

APPLICABLE TO	All Diocesan Schools
DOCUMENT OWNER	Director of Schools
APPROVAL DATE	October 2021
APPROVED BY	CSO Leadership Team
SCHOOL ACTIONS	System policy: Schools are to ensure their practices are consistent with this policy. A local policy is not required.
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	May 2018
NEXT REVIEW DATE	2024
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Enrolment Policy and Procedure 2021

## Purpose

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle welcome many students from overseas countries whose families make their home in the Hunter region. These visa-holding students may settle here permanently, on a temporary basis for an extended time or alternatively for a short stay (i.e. visitor or tourist visa subclasses). They are welcome to seek enrolment into Catholic schools.

This policy aims to establish a common understanding of the major visa subclass categories and the enrolment opportunities and limitations that may exist.

## Policy Statement

This policy will:

- Build a more comprehensive understanding at school level of various visa categories and expectations regarding student enrolment.
- Inform schools of their responsibilities when students on visas present at school for enrolment.

## Definitions

### Permanent Resident Visa

Eligible for State and Commonwealth Government recurrent funding. Non-Australian citizens who have permanent residency status will have the word "resident" printed between the visa class and subclass indicators.

### Temporary Resident Visa

May be eligible for State and Commonwealth recurrent funding. Temporary resident visas permit the holder to stay in Australia for a variety of purposes, including business, family matters and medical reasons. These visas indicate an expiry date.

### Bridging Visa

A bridging visa is granted to temporary visa holders who have applied to change their substantive visa. There are no guarantees, however, that these visa holders will be granted the status for which they have applied. Students holding a bridging visa may or may not be eligible for State and Commonwealth recurrent funding. Eligibility is determined by the subclass of the substantive visa.

**Visitor/Tourist Visa**

Not eligible for State and Commonwealth recurrent funding. These visas allow for short stays within Australian schools. Thirteen (13) weeks of education is only available to this visa holder if enrolment is approved. A letter indicating the beginning and end date of enrolment must be provided by the school before entry.

**Student (Subclass 500) Visa**

The category 'Overseas Student' pertains only to subclass 500. All other categories are classified as 'students on visas'. Overseas students come to Australia, with or without parents/guardians, to access education. They are not eligible for State or Commonwealth recurrent funding. **Students on a subclass 500 visa are INELIGIBLE for enrolment into schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.**

**Exchange Students**

Exchange students are school age students participating in a Student Exchange Program registered by the State or Territory authority. They are treated differently to 'Overseas Students'.

## Scope

This policy and the associated procedures documents apply to all schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Schools are required to seek clarification of enrolment eligibility from the Catholic Schools Office (i.e. the Assistant Director supporting the school) when students present to school holding a visa.

## Guiding Principles

Currently, all visa subclass categories but one may lead to successful enrolment into a diocesan school (overseas students on a student visa subclass 500 who come to Australia to access the education systems are, at this point in time, ineligible for enrolment).

The most common categories are:

- Bridging (a transitional visa when the substantive visa has expired and another has been applied for but not received or approved)
- Permanent resident
- Business/investor/executive
- Spouse/marriage/emergency
- Work/occupation/humanitarian/refugee
- Student (primarily to access education – ineligible for systemic schools)
- Visitor/Tourist
- Temporary protection
- Other visas of a specific nature

The majority of these permanent or temporary categories will allow students access to education in diocesan schools with local fees payable only.

Some temporary visas (e.g. visitor/tourist) allow for education for a limited period of time – 13 weeks; while others allow for a longer period of between 3 to 5 years.

## Responsibilities

**Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Seeking advice and approval from the Director's Unit at the Catholic Schools Office before offering enrolment to families of students with a visa.

- Being aware that students holding a student visa subclass 500 are not eligible for enrolment at diocesan schools.

### **Director's Unit**

The CSO's contact person for students on visas is responsible for:

- Ensuring that any visa presented is validated as current and eligible for enrolment via the Department of Immigration & Border Protection, Visa Entitlement Verification Online.
- Working closely with schools where clarification of eligibility is required. Meetings with the Principal and/or parents may also be required.

## **Legislative/Professional Guidelines**

*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*