

# Enrolment Policy

## Legislative Requirements

The NSW Education Act (1990) (Education Act) sets out requirements for enrolment of students at school in NSW. Children of compulsory school-age are required to be enrolled in, and attend, school or be registered for home schooling (section 22 of the Education Act).

In NSW, the compulsory school age is from the age of 6 to 17. However, a child under the age of 17 ceases to be of compulsory school age if they have completed Year 10 and are enrolled in approved education or engaged in training, or paid work (or a combination of these) on a full-time basis (an average of 25 hours per week) (section 21B of the Education Act).

Waranara School enrolls students ranging from Grade 9 to 12. Therefore compulsory schooling is often relevant to all Stage 5 students and students in Year 11. For students over the age of 17 at Waranara School, enrolment is a choice.

## Policy Statement

The NSW Registration Manual (Section 3.8) requires all schools to keep a register of enrolment of all students at their school.

At Waranara School a student enrolment register is maintained on a cloud-based school management system.

## Enrolment register

Schools are required to maintain a register of enrolments that includes details of each student currently and previously enrolled at the school.

The student enrolment register at Waranara School is collated and monitored by our administrative staff via our school management system. After a student enrolls at our school and submits the required paperwork, administrative staff input relevant information and over time corresponds with parents/guardians regarding any updates to the register. The following information for each student is on the enrolment register:

- name, age and address
- the name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination
- previous school or pre-enrolment situation
- When a student leaves the school, the date the enrolment ceased and the student's destination (i.e. next educational setting) is recorded in the enrolment register. If the destination of a student, under the age of 17, exiting the school is unknown, or the school is not satisfied with the information provided about the student's destination, the school notifies the NSW Department of Education using **student destination unknown form** available from AISNSW. A letter is written by the Principal and sent to the student and parent/carer confirming their withdrawal of enrolment from Waranara School.

Each enrolment register will be retained for a minimum of 5 years on our school management system before being archived.

## **Enrolling Students with a Disability**

Waranara School under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) must not discriminate against prospective students on the grounds of disability.

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards) are made under the DDA. The Standards clarify the obligations of schools in relation to prospective students with disability.

Waranara School's enrolment policy is guided by policies, procedures and frameworks outlined in the *AISNSW Guidelines for Enrolling and Support Students with a Disability for AISNSW Schools*.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to:

- Apply for enrolment;
- Participate in courses or programs; and
- Use facilities or services,

on the same basis as a student without a disability. Adjustments may include administrative, resource and facilities or procedural modifications, depending on the needs of the student.

Processes related to understanding and determining the reasonable adjustments required for prospective student are embedded throughout procedures below including the *Waranara School Referral Form, Enrolment Interview, Enrolment Form and Required Documentation and Student Trial Period*.

In addition, an individual student's adjustments are formally determined, discussed and reviewed with the student and parents/carers through *The Waranara School Individual Learning Support Plan (ILSP) Collaborative Planning Process* (see Learning Support Policy).

### **Unjustifiable Hardship**

While the DDA requires a school to consider all measures required to meet a prospective student's needs, it does not require schools to accommodate a student or prospective student where to do so would require making a reasonable adjustment that could cause *unjustifiable hardship* to the school.

In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, Waranara School examines each individual student case and takes into consideration the following factors:

1. The nature or the benefit of the detriment likely to accrue to, or be suffered by any person concerned. This will involve weighting the benefits/detriments of the reasonable adjustment to all parties including the students and the school as well as the interests of the community at large;
2. The effect of the disability of any person concerned;
3. The financial circumstances and estimated expenditure required to be made by the school in order to make the adjustment
4. The availability of financial and other assistance to the school; and
5. Any relevant action plans that address the reasonable adjustment and the impact it would have on the person or institution.

If Waranara School is considering refuting an enrolment application based on *unjustified hardship*, the Principal will contact the AISNSW Support Services Team for advice and guidance regarding this decision.

Whereby a student's application for enrolment is declined due to *unjustified hardship*, the parents/carers should be given an opportunity to respond before any final decision is made.

The onus is then on the Principal to demonstrate why it is unable to provide reasonable adjustments in justifying why the school is declining the enrolment.

### **Waranara School Referral Form**

Young people who wish to enrol at Waranara School can independently refer themselves, or can be referred by another school, community agency or family member. Waranara School **must** receive referrals via the *Waranara School Student Referral Form*.

This form is to be completed prior to a formal in-person intake interview. The referral form contains a series of questions such as:

- Current School Details and Reason for Referral
- Student Support History and Professional Service Engagement
- Young Person's Strengths and Interests
- Attendance History
- Young Person's Support Needs and Required Adjustments
- Parent/Carer Contact Details
- Current Living Situation
- Family Background including Employment Details
- Any On-Going Court Details
- Formal Assessments such as Psychometric Testing

Prospective students and parents/carers can submit the completed form in-person or email it to Waranara School administrative staff.

Enrolment forms are then reviewed by the Principal for a prospective interview.

### **Enrolment Criteria:**

To be granted recognition as a *Special Assistance School*, a school's Enrolment Policy must identify the characteristics of the disability or social, emotional and/or behavioural needs of the students eligible to enrol in the school.

Waranara School is registered with NESA and AISNSW as a *Special Assistance School* and specialises in assisting students with a history of school disengagement and non-attendance, mental health issues, social and emotional disabilities and/or complex trauma. Waranara School therefore assesses all referrals to enrol against a set of criteria, to determine whether they would benefit from the unique nature and support that the school provides. Whilst all students do not have to satisfy all criteria to be eligible, each criterion is given consideration:

- Has a history of poor attendance and disengagement from schooling
- Has a history of mental health issues and/or complex trauma
- Has a history of learning gaps or difficulties

- Has a diagnosed disability such as but not limited to; Depression, Anxiety, Attention Hyperactivity Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder which Waranara School has the resources to provide reasonable adjustments
- Lives within reasonable distance of Waranara School so they can meet attendance expectations

**Important Note:** Given many Waranara School students have experienced complex trauma, for safety and wellbeing reasons if a student has a history of violent conduct in or outside of the school environment, they will likely be ineligible to enrol at the school.

Enrolment decisions are the responsibility of the Principal and whilst they may discuss the characteristics of prospective students with other staff, the Principal's decision is final.

### **Enrolment Interview:**

On advice from the Principal, enrolment interviews are scheduled by Waranara administrative staff with the prospective student and parent/carer.

The Principal hosts the meeting and asks the student and parent/carer a series of questions such as but not limited to:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What do you like about school or have liked in the past?
- What subjects have you preferred?
- What do you not like or find difficult about school?
- What supports and adjustments have been helpful for you at school in the past?
- Do you currently have any external supports/services involved? If yes, in what ways do they assist?

The Principal then provides a general overview of the school, expectations and reasonable adjustments available to students at Waranara. The student and parent/carer are then given the opportunity to outline any adjustments required.

Should the Principal be on leave, a member of the Waranara School Leadership Team will facilitate the meeting and take notes for the Principal's consideration upon returning from leave.

**Important Note:** Participation in an enrolment interview does not guarantee that the prospective student will be extended an offer of enrolment.

### **Enrolment Form and Required Documentation**

To be eligible to be enrolled and commence attendance at Waranara School, students and their parents/carers **must** provide the following documentation following the enrolment interview:

#### *Mandatory Documentation:*

- Completed Waranara School Enrolment Form
- Birth Certificate or Valid Passport
- Student Immunisation History
- Waranara School Student Rights and Responsibilities Form
- Permission Notes related Multimedia, Excursions and Medication

- Asthma Action Plan
- Anaphylaxis Plan

*Other Documentation if available:*

- External Support Consent Form
- Medical Letters or Reports related to Student Diagnosis/es of Disability
- Formal Reports or Assessments related to Learning such as Psychometric or Speech Pathology Testing
- Individual Learning Support Plans from previous school
- Previous School Reports
- NAPLAN Results

This documentation is collated by Waranara School administrative staff and saved into their student file.

**Important Note:** A student cannot attend a school day at Waranara School until the mandatory documentation has been provided.

### **Student Trial Period and Required Enrolment Documentation**

All students who start at Waranara School are offered a trial period of enrolment lasting **3 weeks**. This period is designed to provide prospective students a chance to demonstrate their willingness to engage at the school. In addition, it is an opportunity for the school to determine if it can provide reasonable adjustments to support the student's attendance, wellbeing and learning needs.

Before a trial period begins, Waranara School administrative staff on behalf of the Principal email the student's current school to inform them they are undertaking a trial at Waranara School including dates relevant to the 3 week trial. In addition, a letter is sent home to the parent/carer indicating the length and purpose of the trial period.

During each week of the trial period, a text message is sent to the parent/carer providing feedback on student learning, engagement and conduct.

In some circumstances, the enrolment trial can be extended for up to another 3 weeks if a student has not engaged or there have been issues related to student conduct. The student and parent/carer are notified at the end of the initial 3 week period via a letter and phone call. In addition, the student's current school is notified via letter that the trial period has been extended with relevant dates.

In some cases, following the trial period a student may not be offered a formal enrolment at Waranara School. This can be for the following reasons observed during the trial period:

- Issues related to student behaviour and conduct (see student conduct policy)
- Non-attendance
- No communication with school staff
- The school is unable to provide reasonable adjustments for the student (see *unjustified hardship*)

Enrolment decisions following a trial period are the responsibility of the Principal and whilst they may discuss the prospective students with other staff, the Principal's decision is final.

If a student engages well and enjoys their trial period at Waranara School, they are then given an official offer of school enrolment (see procedure below).

**Important Note:** Students during the 3 week trial period **are not** enrolled at Waranara School. Their enrolment remains with their current school at this time.

### **Official Offer of School Enrolment**

Following a successful trial period, a formal offer of enrolment is sent via email or letter to the parent/carer from the Principal. The parent/carer must then reply to this correspondence to accept an enrolment at the school.

Once accepted, Waranara School administrative staff send a letter from the Principal to the student's previous school. This letter states we are officially enrolling their student and provides a start date at Waranara School. This letter is saved to the student's file.

If this student is in Year 10, 11 or 12, Waranara School administrative staff will enroll them on the NESAs Schools online platform.

### **Waranara School Fees**

When their student is enrolled Waranara School parent/carers, are asked to pay \$150 per term. This can be paid by term or as a yearly fee. A record of these payments is maintained by Waranara School administrative staff.

**Important note:** If a family is unable to pay the school fees due to personal financial circumstances, they can be exempt from this requirement. This decision is made on needs basis by the school Principal.

### **Transition from Junior to Senior School – Year 10 to Year 11**

All Year 10 Waranara students who successfully achieve their RoSA are provided with an offer letter for enrolment in Year 11 at Waranara School.

Students and their families/carers need to accept the offer via email or phone call by a specified date as determined by the school Principal to secure a place for the following school year.

Should a student reject their offer or fail to accept the offer by the specific date, where possible, Waranara School will endeavour to assist this student to find the best pathway for the following year as outlined in the *legislative requirements* of this policy.

### **Waiting List**

Should a referral form be completed when there are no spaces available at the school, the prospective student will be placed on a waitlist. The parents/carers are notified via phone and email their young person has been placed on the waitlist.

The waitlist is managed by the Principal. The waitlist order is determined chronologically, based on the date that the enrolment mandatory documentation is submitted to the school. When a vacancy becomes available this order is followed.

**Important note:** It is important that parents/carers are aware that inclusion on the waiting list **does not** guarantee enrolment.

### **Exemption from enrolment**

Under section 25 of the Education Act students may be eligible for an exemption from enrolment.

Grounds for exemptions at Waranara School may include:

*Exemption from enrolment:*

- students who have completed Year 9 but not yet completed Year 10 and who have secured a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship

Independent school Principals have been delegated authority by the Minister for Education to grant exemptions in some circumstances.

If a student would like to be exempt from enrolment or attendance at Waranara School for the above reasons, a meeting is to be held with the Principal, student and parent/guardian. Following this, the Principal will utilise necessary procedures outlined in the AISNSW *Guidelines for Exemptions from Attendance and Enrolment for Independent Schools* resource to make their decision. The Principal will next send a letter to the student and parent/guardian outlining their decision. The Principal will maintain a record of this meeting in individual student case notes and in circumstances where necessary save the *Exemption Certificate* in the student's electronic file.

### **Withdrawal of Enrolment from Waranara School**

A student at Waranara School may have their enrolment withdrawn for the following reasons but not limited to:

- Consistent extremely low level of attendance
- No communication with the school
- No response to trialed intervention strategies
- Not meeting required outcomes for their RoSA or HSC
- Due to behaviour (see student conduct policy)

If the student is over the age of 17, it is requested they attend a meeting with Principal and their parent/carer to determine their plan following the withdrawal of enrolment. Where possible, Waranara School will endeavour to assist this student to find the best pathway. A letter is then written by the Principal and sent to the student and parent/carer confirming their withdrawal of enrolment from Waranara School.

For students whose enrolment has been withdrawn under the age of 17 please see the **enrolment register** section of this policy.

**Relevant Documents and Legislation:**

- The NSW Education Act (1990) (Education Act)
- The NSW Registration Manual
- Student Destination Unknown Form
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)
- The Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards)
- AISNSW Guidelines for Enrolling and Support Students with a Disability for AISNSW Schools
- The Waranara School Individual Learning Support Plan (ILSP) Collaborative Planning Process
- Waranara School Student Referral Form.
- Waranara School Enrolment Form
- Waranara School Student Rights and Responsibilities Form
- Waranara School Permission Notes related Multimedia, Excursions and Medication
- Waranara School External Support Consent Form
- AISNSW Guidelines for Exemptions from Attendance and Enrolment for Independent Schools