



## POLICIES

# Enrolment Policy for Systemic Catholic Schools

## Classification

Policy Number: EDO201601-1.0 • Version/Last Updated: 1.0 / December 2016 • Audience: Public • Commencement: 1 January 2017

## Implementation Resources

- [Enrolment Form 2018 cohort](#)
- [Offer of Enrolment and return Acceptance](#)
- [Primary /Secondary College Pathways and Feeder Parishes](#)
- [Enrolment Policy Parent Brochure](#)
- [Enrolment Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Students with Disability and Additional Learning Needs e-Handbook](#)
- [Child Safe Schools \(Child Protection\) Information for Parents 2017](#)
- [Mandatory Planning Procedure \(internal access only\)](#)
- [SCS Parent Charter](#)

### ▼ 1.0 Rationale

The Enrolment Policy for systemic Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney is set within the context of the Church's mission to evangelise, and is founded upon the Vision and Mission Statements for Catholic schools. Catholic schools have a unique role in helping families to nurture and develop their Catholic faith, within the context of their parish and regional communities. As inclusive and evangelising communities, they also welcome families from other faith traditions where this is possible.

The Catholic school participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. In this way "Catholic schools are at once places of evangelisation, of complete formation, of inculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds."

*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*

Many families are continuing the tradition of looking to Catholic schools for the education of their children. Enrolment numbers within the Archdiocese of Sydney have witnessed a steady growth in recent times. In a significant number of schools demand exceeds the number of available places. The student population broadly reflects the diversity of Australian life and culture, with a significant enrolment of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, from indigenous cultures, and students with exceptional ability, students with disability and additional needs.

Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) strives to respond to the needs of all students, within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources. They recognise the entitlement of all students to access

educational opportunities that nurture the Catholic faith, expand life choices, cater for the disadvantaged, and challenge all students to reach their full potential.

This policy exists to ensure the equitable allocation of student places according to the Vision and Mission of Catholic schools.

***Our Vision Statement:***

As partners in Catholic education, we commit ourselves to developing authentic Catholic schools which:

- are founded on the person of Jesus Christ and enlivened by the Gospel
- highlight the relevance of our faith to life and contemporary culture
- are embedded within the community of believers, and share in the evangelising mission of the Church
- are committed to the development of the whole person.

***Our Mission Statement:***

As partners in Catholic education, we commit ourselves to our students by:

- celebrating being Catholic in Australia
- ensuring quality teaching and learning
- making a difference in our world.

## ▼ 2.0 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of this policy provide direction for the Principal and the Enrolment Committee in determining the processes and procedures for an individual school when considering enrolment of students. They serve as a basis to assess specific circumstances within the school context where demand exceeds the number of available places.

- 2.1 Embedded within the parish community, SCS is committed to the development of the whole person and share with the parish in the evangelising mission of the Church.
- 2.2 SCS schools, as part of a parish community, has a responsibility to support parents/caregivers in honouring the commitment to practice their faith, which they undertook on behalf of their child/children at the time of Baptism.
- 2.3 The parish priest has responsibility under Canon Law for Catholic schools and the pastoral care of all involved in the school community. Therefore, the implementation of the enrolment policy requires close collaboration between the parish priest and the school.
- 2.4 The nature of systemic education facilitates information sharing, resource efficiency and the development of comprehensive programs to support the spiritual, academic and social development of all our students.
- 2.5 On enrolment, all parents and students commit to supporting the Catholic ethos of the school, participating in the Religious Education program and in the prayer and liturgical life of the school.
- 2.6 The support and nurturing of the family unit is fundamental to the pastoral and spiritual welfare of each child. Wherever feasible, once a family member has been accepted into an SCS school, priority in enrolment will be given to ensuring the enrolment of siblings.
- 2.7 The preferential option for the poor and marginalised is fundamental in Catholic schools. SCS schools have a responsibility to care for those who are poor, disadvantaged or considered most at risk. No Catholic child will be denied a Catholic education because of a family's genuine inability to pay fees.
- 2.8 SCS schools are committed to the inclusion of children with disability and will observe all relevant state and federal legislation. Planning for the enrolment of students with disability and additional needs, must

take account the school's capacity to provide reasonable adjustments. Students' educational and wellbeing needs are of paramount consideration within the enrolment process.

- 2.9 Planning and provision for the educational and wellbeing needs of the student is dependent on full and frank disclosure both at the point of enrolment and throughout the course of a student's education.
- 2.10 SCS schools have adopted an explicit policy of providing educational opportunities for indigenous students through the provision of a bursary program. Indigenous families may apply for enrolment on the basis of 'special pastoral circumstances'.
- 2.11 Wherever feasible, students who attend an SCS Primary school should have the opportunity to continue their education in a Secondary college within the Catholic system where facilities exist to do so and where the family has supported the ethos of the Catholic Church.
- 2.12 SCS 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 ethos, values and liturgical and sacramental practices of the Catholic Church.
- 2.13 SCS schools have a co-responsibility to ensure a sustainable level of enrolments for each school within the Archdiocesan system, so as to maximise the opportunity for Catholic families to access Catholic schools.

### ▼ 3.0 Policy

- 3.1 All Archdiocesan systemic Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney will apply the Guiding Principles, Procedures and Enrolment Criteria outlined in this policy.
- 3.2 In special circumstances, and after consultation with the parish priest, a school may seek approval from the regional director to modify this enrolment policy to cater for the unique context of the local Catholic community.
- 3.3 Each school must have an Enrolment Committee to provide advice to the Principal during major enrolment intake periods.
- 3.4 The Enrolment Committee should apply the Guiding Principles, Procedures and Enrolment Criteria, as outlined in this policy, in a fair and consistent manner in accord with the relevant Federal and State anti-discrimination legislation.
- 3.5 The membership of the Enrolment Committee will be broadly representative of key stakeholder groups in the school.
- 3.6 The parish priest will be provided with the opportunity to be a full participant in all enrolment decisions, particularly through membership of the Enrolment Committee.
- 3.7 All schools undertake to enrol prospective students exclusively within the prescribed SCS enrolment period as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- 3.8 Where demand exceeds the number of available positions within a school, the priority for allocating enrolment places is to be in accordance with the criteria listed below at 3.14 and 3.15.
- 3.9 On enrolment, all parents and students are required to give an undertaking that they will support the Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools.
- 3.10 On enrolment, all parents are required to give an undertaking that they will jointly and severally honour the financial commitments required by the school and that failure to do so may jeopardise the enrolment or ongoing enrolment of the student or subsequent students in line with the School Fee Collection Policy.
- 3.11 When applying for, and throughout the course of enrolment, parents/caregivers are required to disclose all relevant information related to their child's disability and additional needs. Failure to disclose at the point of enrolment, or during the course of enrolment, may result in revocation of the offer of enrolment.

3.12 When enrolling a student with disability and additional needs, the Principal, in consultation with appropriate regional personnel is required to follow the Mandatory Planning Procedure accessible by the Principal through the SCS intranet.

3.13 The SCS Application for Enrolment form, Offer of Enrolment and Acceptance for return are mandatory for use in all SCS schools in its entirety and without alteration. Any school specific information required at enrolment can be attached on a separate document under the school letterhead and should not be included on a modified enrolment form.

#### 3.14 **Enrolment Criteria: Systemic Primary Schools**

Enrolments are to be made in accordance with the following criteria:

- 3.14.1 Baptised Catholic children of regularly worshipping Catholic families with strong demonstrable links to the local designated Catholic parish or parishes.
- 3.14.2 Siblings of children already attending the school whose families have demonstrated ongoing support for the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.14.3 Children of families who have 'special pastoral circumstances' as assessed by the Enrolment Committee or, where appropriate, the school Principal and/or the parish priest in conjunction with the Principal.
- 3.14.4 Children of Catholic families not covered above, or who are outside the local designated Catholic parish.
- 3.14.5 Children of regularly worshipping Orthodox families who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.14.6 Children of regularly worshipping families from other Christian denominations who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.14.7 Children of Orthodox families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.14.8 Children of families from other Christian denominations who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.14.9 Children of families from other faith traditions or non-religious backgrounds who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.

#### 3.15 **Enrolment Criteria: Systemic Secondary Colleges**

In accordance with the guiding principles, the following criteria are provided to support Enrolment Committees in the discernment of the priority in which enrolment applications are accepted.

- 3.15.1 Baptised Catholic children of regularly worshipping Catholic families with strong demonstrable links to the local designated feeder parish or parishes.
- 3.15.2 Siblings of children already attending the college whose families have demonstrated ongoing support for the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.15.3 Children of families currently enrolled at the designated Catholic feeder schools who have demonstrated ongoing support for the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.15.4 Children of families who have 'special pastoral circumstances' as assessed by the Enrolment Committee or, where appropriate, the school Principal and/or priests of associated parishes in conjunction with the Principal.

- 3.15.5 Children of Catholic families not covered above or who are outside the local designated Catholic feeder schools/parishes.
- 3.15.6 Children of regularly worshipping Orthodox families who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.15.7 Children of regularly worshipping families from other Christian denominations who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.15.8 Children of Orthodox families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.15.9 Children of families from other Christian denominations who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.15.10 Children of families from other faith traditions or non-religious backgrounds who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.

## ▼ 4.0 Procedures

This section sets out the operational aspects of implementing this policy, which may be varied from time to time by the Executive Director of SCS in response to changing circumstances. Principals and Enrolment Committees are required to follow the procedures current at any point in time.

### 4.1 Responsibility of Principals

- 4.1.1 The school will advertise the closing date for the official SCS enrolment period, so that the Enrolment Committee can assess the priority of applications. This does not preclude the Principal from accepting students to fill any vacancies after that date.
- 4.1.2 The Principal will outline the roles and responsibilities of the Enrolment Committee.
- 4.1.3 The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the school's Enrolment Committee is cognisant of relevant legislation and the principles of procedural fairness.
- 4.1.4 When enrolling students with special needs, the student must in the first instance meet the usual eligibility requirements for enrolment.
- 4.1.5 Wherever possible, in situations where demand exceeds the available number of places, Principals will seek to assist students whom they are unable to accept to find a position in an alternative Catholic school.
- 4.1.6 In the process of enrolling students with disability and additional needs, the Mandatory Planning Procedure must be completed by the Principal, in consultation with appropriate regional personnel.
- 4.1.7 Using the Mandatory Planning Procedure, the Principal is required to assess the nature and levels of adjustment necessary for effective educational planning and provision of the student.
- 4.1.8 The Principal (or their delegate) must ensure the effective information exchange between SCS schools regarding a student's academic, pastoral, wellbeing, disability and additional needs including transitioning students' Personalised Plans.

### 4.2 Responsibility of Enrolment Committee

- 4.2.1 Membership of the Enrolment Committee will include the Parish Priest or his representative, the school Principal or delegate, and a parent who is an active member of the local parish community.

4.2.2 The Enrolment Committee will process applications received during the major enrolment intake period for any year. Individual enrolments received outside the enrolment period are delegated to the school Principal.

### 4.3 Responsibility of Families and Carers

4.3.1 On enrolment, all parents and students are required to give an undertaking that they will support the [Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools](#).

4.3.2 When applying for, and throughout the course of enrolment, parents/caregivers are required to disclose and regularly update all relevant information related to their child's disability and additional needs.

4.3.3 Parents are required to assume responsibility for the timely payment of fees to support the ongoing work of the school, parish and community.

## ▼ 5.0 Bases of Discretion

5.1 In exceptional circumstances when considering an individual enrolment application, a Principal, in consultation with the parish priest, may make an exception to the priority criteria as long as the decision is consistent with the overall spirit and rationale of this policy.

5.2 Principals wishing to vary the criteria for enrolment in response to exceptional circumstances within their school community must consult their Parish Priest and receive the approval of their Regional Director.

5.3 In circumstances where all attempts to collect outstanding school fees have been exhausted, the Chief Financial Officer may recommend to the Executive Director that a student/s ongoing enrolment at SCS be terminated in the following school years.

## ▼ 6.0 Explanatory Notes and Definitions

### 6.1 Catholic Education

6.1.1 For the purpose of this document, education in systemic Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney will be conducted in compliance with all applicable legislation (eg the [Education Act \(1990\) NSW](#)) and the requirements of SCS.

6.1.2 There are 170 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney. 152 of these belong to the system of schools administered by SCS and are covered by this policy. The other 18 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese are Congregational schools run independently by Religious Congregations. These schools develop their own enrolment policies and procedures and are not covered by the provisions of this document.

6.1.3 By law students must commence school before they turn six years of age. School entry age is no longer restrained but students must be able to demonstrate a capacity to move to Year 1 the following year. Generally students in NSW start school around the age of five. In June 2009 the NSW Government legislated to raise the minimum school leaving age from 15 to 17, unless students meet the alternative criteria of undertaking approved education or training or participation in paid work for at least 25 hours per week.

### 6.2 Catholic Families

6.2.1 Catholic families are defined as families in which the children are baptised or in which at least one parent is a Catholic and both parents are supportive of a Catholic education for their child.

6.2.2 Catholic families include families of Eastern Catholic Churches.

### 6.3 SCS Enrolment Period

6.3.1 SCS Secondary colleges will enrol prospective students two years before the intended enrolment i.e. Year 5 for enrolment into Year 7.

6.3.2 SCS Primary schools will enrol prospective students in the year preceding the intended enrolment.

#### 6.4 **Exceptional ability, disability, complex social and emotional needs or other additional needs**

6.4.1 A student may be deemed as having exceptional abilities, disability, complex social and emotional needs or other additional needs if, in endeavouring to offer the student equitable access to educational opportunities, adjustments need to be made to curricula, assessment procedures, school premises or modes of course delivery.

6.4.2 The term **disability** refers to students with

- Intellectual disability/intellectual developmental disorders affecting school performance and adaptive skills
- Hearing impairment affecting communication and auditory skills
- Vision impairment affecting access to physical environments, daily living, mobility and social skills
- Mobility/physical disability that may impact on functionality and learning engagement with specific environments
- Mental health disorders seriously affecting educational functioning and emotional wellbeing
- Autism Spectrum Disorder affecting nonverbal and verbal communication, social understanding and social behaviour, and capacity to think and behave flexibly
- Receptive and/or expressive language disorders significantly affecting communication and academic achievement.

6.4.3 The term **additional needs** refers to students with

- Specific Learning Disorders that exist for longer than six months, despite intervention. These disorders can affect literacy, numeracy or motor skill attainment and proficiency. Examples may include dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia
- Complex medical needs that arise as a result of a pre-existing or an acquired condition. Examples may include complex forms of diabetes or epilepsy. Students with disability may also have associated complex medical needs
- Complex social and emotional needs that challenge student's individual capacities and social competency to be resilient, self-regulatory and to understand behavioural choices.

#### 6.5 **Mandatory Planning Procedure**

An internal resource to assist and support the enrolment of students with disability and complex social and emotional needs. This resource is accessible by the Principal and should be completed in consultation with appropriate regional personnel.

#### 6.6 **Parish Community**

6.6.1 In discerning strong demonstrable links to the parish community, consideration could include regular participation in the liturgical life of the parish; active participation in parish-based sacramental programs; contribution to parish ministries; participation in parish community building and outreach programs; or other significant involvement as deemed appropriate by the Enrolment Committee.

6.6.2 Parish community includes the parish of regular worship or the parish defined by residential geographical boundaries. In special situations, some families may live within the geographic area of the parish whilst worshipping regularly in communities aligned to cultural or ethnic groups. In the case of such applications, with the support of their pastor, their parish involvement would be assessed as meeting the criteria for parish participation.

## 6.7 Special Pastoral Circumstances

In discerning criteria that indicate the nature and extent of 'special pastoral circumstances' consideration could include children with special needs; indigenous students; refugee or other marginalised families; links to the parish or school communities through the involvement of grandparents and the extended family; the pastoral care of the student due to family dislocation; prior family links to the school; and any other special circumstances as judged appropriate by the Enrolment Committee.

## 6.8 Designated Feeder Parish/Feeder Schools

6.8.1 In the Sydney Archdiocese, there are a number of parish communities that do not have a local parish Primary school. In these instances, in accordance with the support document [Primary/ Secondary Colleges Pathways and Feeder Parishes](#) document, families may make application to the designated Catholic parish Primary school and be considered equally with the other families from the school's local parish.

6.8.2 Traditionally, Catholic systemic secondary colleges have been founded and supported by the combined efforts of a number of parish communities in a particular location within the Archdiocese. Therefore, Catholic systemic Secondary colleges have strong pastoral links to a number of parishes and Primary schools in their local areas.

6.8.3 In most cases Catholic parishes and Primary schools feed into one or more Catholic systemic Secondary colleges, as outlined in the support document [Primary/ Secondary Colleges Pathways and Feeder Parishes](#) document. However, in some areas of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Catholic congregational colleges service the local area and are not subject to the provisions of this policy.

6.8.4 Enrolment of students from Catholic feeder Primary schools into Secondary colleges assumes that the student has attended the local Catholic Primary school for a minimum of two years, except in special circumstances such as family relocation or as judged appropriate by the Enrolment Committee.

## 6.9 Application of Secondary Enrolment Criteria

6.9.1 In the event of a Secondary college receiving a greater number of applications from families in their designated parish(es) or feeder schools than there are vacancies, the Enrolment Committee will further apply the Enrolment Criteria.

6.9.2 Wherever possible, students who are unable to be placed in their school of first choice will be assisted to find a place in another Catholic school.

# ▼ 7.0 Supporting Documents

## 7.1 Related policies

- [Resolution of Complaints Policy](#)
- [School Fee Collection Policy](#)
- [Students with Complex Care Needs \(Medical Assistance\) Policy](#)
- [Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney](#)

## 7.2 Supporting documents

- [Enrolment Form 2018 cohort](#)
- [Offer of Enrolment and return Acceptance](#) (letter for mail-merge by school and distribution to students)
- [Primary /Secondary College Pathways and Feeder Parishes](#)
- [Enrolment Policy Parent Brochure](#)
- [Enrolment Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Students with Disability and Additional Learning Needs e-Handbook](#)
- [Child Safe Schools \(Child Protection\) Information for Parents 2017](#)
- [Mandatory Planning Procedure \(internal access only\)](#)
- [SCS Parent Charter](#)
- [Eastern Catholic Churches](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#)

## ▼ 8.0 Appendices

- 8.1 **Appendix 1:** [Enrolment Form 2018 cohort](#)
- 8.2 **Appendix 2::** [Mandatory Planning Procedure](#) (internal access only)
- 8.3 **Appendix 3::** [Offer of Enrolment and Acceptance for Return](#)

## ▼ 9.0 Classification

9.1 **Policy Number:** EDO201601-1.0

9.2 **Version:** 1.0

**Last modified:** December 2016

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters contained therein. In so much as any aspect of this policy may appear to be in conflict with another Archdiocesan system or school-based policy, then precedence is to be given to this policy.

9.3 **Audience:** Public

9.4 **Review by:** December 2019

Changing laws, legal precedents, and experience may all serve as triggers for immediate review.

9.5 **Originally Approved by Leadership Team:** July 2011

**Review Approved by Leadership Team:** 4 August 2016

9.6 **Originally Endorsed by SACS Board:** 27 July 2011

**Review Endorsed by SACS Board:** 31 August 2016

9.7 **Approved by Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools:** 7 December 2016

9.8 **Commencement Date:** 1 January 2017

## **Related Policies**

- [Resolution of Complaints Policy](#)
- [School Fee Collection Policy](#)
- [Students with Complex Care Needs \(Medical Assistance\) Policy](#)
- [Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney](#)