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Author:	Director of Catholic Schools

Enrolment Policy

PURPOSE

The Catholic School is the principal 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).

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Mt 28:18-20

The Diocese serves the people of God 'through her witness and through such activities as dialogue, human promotion, commitment to justice and peace, education and the care of the sick, and aid to the poor and children' (*Redemptoris Missio*, 1990, n.20). To ensure this, an understanding of Catholic Mission through co-responsibility exists.

The Principal, in collaboration with the local parish that the school is part of, has a responsibility to ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is maintained and promoted so that Catholic schools can give priority in enrolment to students who are baptised Catholics. Schools may also enrol students whose families are willing to support the foundational values of the Catholic school.

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). Importantly, there is a special place in Catholic 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.

Enrolment of a child into a Catholic school cannot be guaranteed. A fair and transparent process to determine the priority of enrolment will be implemented. Some discretion is given to the Principal, in consultation with the Parish Priest, and in determining whether priority is given to children from other than Catholic families. Once enrolled, all students should know that they are cared for and accepted in the Catholic school.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all persons engaged by Diocese of Lismore Catholic School Limited (DLCSL), including but not limited to employees, contractors and volunteers of DLCSL. It outlines the obligations, responsibilities and standard of behaviour required in the context of enrolments to

uphold the values, integrity and reputation of the Catholic Church, DLCSL, Catholic Schools Office (CSO) and all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lismore.

Employees, contractors and volunteers are to make themselves familiar with the requirements of this document and ensure they comply with the behaviours and obligations outlined within it.

This policy does not form part of any employment contract or contractor agreement and does not impose contractual obligations on DLCSL.

POLICY

The Catholic school always remains a ministry of, and is embedded in the life of, the local parish. The delivery of Catholic education in the Diocese of Lismore is a partnership between the parish and the DLCSL.

Catholic education in the Diocese of Lismore commits to the following aims:

- Supporting the Catholic faith at all levels of Catholic school life with enthusiasm and a sense of vocation.
- Nurturing each individual student's growth in faith and unique potential and gifts. This is why the promotion of the student, the human person, is at the centre of Catholic education in the Diocese of Lismore's Fullness of Life Framework; and recognises the innate dignity of the child and young person, their inherent goodness and their active participation in developing their gifts and talents.
- Offering excellence in educational opportunities founded on the Mission of Jesus Christ articulated in The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values: Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore.
- Fostering strong parent partnerships and engagement.
- Creating and maintaining 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 Catholic schools value "who we are and what we do": parents are invited to enrol in the Catholic school in full knowledge of the expectations around the Catholic Faith and the teachings, beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church.

ENROLMENT PRIORITY

The following agreed order of priority for enrolment in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lismore must be adhered to by each school in its enrolment policy and practices, which are published widely.

This policy does not restrict a parish or parishes from a zoning arrangement, with the approval of the DLCSL Board.

Primary

- Baptised Catholic children of Catholic families from within the parish/region.
- Children of Catholic families from within the parish/region. Children of other-than-Catholic families who currently have or have had siblings within the school (including children of employees of the Diocese of Lismore).
- Other-than-Catholic children transferring from another Catholic school first from within the Diocese of Lismore then from other Catholic Dioceses.

- Children who access parish early childhood services.
- Children recommended for consideration by the Parish Priest.
- Children of other-than-Catholic families who are open to and supportive of the spiritual and religious possibilities offered by a Catholic school.

Children enrolling into kindergarten must turn 5 years of age on or before 31 July of the year of commencement. All children must be in compulsory schooling by their sixth birthday. Students are expected to start school at the beginning of the academic year.

Secondary

- Children of families of Diocese of Lismore Catholic primary schools within the parish/region (nominally, this enrolment would have been for a minimum four-year period). Also, children of Catholic families who have not attended a Catholic primary school, whose family is active within the parish.
- Children of families who currently have or have had siblings within the school (including children of employees of the Diocese of Lismore).
- Children of families transferring from another Catholic school first from within the Diocese of Lismore then from other Catholic Dioceses.
- Children of Catholic families within the parish/region who are enrolled in a non-Catholic school.
- Children recommended for consideration by the Parish Priest.
- Children of other-than-Catholic families who attend other schools and are open to and supportive of the spiritual and religious possibilities offered by a Catholic school.

Some discretion is given to the Principal, in consultation with the Parish Priest and relevant DLCSL staff, in determining the enrolment of a student. The Principal will make the final determination.

Where a decision has been made not to enrol a student, the family has the right to request that the decision be reviewed. A written request for review of the decision should be made in writing to the Director of Catholic Schools.

RATIONALE

Underlying the Mission of all Catholic schools is the desire to immerse its community to the message of Christ. "It is precisely in the Gospel of Christ, taking root in the minds and lives of the faithful, that the Catholic school finds its definition as it comes to terms with the cultural conditions of the times" (*The Catholic School*: The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1977).

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

OUTCOMES

- Catholic schools, inspired by the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, must always be places that are authentically Catholic and centres of educational excellence. In choosing a Catholic 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 Catholic education in the Diocese of Lismore.
- Enrolment forms and marketing materials for enrolment and interview, should be explicit in detail regarding student participation in Catholic life i.e. School Masses, Liturgies, Religious Education classes, Prayer, Retreats etc.
- Catholic 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.
- The number of non-Catholic students enrolled must be given discernment, keeping in mind the Catholic identity of the school.
- Diocese of Lismore Catholic schools are committed to a K-12 continuum.
- Catholic schools will recognise and accept the responsibility to welcome and support those who are poor, marginalised and whose need is the greatest. No Catholic child is to be denied a Catholic education because of a family’s genuine inability to pay school fees.
- Catholic schools are committed to the inclusion of children with special needs through the processes set out in the Inclusive Practices Policy.
- A higher priority should be given to applicants with the greatest need within each level of priority. Consideration should be given to children of families that are recommended by the Parish Priest. The Principal will make the final determination.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values: Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore

Catholic School at a Crossroads Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007

Congregatio de Institutione Catholica, 2009

Enrolment Policy Development in Parish Schools Procedures

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)