



ENROLMENT POLICY

FOR SCHOOLS WITHIN THE SYDNEY ARCHDIOCESAN SYSTEM

This Policy Statement has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. It accommodates the provisions of, and draws policy implications from:

- The Sydney Catholic Schools “Towards 2010” Strategic Leadership and Management Plan
- The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board’s “Vision Statement”, 2002
- The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (including the Disability Standards for Education 2005)
- The NSW Anti-discrimination Act, 1977
- Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2006
- Education Act, 1990

This document was adopted by the SACS Board at its meeting on 27 August, 1997 and published on 20 November 1997. It supersedes:

- Enrolment Policy for schools within the Archdiocesan system (28 February 1990)
- Policy on the Enrolment and Ongoing Education of Students with Special Educational Needs (1 December 1993)

Guiding Principles

- 1.1 The Catholic school is a precious instrument for education in the faith and for the integration of faith and culture in the development of each child.
- 1.2 The Australian Catholic community has contributed to the establishment and maintenance of its schools with the specific intention that they promote the continuance of that community and the development of each child through an active process of catechesis.
- 1.3 The Archdiocese of Sydney, within its saving mission, develops Catholic schools which are founded on the person of Jesus Christ and enlivened by Gospel values in order to highlight the relevance of our faith to life and contemporary culture.
- 1.4 The Archdiocese of Sydney, through the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (SACS) Board, encourages parish communities to establish Catholic schools which are committed to the development of the whole person and embedded within the community of believers, and share in the evangelizing Mission of the Church.
- 1.5* The SACS Board acknowledges the Church's exhortation to Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools whenever it is possible. It accepts a concomitant responsibility on the part of Catholic education authorities to ensure that quality¹ Catholic education, which caters for all enrolled students, is provided in each school.
- 1.6* The responsibility for admitting children to a systemic Catholic school is one that is ultimately shared by the whole Catholic community. While immediate responsibility is delegated to individual school communities, their decisions must be:
 - a) informed by the Gospel values of inclusiveness and equity;
 - b) in accord with Archdiocesan policy as well as Commonwealth and State legislation; and
 - c) subject to an appeals procedure.
- 1.7* The Catholic systemic school strives to cater for the needs of all students at each level, and to meet individual needs over a wide range of learning abilities. These objectives must be equitably achieved within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources and recognise the rights of all students to educational opportunities which expand life choices.
- 1.8* SACS Board acknowledges circumstances may arise subsequent to enrolment (such as a student suffering deterioration in health or behaviour) which compromise a school's capacity to adequately cater for the altered learning needs of a particular student.

MANDATORY PROVISIONS

- 2.1 All parents seeking to enrol children in Catholic schools should be assisted to understand the ideals and principles, upon which the Catholic school is based, in accordance with the "Vision Statement" SACS Board in September, 1988.
- 2.2 Each school within the Archdiocesan system shall formulate an enrolment policy which is consistent with the Archdiocesan policy. A school may adapt the Archdiocesan Enrolment policy to cover specific local circumstances, provided that such adaptations have the approval of the Regional Director. A School Enrolment Policy shall not come into force until it has been approved by the Regional Director.
- 2.3* All duly completed applications for enrolment received before the official closing date shall be treated equally in accordance with the School Enrolment Policy. Where an application indicates that a student has a special educational need², it will be referred to the Regional Consultant responsible for the particular school, who will assess whether or not the school can provide the facilities, resources and suitably trained personnel to support the educational needs of the applicant. The Regional Consultant will then meet with the Principal and the applicant's parents/caregivers to discuss the prospective enrolment prior to the application being considered, along with all other applications, by the School Enrolment Committee.
- 2.4 The formulation, implementation and ongoing evaluation of the School Enrolment Policy shall be the responsibility of the School Enrolment Committee.

Parish Primary Schools

2.5* The School Enrolment Committee for each parish Primary school shall consist of:

- 2.5.1 The Principal;
- 2.5.2 The Parish Priest;
- 2.5.3 A representative of the Parish community on which the school depends. The Parish Priest and Principal shall together arrange for the selection of the Parish representative.

The Committee shall be convened by the Principal and instructed as to its duties under Commonwealth and State Anti-Discrimination Legislation.

Regional Schools

- 2.6* The School Enrolment Committee for each school dealing with clusters of parishes shall consist of:
 - 2.6.1 The Principal;
 - 2.6.2 The Principal, or Assistant Principal of one Feeder School as invited by the Regional Director;
 - 2.6.3 One Parish Priest elected by the Parish Priests of the designated Feeder Parishes;
 - 2.6.4 Two parents, one elected by the Parish Priest (as in 2.6.3 above) and one elected by the Principals of the Feeder Schools;
 - 2.6.5 One nominee of the Regional Director.

The Committee shall be convened by the Principal of the regional school and instructed as to its duties under Commonwealth and State anti-discrimination legislation.

In addition, the Regional Director has the discretionary power to require Chairpersons of School Enrolment Committees whose enrolments overlap to attend a meeting chaired by the Regional Director in order to resolve enrolment conflicts across the cluster.

- 2.7 Children from all families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals and principles may be considered eligible for enrolment. Priority in enrolment is to be given in the following order, except in special circumstances (see Bases of Discretion 3.1):

Children of Catholic families³, such families being actively involved in the parish community or communities on which the school depends;

Children of Catholic families residing in other parishes, such families being actively involved in their home parishes;

Children of families affiliated to churches in communion with the Roman Catholic Church who, for reasons deemed sufficient, seek enrolment in the school;

Children of Catholic families residing within the parish/parishes on which the school depends;

Children of Catholic families residing in other parishes;

Children of Orthodox or other Christian families;

Children of families with other religious convictions.

- 2.8 In cases of poverty, disability⁴ or special needs a child may, and if possible should, be given a higher position in the priorities listed in Provision 2.7 than would otherwise apply.
- 2.9 It is expected that normally, Catholic students shall make up approximately 90% or more of the enrolment of the school. Permission to allow any significant departure from this norm would have to be sought from the SACS Board through the Executive Director of Schools.
- 2.10 Appeals against the decision of the School Enrolment Committee shall be made, in the first instance, to the School Enrolment Committee, then to the appropriate Regional Director.
- 2.11 The Executive Director of Schools shall determine, as part of the effective operation of the system, the minimum age for enrolment in the first year of Primary schools, and shall determine and publish dates for the enrolment period in all schools within the Archdiocesan system.

BASES OF DISCRETION

- 3.1 With regard to the criteria for enrolment as outlined in 2.7 above, special considerations may be given to individual cases, as determined by local circumstances, for the following reasons:
- 3.1.1 Parents' intentions with regard to their own and their children's search for education in the faith';
 - 3.1.2 Family situations necessitating a pastoral approach or requiring the exercise of compassion;
 - 3.1.3 The enrolment of siblings of children already attending the school;
 - 3.1.4 Family circumstances regarding mobility;
 - 3.1.5 The desire to balance the enrolment of boys and girls in a co-educational school.
- 3.2*** It is recognised that the provision of appropriate educational opportunities for all students, but especially for those students with special educational needs, involves a partnership between school staff and parents/caregivers. In keeping with this principle, the educational progress of students with special educational needs will be regularly evaluated by the school staff in consultation with the parents/caregivers. In conjunction with Regional Office staff, the school staff will periodically review the school's continuing capacity to provide quality educational opportunities to particular students with special educational needs. Where it is determined that, despite a school's best attempts to accommodate a child's special educational needs, the continued enrolment of that child compromises both his/her right to appropriate educational opportunities, and the school's human and material resources, then the Principal may request approval from the Regional Consultant to notify the parents/caregivers of the situation. The Principal, Regional Consultant and other specialist staff will then consult with the student's parents/caregivers as to what course of action should be taken in order to best meet the altered educational needs of the student.

* These sections have been amended with regard to students with special needs.

Notes:

1. For the purpose of this document, quality Catholic education is defined as education that conforms to the NSW Education Reform Act (1990) and the requirements of the Catholic Education Office, Sydney.
2. A student may be deemed as having special educational needs if, in endeavouring to offer the student equitable access to educational opportunities, modifications need to be made to curricula, assessment procedures, school premises or modes of course delivery, or, if the provision of special equipment or suitably trained staff is required.
3. Catholic families are defined as families in which at least one parent is a Catholic or in which the children have been baptised Catholics. This presupposes that there will be no discrimination against Catholic children of marriages of mixed faiths or single supporting parent families, and poses a challenge to schools to take into account the particular needs of such children.
4. For the purposes of this document, the term "disability" has the meaning ascribed to it under the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977 and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992.