



TASMANIAN
CATHOLIC
education commission

POLICY

ENROLMENT

RELATED POLICIES / PROTOCOLS / STATEMENTS

Code of Conduct for all Employees in Catholic Education
Catholic Education Commission Tasmania Vision and Mission Statement
Taking Care Policy
TCEC Privacy Policy

Policy No.: 01:2014

Enrolment for Catholic Schools Policy

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1. RATIONALE

Catholic schools participate in the evangelising mission of the Church. They support parents who seek a Catholic education for their children. The Vision and Mission Statement for Catholic Education expressly commits our schools to being authentically Catholic and to give primacy to the promotion of the Catholic faith amongst the students.

As a community of Catholic Schools, we will strive to:

- *participate in the Catholic Church's mission of evangelisation;*
- *explicitly teach, live and celebrate the Word of God within a living Catholic tradition;*

(TCEC Vision and Mission Statement, 2006)

In a broad context, it is important to reaffirm that Catholic schools, whilst being part of the evangelisation mission of the Church, have been established in Australia, first and foremost, for the support of Catholic families in the faith education of their children.

The parish primary school, where younger children receive their early lessons in the faith, remains a cornerstone of the pastoral care of Australia's Catholic people. Here the community of faith hands on the timeless message of Jesus Christ to its youngest members.

(John Paul II, 1986, p126)

Catholic schools are open to all who value and share their explicit goals and acknowledged educational quality. They are places of spiritual, educational and social formation of young people. Catholic schools respond to the call of the Church to give preferential option to the poor. They strive to show special care for those in situations of material and spiritual poverty or those who experience marginalisation in any form.

The Catholic school has an ecclesial identity, because it is a part of the evangelising mission of the Church. Yet a distinguishing feature of

Catholic education is that it is open to all, especially to the poor and weakest in society.

(EO #33).

Although clearly and decidedly configured in the perspective of the Catholic faith, Catholic schools are not reserved for Catholics only.

*(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium
– Congregation for Catholic Education (1998) Para. 16)*

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity of processes and procedures for parents/guardians (parents) seeking to enroll children in all Catholic schools operating in the Archdiocese of Hobart.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

When considering the enrolment of students into their schools, all Tasmanian Catholic school authorities will consistently apply the principles and procedures contained within this document.

4. ENROLMENT PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The Catholic school forms an integral part of the Church community and exists to further the mission of the Church. Catholic schools have been primarily established to support and nurture the faith development of baptised Catholic children.
- 4.2 Catholic schools, as part of the parish community, have a responsibility to support Catholic parents in their honouring of the commitments they made on behalf of their child at the time of Baptism.
- 4.3 In response to the Archbishop's Charter, Catholic Education Tasmania will give a high priority to encouraging Catholic families to choose a Catholic school. It is imperative for families who are not presently represented in our schools and colleges to feel welcome and to know they will not be denied a Catholic education on the grounds of economic necessity or pastoral circumstances. Every Catholic child will be provided with the opportunity to attend a Catholic school.
- 4.4 The preferential option for the poor and marginalised is fundamental in Catholic schools. Catholic schools have a responsibility to positively discriminate in favour of those who are in any way marginalised.
- 4.5 Catholic schools are committed to the inclusion of children with special needs subject to the guidelines set out in the Tasmanian Catholic Education

Commission's Equity Policy (*The Equity Policy* is available on the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office website: www.catholic.tas.edu.au).

- 4.6 Catholic school communities should endeavour, where feasible, to 'reserve' some enrolment places for Catholic families who transfer into the parish community after the traditional enrolment periods. Waiting list policies should reflect the overall enrolment criteria (as indicated in 6.2 below) and give preference to Catholic families regardless as to the timing of the application.
- 4.7 On enrolment, all parents and students will commit to supporting the Catholic ethos of the school.
- 4.8 Whilst the purpose in the establishment of Catholic schools is to educate children from Catholic families, children from all families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals, principles and practices are eligible for enrolment in Catholic schools.
- 4.9 The right and freedom of parents to choose the most appropriate education for their child is acknowledged and respected. This freedom is also governed by the availability of suitable places. Whilst every effort is made to accommodate students at the preferred Catholic school or college, this cannot be guaranteed.
- 4.9.1 Specific arrangements may be made for dual enrolment with another educational service provider, when this is in the best interests of the student. This will be negotiated with the Head of School Services.
- 4.10 After enrolment, the freedom to change schools within the Tasmanian Catholic schooling sector will be moderated by the co-responsibility accepted by all Catholic schools for one another. As well as considering educational, financial and moral issues this co-responsibility will require schools to consider if a student transfer will:
- create division between schools or within the Catholic sector,
 - adversely promote a selected school or set of schools to the detriment of others,

- allow a student to gain an advantage for enrolment in a secondary school over students who would not normally apply until the designated time (refer section 8).

- 4.11 Catholic schools will advise parents of their co-responsibility for other schools.
- 4.12 Prime consideration in consultations about the transfer of students will be the pastoral and educational needs of students and their families.
- 4.13 In considering enrolments in a Catholic school every person will be treated with compassion and justice.

5. SCHOOL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (TCEC) wishes to ensure co-operative planning between all Catholic schools operating in the Archdiocese. Catholic schools need to make careful planning decisions that have implications for accommodation, staffing, financial security and curriculum. Central to these decisions is predictability and stability in enrolments.

The TCEC expects therefore that:

- 5.1 Catholic schools and colleges fully consult surrounding parishes and schools before planning any significant changes to current structures, including in the number of streams and/or classes being offered or changes in educational delivery.
- 5.2 A significant change is considered to be one of, or a combination of, the following:
- 5.2.1 An increase in enrolment that would impact on the enrolments of other Catholic schools
- 5.2.2 An increase in enrolments that would require capital development to accommodate the change

- 5.2.3 An increase, or decrease in the range of Year levels
 - 5.2.4 Relocating the school or part of the school, or the establishment of an additional campus
 - 5.2.5 The implementation, expansion or cessation of a school bus service
 - 5.2.6 Changing the enrolment practice in respect of the gender of students
 - 5.2.7 Adjustments to ancillary services such as outside school hour services or boarding school facilities that could impact on the enrolments of other Catholic schools.
- 5.3 All Catholic schools and colleges must obtain agreement from the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission before proceeding with any significant changes to current structures, expansion in the number of streams and/or classes being offered or changes in educational delivery.

6. PROCEDURES / GUIDELINES

School authorities will manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the principles articulated above. Further procedures / guidelines for schools are as follows:

6.1 Local Enrolment Policies

Each school will develop and publish an enrolment policy in accordance with this overarching TCEC policy and enrolment criteria. School based policies should reflect the unique context of the local community, especially with respect to the application of issues included in the Section 6.3 'Basis for Discretion' and local enrolment procedures.

Schools need to take every opportunity to outreach to Catholic families through Archdiocesan Catechetical programs, parish structures and links with neighbouring government and independent schools. Through their enrolment

policy schools need to take positive steps to promote Catholic education through such strategies promoting the *Archdiocesan Education Foundation scholarships* for Catholic families in need, open days, letter drops and media releases.

The governing bodies of each school should structure their individual enrolment policy to respect the overall Archdiocesan goal of working towards a target of 75% Catholic cohort whilst concurrently ensuring the viability and ongoing effectiveness of each individual school community. Each governing body should develop operational procedures and guidelines with regards reserving some enrolment places for Catholic families and managing waiting lists.

6.2 Enrolment Criteria

Preference for enrolment will be determined by the following prioritised order of criteria:

- 6.2.1 Catholic children of families with demonstrable links to their parish community (refer 6.3.2),
- 6.2.2 children who have, or have had, siblings in a specific Catholic school,
- 6.2.3 children of families currently enrolled in a Catholic school who have explicitly supported the Catholic ethos of the school,
- 6.2.4 children of Catholic families who are not covered by points 6.2.1 – 6.2.3,
- 6.2.5 children of families who have 'special pastoral circumstances' as deemed appropriate by the Enrolment committee or equivalent authority (refer 6.3.3), including humanitarian children recently arrived in Australia and children from poor and disadvantaged families who may be unaware of the existence of accessible Catholic schools (refer 6.3.3),
- 6.2.6 children of Orthodox families who have demonstrable links to their faith community,

- 6.2.7 children of Orthodox families,
- 6.2.8 children of families from other Christian denominations who have demonstrable links to their faith community and who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community,
- 6.2.9 children of families from other Christian denominations who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community,
- 6.2.10 children of families from other religious traditions who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community, and
- 6.2.11 children of families with no affiliation to a religious tradition who appreciate and are prepared to support the ethos of the Catholic school community.

6.3. Basis for Discretion

It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances there will be a need for those making enrolment decisions at the school level to have some basis for discretion. Discretionary decisions could include:

- 6.3.1 Consistent with the Guiding Principles, schools may give priority to the enrolment of children with special pastoral, social or educational needs.
- 6.3.2 Discerning the criteria that indicate the nature and extent of 'demonstrable links to the parish community'. Considerations could include: participation in the liturgical life of the parish; involvement in parish based sacramental programs; contributions to the parish ministries; participation in parish community building and outreach activities.
- 6.3.3 Discerning the criteria that indicate the nature and extent of 'special pastoral circumstances'. Considerations could include: special needs children; refugee and other marginalised families; links to the parish community through the involvement of grandparents and the extended

family; the pastoral care of the child due to family dislocation; old scholars.

6.3.4 Children from more isolated communities who may not have had reasonable access to a Catholic parish or school may be given a higher priority, if deemed appropriate by the enrolment committee or equivalent authority.

6.3.5 Each school community will develop its own enrolment policy to address local circumstances, as long as it is consistent with the TCEC overarching policy – e.g. details regarding timing of enrolment applications; parish and geographical boundaries; closure of enrolment period.

6.3.6 Flexibility regarding commencement ages may be considered in the case of interstate student transfers where the student has already enrolled in an equivalent grade level, noting in particular that the names for different grades may vary from state to state.

6.3.7 Specific protocols exist for the consideration of early entry into Kindergarten before the prescribed entry age (refer Department of Education Tasmania, *Early Entry to Kindergarten for Children who are Gifted (Cross Sectoral Guidelines)*, available at http://www.education.tas.gov.au/About_us/Pages/Policies.aspx)

7. Government Legislation

In accordance with the appropriate State Government legislation, the minimum commencement age for children entering Kindergarten is four years of age, on or before 1 January in the year of commencement. It is also expected therefore that prior to entry to Preparatory, a child will be five years of age on or before 1 January in the year of commencement.

8. Designated Enrolment Entry Points

8.1 The designated entry points for schools and colleges are:

- Kindergarten
- Preparatory
- Grade 3
- Grade 7
- Grade 11

8.2 Apart from these designated entry points for schools and colleges, parents who transfer children into a Catholic school from outside the Catholic Education system (especially in the upper primary years of schooling) may not receive preferential entry into a Catholic secondary college as represented in criteria 6.2.3 above, to the exclusion of the children of families currently enrolled in Catholic primary schools.

9. Student Transfer between Schools

Any acceptance of a student transfer will occur only after consultation between the respective schools. The following practices are to be adopted in the cases of application for transfer between schools for students within the Tasmanian Catholic Education sector.

9.1 The Principal of the school of destination, on receiving an application for transfer, and prior to interview, will:

- advise the parents of the prospective enrollee, that the Principal must inform the Principal of the school of origin of the application prior to interview,
- inform the parents that a consultation will occur between the schools with regards to the application for transfer.

9.2 The Principals would then, at the earliest opportunity, and within 10 days, confer with each other to consider the application. Particular consideration will be given to the pastoral needs of the family and the potential impact on the transfer on enrolment patterns across the Tasmanian Catholic system.

- 9.3 The Principal of the school of origin will not seek to prevent transfer in cases where it can be demonstrated that for genuine educational, pastoral or family reasons such a transfer will be beneficial for the student.

Examples of such reasons could include, but are not restricted to:

- relocation of the family home, or change in family circumstances,
- where the continued enrolment of the student in the school of origin may have serious negative effects on the student's wellbeing in an academic, pastoral or social sense.

9.4 Unresolved Issues

In the event of a disagreement arising from the interpretation or application of this Policy, the principles or operating guidelines, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate Head of School Services. The need to appoint an arbitrator to consult with interested parties will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

10.0 Supersession

This policy supersedes the following TCEC policy document:

10.1 Enrolment for Catholic Schools Policy (2012)

REFERENCES

Department of Education Tasmania, *Early Entry to Kindergarten for Children who are Gifted (Cross Sectoral Guidelines)*, available at:

http://www.education.tas.gov.au/About_us/Pages/Policies.aspx

FORMS

Nil

APPENDICES

Nil

SIGNED:



TCEC Chairperson

DATE:

11 Sept 2014

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