides a transparent and consistent reference point to both those seeking enrolment and those responsible for enrolment at the School. It will facilitate a consistent approach and process for The Sycamore School and assist the School to meet their legal obligations where enrolment policy and procedures are implemented or challenged.

The Sycamore School is committed to providing autistic young people with a high-quality education and reasonable adjustments to enable them to access and participate in education on the same basis as other

young people. The School provides highly individualised programs delivered by a multidisciplinary team of classroom teachers and support staff.

Principles

Decisions to determine whether a young person meets the criteria outlined in this policy will be made by the Enrolment Review Committee having regard to the following principles:

- Evidence-based decisions will be based on available evidence demonstrating that all the Policy's eligibility criteria are met.
- Transparency decisions will be made on the basis of the criteria set out in this Policy and clearly explained to parents/carers.
- Timeliness decisions will be made in a timely manner to ensure, as much as practicable, that young people can start school as soon as possible, or continue their educational programs. At times, it may take up to 10 weeks to process enrolment applications and decisions.

Eligibility Criteria for Enrolment

To be eligible for enrolment at The Sycamore School students must have a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder by a registered paediatrician, psychiatrist, neurologist or psychologist with a practice endorsement in clinical psychology, educational and developmental psychology or neuropsychology.

- 1. The diagnosis must be documented in a signed letter or within a signed medical report. If the diagnosis is documented in a letter, it must reference DSM-5 or ICD-11, have a date, the specialist's full name, AHPRA Medical Board Registration Number (MED000) and contact details.
- 2. Your child can participate in a group setting.
- 3. Your child demonstrates safe behaviour towards self and others.
- 4. Your child can demonstrate independence skills for participating in school activities without the need for ongoing one to one support. This includes independence for daily life skills and medical support; the School does not employ nurses or medical staff and as such, are not equipped to support students with complex medical needs.
- 5. Your child is an Australian citizen, or they hold the appropriate visa.

The Sycamore School cannot enrol a child if they or their parent/carers hold a visa with a subclass, including but not limited to, **500**, **570**, **571**, **572**, **573**, **574** or **575** or, are students with a visitor visa.

Enrolment Process

The Sycamore School enrolment process outlines a clear, inclusive, and supportive enrolment process for eligible students. The enrolment application is an online process, and support is provided to families who may need to access this using alternative methods. We are committed to providing a transparent and respectful process that considers the individual needs, strengths, and aspirations of each young person.

Applications may take up to 10 weeks to process depending on the volume of applications being assessed at any given time. Our application process is thorough and involves a specialist team to ensure that each application is given full consideration.

Steps for enrolment application process:

1. Parent/Carer completes the online Enrolment Eligibility Criteria: Questionnaire or contacts the school

- to access support to complete the form.
- **2.** If a child is eligible for enrolment, the parent/carer will be asked to submit an online Enrolment Enquiry.
- **3.** Parent/Carer will receive a confirmation that we have received the Enrolment Enquiry and be invited via email to book a school tour.
- **4.** Once parent/carer has attended the school tour, the parent/carer will receive an email inviting them to submit an Enrolment Application Form online. The following supporting documentation is required:
 - a. A copy of the child's birth certificate
 - b. A copy of the child's diagnosis report and/or letter quoting the DSM-5 Criteria or ICD-11
 - c. Other diagnosis information and reports, including functional impact of the disability
 - d. Therapy supports initial and/or summary reporting
 - e. Previous Educational Setting Report Cards (the two most recent)
 - f. Previous Education Setting Individual Learning and/or Behavioural or Safety Support Plans
 - g. Any other information to support the enrolment application process to understand the educational needs of the child.
- **5.** The Enrolment Application Form, providing supporting documentation and a non-refundable \$250 enrolment application fee are all facilitated through the online Enrolment Application Form. Parents/carers can access support to complete this application process.
- **6.** Parent/carer will receive a confirmation email that the School has received the Enrolment Application.
- **7.** Each Enrolment Application is reviewed by the Enrolments Team.
- 8. If required, extra information will be requested from the parent/carer to complete the application.
- 9. The Enrolment Application is reviewed by the Enrolment Review Committee.
- 10. The Enrolment Review Committee will provide feedback to the Enrolments and Marketing Officer to liaise where appropriate with parents/carers, education settings and/or external therapy teams. All external contact regarding a child's enrolment application is in consultation and with the consent of the parent/carer. Failure to provide consent is likely to impede the progress of the application.
- **11.** The Enrolment Application may progress through the following stages thereafter:
 - a. A school observation at the current education setting
 - b. Communication with relevant staff of educational setting/s
 - c. Communication with relevant external therapist/s
 - d. A Suitability and Support Meeting
 - e. A Meeting with the Principal

All applications we receive are reviewed to ensure the School can provide reasonable adjustments for both current and prospective students. The final decision regarding a child's suitability for enrolment is at the discretion of the Principal.

- 12. Parents/carers will be notified by email of the decision for their child's enrolment application.
- **13.** Successful applications will receive an Offer of Enrolment, and an Enrolment Contract will be sent via email to complete including payment of the \$1,000 Enrolment Deposit. Enrolment is only confirmed when the Enrolment Contract and Enrolment Deposit have been received.
- **14.** A Meet and Greet appointment is made for the new student and the Collaborative Education Team (CET).
- **15.** Student Commences on an agreed date which may involve a staggered start to support the needs of the student.

If a vacancy is not available at the time of application, your child will be added to our enrolment expressions of interest list. Families on the School's expressions of interest list will be contacted if a suitable vacancy arises.

Request for Review of Unsuccessful Enrolment Application

Families who receive notification that their enrolment application has been unsuccessful may formally request a review of the decision. Requests for review must be submitted in writing to the Enrolments Officer within two (2) months of the decision date.

If a review request is received the family will not be required to submit a new enrolment fee. The application will be reassessed based on the original submission, along with any updated supporting documentation provided at the time of the review request.

The School will review the request in accordance with its enrolment criteria and availability of placements, and will communicate the outcome of the review in writing within a reasonable timeframe. Information we collect is covered by our Privacy Policy which is available on the School's <u>website</u>.

5 Implementation

School Responsibilities

The Sycamore School acknowledges that its responsibilities are:

- To follow the Enrolment and Fees Policy and Procedure
- To confirm students have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder prior to enrolment.
- To determine the capacity of the School and its ability to provide an education experience for the student.
- To ensure enrolment documentation is kept for each student as outlined below.
- The Sycamore School will ensure that a student has meaningful access the Australian Curriculum, and that their wellbeing, needs, and goals are at the forefront of decision making.
- The Sycamore School will act in the best interests of the students and the School.
- The Sycamore School will determine the fees for the year before the commencement of the term to which the fees apply, usually at the beginning of the academic year.
- Maintain personal Information in accordance with the Privacy Act.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- Provide the School with full information about their child's diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, functional impact of disability (if known), health and wellbeing of the child when applying for enrolment.
- Families have an ongoing responsibility to provide the school with up-to-date medical records, relevant health information, and any updates that may affect the student's wellbeing or support needs throughout their time at the school.
- Support the ethos of the School, adhere to rules, policies, procedures, and future implementations by the School's Board of Directors.
- Understand that the initial and ongoing enrolment of their child at The Sycamore School is conditional on providing full disclosure of information relevant to the ongoing education of their child.
- The school reserves the right to review and, if necessary, cancel a student's enrolment wherethere are serious breaches of school expectations or unresolved issues with fee payment.
- To be familiar with <u>The Sycamore School's Policies</u>.
- To read, understand, and agree to the terms of this Enrolment Policy, Enrolment Application Form and Enrolment Contract.
- To understand that autistic young people may display behaviours that pose a risk to themselves or others as a means of communication or in response to environmental, emotional, or sensoryfactors.

Sycamore School works with young people to build their functional capacity in the areas of communication, and emotional regulation. However, at times and while acknowledging the School's supportive environment and specific skill-building program, there may be instances, e.g., for safety reasons, where the School is unable to effectively to meet a young person's needs.

Enrolment Documentation

The Sycamore School is committed to ensuring that its enrolment processes are transparent, inclusive, legally compliant, and reflective of our values as a quality education for autistic young people.

Enrolment Application Forms and Procedures

- The Sycamore School will use comprehensive and up-to-date enrolment application forms and procedures that gather sufficient information to enable the School to prepare effectively for the enrolment and transition of prospective students.
- Application forms must be clearly labelled as 'Enrolment Application', and families will be advised that submission of this form does not guarantee enrolment.

Consideration of Individual Learning Needs

The School will assess and consider any individual learning or support needs disclosed through the
enrolment process to ensure appropriate preparation of educational programs and reasonable
adjustments are considered, in line with anti-discrimination legislation and duty of care
responsibilities.

Enrolment Contracts and Legal Requirements

- The enrolment contract will outline and confirm the full range of contractual arrangements between the School, parents/carers, and students. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Payment of school fees.
 - b. Privacy and information handling.
 - c. Acceptable use of technology and communications.
- Acknowledgement of The Sycamore School's policies and values. Parents/carers will be required to
 digitally sign the Enrolment Contract, including the acknowledgement of school fees and terms, prior
 to the student's commencement.

Disclosure and Accuracy

 Parents/carers are required to provide full and accurate disclosure of relevant information when completing the Enrolment Application Form. Failure to do so may result in a review of, or cancellation of, the enrolment.

Data Collection and Privacy

- This information may also be used for related purposes, including statutory reporting, inaccordance with The Sycamore School's Privacy Policy.
- Information will be handled with confidentiality and respect and only used for purposes that support the student's wellbeing and learning.

Application Review and Updates

• Enrolment forms, procedures, and related documents will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current, legally compliant, and aligned with best practice and community expectations.

Cancellation

Any cancellation of an enrolment application must be submitted in writing by the parent/carer.

Enrolment Considerations

In line with The Sycamore School's commitment to inclusion, equity, and duty of care, the following factors may be considered when reviewing applications for enrolment:

• Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):

The Sycamore School is specifically designed to support the learning, social, and emotional needs of students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

• Capacity to Support each Child's needs:

We assess all enrolment applications based on our capacity to support each student's individual needs, while also considering the wellbeing of the broader student body and the School's available human, financial, and physical resources consistent with our obligations under disability discrimination law and duty of care.

Availability of Placements:

Enrolment is subject to the availability of appropriate placements, taking into consideration class sizes, staff-to-student ratios, and the needs of the broader school community.

• Compliance with Disability Discrimination Legislation:

In accordance with the School's <u>Disability Discrimination Policy</u>, The Sycamore School will not unlawfully discriminate against, harass, or victimise a student based on their disability or the disability of an associate. The School will take reasonable steps to ensure that a student with a disability is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, the School on the same basis as a student without a disability, and without experiencing discrimination.

Enrolment Transition Period

To support the successful transition of all students into our school community, new students are supported and placed on an Enrolment Transition Period. This period is designed to ensure that the student's individual learning, social, emotional, safety and wellbeing needs are understood and able to be supported within our school environment.

The purpose of this period is to:

- Facilitate a smooth and supported transition into The Sycamore School.
- Enable staff, families, and the student to collaboratively assess the effectiveness of existing supports and identify any additional needs.
- Ensure that the school can make reasonable adjustments where required to meet the young person's educational needs.
- Support decision-making in the best interests of the student, particularly in relation to their sustained wellbeing, safety, and learning progress.

The Enrolment Transition Period is typically up to two school terms but may be extended at the discretion of the Principal. Any concerns observed by the school which may impact a student's ongoing enrolment, will be communicated with the parents/carers both verbally and in writing. This process ensures that the school and parents/carers work in collaboration and consultation to support the student in the context of the school.

At the conclusion of this period, parents/carers will be notified by email confirming ongoing enrolment of their young person.

In some instances where it is determined that the school is not able to meet the ongoing educational needs of the student, in the context of the current student body and the School's human, financial and physical resourcing capacities, a child's enrolment may be cancelled. Parents/carers would be aware of this being a consideration prior to the decision as they would have been already involved in meetings and discussions with school staff.

Alternative education options, transition and options for continuation of learning while alternative options are being considered will be discussed in partnership with the child, family, and the child's therapist/s (as appropriate). All decisions are student-centred.

Parents/carers can appeal the decision of a cancellation of enrolment by writing to the Principal within 10 ten days.

Indemnity

By signing the Enrolment Contract, parents/carers indemnify the School against any loss or damage caused by failure of the parents/carers or their child/ren to comply with the School's policies and procedures, including Student Code of Conduct . Parents/carers indemnify the School against any loss or damage caused by the behaviour of their child/ren.

Cancellation of Enrolment

The Sycamore School may cancel a student's enrolment contract if:

- The School determines that it is not able to meet the needs of the student, with consideration to the needs of our student body and the School's human, financial and physical resourcing capacities.
- A break down in mutual trust and co-operation between the School and the parent/carer has occurred.
- Parent/Carers are in breach of the enrolment contract, and they fail to remedy the breach within a reasonable time after notice from the School requiring them to do so.

Withdrawal of Enrolment

A parent/carer may choose with withdraw their child from the school. Once a student has commenced, The Sycamore School requires one term's notice in writing of the intention to withdraw their child's enrolment. Parents/Carers are required to keep payments up to date until the agreed finishing date. A child may leave the school prior to the end of a school term; in these instances, the full term's fees are still required.

Parents/Carers may also terminate the enrolment contract when:

- The School is in breach of the enrolment contract and fails to remedy the breach within a reasonable time after notice from the parents/carers requiring the School to do so; and
- If the School increases the fees for a term by more than 10% of the fees payable for the preceding term, parents/carers may terminate this enrolment contract by notice in writing to The Sycamore School, within fourteen (14) days of the date on which we notify them of the increase.

Enrolment Deposit

- 1. To secure an offer of enrolment, a \$1000 deposit must be paid within 14 days of receipt of the invoice. Upon completion of schooling, cancellation or withdrawal of enrolment this deposit will be deducted from your final fee invoice.
- **2.** If a student does not commence at the school following their enrolment confirmation, the enrolment deposit is forfeited, that is, there is no reimbursement of the enrolment deposit.

School Tuition and Fees

The School and governing body determines the annual school tuition fees. This is completed at the end of each year before the commencement of the year to which the fees apply. The fee schedule is published on

the School's website

- 1. Fortnightly, termly and annual payment options are available. Termly and annual payments can be made via Direct Bank Transfer or EFTPOS. Fortnightly payments are processed via Direct Debit only.
- **2.** If withdrawing your child, you must give one term's notice in writing to the Principal. If insufficient notice is given, one term's fees will be payable.
- **3.** It is your responsibility to contact the School Business Manager if you are unable to make a payment by the due date. The Business Manager will negotiate with families any unresolved overdue accounts.
- 4. No student will be allowed to enter a new term at the School while fees for the previous term are unpaid. Each year there may be a small school fee increase, and we will advise you of the new amount as soon as possible. If we increase the fees for a term by more than 10% of the fees payable for the preceding term, you may terminate this enrolment contract by notice in writing to us given within fourteen (14) days of the date on which we notify you of the increase.

Fee Assistance Program

To assist parents/carers with their financial commitment to the School, procedures are in place which are fair and equitable for the Sycamore School community. The Sycamore School may be able to assist parents/carers who are experiencing short term difficulties in complying with the terms and conditions for payment of fees due to extraordinary circumstances. Parents/carers who have difficulty in meeting their financial liability to the School are encouraged to initially contact the Principal. The outcome may not always be a remission of fees but may include extended payment terms or a partial moratorium on payments for a negotiated period, depending on circumstances. All discussions and ensuring arrangements are kept in the strictest confidence. A Fee Assistance Program Approval letter outlined the agreed fee assistance.

6 References

The Sycamore School Privacy Policy

The Sycamore School Disability Discrimination Policy

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)

Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006 (Qld)

Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)

Education (Overseas Students) Regulation 2018 (Qld)

Australian Education Act 2013 s77(2)(f)

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)

Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth)

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)

Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld) Delegations/Authorisations

7 Document History

Version	Description of modification	Modified by	Date
2	Rewrite of policy and procedure	Jemma Riding	23 June 2025
1.5	Reviewing policy for updating	Vanessa Lyle	4 November 2024
1.4		Sonya Marshall	2022

Appendix A Enrolment Application Form















