

- interact proactively with students and their families, through the educational and pastoral life of the school, assisting them in their faith development
- establish effective relationships with representatives of their local communities including pastors, parents/carers and staff in developing local procedures for the enrolment of students

Leadership

- engage the school community in Archdiocesan renewal and quality assurance processes
- ensure that enrolment processes for students with special needs follow the *Enrolment Application and Support Procedures for Students with Special Educational Needs (2002)* of Brisbane Catholic Education
- review regularly school fee and levy policies and processes consistent with the principles

- of justice and equity
- develop and communicate to their community enrolment policies and procedures that have been developed in accordance with this enrolment policy and local needs.

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**ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE
CATHOLIC EDUCATION COUNCIL**

POLICY

STATEMENT

**Enrolment of Students
in Catholic Schools**

**FOR BRISBANE CATHOLIC
EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

JUNE 2004



Foreword

This policy statement addresses the changing nature of the local communities that our Catholic schools serve. We live in one of the fastest growing areas of Australia. Our Catholic schools appear to be in great demand. It is necessary, therefore, for us to reflect upon our enrolment policies and processes and relate them to the mission of our schools within the overarching mission of the Archdiocese.

I wrote a message to schools in May of 1995 when we celebrated 150 years of Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese. On that occasion I wrote

"I look to Catholic schools in the Archdiocese to be places that strive for excellence in their teaching and learning processes and also places that:

- *introduce students to the Gospel*
- *teach the Catholic Tradition*
- *are places of justice*
- *are places of prayer*
- *are places where God's presence is proclaimed in word and action*
- *challenge students to work to improve society through service and action based upon the life and teachings of Jesus Christ."*

My hope is that after students are enrolled in our Catholic schools that they experience in a vital way the above expectations. While an enrolment policy cannot reflect everything that a Catholic school can offer, it does provide an opportunity for local communities to reflect upon what is provided for students and their families within the school community. This policy statement has undergone extensive consultation throughout the Archdiocese. The draft received the largest amount of feedback of any Council policy to date. Its scope and orientation were overwhelmingly endorsed.

I ask that Catholic school communities reflect upon this enrolment policy and review their own policies and enrolment procedures. I ask similarly that they engage with the consequences of the policy to promote our schools as creative places of learning and mission.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev J A Bathersby DD
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

POLICY

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese 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 expressed values of the school. In such instances schools embrace church teachings regarding respect for the faith journey of individuals within the religious dimension of school life.¹

The process of enrolment is to be guided by principles of justice and equity that support Catholic ethos and vision.²

INTRODUCTION

In a spirit of service guided by the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in the tradition of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Catholic schools further the mission of the Church and continue to reach out to those who are poor and marginalised. Catholic schools are committed to providing a holistic education, which is responsive to each student's diverse and unique spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and developmental needs and circumstances.

RATIONALE

Catholic schools recognise the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. Catholic schools share with pastors and parents the responsibility to nurture the development of each student.

The Brisbane Archdiocesan Report on the Bishops Project on Catholic Schooling 2001 states that the Catholic school of the future will "provide an authentic experience of Catholic Christian community" and "be open to those who support its values."³

Contemporary issues that impact upon enrolment in Catholic schools include:

- enrolment demands for Catholic schooling
- changing church affiliation patterns by families
- disability and anti-discrimination legislation
- access for those who are poor and marginalised
- responses to government education initiatives
- provision of religious education and faith development opportunities for all students
- the development of ecumenical schools.

Schools respond creatively to such issues by offering to students a holistic Catholic education that will assist them to become actively engaged in enriching the world throughout their lifetime.

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese therefore, are

committed to providing high quality, inclusive schooling and are visible expressions of the Church in action. In partnership with parishes and deaneries, schools are part of the Church's mission to educate and support the faith of its members. They also contribute to the development of Catholic Christian identity. "The endeavour to interweave reason and faith, which has become the heart of individual subjects, makes for unity, articulation and coordination, bringing forth within what is learnt in school a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history."⁴ Guided by principles of respect and tolerance, and in a spirit of dialogue, Catholic schools are challenged to respond to an ecumenical and multi-faith society.

CONSEQUENCES

The following consequences result from the application of the Archdiocesan enrolment policy at the local level.

Parish and Archdiocesan Catholic schools, in collaboration with pastors, will:

Catholic Identity

- promote a clearly articulated vision and statement of expressed values and experience of schooling within the Catholic tradition
- ensure that enrolment process and patterns contribute to and maintain the Catholic identity of the school community
- link pastorally and strategically with their parish and deanery communities
- ensure that the classroom teaching of religion and the religious life of the school are grounded in the Catholic faith tradition whilst being sensitive to ecumenical and multi-faith perspectives

Pastoral and Educational

- ensure that the curriculum embodies the wisdoms and values of the Catholic tradition
- provide opportunities to enrich the spirituality and faith development of staff enabling them to teach effectively in a Catholic school

¹ *The Code of Canon Law*, 1984, canon 748 § 2.

² Congregation for the Clergy, *General directory for catechesis*, N.S.W., 1998, n 75, p.76.

³ Brisbane Catholic Education, *A statement on religious education for Catholic schools*, Brisbane, 1997, pp.12-17.

⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium*, N.S.W., 1998, n15, p.18.

⁵ Archdiocese of Brisbane, *Queensland bishops' Catholic schools research project Archdiocese of Brisbane 1998-2001*, Brisbane, 2001, p.6.

⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education, *op.cit.*, n14, p.17.