

Enrolment Policy

Table of Contents

1. Biblical Basis.....	2
2. Preamble	2
3. Guidelines for Enrolment Decisions	2
4. Enrolments Registrar	3
5. Overall Description of the Enrolment Process	3
6. Confidentiality.....	3
7. Laws and Regulations	4
8. Association Membership in Relationship to Enrolment.....	4
9. Priority Categories	4
10. Waiting Lists	5
11. Considerations for Filling Vacancies	5
11.1 Maximum Class Sizes	6
11.2 Minimum Christian Percentage	6
11.3 Procedure for Filling a Vacancy	7
12. Enrolment Criteria.....	7
12.1 Minimum Starting Age for Enrolments	7
12.2 Maximum Age for Enrolments	7
12.3 Schools Ability to Meet the Needs of the Student.....	8
12.4 Assessment Procedure	8
12.5 Requesting Enrolment Information From Parents	8
12.6 Consideration of Remissions.....	8
13. Christian Lifestyle Initiative	8
14. Transfers Between Campuses	9
15. Holding Class Places / Temporary Withdrawal	9
16. Temporary Enrolments	9
17. Recommendation to Board	9
18. Offer of Placement.....	9
18.1 Notification of Acceptance / Refusal of Enrolment.....	9
18.2 Conditions of Enrolment	9
18.3 Time Periods Regarding Acceptance.....	10
19. Document History	11
1. Appendix I - Christian Percentage Rationale	12
1.1 Introduction	12
1.2 Our School as a Covenant Community.....	12
1.3 Implications for our School	12
1.4 Disadvantages of reducing the minimum Christian percentage	13
1.5 Anti-Discrimination Legislation.....	13

1. Biblical Basis

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Proverbs 22:5-6

⁵ Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them.⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honour your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” ⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

2. Preamble

Illawarra Christian Education (ICE) was established by Christian parents desirous that their children be educated within a distinctively Christian school environment. Training in a Christian view of the world and relationships, and Christian nurture of the child are fundamental to the functioning of our schools. It is the task of Illawarra Christian Education school's to “lead the child to discern the meaning and structure of the creation under the guidance of the Word of God and to train the child in the use and development of their God given talents, so that they may be equipped to serve Christ as King in all spheres of life to the Glory of God and the wellbeing of their fellow men” (refer Educational Creed, Section H).

As a covenant community, Illawarra Christian Education, through its Enrolment Policy, seeks primarily to support Christian parents (Galatians 6:10) in their task of nurturing and training their children in God's ways. Illawarra Christian Education also seeks to support other families who are supportive of the Christian ethos of ICE schools and are desirous that their children come under the ICE Christian educational model.

This policy acknowledges the needs and desires of the individual family or child within the context of the nature and needs of the school community, such that justice and loving kindness may be evident in all enrolment processes and decisions (Micah 6:8). While justice and loving kindness should not be applied to one family or child at the expense of others, due recognition should be given to the Biblical pattern of care for the disadvantaged.

The ultimate responsibility, before God, for the training and nurture of the child resides with the parents. It is not the role of the ICE to seek to usurp that responsibility; neither should parents abdicate it in favour of the school.

It is expected that parents will be supportive of the educational model and ICE's “Code of Behaviour” and will work in partnership with Illawarra Christian Education staff.

3. Guidelines for Enrolment Decisions

All enrolment decisions will be at the sole discretion of the Board. The following guidelines are to be taken into account by the Board when considering applications for enrolment.

1. Illawarra Christian Education's Biblical ethos and constitution.
2. The provision of a sound Christian education for the children of Christian parents.
3. The recommendations of those responsible for advising the Board.
4. The impact of the enrolment on the welfare of each class and the whole school community.

5. Stewardship of available resources to ensure the viability of the whole school community.
6. The capacity of the school to cater for the individual needs of the student
7. A response of justice, loving kindness and pastoral care.
8. Maintenance of a predominantly Christian community.
9. Consideration of existing laws and regulations.

4. Enrolments Registrar

The role of Enrolments Registrar is performed by a member of the office staff. There is one Registrar for Illawarra Christian Education, aided by office staff at each School. The Registrar works closely with the Board member responsible for enrolments.

The Registrar maintains ownership of the entire enrolment process and performs the day to day enrolment transactions, including organising assessments and interviews.

The Registrar has the authority to approve straightforward enrolments and submits a report of those approved to the next Board meeting. Enrolments requiring additional assessments, involving special needs or impacting the minimum Christian percentage for a class must be taken to the Board for approval.

5. Overall Description of the Enrolment Process

A family enquiring about enrolment will be sent an Enrolment Prospectus, containing the procedure for enrolment, an enrolment application form, a document describing the Biblical basis of Christian education, and the uniform and discipline policies.

Upon receipt of the application form and enrolment application fee, the information will be checked and recorded.

When a vacancy occurs, the waiting list is reviewed and the family at the top of the list is invited for an interview and student assessment. Parents will provide two recent school reports, all other documentation relevant to the child, and will sign a consent form authorising the school to seek further information relevant to the enrolment.

Where possible, consultation with third parties providing reports and assessments will occur.

The enrolment interview team should comprise at least two members:

- The Registrar or delegate, and
- The Principal or delegate.

During the interview and assessment process, free and open communication will be encouraged with parents in regard to their child's individual needs and the progress of their application.

All available information is considered and a recommendation is formed on the enrolment application.

Parents and students must agree with the Code of Behaviour and secondary students and their parents must sign the Code to show their agreement before approval for enrolment can be given.

If the recommendation from both the interview and assessment is for acceptance, and there are no complicating issues, the Registrar may approve the enrolment immediately and submit a report to the next Board meeting. Otherwise the recommendation and all relevant information are presented to the Board for decision.

If the recommendation is for non-acceptance, the parents will be further consulted to ensure clarity of understanding of issues and processes.

Copies of all correspondence are to be filed with the original application.

6. Confidentiality

All enrolment information is to be kept confidential and only viewed by the Business Manager, Registrar, the Principals, staff involved in the enrolment process and the Board.

Written consent from parents to allow discussion of assessment results from teachers and other professionals will be sought.

6.1 Federal Reporting Obligations

When a student from another state enrolls or applies for enrolment at an Illawarra Christian Education school the school will follow the process to request the transfer of information from the student's previous school as outlined in the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note.

7. Laws and Regulations

In all enrolment decisions, Biblical principles have pre-eminence. Subject to Biblical principles, Illawarra Christian Education adheres to existing laws and regulations. Given this, special care needs to be taken to ensure that all aspects of the enrolment process conform to legal requirements, including anti-discrimination and privacy legislation, whilst maintaining the Christian ethos and character of the school.

Personnel involved in the enrolment process should take into account those requirements.

If during the process of considering an enrolment the Board is uncertain of its Biblical, legal or educational obligations, it should seek advice from suitably qualified persons or organisations. Such advice should be carefully considered when making the final enrolment decision.

8. Association Membership in Relationship to Enrolment

The Association is established to provide Christian education, based on the word of God, for children, primarily from Christian families. As such, Association members receive priority in the enrolment process.

When families apply for both membership and enrolment at the same time, a separate Association membership interview must take place prior to a recommendation being made to the Board for a decision on Association membership. If the application for membership is approved by the Board, the student is moved to the appropriate priority category for the purposes of enrolment.

Similarly, when families apply for Associate membership, after already having had an enrolment interview, a separate membership interview will occur, and the student moved to the appropriate priority category if the family is accepted for Association membership by the Board.

In all other respects, the enrolment and Association membership processes are independent.

When families become full members of the Association prior to their children being offered a position in the school, the student is moved to the appropriate priority category.

9. Priority Categories

When an application for enrolment is received and receipted, it is added to the appropriate campus and class waiting list according to a priority category as listed below.

The priority categories, in order, are:

1. Full members of the Association who have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
2. Full members of the Association who do not have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
3. Associate members of the Association who have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
4. Associate members of the Association who do not have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
5. Parents who are committed to Parent-Controlled Christian Education transferring from another Christian school and who are eligible for full membership of the Association.

6. Parents who are neither full members nor associate members of the Association and who have children attending an Illawarra Christian Education school.
7. Parents who are professing Christians, defined as those who attend church at least monthly, who sign on the enrolment form to indicate that they accept and personally believe the statement of faith, and whose application is accompanied by a reference from the minister of their church.
8. All other families.

Where two or more applicants, in consideration of the above categories, have equal priority and the position cannot be filled from a higher category, the earliest date of application for enrolment will take precedence.

Exceptional circumstances may arise from time to time where adherence to the priority categories may be overridden by the Board. All recommendations to override the priority categories must be presented to the Board, along with supporting information, for a decision prior to the family commencing student assessment and parent interviews.

When the process of filling vacancies is in progress, any changes in priority categories for families involved, such as Association membership, must be approved by the Board.

When a priority 7 or 8 family has a child being considered to fill a vacancy, and that family has other children on the waiting list, then those children may be considered to be in priority 6 if there are vacancies which they could also fill.

10. Waiting Lists

Upon receipt, all applications are checked to ensure that all necessary information has been supplied and then entered onto the waiting list according to:

- campus preferred,
- class applied for,
- relevant priority category,
- date of application.

When a vacancy becomes available, the Registrar will review the waiting list and approach families in the order of priority unless a recommendation is made to the Board to override the priority category due to exceptional circumstances.

Should a family either decline or not respond to an offer to commence the enrolment process, the next family on the waiting list is approached and so on until the vacancy is filled. When parents decline an offer to commence enrolment, the student is moved to the bottom of their category on the waiting list with the date of application set to the current date. In this case, the Registrar need not contact the family again during the current year unless the family specifically requests that we do so. If special circumstances play a part in the parent's decision to decline, the Board may choose to leave the student in their current position within the category.

11. Considerations for Filling Vacancies

The Board will seek to allocate enrolments in accordance with the priority categories.

In every enrolment decision the Board will consider:

- The welfare of the whole school community (including children, parents and staff).
- The Christian ethos of Illawarra Christian Education.
- The capacity of the school to cater for the individual needs of the student.
- The Board will periodically review all vacancies.

11.1 Maximum Class Sizes

The maximum enrolments in classes are:

- Prep 30 per day
- Kindergarten to year 2 24 (Single Stream), 24 (Double Stream)
- Year 3 to year 4 30 (Single stream), 30 (Double stream)
- Year 5 to year 6 32 (Single stream), 32 (Double stream)
- Year 7 to year 10 32 (Single stream), 28 (Double stream)
- Year 11 to year 12 notionally 38 for the purposes of calculating Christian percentage, however there is no set maximum

In special circumstances class sizes may be varied. The maximum size of a class may need to be reduced because of physical rooming restrictions.

11.2 Minimum Christian Percentage

The Board will seek to ensure that a minimum percentage of enrolments for each year come from Christian families. These are families who satisfy the requirements for membership or entry into priority 7 on the waiting list. Use the following as guidelines:

- Each class from Prep to year 3 should aim to have a minimum of 75% of students from Christian Families
- Each class from year 4 to year 12 should aim to have a minimum of 85% of students from Christian families.
- High School students coming from other families but who make a credible confession of their own Christian commitment are to be included in the Christian category. They must attend church regularly, which can include attendance at a church youth group. Their application must include a reference from their church testifying to their Christian commitment. The reference must be signed by a recognised Minister of the church. Such students will be interviewed at the parent interview.

It is desirable that new students entering Senior High School be Christians or be from a Christian family.

In special circumstances the Board may approve a temporary reduction in the minimum Christian percentage for a class. It is expected that the class would return to the normal minimum Christian percentage by filling subsequent vacancies from Christian families.

The number of positions in a class available to students from other families who do not meet the Christian criteria is calculated on the maximum class size, rounded up to the nearest whole number. For double streamed classes, this calculation is performed on the total maximum size of both classes combined.

The following table shows the number of positions available in a class to students from other families, according to class size.

Total class size	Positions available to students from other families – Year 3 and below	Positions available to students from other families – Year 4 and above
24	6	4
30	8	5
32	8	5

38	10	6
48	12	8
52	13	8
56	14	9

11.3 Procedure for Filling a Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs the waiting list is reviewed to determine the next student in order of priority. If the student is from priority list categories 1 to 6, arrangements are to be made for a student assessment for the first child on the list and following children up to the existing number of vacancies. (If there is to be any special consideration given to children, then this should be noted on the waiting list and in the case of a vacancy, it should be referred to the Board before action is taken).

If there are no applications in priority categories 1 to 6 the Registrar shall be responsible for arranging an enrolment interview with both parents, if possible, and two members of the interview team who will complete the interview form and return it to the office.

In the case of a staged class which comprises more than one grade, the guideline is to fill a vacancy from the majority grade in the class. Before approaching families, the Registrar should consult with relevant staff who may determine that the class makeup would be better served by filling the vacancy from a minority grade. Preference should be given to upholding the Christian percentage by approaching families in categories 1-7 for all relevant grades before moving to category 8.

12. Enrolment Criteria

12.1 Minimum Starting Age for Enrolments

- Students commencing school in Prep must be three (3) years of age by 30th April of that year.
- Students commencing school in Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by 30th April of that year.
- Students commencing school in Year 1 must be six (6) years of age by 30th April of that year.
- For all other classes, there is no set minimum age. Each student is considered in relation to their readiness for the class, and to the class that they propose to enter.

In exceptional circumstances, the Board may, upon written request from parents, review individual students whose birthday occurs during May of the proposed year of entry to Kindergarten or Year 1. Such circumstances may include:

- Transfer from another Christian school.
- Additional documentary evidence from educational specialists indicating readiness for school.
- Other exceptional circumstances as determined by the Board from time to time.

In such exceptional cases the Board may seek additional assessments and recommendations when considering the enrolment application.

12.2 Maximum Age for Enrolments

- There is no set maximum age for enrolment in each class. Each student is considered in relation to the class that they propose to enter.
- Mature age applicants will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with the criteria established in this policy.

12.3 Schools Ability to Meet the Needs of the Student

A key consideration for enrolment is the capacity of the school to cater for the specific needs of the individual student, both in the short and long term. As a Christian community, we have a responsibility to seek to provide each student with the opportunity to develop to their God given potential. To assist in this process, the following will be considered:

12.4 Assessment Procedure

The aim of the assessment procedure is to assist in understanding:

- the anticipated needs of each individual student throughout the duration of their schooling
- the anticipated resources required to meet those needs
- the school's capacity to provide those resources
- upon acceptance of enrolment, the individual program required to meet those needs
- the impact of meeting those individual needs on the existing class and school community

An important aspect of the assessment procedure is the free and open communication with parents of their child's individual needs. This will occur during all stages of the process.

12.5 Requesting Enrolment Information From Parents

To facilitate an understanding of the student's needs, it will be necessary to request all relevant reports and information from the parents regarding the student. In requesting this information, due consideration will be given to relevant laws.

Where possible, consultation with third parties providing reports and assessments should occur. Written consent will be sought from the parent prior to consultation.

Information will be requested through enrolment application forms or verbally during the assessment procedure.

12.6 Consideration of Remissions

A family's ability to pay required fees will be considered, however this should not be the main determining factor in the decision making process. During the enrolment process, if it appears that payment of fees may impose a financial burden on the family, and they satisfy the Remission of School Fees Policy the Board representative and Business Manager should apply this policy. It is expected that families not eligible for fee assistance, or did not inform the Illawarra Christian Education of their eligibility at enrolment of their first K to 12 student will be able to fulfil their commitment of meeting school fees. Therefore, no request for fee remission will be considered in the first twelve months following enrolment.

13. Christian Lifestyle Initiative

Christian Lifestyle Initiative (CLI) is an enrolment offer made to parents of Christian students entering Year 11. The enrolment will be at a substantially reduced fee for Years 11 and 12. The aim is to promote Christian education at senior secondary level amongst families who might not otherwise be able to afford it. CLI applications must be submitted by the minister of the church attended by the student, and must include a reference from the minister attesting to the Christian character of the student.

The student will be interviewed at the parent interview with one of the interviewers being the Principal or delegate. CLI applications must be approved by the Board.

A review by the Principal or delegate of the offer for a CLI will occur at the end of the Preliminary Year in order to confirm or discontinue the CLI for the HSC year. This review will be on the basis of maintenance of the student's Christian walk.

14. Transfers Between Campuses

To maintain the integrity of the waiting list the Board will consider each request for campus transfer on its merit and according to the circumstances at the time.

Any transfer is dependent upon a vacancy being available and the considerations for filling vacancies outlined below.

15. Holding Class Places / Temporary Withdrawal

Positions will not normally be held open in a class for temporary withdrawal of a student. Under exceptional circumstances, the Board may choose to override this practice.

16. Temporary Enrolments

It is not normal policy to have temporary enrolments, however under exceptional circumstances the Board may approve an increase in class sizes to accommodate temporary enrolments.

17. Recommendation to Board

In order to meet its obligation of making a fair and just decision in each enrolment application that the Board needs to approve, it is essential that the Board have at its disposal all relevant information.

This should include, at a minimum, the following:

- The information provided on the enrolment application.
- Priority category and current Christian family percentage in the class.
- A description of the individual needs of the student and how these needs have been determined.
- The outcome of discussions with parents and others currently involved in the management of the student.
- Specific support requirements to meet the students needs and the estimated cost of providing the required resources.
- Potential sources of additional funding.
- Characteristics of the class and potential impact on the school community.
- Other options that have been considered (such as alternate campus, repeats, etc)

A recommendation will be provided to the Board based on the available information.

18. Offer of Placement

18.1 Notification of Acceptance / Refusal of Enrolment

Parents will be notified in writing of the decision regarding the application for enrolment.

18.2 Procedures of Enrolment

Parents will be given a date by which they must respond to the offer in writing and a date by which the student must commence school.

Parents are required to sign an acceptance of the offer of placement, indicating their acceptance of the terms of enrolment. They will also be required to pay fees as outlined in the Fees Policy to hold the position until the date of commencement as signified in the letter of offer.

For non-Christian families (ie families who do not satisfy the requirements for membership or entry into priority 7 on the waiting list), the following two additional enrolment conditions apply:

- Parents must agree to attend an information session where the gospel and the basis for Christian education will be clearly enunciated within the first two years of their child being at the school.
- Parents are required to acknowledge, in writing, that they are comfortable with the statement of faith and the Christian ethos of Illawarra Christian Education, and accept that, in the course of their time at ICE, their children will be presented with the gospel, and given the opportunity to respond

If the required fees are paid and the student consequently does not take up the position, the fees will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances as approved by the Business Manager.

18.3 Time Periods Regarding Acceptance

When an offer of placement is made, parents will respond within a period of fourteen (14) days of the date of letter of offer. Should all conditions of enrolment not be satisfied within the required time, a phone call will be made to confirm that the parents understand the conditions of enrolment, prior to the position again being declared vacant.

Policy History

Version	Revised By	Approved	Description	Next Review
1.0		2002	Initial release	
2.0	K Bosward	3/6/2004	Added Registrar role; revised maximum class sizes, minimum Christian percentage guidelines and K/1 minimum starting age	
2.1	K Bosward	9/12/2004	Clarified category 7 criteria, enrolment process and waiting list processing; changed Kinder enrolment process; added HOC role, CLI, temporary enrolments and Christian percentage rationale	
2.2	K Bosward	6/6/2005	Clarified student's own profession of faith; added procedure for filling vacancy in staged (composite) class	
2.3	K Bosward	13/10/2005	Clarified interview requirements for Year 11/12 students	
2.4	K Bosward	2/2/2006	Clarified requirements for student's own profession of faith	
2.5	K Bosward	9/3/2006	Kindergarten assessments now done before approval	
2.6	K Bosward	24/8/2006	Added Federal Reporting Obligations	
2.7	M Edwards	05/06/2007	Changes to Christian percentage	
2.8	C Muscat	16/10/2008	Changes to starting age and maximum class sizes	
2.9	G. Batten & C. Muscat	19/5/2011	Changes to eligibility for Fee Remission. Review Policy 2012	
3.0	G. Batten & C. Muscat	18/07/2011	Changes to size of Prep classes and age of entry to Prep	2013
3.1	G. Batten & C. Muscat	2/2/2012	Inclusion of Biblical Basis & requirement of accepting to "Code of Conduct" as a condition of enrolment	2014
3.2	Exec Assistant to Exec Principal	Pre-approved October 2016	Change of operational name to ICE, Campus to School and reformatting	2017

Appendix I - Christian Percentage Rationale

18.4 Introduction

The Enrolment Policy contains the guideline that the Board will seek to ensure that a minimum 85% of all enrolments come from Christian families. These are families who satisfy the requirements for membership or entry into priority 7 on the waiting list. Each class should aim to have 85% students from Christian families. Also, students coming from other families but who make a credible profession of their own Christian commitment are to be included in the Christian category.

This paper gives the rationale behind our minimum Christian percentage guideline. With increasing enrolment “competition” from other Christian schools in our region, it is appropriate that this rationale be recorded here and referred to as needed when questions arise regarding this guideline.

18.5 Illawarra Christian Education as a Covenant Community

Our Educational Creed states that Christ’s body is “the covenant community bound to Him as head, and that the children of believing parents belong to that covenant community.” (E.11-13).

Further, the Creed states “although by the grace of God, men who reject the Word of God as the ordering principle of life provide many valuable insights into the common structure of reality, yet because the religious direction of their thoughts remains radically opposed to that of the covenant community in Christ, there can be no possibility of a synthesis of their systems of thought with the scripturally directed thought which Christ’s covenant community is called to pursue.” (E.17-24).

Also, “a school where Christ is confessed as head of the educational task in harmony with the Scripture is a valid ... expression of the life of the covenant community redeemed in Christ.” (H.4-7).

Thus we see that our Educational Creed expects our schools to be substantially and effectively a covenant community, comprised of children of one or two believing parents, together with believing staff who work in partnership with the parents in the education of their children. Parents therefore join a community endeavouring to fulfil a God-given responsibility to give children a Christ-centred education on how to do all things for the glory of God.

Implications for our Schools

Since our schools are to be substantially and effectively a covenant community, we must approach with caution and much prayer any discussion which may result in not maintaining a high percentage of Christian families in our community. The impact of too many families who do not confess Christ as their head cannot be underestimated. “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” (1 Cor 5:6).

Ronald P Chadwick says, “In my conversations with many Christian school administrators across America today, the unanimous conclusion is that the strength of the Christian school is in direct proportion to the Christian home or homes that are represented in the school family.” (quoted by Richard Edlin, *The Cause of Christian Education*, p92).

Reina de Vries (from Christian Parent-Controlled Schools Ltd in Australia) is strongly of the view that a Christian percentage less than 80% can be disastrous. Christian parent-controlled schools which have a low or no minimum Christian percentage guideline have faced a number of problems.

The concern here is the potential influence that parents who are not Christ-centred may exert within the school. In this regard we even need to be careful when considering a student’s own profession of faith. While a child of unbelieving parents may make a credible profession of faith, the reality is that the parents are the ones who are responsible for their child’s education and who pay the fees, so they will be the ones who may seek to influence the direction and policy of the school.

There may even be an issue with anti-discrimination legislation, although this is as yet untested. While a Christian school may be “Christian” in name, if it can be demonstrated that a significant number of families in the school do not call themselves “Christian”, then the school could forfeit existing exemptions granted to them under the legislation. For example, the school could lose the legal right to employ only Christian staff.

In Christ’s service to partner with parents in providing a quality Christian Education founded on the Word of God

18.6 Disadvantages of reducing the minimum Christian percentage

Potential negative implications for our schools caused by reducing the minimum Christian percentage include:

- A greater number of parents who may not understand the biblical principles of education and thus may seek to impose other agenda, such as focusing more on the “private” aspect of independent schooling rather than our distinctive Christ-centred education.
- The temptation to remove what may be regarded as objectionable material from a Christ-centred curriculum, so as not to offend an increasing number of families who do not have a personal commitment to Christ.
- More disruptive pupils, especially those who enter at high school. Of course the sinful nature that afflicts all people (Romans 3:10) means that disruptive students may come from Christian families as well. However, in general there is the potential for more disruptive behaviour from children whose parents do not seek to live by the teachings of the bible nor to train their children to uphold those teachings. Those who come into the school later will find the school particularly different and challenging compared to what they have been used to.
- A decreased willingness to exercise disciplinary action against disruptive students, again for fear of offending parents and damaging the reputation of our schools. We may even be on shaky legal ground here. There is an expectation by parents that our schools, because they are caring and smaller, may be able to “fix” behavioural problems manifested by students at other schools. As we lower our percentage, more parents will insist on their right to have our schools take in their children and may challenge us if we are perceived to refuse on the basis of behavioural unsuitability. Currently our only avenue for refusal is on the basis of Christian percentage.
- The result can be a greater emphasis on the school environment, rather than on curriculum and teaching method. There may also be a greater emphasis on evangelism, which while important and necessary (even amongst the children of Christian parents), is not the primary task of education. It can lead to a greater focus on the secondary school where significant behavioural problems are more likely to be manifested, and where students are often seen as better targets for evangelism. By contrast, the educational approach that is to be characteristic of a covenant community should be one of continual disciplining and nurturing all the way from infants through to the senior years. This is an extension of what Christian parents are already doing in disciplining their children at home.

18.7 Anti-Discrimination Legislation

This paper does not seek to address in detail any legal issues surrounding a minimum Christian percentage guideline. Current legal advice indicates that under existing religious exemptions in the anti-discrimination legislation, we are permitted to refuse enrolment to families on the basis of Christian status, provided we have clearly indicated our definition of “Christian” up front to parents. We do this in the enrolment application form where parents are required to indicate that they attend church at least monthly, that they accept and personally believe our statement of faith, and that they have included a reference from the minister of their church.