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# ENROLMENT POLICY FOR DIOCESAN SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS

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March 2013



## PURPOSE

This policy sets out principles and priorities for enrolment in Diocesan systemic schools. It is addressed to school enrolment committees and to families seeking enrolment.

This policy seeks to develop a fruitful relationship between the local Catholic parish and school community and those families seeking enrolment. It calls parish, school and family to a closer bond of joint accountability for faith development and excellence in education for children. It emphasises the openness of the Catholic school system of Broken Bay to the children of all Catholic families. The policy encourages the local Catholic community, under the leadership of the parish priest and principal, to look upon the time of enrolment as a potential occasion for ongoing evangelisation. The policy calls upon parents to examine their present faith commitments, to develop their role as prime educators of their children in faith and to immerse themselves in the communal, liturgical, ministerial and service dimensions of the parish.

The policy calls the parish priest and principal to work in collaboration with members of the parish to form an enrolment committee. The purpose of an enrolment committee is to assist the parish priest and principal to implement this policy and to develop a ministry of accompaniment within the parish. This ministry demands training and skill development so that the enrolment process is both welcoming and invitational to families and results in realisable commitments on the part of parents and of the parish and school community.

While it is the hope, over time, to provide sufficient classrooms to meet enrolment numbers, the enrolment policy details to enrolment committees a way of establishing priorities for acceptance of enrolments where there are more applications than available places. Should these circumstances arise, the enrolment committee will explore alternative placement in a neighbouring Catholic school and /or access to parish catechetical and sacramental programs.

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following principles provide the basis for this policy:

1. The Catholic school system of Broken Bay contributes to the mission of the Diocese. As a school system, it strives for excellence in education. Such excellence may also be achieved in other educational forums.

The unique contribution of the Diocesan School System is that its purpose is to educate and form students in Catholic discipleship by offering them experiences of following Jesus as members of the Catholic community. Catholic schools have traditionally aimed to support Catholic parents in their role of educating their children in the faith. In a time when many Catholic parents are in need of support, it is also an effort by the Catholic community to provide some direct assistance to children and their families in experiencing what discipleship of Jesus means for those who profess the Catholic faith.

2. Enrolment in a Catholic school is an event in which the local Catholic community reaches out to its families. It is recognised that some of these families have little contact with the Church, and little experience of Catholic discipleship. Enrolment is an opportunity for a new evangelisation for many of these families, and an ongoing evangelisation and a deepening of their faith and involvement in Church life for others.

3. Parents and children enrolling in Catholic schools commit themselves to a parish<sup>1</sup> community that works towards the education, formation and pastoral care of young people. By acceptance of the enrolment the parish community commits itself to supporting the formation of the family in faith. The enrolment committee shall seek to offer enrolment to those Catholic families that have committed themselves to Catholic discipleship, the worshipping community of the parish and the religious values of the Diocese.
4. The priest and principal collaborate to provide spiritual leadership within the local Catholic community. Both participate in the enrolment process. Their leadership is entrusted to members of the local enrolment committee both individually and collectively during the interview and discernment processes.
5. There is an appreciation of differences in enrolment demand within the Diocese and appropriate guidelines will be issued to advise local enrolment committees. The Diocesan School System has limited resources which may limit some options for enrolment. Given these constraints, a school must give first priority to the parish or parishes immediately associated with it.

Normally the school would not accept enrolment from other parishes unless schools in those parishes have no places available.

6. The time of enrolment is an opportunity for dialogue, reflection and mutual discernment about the individual circumstances and spiritual journey of the student in the context of the family and of the life of parish embodied in the school.
7. No student shall be denied enrolment in a Catholic school purely on the basis of a genuine inability to pay fees and other charges.

## POLICY CONTENT

8. Priority in enrolment will be given in this order to:
  - children whose Catholic families are known and involved members of the parish<sup>2</sup>
  - children whose Catholic families express through the enrolment process an intention to commit to Catholic discipleship and the worshipping community of the parish
  - children whose Catholic families express an understanding of and commitment to the educational and religious life of the school
  - children whose families of other Christian traditions are known and involved members of their worshipping community and express an understanding of and commitment to the educational and religious life of the school
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9. Where there are less places than applicants the enrolment committee itself shall determine enrolments in accordance with clause 8 and, based on the dialogue and

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<sup>1</sup> Primary schools generally relate to one parish and secondary schools relate to several parishes. In particular circumstances, due to parish configurations, a school may relate to more than one parish or there may be more than one school in a parish.

<sup>2</sup> 'Known and involved members of the parish' are regularly worshipping Catholic families resident within the parish's geographic boundaries or regular worshippers on the parish database.



discernment process with parent(s) (and, in the case of secondary enrolment, students), having regard for such factors as:

- the expressed commitment to the religious life of the parish and the school
  - prior involvement in sacramental programs
  - prior attendance at a Catholic school
  - participation in Special Religious Education
  - involvement and commitment to another Christian tradition
  - commitment to the life of the Catholic school
  - espoused values, written references
10. The Enrolment Committee may at its discretion in exceptional circumstances accept the enrolment of a child for a pressing pastoral need.
  11. The Catholic Schools Office will facilitate arrangements to increase the proportion of students from poorer Catholic families.
  12. Enrolment Committees must keep records where exceptional cases required a different priority and forward such decisions to the Diocesan Enrolment Committee.
  13. The Diocesan Enrolment Committee shall:
    - determine Diocesan enrolment procedures, including protocols for working with local enrolment committees
    - determine the enrolment capacity of each school
    - determine the proportion of students who are not Catholic in schools in which there are more places than applicants
    - organise training for local enrolment committees.
  14. Consideration of the enrolment of siblings must comply with priority order indicated in clause 8. While this policy seeks to promote the value of children of families being kept together, in circumstances where children and families are not known and involved members of the parish, the enrolment of siblings cannot be guaranteed.
  15. Enrolment in a secondary Catholic school is regarded as a new enrolment.
  16. Appeals against the decisions of the local enrolment committee shall be directed to the local enrolment committee in writing. Recourse in writing may be made to the Diocesan Enrolment Committee after completion of that appeal process.

## POLICY REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed periodically and not less frequently than once every five years from the date of implementation of the policy.

## POLICY DATES

Policy date of completion of formulation and adoption	November 2001
Date of effective implementation	April 2002
Revised and confirmed	March 2013
Date of next review	April 2018



**Bishop David L. Walker**  
Bishop of Broken Bay

