

Enrolment Policy

1. RATIONALE

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”. (Vatican Council 11, Decree on Christian Education, section 3 & 6) Furthermore, parents have the duty “to entrust their children to Catholic schools whenever this is possible”. (ibid, n.8)

St Philomena’s offers schooling for students in the Catholic tradition from Kindergarten to Year 10.

1.1 This policy addresses the needs of families seeking a Catholic education.

It’s primary focus is to provide guidelines for the enrolment, where possible, of children from Catholic families. Catholic families are defined as:

Families in which at least one parent is a Catholic or in which the children to be enrolled have been baptised Catholics.

1.2 This policy seeks to establish consistency in enrolment practices within the school.

1.3 This policy reflects and supports the Armidale Diocesan Mission and Vision statement;

1.3.1 “to provide quality education for students in the Catholic Tradition in partnership with rural communities”.

1.3.2 “to educate, to build community and to serve and thus support parents who are the primary and principal educators of their children”.

2. ESSENTIAL PROVISIONS

Parents seeking enrolment for their child (ren) do so first by making application to the Principal. This involves completing and returning an enrolment form to the school office for each individual child.

The application process includes students and parents. They must attend an interview with either the Principal or a delegate prior to enrolment, before the application is accepted. It needs to be understood that an application for enrolment is not a guarantee of enrolment. It is not the first step in a process that will inevitably lead to enrolment. It is a request for consideration for enrolment. Any previous school reports will have a bearing on the outcome of the interview. Secondary students will be asked to take part in the interview and their contributions to the interview will help determine the final result.

During the interview parents will be asked why they are seeking enrolment and how best the home and school can work together in achieving a productive and supportive learning environment.

Secondary students are asked to contribute to the discussion. The school handbook should be referred to prior to interview by enrolling families. Secondary students and parents will be asked to sign “Parent” and “Student” agreement forms. Secondary parents will have the option to sign a Centrecare form which will allow secondary students to refer themselves to the school counsellor.

2.1 The school develops an enrolment policy which is consistent with the provisions of all Diocesan Policies and directives while being sensitive to Moree needs.

2.2 The school establishes a school enrolment process.

2.2.1 This process encompasses the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the school’s enrolment policy.

2.2.2 This process includes appropriate consultation between the Principal, the Parish Priests(s), the school board and relevant representatives of the community(ies) on which the school depends.

2.2.3 While the key intake groups will be Kindergarten and Year 7, positions are offered across the K-10 spectrum. A limited number of positions are offered and all who make application may not be offered a position.

2.3 The school enrolment policy is available to all members of the parish and school communities, and a copy is forwarded to the Diocesan Director of Schools.

2.4 All parents seeking to enrol children in Catholic schools are assisted to understand the ideals and principles upon which the Catholic School is based.

Application for enrolment of your child means that you are choosing a Catholic education for your child. It implies a commitment to support the faith practice and aims of the school, and a willingness to co-operate in their implementation.

Specifically it means:

- *Religious Education is a core subject*
- *Practice of the Catholic Faith and Parish involvement are emphasised*
- *Academic achievement and the acquisition of skills are developed within a Catholic framework*
- *Appropriate participation in the academic and the spiritual life of the school is presumed.*

Your child is expected to adhere to the school’s standards for:

- *behaviour, dress and self-discipline*
- *application to course work and study*
- *Compulsory participation in school activities, especially Religious Education days, Sports Carnivals and excursions and camps.*
- *respect for people and property*
- *observance of school regulations*
- *participation in faith practice and worship.*
- **ACCEPTANCE OF ALL OF THE ITEMS IN SECTION 2.4 IS MANDATORY.**

PRINCIPLES FOR DETERMINING ACCEPTANCE

2.5 While children from all families who are prepared to support the ideals and principles of the Catholic school are eligible for enrolment, priority in enrolment is given in the following order, **except in special circumstances as determined by the Principal.:**

2.5.1 Children of Catholic families

2.5.2 Children of existing families

2.5.3 Families who will support the aims and practices of the school

2.5.4 Non Catholic children:

2.5.4.1 who have previously attended another Catholic school

2.5.4.2 whose parents, for religious reasons, wish them to have a Catholic education

2.5.5 Children of families with other religious convictions

2.5.6 The Principal may use discretion in offering/not offering enrolment to families particularly in pastoral cases or after discussion with the Parish Priest.

2.5.7 Enrolment age of children entering kindergarten must be in accordance with the directives in the CSO administrative handbook.

2.6 Parents seeking to enrol students commencing Year 7 are asked to give due consideration to this process. A priority will be given to those families who commit the student to Year 10. This will not preclude parents from applying for a shorter term however enrolment for a shorter term will only be offered if vacancies exist.

2.7. Unsuccessful applicants may be placed on a waiting list for enrolment.

3 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Subject to paragraph 2.5 special consideration may be given to:

3.1 Children of disadvantaged families and children with special needs within the constraints of available teaching and material resources. The enrolment of such children requires sensitive dialogue involving the parents of the child concerned, the Principal and Catholic Schools Office staff. (Refer Special Needs Handbook).

3.2 Children of families who are suffering financial hardship and related inability (as opposed to unwillingness) to pay school fees fully or in part should not find this an obstacle to enrolment within the terms of Provision 2.5 above and the Policy: Diocesan School Fees.

4 SCHOOL FEES

While remaining always sensitive to the needs of families in difficult and traumatic situations, the school has significant expenses and debt for the maintenance and provision of the outstanding facilities that have been provided over many years.

Provision exists for extensions of time for payment or some consideration of amounts, but only when the Principal is accorded the courtesy of immediate contact, for parents to explain circumstances and to make alternative arrangements.

Compassion for, and support of families in special circumstances will always be a priority.

The school is therefore essentially a user-pays organisation and full fees are expected from all who seek enrolment.

School fees are set out each year detailing tuition, resources, insurance, excursions and other costs as determined by the School Executive. The school expects that fees are paid promptly either at the time of acceptance in the school or at the time of receipt of the account.

For overseas students, one full term's fees must be paid to validate enrolment acceptance in accordance with CRICOS (Dio Policy).

It is unreasonable and unjust to other families, however, to ignore fee accounts or to fail to contact the School promptly when problems affecting payment may arise. Debt collection processes will be initiated when necessary in accordance with the Diocesan Fee Policy.

5. BASES OF DISCRETION

5.1 In relation to the implementation of the general and particular principles outlined in 2.2, consideration also may be given, as local needs require for the following reasons.

- 5.2 family situations necessitating a pastoral approach or requiring the exercise of compassion.
- 5.3 parent intention with regard to their own and their children's search for "education in the faith"
- 5.4 the enrolment of siblings of children already attending the school
- 5.5 family circumstances involving relocation

Full fee-paying overseas students may be enrolled in St Philomena's after the needs of local students who are eligible for enrolment have been met. Full fee paying overseas students are enrolled in accordance with the requirements of the Catholic Education Commission NSW, which are available from the Catholic School Office.

6. APPEALS

Appeals against decisions of the enrolment process shall be conducted in the following manner:

- 6.1 Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and given reasons for the unsuccessful application by the school Principal. Appeals against an unsuccessful enrolment application may be made to the Diocesan Director of Schools who will discuss the appeal with the Principal and the Parish Priest.