



Diocese of Broken Bay

ENROLMENT POLICY FOR DIOCESAN SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS

Diocese of Broken Bay
February 2002

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Diocesan Enrolment Policy is to emphasise the openness of the Catholic school system of Broken Bay to the children of all Catholic families. While the school system does not always have the physical capabilities to accept all applicants, it intends to ensure a warm welcome to all who apply.

This policy seeks to develop a working relationship among the local Catholic community, its existing school community and those seeking to establish themselves as participants in both. The policy calls parish, school and family to a closer bond of joint accountability for faith development and excellence in education for children. It 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 prospective 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 local Catholic community.

The policy envisages procedures which call the Parish Priest and Principal to work in collaboration with their members so that the greater faith community accepts its role in the faith life of the school and parish. The concept of an enrolment committee is to assist the two leaders in their tasks and to develop a new ministry of leadership and accompaniment within the parish. This ministry demands training and skill development so that the interview process is both invitational to prospective parents and evocative of realisable commitments on the part of parents and of the local Catholic community.

The policy envisages that many parents will arrive at the first interview with a primary consideration of securing a place in the school for their child. The first interview offers the opportunity to educate parents in the philosophy of Catholic school education, and the link between the faith community and faith education. It is not a hurdle for parents to jump; it is a total welcome to parents in the spirit of the Gospel. It is a welcome to examine lives, "to seek life to the full" so that they might seek the development of their own spirituality and work to sustain the local Catholic community that affords their children opportunities by way of bricks and mortar, pedagogy and ethics.

While it is the hope, over time, to provide sufficient classrooms to meet enrolment numbers, the enrolment policy does detail to enrolment committees a way of establishing priorities for acceptance of enrolments where there are more applications than available places. The appropriate welcome to all applicants may allow the local Catholic community to work better with unsuccessful applicants in its provision of sacramental programs and catechetical endeavours.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following principles inform the content of 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 it is a way for the Catholic community to provide for its young people an opportunity to experience Christian discipleship. It has traditionally aimed to support Catholic parents in their role of educating their children in the faith. In a time when many Catholic parents are unable to do this, 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. Enrolling in a Catholic school is normally an intra-community event: it is the local Catholic community reaching out to its families, some of whom have little contact with the Church, and little experience of Christian discipleship. It is an opportunity for evangelisation for many of these families, and a deepening of their faith and involvement in Church life for others. The enrolment committee shall seek to include those Catholic families that have committed themselves to school in the parish within the enrolment process.
3. Parents and children enrolling in Catholic schools commit themselves to a Catholic community of the total parish¹ that works towards the education, formation and pastoral care of young people. By acceptance of the enrolment the local Catholic community commits itself to supporting the formation of the family in faith.
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 enrolment process.
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 Catholic school system has limited resources and deployment of resources in the past limits some options for enrolment. Given these constraints, a school must give first priority to the parishes immediately associated with it.
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 family and the religious purposes of the school in the life of the parish.

POLICY CONTENT

7. Priority in enrolment will be given to:
 - Those children and families who are known and involved members of a local Catholic community.
 - The children of Catholic families that have expressed a commitment to support the life of the Catholic school in the parish.
 - The children of other Christian families that have expressed a commitment to support the life of the school.
 - The children of non-Christian families that have expressed a commitment to support the life of the school.
8. Enrolment Committees must keep records where exceptional cases required a different priority and forward such decisions to the Diocesan Enrolment Committee. Where there are places, the children and families of other Christian traditions who are known and involved members of their worshipping community and who have demonstrated their willingness to support the goals and life of the Catholic school may be offered enrolment. If there are still places, the children of other families who have demonstrated their willingness to support the goals and life of the Catholic school, may be offered enrolment.

¹ Primary schools generally relate to one parish and secondary schools relate to several parishes.

9. The Diocesan Enrolment Committee shall determine:
- Diocesan enrolment procedures, including protocols for working with local enrolment committees
 - the enrolment capacity of each school
10. Where there are less places than applicants the enrolment committee itself shall determine enrolments based on the dialogue and discernment process with parent(s) (and, in the case of secondary enrolment, students), using the following criteria:
- the expressed commitment to the religious life of the school in the parish
 - prior involvement in sacramental programs
 - prior attendance at a Catholic school
 - participation in Special Religious Education
 - espoused values, written references
 - involvement and commitment to another Christian tradition
 - commitment to the life of the Catholic school

Where there are more places than applicants the enrolment committee shall refer the issue of the proportion of non-Catholic enrolments to the Diocesan Enrolment Committee.

11. The enrolment of siblings is encouraged where there is has been demonstrated commitment to support the life of the school in the parish.
12. Enrolment in a secondary Catholic school is regarded as a new enrolment.
13. Appeals against the decisions of the enrolment committee shall be directed to the enrolment committee in writing. Recourse in writing may be made to the Diocesan Enrolment Committee and then to the Diocesan Schools Board after completion of that appeal process.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The Diocesan Enrolment Committee will develop and disseminate enrolment procedures and organise training for local enrolment committees.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed periodically and not less frequently than once every three years from the date of implementation of the policy.

POLICY DATES

Policy date of completion of formulation and adoption	22 November 2001
Date of effective implementation	29 April 2002
Revised and confirmed	21 November 2002
Date of next review	21 November 2005



Bishop David L. Walker
Bishop of Broken Bay

