



## Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Lismore

# ENROLMENT - POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN PARISH SCHOOLS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

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| <b>SOP Contact Officer:</b>   | Assistant Director – School Evangelisation & Catechetical Services  |
| <b>Related Documentation:</b> | Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore Foundational Values for Catholic Identity and Mission.<br><br>Catholic School at a Crossroads Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007<br><br>Congregatio de Institutione Catholica, 2009 |

*“The Catholic School is the principle educational arm of Catholic families, parishes and the wider church... It is there to assist parents and parishes in their educational, evangelical and catechetical mission as well as to help the wider community in its educational and civic service”* (Catholic School at a Crossroads Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007).

## **RATIONALE**

Parish schools were established as places of educational excellence and places that transmit the faith, in the mission entrusted to the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ. They form part of a tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in the Diocese of Lismore for 150 years. They also fulfil parents’ rights to choose the schooling for their children which reflects their own faith, values, beliefs and hopes.

Catholic schools have a particular responsibility to provide a Catholic religious education to children baptised in the Catholic faith and to support parents in honouring the commitments that they made on behalf of their children at baptism.

The Catholic school is also “open to all who want to share its educational and faith goals inspired by Christian principles” (Congregatio de Institutione Catholica 2009). Most importantly, there is a special place in parish schools for those with the greatest need, especially in areas of lesser educational options or lower socio economic circumstances, and efforts should be made to encourage such enrolments, within the vision of the Bishop of Lismore for the poor.

## **AIMS**

Education in the Diocese of Lismore commits to the following aims:

- Supporting the living and transmission of the Catholic faith at all levels of parish school life with enthusiasm and a sense of vocation.
- Nurturing each individual student’s growth in faith and unique potential and gifts. This occurs to enable a ‘fullness of life’ through Jesus Christ and his teaching (John 10:10).
- Offering excellence in educational opportunities founded on the mission of Jesus Christ articulated in *Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore: Foundational Values for Catholic Identity and Mission*.
- Fostering strong parent partnerships and engagement.
- Creating Christ centred and pastorally caring communities who respect and nurture each other, the wider society and the world, according to the teaching of Jesus.

In such aims parish schools value ‘who we are and what we do’: parents are invited to enrol in the parish school in full knowledge of the expectations around the Catholic Faith and the teachings, beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. In essence, the parish remains at the ‘centre’ of parish school.

## 1. GUIDELINE STATEMENTS FOR ENROLMENT

- 1.1. Parish schools, inspired by the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, strive to be places that are authentically Catholic and centres of educational excellence. In choosing a parish school, parents and guardians agree to respect and support the Catholic identity of the school and its role in the parish, and the aims of education in the Diocese of Lismore. As such, enrolment forms and marketing materials for enrolment and interview, should be explicit in detail regarding student participation in Catholic life- Mass, Liturgies, RE classes, prayer, Retreats etc.
- 1.2. Interview templates should promote consistency amongst interviewers.
- 1.3. Innovative Catechetical approaches and resources should be considered and developed for non-Catholic and 'unchurched' Catholic enrolments especially in years K and 7, where applicable.
  - I. Parish schools are seen as evangelising places and, regarding many families, the 'interface with the Church' (Rymarz 2016). Therefore, pastoral care support and opportunities for involvement in parish life should be discussed at enrolment with all families.
- 1.4. Enrolment of non-Catholic students must be given discernment. In the light of the transmission of the faith, the total Diocesan number of non-Catholics should not increase per annum unless there are extenuating circumstances regarding the incoming cohort in the parish school, which have been discussed with the Parish Priest and the Director of Catholic Schools. The Catholic Schools Office should by March each year inform Parish Priests of final enrolment figures and the corresponding numbers of Catholics in district public schools.
- 1.5. Enrolment of a child into a parish school cannot be guaranteed. A fair and transparent process to determine the priority of enrolment will be implemented. Once enrolled, students of all faiths and beliefs should know that they are cared for and accepted in the parish school.
- 1.6. Parish schools will recognise and accept the responsibility to welcome and support those who are poor, marginalised and whose need is the greatest. Financially poor Catholic family enrolments should be welcomed and adjusted for, in school planning and parish budgeting. No child is to be denied a Catholic education because of a family's genuine inability to pay school fees.
- 1.7. Parish schools are committed to the inclusion of children with special needs through the processes set out in the Enrolment of Students with Special Needs policy.
- 1.8. Parish Clergy should develop systems to maintain contact with families from baptism to school entry and be visible and welcoming during enrolment periods. Resources in this regard should be developed by the Parent body in consultation with Parishes. Innovation of on-line contact should be further investigated jointly by parishes and the CSO.
- 1.9. The Catholic narrative and tradition (as well as celebrating and naming successes) should be shared with the wider community using varying media in the enrolment period. All elements of the Catholic worldview and the promotion of faith, peace and social justice activities should be evident in parish school communications, in the enrolment period.

## 2. ENROLMENT PRIORITY IN POLICY

2.1 The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is maintained and promoted so that parish schools can give priority in enrolment to students who are baptised Catholics. Schools may also enrol students from other faith traditions whose families demonstrate that they share in the foundational values of the parish school. Principals will inform Parish Priests of accurate enrolment numbers of Catholics present in the school throughout the year.

2.2 The following priorities for parish schools are recommended in policy:

### **Primary**

- II. Catholic families of the Parish who are known and involved members of the Parish.
- III. Catholic families of the Parish who participate irregularly in the life and worship of the Parish\*.
- IV. Other than Catholic Families committed to a Christian denomination who seek a Catholic education and who currently have or have had children within the school#.
- V. Other than Catholic families who are open to the spiritual and religious possibilities offered by a Catholic school.

### **Secondary**

- I. Catholic families of the associated feeder Parish schools who are known and involved members of those Parishes.
- II. Catholic families of other Parishes who are known and involved members of their own Parish but whose child has particular educational needs that can be best met in this parish school\*.
- III. Catholic families of associated feeder Parishes who are known and involved members of their Parishes and who have a child enrolled in an area- government or other Christian denomination school#.
- IV. Other than Catholic families whose child attends a Catholic school and other primary schools in the feeder parish whose families have demonstrated support for Parish and Parish school life.
- V. Other than Catholic families whose child attends other schools who are open to the spiritual and religious possibilities offered by a Catholic school.

\*Students seeking out-of-area enrolments must provide a summary, with their enrolment form, of the reasons for their request. This will be considered by the Principal and Parish Priest or Enrolment Panel.

# Provision must be made for Catholic families transferring an enrolment from other clusters/states.

### 2.3 **Note**

Siblings of children already enrolled in the school are considered by the same criteria above. However, within each of these categories, a sibling of a child already enrolled will have preference over an applicant who does not have a sibling enrolled in the school.

A higher priority should be given to applicants with the greatest need within each of these levels. Special consideration will be given to families, either baptised or non-baptised, that are indicated by the Parish Priest.

### 3. PRINCIPAL'S CHECKLIST – NON-NEGOTIABLE ELEMENTS

*In inviting enrolment into the Parish School the Parish School Enrolment Policy should have as appendix the following non-negotiable elements:*

- Enrolment forms and marketing materials for enrolment and interview indicated for families suffice explicit detail regarding expected for student participation in Catholic life- mass, liturgies, RE lessons, prayer, Retreat etc.
- The number of non-Catholics in the incoming cohort in the parish school has been discussed with the Parish Priest and the Director of Catholic Schools\*.
- In the enrolment *and* interview process, parents and guardians agreed to respect and support the Catholic identity of the school, and its role in the parish, and acknowledged the importance of Religious Education.
- Pastoral care support and opportunities for involvement in parish life have been discussed at enrolment with all families.
- Catechetical approaches have been reconsidered for classes in years K and 7 where total non-Catholic enrolment is beyond 60% (Mulligan, 2014).
- Priorities and preferences for enrolments have been adhered to; and there exists agreed discernment between schools operating in the same intake area/cluster.
- Interview templates promoted consistency amongst interviewers regarding the above elements.

\* Information from the Catholic Schools Office should by March each year inform Parish Priests of final enrolment figures and the corresponding numbers of Catholics in district public schools.

## VERSION HISTORY

| <b>Version</b> | <b>Approval Date</b> | <b>Authorised By</b>       | <b>Notes</b>        |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1              | March 2018           | Assistant Director - SEACS | Originally released |