



ENROLMENT FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS POLICY

RELATED POLICIES

Catholic Ethos
Inclusion Policy

RATIONALE

Catholic schools participate in the evangelising mission of the Church. They support parents who seek a Catholic education for their children. The Vision and Mission Statement for Catholic Education expressly commits our schools to being authentically Catholic and to give primacy to the promotion of the Catholic faith amongst the students.

As a community of Catholic Schools, we will strive to:

- *participate in the Catholic Church's mission of evangelisation;*
- *explicitly teach, live and celebrate the Word of God within a living Catholic tradition;*
(TCEC Vision and Mission Statement, 2006)

In a broad context, it is important to reaffirm that Catholic schools, whilst being part of the evangelisation mission of the Church, have been established in Australia, first and foremost, for the support of Catholic families in the faith education of their children.

The parish primary school, where younger children receive their early lessons in the faith, remains a cornerstone of the pastoral care of Australia's Catholic people. Here the community of faith hands on the timeless message of Jesus Christ to its youngest members. (John Paul II, 1986, p126)

Catholic schools are open to all who value and share their explicit goals and acknowledged educational quality. They are places of spiritual, educational and social formation of young people. Catholic schools respond to the call of the Church to give preferential option to the poor. They strive to show special care for those in situations of material and spiritual poverty or those who experience marginalisation in any form.

The Catholic school has an ecclesial identity, because it is a part of the evangelising mission of the Church. Yet a distinguishing feature of Catholic education is that it is open to all, especially to the poor and weakest in society (EO #33).

Although clearly and decidedly configured in the perspective of the Catholic faith, Catholic schools are not reserved for Catholics only.

*(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium
– Congregation for Catholic Education (1998) Para. 16)*

Catholic schools are based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony ...

The Catholic school is a most important locus for human and Christian formation.,the special function of the Catholic school to:

- *Develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity;*
- *Enable young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in that new life which has been given them in baptism; and*
- *Orientate the whole of human culture to the message of salvation". (GDC #259)*

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity of processes and procedures for parents seeking to enroll their children in Archdiocesan Catholic schools. When considering the enrolment of students into their schools, all Archdiocesan Catholic school authorities will consistently apply the principles and procedures contained within this document.

DEFINITIONS

Nil

PRINCIPLES

1. The Catholic school forms an integral part of the Church community and exists to further the mission of the Church. Catholic schools have been primarily established to support and nurture the faith development of baptised Catholic children.
2. Catholic schools, as part of the parish community, have a responsibility to support Catholic parents in their honouring of the commitments they made on behalf of their child at the time of Baptism.

3. Wherever possible, every Catholic child within a parish community should be provided with the opportunity to attend a Catholic school. Catholic schools should work towards a system-wide target of enrolling at least 75% of their student cohort from Catholic families within the parish, particularly at the Kinder/Prep entry level.
4. The preferential option for the poor and marginalised is fundamental in Catholic schools. Catholic schools have a responsibility to positively discriminate in favour of those who are in any way marginalised.
5. Catholic schools are committed to the inclusion of children with special needs subject to the guidelines set out in the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission's Inclusion Policy (*The Inclusion Policy for Children and Young Persons with Special Learning Needs Enrolling in Catholic Schools in Tasmania*) is available on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceo.hobart.catholic.edu.au).
6. Catholic school communities should endeavour, where feasible, to 'reserve' some enrolment places for Catholic families who transfer into the parish community after the traditional enrolment periods. Waiting list policies should reflect the overall enrolment criteria (as indicated in 1.0 below) and give preference to Catholic families regardless as to the timing of the application.
7. On enrolment, all parents and students should undertake a commitment to support the Catholic ethos of the school in accordance with the TCEC Parents' Charter (to be published).
8. Whilst the purpose in the establishment of Catholic schools is to educate children from Catholic families, children from all families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals, principles and practices are eligible for enrolment in Catholic schools.
9. Students having enrolled in a Catholic primary school should generally have the opportunity to extend their post primary education to a secondary college within the Catholic system where the facilities exist to do so and where the family has supported the Catholic ethos of the school. Whilst it is highly desirable that all children who have received a Catholic education in the primary grades have access to a Catholic secondary college, this continuity of enrolment cannot be guaranteed in all circumstances.

10. Catholic schools need to advise parents of their co-responsibility for the educational viability of one another. Schools need to make careful planning decisions which have implications for accommodation, staffing, financial security and curriculum. Central to these decisions is predictability and stability in enrolments. Whilst every effort is made to accommodate students at the preferred Catholic school or college, this cannot be guaranteed.
11. In considering enrolments in a Catholic school every person should be treated with compassion and justice.

PROCEDURES / GUIDELINES

School authorities manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the principles articulated above. Further procedures / guidelines for schools are as follows:

1.0 Local Enrolment Policies

Each school should develop and publish an enrolment policy in accordance with this overarching TCEC policy and enrolment criteria. School based policies should reflect the unique context of the local community, especially with respect to the application of issues included in the Section 3.0 'Basis for Discretion' and local enrolment procedures. The governing bodies of each school should structure their individual enrolment policy to respect the overall Archdiocesan goal of working towards a target of 75% Catholic cohort whilst concurrently ensuring the viability and ongoing effectiveness of each individual school community. Each governing body should develop operational procedures and guidelines with regards reserving some enrolment places for Catholic families and managing waiting lists.

2.0 Enrolment Criteria

Preference for enrolment will be determined by the following prioritised order of criteria

- 2.1 Catholic children of families with demonstrable links to their parish community (refer 3.2 below);
- 2.2 children who have, or have had, siblings in a specific Catholic school;
- 2.3 children of families currently enrolled in a Catholic school who have explicitly supported the Catholic ethos of the school;

- 2.4 children of Catholic families who are not covered by points 2.1-2.3;
- 2.5 children of families who have 'special pastoral circumstances' as deemed appropriate by the Enrolment committee or equivalent authority (refer 3.3 below)
- 2.6 children of Orthodox families who have demonstrable links to their faith community;
- 2.7 children of Orthodox families;
- 2.8 children of families from other Christian denominations who have demonstrable links to their faith community and who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community;
- 2.9 children of families from other Christian denominations who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community;
- 2.10 children of families from other religious traditions who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community;
- 2.11 children of families with no affiliation to a religious tradition who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community.

3.0 Basis for Discretion

It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances there will be a need for those making enrolment decisions at the school level to have some basis for discretion. Discretionary decisions could include:

- 3.1 Consistent with the Guiding Principles, schools may give priority to the enrolment of children with special pastoral, social or educational needs.
- 3.2 Discerning the criteria that indicate the nature and extent of 'demonstrable links to the parish community'. Considerations could include: participation in the liturgical life of the parish; involvement in parish based sacramental programs; contributions to the parish ministries; participation in parish community building and outreach activities.
- 3.3 Discerning the criteria that indicate the nature and extent of 'special pastoral circumstances'. Considerations could include: special needs children; refugee and other marginalised families; links to the parish community through the involvement of grandparents and the extended family; the pastoral care of the child due to family dislocation; old scholars.

- 3.4 Children from more isolated communities who may not have had reasonable access to a Catholic parish or school may be given a higher priority, if deemed appropriate by the enrolment committee or equivalent authority.
- 3.5 Each school community is able to develop its own enrolment policy to address local circumstances, as long as it is consistent with the TCEC overarching policy – eg. details regarding timing of enrolment applications; parish and geographical boundaries; closure of enrolment period.
- 3.6 Flexibility regarding commencement ages may be considered in the case of interstate student transfers where the student has already enrolled in an equivalent grade level, noting in particular that the names for different grades may vary from state to state.
- 3.7 Specific protocols exist for the consideration of early entry into Kindergarten before the prescribed entry age (refer Department of Education Tasmania, *Entry and Progress Through Early Childhood Education, Admission Policy and Guidelines*, available on:
www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/support/extendedlearning/policy)

4.0 Government Legislation

In accordance with the appropriate State Government legislation, the minimum commencement age for children entering Kindergarten is four years of age, on or before 1 January in the year of commencement. It is also expected therefore that prior to entry to Preparatory, a child will be five years of age on or before 1 January in the year of commencement.

5.0 Student Transfer between Schools

- 5.1 It would be expected that Principals would confer with each other when considering applications from families seeking the enrolment of children who are currently attending a Catholic school. Particular consideration would be given to the pastoral needs of the family and the potential impact on enrolment patterns across the Catholic system.
- 5.2 Parents need to be made aware that consultation will occur between schools with regards to transfer applications. It is recommended that parents inform the Principal of their school of origin of their intention to seek alternative placement.

- 5.3 Apart from the designated entry points for schools and colleges, parents who transfer children into a Catholic school from outside the Catholic Education system (especially in the upper primary years of schooling) may not receive preferential entry into a Catholic secondary college as represented in criteria 2.3 above.

6.0 Supercession

This policy supersedes / updates the following TCEC policy documents:

- 6.1 Enrolment for Catholic Schools Policy and Guidelines (1988; 1996; 2005)
- 6.2 Year 7 Enrolments: Hobart Catholic Secondary Schools – Policy Statement and Protocols (1996)
- 6.3 Student Transfer Between Schools

REFERENCES

- Department of Education Tasmania, *Entry and Progress Through Early Childhood Education, Admission Policy and Guidelines*, available on:
www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/support/extendedlearning/policy

FORMS

Nil

APPENDICES

Nil

SIGNED:



TCEC Chairperson

DATE:

22/02/08

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