

ENROLMENT POLICY

FEBRUARY 2013

DOCUMENT SUMMARY

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Associated Docs	Enrolment Guidelines for Students with Disabilities Enrolments of Overseas Students Gifted and Talented K-12 Policy

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Inspired by the message and example of Jesus Christ, Catholic schools live out a distinctive educational vision. Supported by the Catholic community of which they are a vital part, they invite students and their families into a faith-filled educational experience.

As a key ministry of parishes and the diocese, Catholic schools encourage and support parents in their responsibility for the faith formation of their children. This formation is supported by prayer and opportunities to participate in the life, mission and liturgy of the broader Catholic community.

Our schools commit to:

- nurturing each individual's growth in faith and unique potential
- offering outstanding educational experiences founded on Catholic values
- fostering partnership between parents and staff in the education of their children
- creating communities of respect for each other, the wider society and the earth
- encouraging active engagement in social justice issues, the service of others and the promotion of peace.

Catholic schools are part of a long tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in Australia and this diocese for over 180 years. They fulfil parents' rights to choose the schooling for their children which reflects their own values, beliefs and hopes.

Diocesan Enrolment Policy

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1. RATIONALE

“Our mission is to evangelise – to proclaim Christ, the Good News of God’s love for all. All our pastoral activities must, therefore, both flow from our personal response to Christ and be carried out in the spirit of the Gospel.”

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Pastoral Plan, Moving Forward Together, 2011 (Theological Principle 3.1)

Catholic schools centred on the person of Jesus Christ are called to live and proclaim the message of the Gospel. Supported by, and in collaboration with, the Catholic community of which they are a vital part, Catholic schools encourage staff, students and their families into a personal relationship with Jesus, challenging them to find, through Him, meaning and value in their lives.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are “an integral part of the evangelising mission of the Church.”

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Vision Statement for Catholic Schools (2002)

Catholic schools are established to support the local Church in providing an education enlivened by the spirit of the Gospel. As part of a long tradition of Catholic education provided in this Diocese, Catholic schools continually strive to be centres of educational excellence.

“The Catholic School is the principal educational arm of Catholic families, parishes and the wider church... It is there to assist parents and parishes in their educational, evangelical and catechetical mission as well as to help the wider community in its educational and civic service.”

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

The school is an integral part of the Parish and Pastoral region’s programme of outreach to Catholic families. Enrolment in a Catholic school enables the local Catholic community to offer support to parents in the faith education of their children. In addition, Catholic schools contribute significantly to the Australian community by promoting quality education and a just and tolerant society.

It is recognised that some families have had little contact with the Church and little experience of Catholic discipleship. Enrolment allows for the evangelisation of families and a deepening of faith and involvement in Church life.

The Catholic school “is a school for all, with a special attention to those who are the weakest.”

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the 3rd Millennium (1997)

The Catholic school *“is open to all who want to share its educational goal inspired by Christian principles”* (Congregatio de Institutione Catholica 2009). Most importantly there is a special place in Catholic schools for those with the greatest need and every effort should be made to encourage their enrolment.

In the light of their mission and rich history Catholic schools have a special care and responsibility for the children of Catholic families- In the present time we are also challenged to take the Good News of Jesus to all who are open to it.

This policy, informed by Church documents and policies of the Diocese, provides guidance to parents and school communities on the enrolment processes to be adopted in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. The associated guiding principles will assist Parish Priests, Principals and parish communities in enacting an enrolment process for those who seek a Catholic Education.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Catholic schools, inspired by the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, strive to be centres of excellence and authentically Catholic.
2. Catholic school communities work to create strong partnerships with the parish/parishes they serve.
3. Catholic schools will ensure that the enrolment process is a welcoming manifestation of Gospel values.
4. In choosing a Catholic school parents and guardians agree to respect and support the Catholic identity of the school, its role in the parish and to acknowledge the importance of Religious Education for their children.
5. Catholic schools have a particular responsibility to provide a Catholic education to children baptised in the Catholic faith and to support parents in honouring the commitments that they made on behalf of their children at Baptism.
6. The Catholic school, whilst established to educate children from Catholic families, will accept enrolments from families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals, principles and practices.
7. Catholic schools recognise and accept the responsibility to welcome and support those who are poor, marginalised and whose need is the greatest.
8. Catholic schools are committed to the inclusion of children with special needs through the processes set out in the Enrolment of Students with Special Needs policy.
9. No child will be denied a Catholic education because of a family's genuine inability to pay school fees.
10. Our diocese aims to provide the choice of Catholic schooling to all those seeking a Catholic education for their children. Enrolment of a child into a Catholic school however cannot be guaranteed. A fair clear and transparent process to determine the priority of enrolment will be implemented.

3. AIMS

This Enrolment Policy has been devised in order to accommodate the needs of families seeking a Catholic education. It aims to:

- 3.1 Set direction for school procedures and practices for enrolling students into Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.
- 3.2 Establish a common, consistent approach in enrolment practices.
- 3.3 Assist the system of Catholic schools to:
 - 3.3.1 provide schooling, where possible, for all Catholic children who seek enrolment
 - 3.3.2 cater for the individual needs of each child equitably within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources
 - 3.3.3 encourage parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools to give support to parish and school life, especially in education in faith.

4. DEFINITIONS

Catholic families are defined as families in which at least one parent/guardian is a Catholic . This presupposes that there will be no discrimination against Catholic children of marriages of mixed faiths or

single supporting parent families, and poses a challenge to schools to take into account the particular needs of such children.

Catholic school is one which operates with the consent of the diocesan Bishop and is one where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

Parish For the purpose of enrolment, the 'parish' is the local parish as defined by its geographical boundaries.

Disability For the purposes of this document, the term "disability" has the meaning as described under the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977 and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992.

"Those with the greatest need" May include those students who are socially, financially, emotionally and/or spiritually disadvantaged and/or at the margins of society.

Enrolment Panel An advisory committee comprising the School Principal/s, or their nominees, and the Parish Priest or their nominee. This panel is convened if required, to meet and consider enrolment issues in the Parish and applications for consideration of special circumstances.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

School authorities manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the rationale and guiding principles articulated in the enrolment policy. Further procedures / guidelines and implementation issues for schools are as follows:

5.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The enrolment process is characterised by family, school, CSO and parish partnerships based on **mutual responsibility**, respect, effective communication and trust. These partnerships need to be demonstrated and strengthened by the enrolment procedure and practice.

The **Parish Priest** in collaboration with the Principal has responsibility in the enrolment process to:

- a) communicate the commencement of enrolment period in parish bulletins
- b) positively link the school with its parish community and participate in the enrolment induction and information session for families
- c) review applications for enrolment with the principal where required
- d) welcome enrolling families and encourage their active involvement in the Catholic community
- e) encourage Catholic families in the parish or parishes to consider enrolment in the school

The **Principal**, in collaboration with the Parish priest has responsibility in the enrolment process to:

- a) ensure that the authentic vision of Catholic education remains the guiding principle in the application of the enrolment policy (see Appendix 1 *Catholic Identity of Diocesan Schools*).
- b) seek to develop a fruitful relationship between the local Catholic parish and school community and those families seeking enrolment.
- c) ensure that the school has practices and processes that reflect the Enrolment Policy rationale and guiding principles
- d) positively discriminate in favour of those whose need is the greatest.
- e) give parents clear information about enrolment in a Catholic School
- f) ensure that the enrolment policy implementation is exercised in a just and compassionate manner
- g) advise school personnel of the underpinning values and Catholic ethos that always has to guide decisions about enrolment and interactions with families

- h) respond to any concerns from families in enrolment matters
- i) ensure no student is refused enrolment because of an inability, as distinct from an unwillingness, of a parent/guardian to meet financial requirements
- j) employ strategies for communicating with the broader community, including Catholic families, about school enrolment policy and processes.
- k) consult with the CSO on matters requiring clarification and be involved in ongoing feedback and evaluation of the enrolment process.
- l) ensure confidentiality and privacy guidelines are followed
- m) communicate with previous or feeder school if required

The **Catholic Schools Office** is responsible to the Bishop in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle to:

- a) develop, monitor and evaluate enrolment policies for Catholic schools.
- b) encourage strong partnerships between priests, parents, principals and staff.
- c) monitor enrolment information submitted by the school and action taken by the school to ensure the Catholic Identity of the school and the basic aims of Catholic education are strongly maintained.
- d) ensure that enrolment criteria are clear and unambiguous; and the enrolment policy complies with all relevant legislation
- e) advise and support schools with the implementation of the Enrolment Policy
- f) ensure that school personnel carry out their responsibilities appropriately in relation to the enrolment policy
- g) fund system wide advertising at the opening of the enrolment period each year

Parents and Guardians enrolling their children in Catholic schools have responsibility to

- a) respect and agree to support Catholic ideals, principles and practices and acknowledge the importance of religious education for their children.
- b) commit themselves to a parish community that works towards the education, formation and pastoral care of young people.
- c) complete the official enrolment form and return it by the due date. (Such action, however, does not guarantee enrolment in the school).
- d) abide by the provisions specified in the enrolment form
- e) recognise and be prepared to meet their financial responsibilities for the ongoing enrolment of the child
- f) disclose any special educational needs of the prospective student
- g) disclose any particular medical, social and/or emotional conditions as well as health care requirements of the prospective student and allow for communication with relevant medical personnel if required.
- h) advise the Principal of any Court Order(s) that may exist in regard to the child and provide a certified copy of the Order(s) for the child's school file
- i) provide the necessary visa documentation relating to an overseas student enrolment

5.2 PROCEDURES

The process of enrolment involves a serious commitment to education on the part of the student, a willingness to assist and support the endeavours of the school on the part of the parents and a responsibility to provide an effective Catholic educational environment, and appropriate motivation and learning experiences on the part of the school. Although the local context, as well as whether the school is primary or secondary may vary the order of enrolment procedures, the following processes will normally occur:

- a) The enrolment period is advertised as being open.
- b) The parents contact the school requesting an official Application for Enrolment Form including the CSO Information Package. Detailed enrolment information and forms are also available on the Catholic Schools Office Website: mn.catholic.edu.au.
- c) A new application for enrolment must be completed for enrolment into Kindergarten and transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7 as well as when moving from a junior to a senior secondary school in the diocese (Year 10 to Year 11).
- d) Parents who make application for enrolment for their child/children are invited for an interview with the Principal or nominee. During this interview the following issues would be discussed:
 - The ethos of the Catholic School
 - The schools relationship to the Parish or the Pastoral Region
 - The primacy of the parents as their child's educators and their relationship to the school
 - Particular characteristics or needs of the child
 - The financial arrangements necessary to maintain a Catholic School
 - The parents' ability to meet financial obligations and where this needs to be varied, discussions as to any variation.
- e) A parent information session will be held for all families who have sought enrolment or for whom an offer of enrolment has been made (secondary schools). This gathering of prospective enrolees with the parish priest or priest of the region, Principals and school staff is an opportunity to enhance understanding of the traditions of the Catholic community: its story, its experiences and its teachings. During this session, curriculum and organisational matters may also be discussed.
- f) Parent acceptance of an enrolment offer involves a serious commitment and explicit acceptance in respect of the ethos of the Catholic School as the environment in which their child will be educated.
- g) A non-refundable fee is required either when lodging the enrolment form or on confirmation of an enrolment offer.
- h) The Principal, in consultation with the Parish or Regional Priest or their nominee, will list applications in order of priority. Depending on enrolment numbers it may be appropriate for the Parish/Region Priest and School Principal to discuss the enrolment of non-Catholic students. This should occur before enrolment is finalised.
- i) An enrolment panel may be convened by the principal/s and/or parish priest to provide advice or to conduct interviews if required. Ordinarily, the panel will comprise the Parish Priest (or his representative) as well as the principal/s. Enrolment panels can be convened for an individual school or a cluster of schools served by the same parish priest. A Principal will chair the panel. In the exercise of its role the panel respects fully the confidentiality of all applicants and any discussion relating to them.
- j) A successful applicant will be contacted and offered a place in the appropriate class. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing. Students may also be placed on a waiting list. Any formalised waiting list is to be prioritised and procedurally fair. Appeals against the decision shall be made firstly to the Principal, then to the appropriate Assistant Director at the Catholic Schools Office.

- k) In some circumstances it may be necessary to put some applications 'on hold' pending finalisation of late (Catholic) arrivals. Those concerned should be advised of the situation and the time when they may expect a definite answer. The advice of the Catholic Schools Office may need to be sought in some circumstances.
- l) Induction sessions for pre-school, Year 7 and Year 11 students are generally held during the second semester of the year preceding the child beginning at a new school. This induction may be over a longer period for those students with learning support needs.

5.3 ENROLMENT CATEGORIES

5.3.1 Kindergarten Enrolments

- a) To be eligible for Kindergarten enrolment in **diocesan schools**, pupils must celebrate their fifth birthday on or before **31 May** of the year in which their parents seek enrolment for them. This varies from NSW government advice which states that the minimum starting age for a child to be enrolled in a NSW school is four years and six months, i.e. a child must turn five by 31 July in the year of starting school.
- b) By law, all children must be enrolled in school by their sixth birthday.

5.3.2 Early Age in Kindergarten

- a) The enrolment of students under the minimum starting age is not recommended. In those situations where, a parent seeks enrolment of a child under the minimum starting age; and the principal agrees to enrolling the child in the school, the approval of the designated Assistant Director is required, before enrolment under the minimum starting age can occur.
- b) An application for Early Age Entry to School will need to be submitted to the Assistant Director by the principal for approval to be sought. Supporting documentation from appropriate health or educational professionals detailing substantive reasons for early school entry must be attached to the application, as well as a letter from the parent(s) requesting an exemption from the policy. It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to provide all appropriate documentation to the principal for submission to the Director for consideration.
- c) Approval for early age enrolment will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

5.3.3 Early Age in Primary or Secondary

- a) The Principal has the discretion to process an early age enrolment (Primary or accelerated Secondary school entry) only if special circumstances exist.
- b) Parents must be informed by the principal or delegate that the school will assess the child's readiness and learning after consultation with the Senior Education Officer (Student Support) at the time of the enrolment application
- c) For individual cases (primary and secondary school entry) where it is believed that the readiness of a child would warrant his or her enrolment at an earlier age than usual, the Principal must consult with the Senior Education Officer (Student Support) to arrange for an individual assessment of the child's readiness and learning needs.
- d) Before agreeing to the early enrolment of the child the Principal must seek written approval from their Assistant Director

5.3.4 Secondary Enrolments

- a) Primary Principals must pass on to Secondary Principals, all relevant academic and financial information of the student. Indebtedness in prior schools needs to be considered to ensure satisfactory arrangements are in place for the management of outstanding fees. Privacy and confidentiality guidelines are to be followed.

- b) Ordinarily, Catholic children who have completed their primary education in Catholic schools will have priority of entry into Catholic secondary schools
- c) Students having enrolled in a Catholic primary school should generally have the opportunity to extend their post primary education to a secondary school within the diocese and where the family has supported the Catholic ethos of the school. Whilst it is highly desirable that all children who have received a Catholic education in the primary grades have access to a Catholic secondary school, this continuity of enrolment cannot be guaranteed in all circumstances.
- d) Special arrangements may be introduced from time to time to assist the maximum provision of enrolments in the diocese.

5.3.5 Students with Disabilities

Provided the school has adequate facilities and resources, no child will be denied Catholic schooling because of a disability. A Student Support Officer from the Catholic Schools Office will be contacted for advice during consideration of an enrolment application for students with special needs.

- a) Principals must refer to the Disability Discrimination Act and the guidelines and the *Enrolment Guidelines for Students with Disabilities (2010)* -Flowchart Appendix 3
- b) A Student Support Officer Student Services must be contacted for advice during consideration of an enrolment application for a student with disabilities.

5.3.6 Overseas Students

- a) Given the current complex regulations which govern the conditions under which students holding visas may seek enrolment into Australian schools, Principals are to refer all applications to their Assistant Director. Enrolments must not be approved until this is done.
- b) In making such referrals Principals must sight the applicant's passport and visa and forward a copy identifying the visa status of the student concerned. The time period specified on a visa is critical and if the student is successfully enrolled the expiry date needs to be tagged on the school administrative system. When this period expires the student may no longer be eligible for education and/or State and Commonwealth recurrent funding. If a student's visa expires the Principal should immediately contact their Assistant Director.
- c) Students seeking enrolment that hold a Student visa (571 visa subclass) will not be offered education in a Maitland/Newcastle Diocesan school. These students are not eligible for State or Commonwealth recurrent funding and are liable for both local fees and for the recovery of government per capita grant subsidy as well as ESL tuition that may be required. Students holding this visa subclass come to Australia expressly to access education and not due to family relocation.
- d) Principals may not guarantee to any person that enrolment of a student holding a visa will be effected upon following their taking up residence in Australia.

N.B. For ESL costs and or support to families contact 'Teaching and Learning Services

5.3.7 Students with a history of violence

The Catholic Schools Office has a responsibility to assess and manage any risk of harm to its staff and students. Section 5A of the NSW Education Act places responsibility on Principals to ascertain whether there is anything in a student's history or circumstances which might pose a risk to the student, other students or staff.

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the student has a history of behaviour that gives rise to a risk at school, Principals should ensure the **Request for student background information and documents** form is forwarded to any previous school. "Reasonable grounds" may include, among other things, responses provided on the application form or by the parents or student in discussion with the school, or information provided by reputable sources such as previous Principals, school counsellors, staff with previous experience

of the student, or staff of other government agencies with first-hand knowledge of the student. From the information provided the Principal needs to ascertain if a Risk Management Assessment is needed. This is **not** intended for all students or an avenue to prevent a student from enrolling.

5.3.8 Conditional Enrolment

The Principal may, in discussion with the student, parents, parish priest, staff and CSO personnel, enrol a student on a conditional basis in light of the student's particular situation and/or needs at the time of or during the student's enrolment.

5.3.9 Exemption from Enrolment at school

By law, all children must be enrolled in school by their sixth birthday. In the case of parents of children of compulsory school age seeking authority not to enrol, this must be considered as an application for exemption from school enrolment. Certificates of Exemption from the compulsory education requirements of Section 25 of the Education Act 1990 may be granted by the Director of Schools when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is in the student's best interests in the short and long term and that alternatives to exemption have been considered. For further information refer to the *Guidelines for Exemption from Attendance at NSW Catholic Systemic Schools*.

Diocesan Directors may grant such exemptions due to:

- age, where a child turns six years on or after 1 October or later in a school year and is engaged in:
 - full time preschool education at an accredited preschool for the remainder of that school year
 - participation in full or part-time accredited preschool programs for students with disabilities leading to enrolment and full time attendance at a government or registered non-government school not later than six months after the child's sixth birthday.
- the health or disability of a child necessitating the continuation of an individual program supported by medical specialists not longer than six months after the child's sixth birthday.

5.4 ENROLMENT PRIORITIES

The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is maintained and promoted so Catholic schools in the diocese give priority in enrolment to students who are baptised Catholics. Schools may also enrol students from other faith traditions whose families demonstrate that they share in the expressed values of the school.

Should distinction in potential enrolments be required, the following priorities for **primary schools** is recommended:

- a) Catholic families of the Parish who are known and involved members of the Parish.
- b) Catholic families of other Parishes who are known and involved members of their own Parish but who have particular needs, which can be best met in this school.
- c) Catholic families of the Parish who participate irregularly in the life and worship of the Parish.
- d) Families committed to a Christian denomination who want a Catholic education and who currently have or have had children within the Catholic system and were totally supportive of the school.
- e) Catholic families who do not participate in Parish life.
- f) Families of other Christian denominations who want a religious education for their children and who regularly participate in their own denominational life.
- g) Families who nominally belong to other religious denominations and who are open to the possibilities offered by a Catholic school.

- h) Families who have no religious affiliation but who are open to the possibilities offered by a Catholic school.

NOTE:

- Siblings of children already enrolled in the school are considered by the same criteria above. However, within each of these categories, a sibling of a child already enrolled will have preference over an applicant who does not have a sibling enrolled in the school.
- A higher priority should be given to applicants with the greatest need within each of these categories.

In the case of enrolments into **secondary schools**, priorities apply and the **order of preference** is as follows:

- a) Catholic families of the associated feeder Parish schools who are known and involved members of those Parishes.
- b) Catholic families of other Parishes who are known and involved members of their own Parish but who have particular educational needs that can be best met in this school and who have been enrolled in Catholic schools outside the core zone. (Students seeking out-of-zone enrolments must provide a summary, with their enrolment form, of the reasons for their request. This will be considered by the Principal and Parish Priest or Enrolment Panel).
- c) Catholic families of the associated feeder Parishes who participate irregularly in the life and worship of those Parishes enrolled in the core feeder zone schools.
- d) Families of other Christian denominations, and who have children enrolled in the core zone feeder schools.
- e) Families of associated feeder Parishes who are known and involved members of their Parishes and who have children enrolled in core zone government or other Christian denomination schools.
- f) Families of the associated Parishes who participate irregularly in the life and worship of the Parish and who have children enrolled in core zone government or other Christian denomination schools.

NOTE:

- Children who have completed their primary education in Catholic schools will generally have priority of entry into Catholic secondary schools.
- Siblings of children already enrolled in the school are considered by the same criteria above. However, within each of these categories, a sibling of a child already enrolled will have preference over an applicant who does not have a sibling enrolled in the school.
- A higher priority should be given to applicants with the greatest need within each of these categories.

5.5 BASIS FOR DISCRETION

Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making with regard to enrolment in a Catholic school. Therefore, while bearing in mind that their first priority is to Catholic parents, Parish Priests and Principals of Catholic schools can exercise some flexibility in enrolment decisions where pastoral discretion may be deemed necessary.

Discretionary decisions could include:

- a) In cases of poverty, disability or special needs a child may, and if possible should, be given a higher position in the priorities listed than would otherwise apply.
- b) Parents' intentions regarding their own and their children's search for education in the faith
- c) Family situations requiring compassion or a special pastoral approach
- d) Family circumstances involving family relocation
- e) Students who have not been able to access a Catholic school previously because of location

5.6 COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS

The diocesan Catholic school is part of a system of schools whose members work in cooperation for the common good of all and recognise that enrolment choices can impact on other schools.

- a. Catholic schools need to advise parents of their co-responsibility for the educational viability of other schools in the diocese. Schools need to make careful planning decisions which have implications for school facilities, staffing, financial security and curriculum. Central to these decisions is predictability and stability in enrolments. Whilst every effort is made to accommodate students at the preferred Catholic school this cannot be guaranteed.
- b. It is expected that Principals would confer with each other when considering applications from families seeking the enrolment of children who are currently attending a Catholic school outside the Parish served by the school. Particular consideration would be given to the pastoral needs of the family and the potential impact on enrolment patterns across the Catholic system.
- c. Parents need to be made aware that consultation will occur between schools with regards to transfer applications. It is recommended that parents inform the Principal of their school of origin of their intention to seek alternative placement.
- d. 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. Previous enrolment trends may assist in this planning.

5.7 TRANSFER BETWEEN SCHOOLS

- a) Any acceptance of a student transfer should occur only after consultation between respective schools.
- b) Any Catholic school accepting an enrolment from another Catholic school or school sector should seek information and obtain copies of student documentation as well as send appropriate advice to the student's previous school.

5.8 ENROLMENT GENERATED STRUCTURAL CHANGES

- a) Proposed changes by schools to current structures and/or educational delivery because of a change to enrolment patterns or practices of a significant nature should be discussed with Assistant Directors and then communicated in writing to the Director of Catholic Schools.
- b) A significant change is considered to be one of, or a combination of, the following:-
 - An increase in enrolments that would impact on the enrolments of other Catholic schools
 - An increase in enrolments that would require capital development to accommodate the change
 - A significant decrease in the number of Catholic enrolments
- c) A minor change is considered to be one that is not likely to impact on the Catholic identity of the school or on enrolments of other Catholic schools, nor require capital development to accommodate the change.
- d) In circumstances where enrolment numbers approach upper limits for class groups the principal acts with concern for parish and system resources.

5.9 APPEALS & DISPUTES ABOUT ENROLMENT DECISIONS PROCESS

- a) Appeals against the decision shall be made firstly to the Principal, then to the appropriate Assistant Director at the Catholic Schools Office.
- b) Procedures and processes in the Complaints Management Policy will be followed.

6. BUDGET

The Catholic Schools Office will fund diocesan advertisements for the opening of school enrolments each year. Costs for producing enrolment material will be funded by the system.

Schools need to allocate funds for their own documentation and individual publicity costs.

7. EVALUATION

The process for evaluating this policy will be ongoing, and adjusted according to participants' comments, or as the need arises. It is expected that this policy will be formally reviewed in 2016.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1: Catholic Identity of Diocesan Schools

It is a cornerstone of each Catholic school that it is demonstrably Catholic in its identity to the school and broader community. Catholic schools by their culture, practices, policies and processes will embody the values and spirit of Christ, and the practices and traditions of the Church. So instead of a required percentage of Catholic students enrolled, schools will need to show evidence they are demonstrably Catholic in their ideals, principles and practices.

In determining the Catholic identity of the school the following indicators or evidence would be considered:

1. The school meets the appropriate requirements for the teaching of religion and the diocesan K-12 Religion Syllabus is implemented
2. The quality of the Religious Education program as commented on in the school review
3. The integration of Catholic beliefs, values and practices into the curriculum and school activities
4. The Catholicity of students at the school
5. School Life is celebrated through Catholic prayer, liturgy and symbol
6. Relationships between staff, students, parents, parish and the wider community give witness to Gospel values such as compassion, justice, respect, inclusion
7. Linkage to the broader missionary activities of the parish(es).
8. The School's physical environment gives witness to its Catholic identity
9. The school community commitment to social justice
10. Opportunities for faith formation and development for members of the school community
11. The promotion of Catholic perspectives in the curriculum
12. Collaboration occurs with parish priest and parish representatives
13. The School is involved in the life of the parish or parishes, diocese and wider community eg.
 - a. Opportunity is provided for involvement in the sacramental life of the church
 - b. School supports parish Sacramental programs
 - c. Regular liaison with and inclusion of Parish Priests in the life of the school
 - d. Availability of Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
 - e. Availability of school resources / facilities to State School Special Religious Education (SRE) and wider parish community
 - f. Participation in Diocesan liturgies
 - g. Involvement in parish youth ministry
 - h. Support for World Youth Day
 - i. Vocations Awareness program / promotion
 - j. Promotion of parish activities in school newsletter
 - k. Parish involvement in school activities/ events
 - l. School presence on Parish Pastoral Council
 - m. School participation at parish Masses
14. The implementation of appropriate pastoral care and student support programs for students/families/staff based on the authentic teachings and values of the Catholic Church.

15. The commitment and example of staff, particularly to the students, in witnessing the values espoused by the Catholic Church and the Diocesan Catholic Education System.
16. School Staff have or are working on meeting the requirements of the Faith Education Accreditation policy
17. The recognition and support of parents in their primary role as educators of their children particularly in regards to the religious development and pastoral care of their children.
18. The recognition of the spiritual and religious background of children from faith traditions other than the Catholic faith.
19. The support of parents in difficulties in meeting financial obligations associated with the school.

Appendix 2: General Enrolment Information

Each year a Circular is sent to schools in preparation for the Enrolment period for the following year. The information is provided below.

The following are the details regarding enrolment procedures for new pupils for the **(date)** school year. While the procedures specifically address enrolments in Kindergarten and Year 7, they have a general application in respect of enrolments in other years.

Acceptance of enrolments must be in accordance with agreed practices on class sizes.

THE ENROLMENT PERIOD

The official enrolment period will be from **(date)** to the end of May **(year)**. Enrolment advertising normally begins with Catholic Schools Week and in **(year)** this begins on **(date)**

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ENROLMENT

Publicity will be given to the enrolment period by

- I. Parish Priests are being asked to make mention of the enrolment period in parish bulletins in **(date)**
- II. Advertisements will appear in all major newspapers circulating in the diocese in the week preceding Catholic Schools Week.
- III. In addition, principals are asked to display enrolment posters and publicise enrolment in any circulars forwarded to parents either before or immediately after Catholic Schools Week.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Catholic primary schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are parish-based. In most cases, they serve the needs of an individual parish community. In some cases, they serve the needs of two or more parish communities.

Sometimes, principals are requested by parents to enrol children who live outside the parish community/communities served by the school. Principals are requested to encourage such parents to enrol their children in their own parish primary school.

Principals are referred to the Process for the Enrolment of Students with Special Needs” - **Enrolment Policy Support Material** for information regarding enrolment of students with special needs.

ENROLMENT IN KINDERGARTEN

The regulations regarding enrolments in Kindergarten are as follows:

- (i) There is one intake into Kindergarten each year and this is at the beginning of first term.
- (ii) To be eligible for enrolment in Kindergarten, pupils must celebrate their fifth birthday on or before May 31 of the year in which their parents seek enrolment for them.
- (iii) Where parents request the enrolment of children who turn five after May 31, an exemption from the age limit is to be preceded by an assessment of the child's readiness for school. This assessment is to be made by the principal, or the principal's delegate, at an interview with parents at which the child is present, prior to a meeting with the Enrolment Committee. Principals remain free to recommend for or against the exemption. However, please be aware that if a child is enrolled in Kindergarten and then has to repeat kindergarten the following year they are NOT funded by the government and the CSO has to pick up the cost.

- (iv) Where parents request enrolment of a child who turns 5 after July 31, procedures as stated in diocesan policy, *"The Education of Gifted & Talented Students for Early Enrolment"*, should be followed.

ACTION REGARDING ENROLMENTS

Principals of primary schools are asked to take the following action, where appropriate:

- (i) Advise the Parish Priest of details of enrolment procedures for Kindergarten pupils for **(year)** so that they can be included in parish bulletins beginning on the **(date)** weekends.
- (ii) Distribute enrolment forms for Year 7 **(year)** to parents of Year 6 pupils in the second last or last week of **Term 1**.
- (iii) Receive all completed Year 7 enrolment forms, including any out-of-zone applications and forward them to the **principal of the appropriate zoned high school** as soon as possible. It is advisable for forms to be forwarded to the relevant high school during the **first few weeks of Term 2**.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SPECIAL NOTE: The enrolment information given below does not apply to Year 6 students at St. Catherine's Catholic College, Singleton who are moving to Year 7.

ENROLMENT IN YEAR 7

- (i) **All** applications for enrolment in Year 7 are received by the principal of the **zoned** high school (except where multiple rights exist, in which case they are forwarded to the school applied for as in (iii) and (iv) below) for processing.
- (ii) Out-of-zone applications are dealt with as detailed in the procedures noted in this document.
- (iii) Parents of children in Year 6 at Catholic primary schools receive enrolment forms from the primary school principal. Completed forms are returned to the primary school principal who forwards them as in (i) above.
- (iv) Parents of children in Year 6 at Government and other primary schools are able to obtain enrolment forms from the Catholic Schools Office or from principals of Catholic secondary schools. These forms are forwarded, upon completion, to the zoned school.
- (v) Each school develops processes to inform parents of the receipt of the application and the decision regarding acceptance. Successful applicants are advised by the school principal of procedures regarding school requirements for the following year.
- (vi) Enrolments are processed in accordance with the provisions of the *Enrolment Policy*. Enrolment priorities are established in *Section 5.4* and the basis for discretion in *Section 5.5* of the policy.
- (vii) The number of Year 7 enrolments accepted will form the basis of the school's Teaching Staff Establishment for Year 7. These enrolments are regularly monitored by the CSO Staffing Committee to ensure accuracy with staffing provisions for the following year.

NOTE:

Experience over recent years indicates the need for great care in the process of accepting enrolments, and the timing of such acceptances. Principals need to liaise closely with their Assistant Director in these matters.

ENROLMENTS IN YEARS 8 TO 12

- (i) Schools enrol new Catholic students to Years 8 to 12 provided the students live within the school's zone and the Baptismal Certificate accompanies the enrolment form.
- (ii) Decisions regarding enrolments are in accordance with the provisions of the *Enrolment Policy*. Enrolment priorities are established in *Section 5.4* and the basis for discretion in *Section 5.5* of the policy.

ENROLMENT IN YEAR 11, ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S COLLEGE, HAMILTON

- (i) Parents of students attending St Pius X, Adamstown, St Mary's, Gateshead and San Clemente, Mayfield will receive an application form directly from St Francis Xavier's College.
- (ii) Application forms for students attending any other secondary school are available either from St Francis Xavier's College or the Catholic Schools Office.

ENROLMENT IN YEAR 11, ST MARY'S ALL SAINTS COLLEGE CAMPUS MAITLAND

- (i) Parents of students attending St. Joseph's Campus ASC and, St. Peter's Campus ASC will receive an internal All Saints College application form from St Mary's Campus.
- (ii) Application forms for students attending any other secondary school are available either from All Saints College, St Mary's Campus or the Catholic Schools Office.

OUT-OF-ZONE ENROLMENTS

- (i) The concept of zoning is still in place.
- (ii) Based on feeder zone pool numbers and/or physical restraints, an agreed **maximum enrolment entry number** may be established.
- (iii) Out-of-Zone enrolments are directed initially to the zoned school for consideration. Contact is to be made with the principal of the applied-for school regarding pressures on that school's enrolments. If given approval they will be passed on to the applied-for school for consideration.
- (iv) Care needs to be taken with out-of-zone applications so that early acceptances do not affect the placement of students in zoned schools. Principals should also indicate a date beyond which in-zone applications will not receive preferential placement.

The following zoning arrangements will operate for (YEAR):***ST. JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL, ABERDEEN***

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-12, from the areas of Denman, Merriwa, Muswellbrook Scone and Murrurundi.

ST. PIUS X HIGH SCHOOL, ADAMSTOWN

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-10, from the areas of Adamstown, Broadmeadow, Hamilton, Kotara South, Lambton, Newcastle, New Lambton, Wallsend and Shortland and defined by the zone primary schools.

ST. PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL, BOORAGUL

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-12, from the areas of Boolaroo-Warners Bay, Cardiff, Glendale/West Wallsend, Morisset, Toronto, Booragul and defined by the zone primary schools.

ST. MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, GATESHEAD

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-10, from the areas of Belmont, Boolaroo-Warners Bay, Charlestown, Gateshead, Windale and Swansea and defined by the zone primary schools.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S COLLEGE, HAMILTON

Accepts girls and boys for Years 11-12 from Year 10 from St. Pius X H.S., Adamstown, St Mary's H.S., Gateshead and San Clemente H.S., Mayfield.

ALL SAINTS COLLEGE, ST. JOSEPH'S CAMPUS, LOCHINVAR

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-10, from the areas of Branxton (where transport to Lochinvar is more convenient than it is to Singleton), Cessnock, Lochinvar and Rutherford.

ALL SAINTS COLLEGE, ST. MARY'S CAMPUS, MAITLAND

Accepts girls and boys, Years 11-12, from the areas of Beresfield, Dungog, Gresford, East Maitland, Kurri Kurri, Maitland, Branxton, Cessnock, Lochinvar and Rutherford.

ALL SAINTS COLLEGE, ST. PETER'S CAMPUS, MAITLAND

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-10, from the areas of Beresfield, Dungog, Gresford, East Maitland, Kurri Kurri, and Maitland. The geographic boundary for Raymond Terrace is west of the Hunter River.

SAN CLEMENTE HIGH SCHOOL, MAYFIELD

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-10, from the areas of Mayfield/ Mayfield West, Nelson Bay, Raymond Terrace, Stockton, Wallsend/Shortland and Waratah. The geographic boundary for Raymond Terrace is east of the Hunter River.

ST. CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE K-12, SINGLETON

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-12, from the areas of Branxton (where transport is more convenient than it is to Lochinvar) and girls and boys Year K-12 from the parish of Singleton.

ST. CLARES' HIGH SCHOOL, TAREE

Accepts girls and boys, Years 7-12, from the areas of Bulahdelah, Forster- Tuncurry, Gloucester/Krambach, Taree and Wingham.

APPLICATION FORM

- (i) The standard **APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL ENROLMENT** form should be used. All applications for enrolment from Kindergarten to Year 12 are to be on this standard form.
- (ii) In the case of non-Catholic students from Government schools seeking enrolment, and students seeking out-of-zone enrolments, a summary of the reasons for the request should be included.

Documents required with application

- Birth Certificate or identity documents
- Baptismal Certificate (unless the student is currently enrolled in a diocesan school).
- Immunisation history statement (only required for students enrolling in primary schools for the first time)
- Proof of student's residential address
- Copies of any family law or other relevant court orders (if applicable)

If the child is not a permanent resident:

- Passport or travel documentation
- Current visa and previous visas (if applicable)

In addition if the child is a temporary visa holder:

- Authority to enrol issued by the Temporary Visa Holders program
- Evidence of the visa the student has applied for (if the student holds a bridging visa)

ENROLMENT OF OVERSEAS STUDENTS

- (i) Given the current complex regulations which govern the conditions under which overseas students may seek enrolment into Australian schools principals are to refer all such applications to the Director's Office. Enrolments must not be approved until this is done.
- (ii) In making such referrals principals must sight the applicant's passport and forward a photocopy identifying the appropriate visa status under which the applicant is permitted to enter Australia. The time period specified on a visa is critical and students must not be enrolled for any period not specifically included on a visa.
- (iii) Principals may not guarantee to any person that enrolment of an overseas student will be effected upon their taking up residence in Australia.

FEE CLEARANCE

In moving from one diocesan school to another a fee clearance with the previous school is sought. Enrolments may proceed once the enrolling Principal is assured that satisfactory arrangements are in place for the management of outstanding fees. Parents are to be advised well in advance if the finalisation of the child's enrolment is pending a matter related to non-payment of fees.

ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

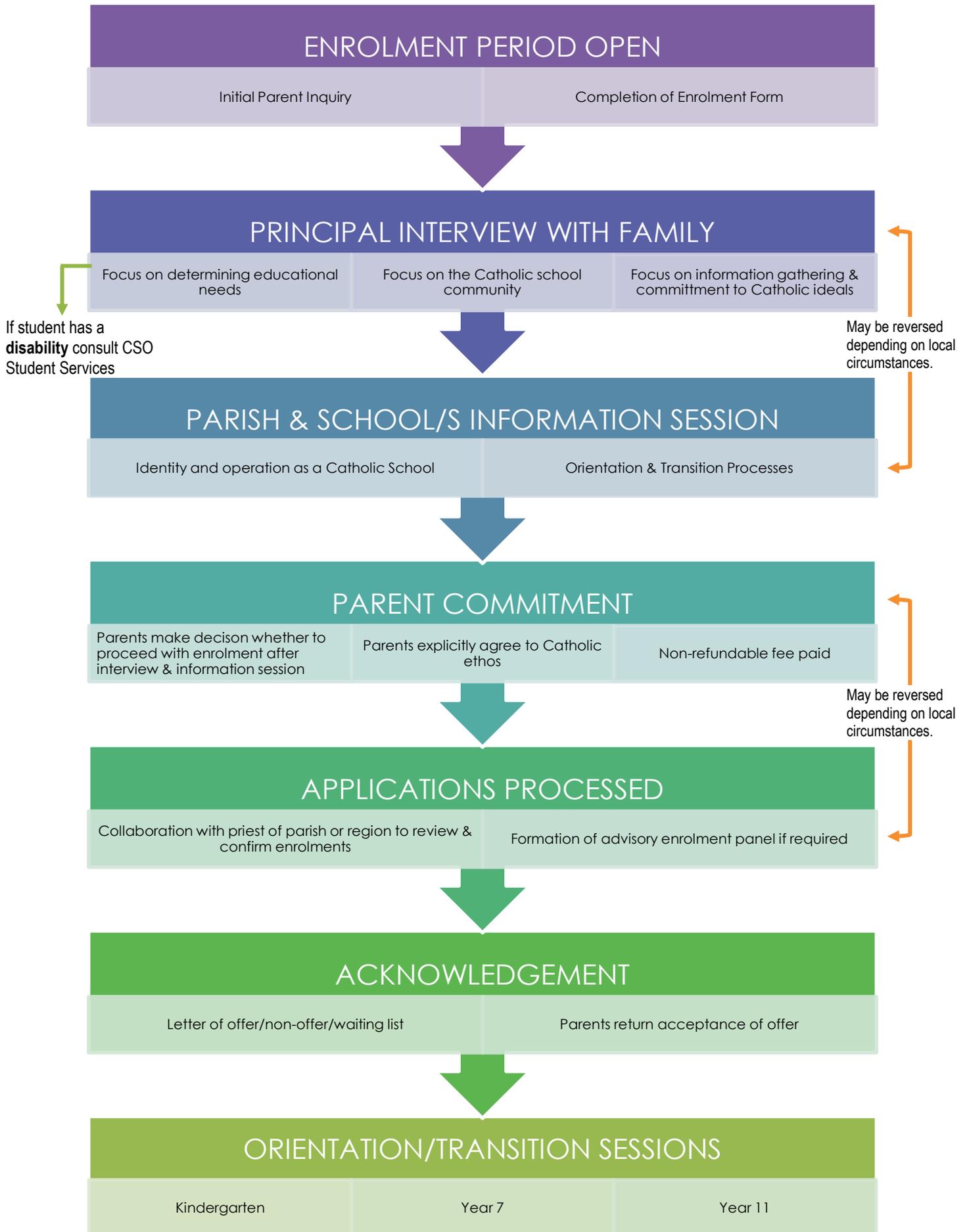
For enrolment of students with Special Needs, refer to the '*Guidelines for Enrolment of Students with Disabilities and/or Special Needs (Revised 2010)*'. This document outlines the process to be followed when enrolling students with Special Needs. All applications must be first assessed by members of Teaching and Learning Services. This process must be followed once all general enrolment criteria, as stated in the Enrolment Policy, have been met.

GUIDELINES FOR EARLY ENTRY AND ENROLMENT OF GIFTED & TALENTED STUDENTS

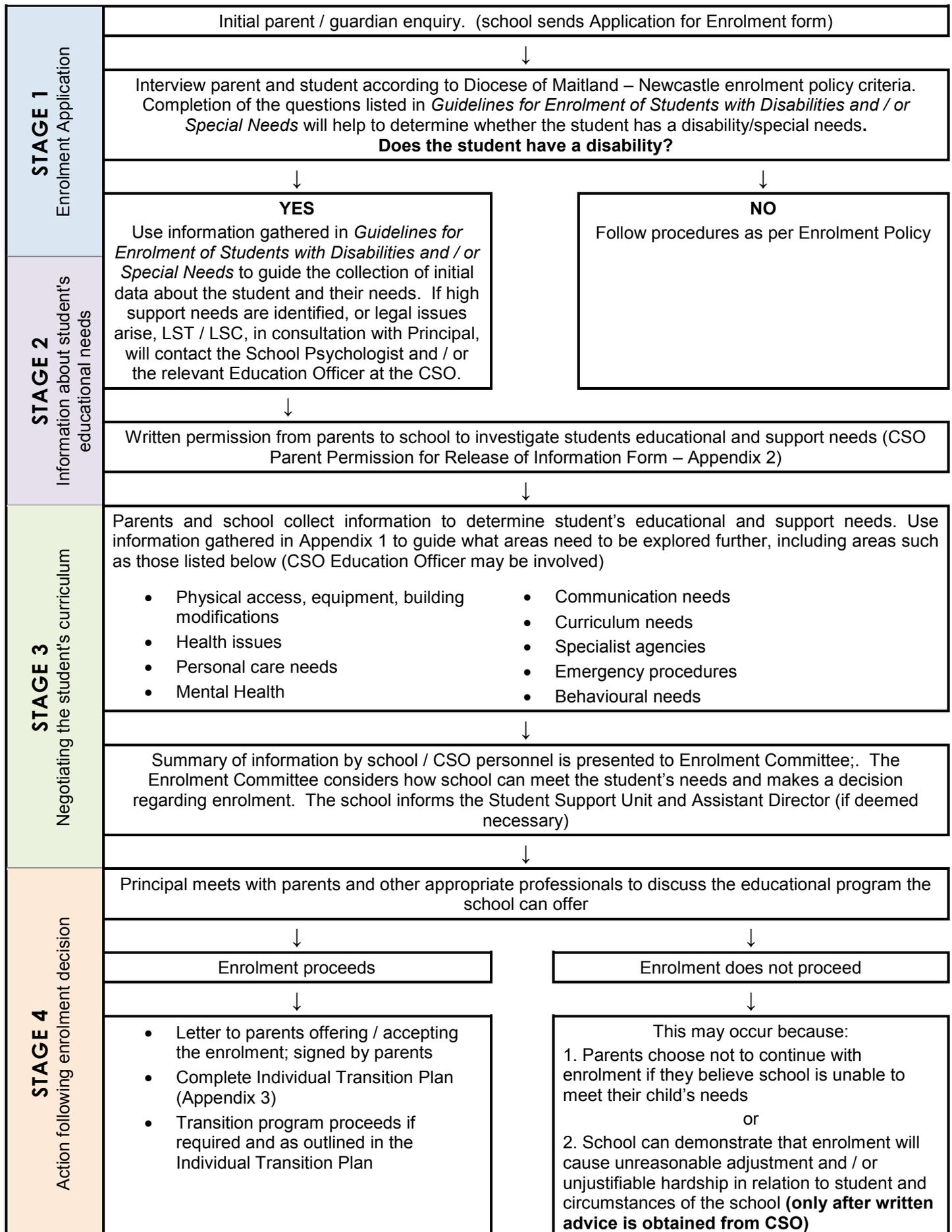
Refer to the Diocesan Policy, *Gifted and Talented K-12 Policy (May 2004)*.

Appendix 3: Enrolment Application Process

The local context, as well as whether the school is primary or secondary may vary the order of enrolment procedures



Appendix 4: Enrolment Guidelines & Transition for Students with a Disability



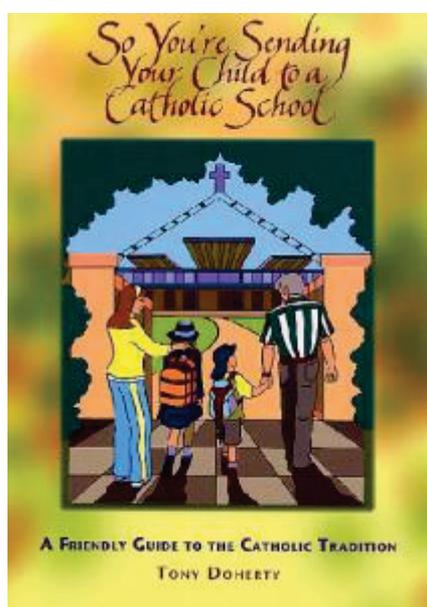
Appendix 5: Resources for families enrolling children in Catholic schools

Resources for parents who are planning to send their children to a Catholic - both those entering the system for the first time at primary or secondary level and those who, beyond the school, have little contact with the wider Church community can be of great assistance in the enrolment process.

High quality and user friendly information and induction can help families appreciate a little better the culture they are coming into, what makes the Catholic school the place that it is, and something of the vision that caused it to be established in the first place.

BOOKS

“So You’re Sending Your Child to a Catholic School”: Fr Tony Doherty is designed to be a friendly and gentle introduction to a few of the beliefs and values which make Catholics tick. This book provides a simple overview for people coming in touch with the Church, perhaps for the first time, or refreshing their acquaintance with Catholic tradition.



Appendix 6: Urgent Request for Student Background Information and Documents



CONFIDENTIAL

To be completed by the Principal of the school at which the student is seeking to enrol

From the Principal: _____

To the Principal: _____

Dear Colleague,

The student whose name and date of birth appear below has sought to enrol at this school.

Student's name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Sex: Male

Female

To assist us to conduct a risk assessment in the context of enrolment, I would appreciate all relevant and available information about the student's behaviour and disciplinary history and would be obliged if you would arrange for that information to be forwarded to me. This should include the student's enrolment details, risk assessments undertaken relating to the student, behaviour management or disciplinary processes undertaken with the school, any reports of concerns raised by classroom teachers, notes of the student welfare committee etc.

If there are particular aspects of this student's behaviour of which I should be aware, please call me directly on telephone number _____

Direct Number: _____

Fax Return: _____

To be completed by the Principal of the student's former school.

Please indicate in each of the boxes **Y**(yes) or **N** (no) or **O** if unsure

To be managed at school this student required behaviour support. Please forward a copy of the relevant program.

This student has a documented history of violence or use of illicit drugs or legal drugs in a manner not prescribed or use of alcohol.

This student was suspended/expelled for violence, threats of violence or possession on school premises of a weapon or implement used or intended to cause harm

Information on this student, including details of any safety concerns, will be posted to you in an envelope marked *Personal and Confidential* by

_____/_____/_____/_____

Confidentiality Warning

The confidentiality of the information contained in this message is protected and is intended for the principal named above. If you are not the named recipient you must not copy, distribute, take any action reliant on or disclose any details in this message to any other person or organisation. Unauthorised disclosure or misuse of the confidential information obtained as a result of mistaken transmission may incur a liability for criminal penalty. Please notify the sender if you have received this message in error.

Please respond by return email