ENROLMENT POLICY

1. Initial Implementation	1st January 2015
2. Revision Date:	2017
3. Approved By:	BCCS 15 November 2014
4. Contact Officer:	Paul Holman

Bishop's Commission For Catholic Schools Policy

Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Armidale

BCCS ENROLMENT POLICY

2015 **BCCS Policy No** 2015/01

1. PREAMBLE

The Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools[1] (BCCS) Diocesan Enrolment Policy provides transparent direction for Parish Priests and principals in the implementation of student enrolment policies and procedures for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale, NSW. This policy supersedes the BCCS Policy Statement: "Enrolment of Students in Catholic Systemic Schools in the Diocese of Armidale", dated 31st August 2002. It sets a common, consistent approach in enrolment practices across all schools and negates the need for schools to have a separate local policy. Principals, in consultation with the Diocesan Director of Schools, may name any particular local need within the 'Basis of Discretion' section of the policy. This will support the system of Catholic schools to cater for the individual needs of each child equitably within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources.

The policy is firmly placed within the foundational frameworks of the Diocesan Mission Statement for Catholic Schools and the Diocesan Strategic Intents and Strategic Directions Statement.

> *'No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith. So indeed the Catholic school, while it is open, as it must be, to the situations of the contemporary world, leads its students to promote efficaciously the good of the earthly city and also prepares them for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading and exemplary apostolic life they become as it were, a saving leaven in the human community. '(Gravissimum Educationis 8)*

Covering the vast ancient lands of the Anaiwan, Banbai, Dunghatte, Gambabnygir, Kamilaroi and Ngoogabrul peoples[2], in the northwest of NSW, the Catholic Diocese of Armidale is ever mindful of the rich culture and traditions of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit the Catholic faith was carried in the hearts of the early European settlers to the region. Religious men and woman travelled along with the people. Catholic parishes and schools became important cornerstones- places animated by faith, communion and community. We cherish the unique blessing that Catholic education is to our regional and Australian society. Today we live in an era where Catholic families[3] need support, just as many did in these earlier times. It is therefore incumbent for our Catholic schools to provide some direct assistance to children, young people and their families in experiencing what the discipleship of Jesus means for those who profess the Catholic faith. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale have always espoused a mission to be open to the materially and spiritually poor and the weakest in society. It is from this standpoint that we recognize changing

[1] Explanatory Notes 1.1

1. PREAMBLE

societal conditions create an even greater need for schools to augment an evangelising role in addition to the catechetical role they have traditionally played. It is therefore the intention of this policy to ensure that the Catholic culture and identity of our schools, within their parishes, are inclusive in nature and faithful to the mission of Christ to let no one person be held at bay from the love of God because they fear their weakness will find no welcome.

2. RATIONALE

Under the compulsory education requirements of the NSW Education Act 1990, the Catholic Diocese of Armidale is the approved authority for the registration and accreditation, of the system of non-government compulsory school-age, Catholic schools in the geographic area of the Diocese. The Act ensures that parents[4] are responsible for their child to be enrolled and attending a government or non-government registered school. The Catholic Church teaches that the "task of imparting education belongs primarily to the family" and that parents "have a primary and inalienable duty and right in regard to the education of their children"[5]. Furthermore, parents have the duty 'to entrust their children to Catholic schools whenever this is possible'[6] and where possible.

The BCCS Diocesan Enrolment Policy has been devised to support the parish priest and the school principal in discerning and implementing a transparent and equitable enrolment process that meets the needs and aspiration of families within the context of Catholic principles and values, NSW legislation and the available educational resources at the local level.

[2] Explanatory Notes 1.2
[3] Explanatory Notes 1.3
[4] Explanatory Notes 1.5
[5] Associated Policies/Church Documents 2.18
[6] Associated Policies/Church Documents 2.19

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 The Diocesan Mission Statement for Catholic schooling commits all partners in Catholic primary and secondary education to;

Proclaim - The Good News of Jesus Christ in our words and actions. Our Catholic faith and life experience.

Witness - To the Reign of God by responding through personal witness to God's unique love for each of us. By living in a spirit of faith, hope, justice and integrity.

Serve - The community by educating students, parents and staff in our Catholic story, traditions and beliefs and their implications for our lives in the context of educational programs that are of the highest standards.

3.2 Embedded within the local Catholic parish community, Catholic schools are committed to the development of the whole person and share with the parish the evangelising mission of the Church, as such schools give priority to the baptised children of their parishioners.

3.3 The Catholic Diocese of Armidale is committed to the aim of enrolling every Catholic child of a parish in the local Diocesan Catholic School.

3.4 The Catholic Diocese of Armidale is committed to ensuring and maintaining a critical mass of Catholic students[7] enrolled in every diocesan Catholic school. Whilst not the only factor, this critical mass of Catholic students is essential to the Catholic identity, character, and culture of the school. The parish priest and the school principal share the responsibility in ensuring that this Catholic identity, character and culture are maintained and promoted.

3.5 The Catholic Diocese of Armidale recognises that much more than a preponderance of Catholic families is required for a genuinely Catholic school. The Diocesan Director of Schools will work with parish and school communities of the diocese to review and evaluate the Catholic culture of the schools.

3.6 The Catholic Diocese of Armidale reaffirms its commitment to the essential elements of the Catholic school while recognising and even embracing changing patterns as 'signs of the times' and a new mission for Catholic education.

[7] Explanatory Notes 1.4

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Along with the Bishop, the parish priest has particular rights and responsibilities under Canon Law[8] for Catholic schools and the pastoral care of all involved in the school community. Therefore the implementation of the Diocesan Enrolment Policy and the CSO Enrolment Operational Procedures[9] requires close collaboration between the parish priest and the school principal.

4.2 Catholic schools are open to all Catholic families, as well as families from Orthodox churches, families from other Christian Churches and those from other faith traditions or non-religious backgrounds who are prepared to support the principles and values, liturgical and sacramental practices of the Catholic Church.

4.3 Catholic families seeking enrolment in a Catholic school will not be denied a place for their child because of genuine financial hardship[10] or other special pastoral circumstances[11], in fact schools are actively encouraged to support those who are poor, marginalized or in the greatest of need.

4.4 Catholic schools are places where children and young people experience the transforming Good News of the Gospels and as such are inclusive of students with identified additional needs[12]. Prior to the finalisation of the enrolment process the educational needs of the applicant must be identified, and the matter referred to the Catholic Schools Office to determine and plan for the necessary adjustment of the school and system required to support the needs of the applicant.

4.5 Catholic schools are not able to offer enrolment to students with Student Visa (subclass 571) as the Catholic Schools Office is not a registered, Commonwealth Register of Institution and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) provider.

4.6 Proposed changes by schools to current structures and/or educational delivery due to a change in enrolment patterns or practices of a significant nature should in the first instance be discussed with the parish priest and forwarded in writing to the Director of Catholic Schools for the consideration of the Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools.

4.7 The school principal will observe the compulsory education requirements of the NSW Education Act 1990 and other relevant State and Federal legislation when giving consideration to enrolment applications and in the provision of continuing enrolment year to year.

[8] Associated Policies/Church Documents 2.11
[9] Associated Policies/Church Documents 2.2
[10] Explanatory Notes 1.6
[11] Explanatory Notes 1.7
[12] Associated Policies/Church Documents 2.2

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.8 ENROLMENT PRIORITIES

4.8.1 Primary

4.8.1.1 Baptised Catholic children of Catholic families who reside in the designated parish and who regularly and frequently worship at Sunday Mass in the designated parish.

4.8.1.2 Baptised Catholic children not covered above or who may be outside the designated Catholic parish, with a preference for Catholic families who reside in parishes without a Catholic primary school.

4.8.1.3 Siblings of children already attending the school whose families have demonstrated ongoing support for the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.1.4 Children of Catholic families who have not yet received the sacrament of Baptism where the family has made a commitment to support the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.1.5 Children of families who have special pastoral circumstance as assessed by the principal and parish priest.

4.8.1.6 Children of regularly worshiping Orthodox or other Christian denominations who have strong links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.1.7 Children of Orthodox or other Christian denominations not covered above who are prepared to support the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.1.8 Children of families from other faith traditions or non-religious backgrounds who are prepared to support the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.2 Additional note for Central Schools

4.8.2.1 Enrolment is continuous from Kindergarten to Year 10

4.8.3 Secondary Colleges

4.8.3.1 Baptised Catholic children of Catholic families who reside in the designated parish and who regularly and frequently worship at Sunday Mass in the feeder parish/es.

4.8.3.2 Baptised Catholic children not covered above or who may be outside the designated feeder Catholic parish, with a preference for Catholic families who reside in parishes without a Catholic secondary school.

4.8.3.3 Siblings of children already attending the college whose families have demonstrated ongoing support for the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.3.4 Children of Catholic families who have not yet received the sacrament of Baptism where the family has made a commitment to support the principles and

4. POLICY STATEMENT

values of the Catholic school.

4.8.3.5 Children of families who have special pastoral circumstance[13] as assessed by the principal and parish priest.

4.8.3.6 Children of regularly worshiping Orthodox or other Christian denominations who have strong links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.3.7 Children of Orthodox or other Christian denominations not covered above who are prepared to support the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.3.8 Children of families from other faith traditions or non-religious backgrounds who are prepared to support the principles and values of the Catholic school.

4.8.3.9 Enrolment is continuous from Years 7 to 12.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 This BBC Enrolment Policy will be supported by the CSO Enrolment Operational Procedures.

5.2 BASIS OF DISCRETION

5.2.1 In relation to the implementation of the general and particular principles outlined in this policy consideration may also be given to the local needs requirements for the following reasons:

5.2.1.1 Family situations necessitating a pastoral approach or requiring the exercise of compassion for example; siblings of students currently enrolled, grandparents who take on the full time care of grandchildren.

5.2.1.2 Parents' intention with regard to their own and their child's search for 'education in the faith'.

5.2.1.3 Students who have not been able to access a Catholic school previously because of isolation.

5.2.1.4 Family circumstances involving relocation.

5.2.2 Some discretion is given to parish priests and school principals in determining whether priority is given to a non-practising Catholic child from the parish or to a practising Catholic child from another parish. This may even alter on a case by case basis.

6.1 APPEALS

6.1.1. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and advised of the basis of this decision and informed of the appeals process.

[13] Explanatory Notes 1.7

5. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1.2. Appeals process:

An appeal should be made in writing to the Diocesan Director of Catholic Schools and should include all the details of the situation, including advice from the principal. The Director shall discuss the appeal with the principal and the parish priest, give due consideration and make a recommendation to the Bishop.

The Bishop will make the final decision upon receiving advice from the Director.

The Director shall then inform the applicant in writing of the result of the appeal within the framework of this policy.

REFLECTION MATERIAL / ASSOCIATED POLICIES

1. EXPLANATORY NOTES

1.1 A Catholic School is one that operates with the consent of the Bishop of Armidale and is one where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

1.2 Kamilaroi, Anaiwan, Ngoogabrul, Dunghatte, Gambabnygir and Banbai are the Aboriginal Nations on whose lands we are situated.

1.3 Catholic families are defined as families in which at least one parent is a baptised Catholic in either the Latin or Eastern Rites of the church. This presupposes that there will be no discrimination against Catholic children of marriages of mixed faiths or single supporting parent families. Enrolment proprieties are given to baptised children of regularly worshiping Catholic families.

1.4 A Catholic student is defined as a student who has received the sacrament of Baptism.

1.5 A parent as named in this policy is a term that is inclusive of persons with parental responsibilities including legal guardians and carers. Authorised carers can apply for 'sole parental responsibility' for a child or young person who has been in their care for two years or more. A sole parental responsibility order is a long term order intended to last until the child or young person is 18 years old, and there are limited circumstances under which they may be varied or cancelled. The order gives the carer all the powers and responsibilities which parents have in relation to their children under the law. It reduces the involvement of DoCS and the designated agency by allowing the carer to make long-term decisions for the child or young person. An application for sole parental responsibility can only be made with the consent of the birth parents. If the child is aged over 12 the order will also require their consent. This means that agreement needs to be reached by all about what is best for the child, and everyone must be committed to the case plan.

1.6 Genuine financial hardship: Generally determined by an assessment of the family's income in relation to the poverty line.

1.7 Special pastoral circumstance may include students who are socially, financially, emotionally and/or spiritually disadvantaged. In rural and remote areas of the diocese this would include students who due to isolation have been unable to attend a parish primary school and seek enrolment into a secondary college; Family situations requiring compassion or special pastoral approach; for example grandparents who take on the full time care of grandchildren and family circumstances involving family relocation.

REFLECTION MATERIAL / ASSOCIATED POLICIES

2. ASSOCIATED POLICIES/CHURCH DOCUMENTS

2.1 Diocesan Mission Statement for Catholic Schools / Diocesan Strategic Intents and Strategic Directions Statement 2012-2014

2.2 CSO Enrolment Operational Procedures TBD

2.3 CSO Operational Overseas Student Visa Policy TBD

2.4 CSO Operational Diocesan School Fees 2014

2.5 BCCS Armidale Guidelines for the Management of Student Attendance

2.6 BCCS The Suspension, Expulsion and Exclusion Policy

2.7 BOSTES registration and accreditation manual

2.8 CSO Armidale Core Catholic principles and values and the New Australian Curriculum: A position Paper (2014)

2.9 Gravissimum Educationis 8

2.10 Catholic nature and identity of our schools TBD

2.11 The Code of Canon Law: Can.796-806 Title 111 Catholic Education Chapter 1- Schools

2.12 *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium:* Congregation for Catholic Education (1998)

2.13 *The Catholic School:* Congregation for Catholic Education (1977)

2.14 *Declaration on Christian Education* (Gravissimum Educationis) 1965

2.15 *Educating Together in Catholic Schools* (Congregation for Catholic Education) 2007

2.16 *Catholic School at a Crossroads Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT (2007)*

2.17 V*atican Council ll, Decree on Christian Educatio*n

2.18 (Vatican Council ll, Decree on Christian Education, nn 3 & 6)

2.19 (ibid, n.8)

2.20 Catholic Schools at a Crossroads pp 8 & 10

2.21 Catholic Schools at a Crossroads pp 10

Replaces Policy Number	2002
Approved by BCCS	2014
To be Reviewed	2017