

# Enrolment Policy



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## 1.0 Rationale

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

“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 today continue the tradition of looking to Catholic schools for the education of their children. The student population broadly reflects the diversity of Australian life and culture across the Diocese, with enrolment of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, from indigenous cultures, and students with exceptional ability, students with disability and additional needs.

CEDWW 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.

*CEDWW Vision Statement:*

Inspired by the message and actions of Jesus Christ we nurture excellence as a Community of Learners, so all may flourish in the fullness of their humanity.

## 2.0 Guiding Principles

- 2.1. Embedded within the parish community, the school is committed to the development of the whole person and shares with the parish in the evangelising mission of the Church.
- 2.2. CEDWW 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 collaboration between the parish priest and the school.
- 2.4. The nature of systemic school 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 a CEDWW 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. CEDWW 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. CEDWW 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 of 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. CEDWW schools commit to providing educational opportunities for indigenous students through the provision of fee relief, as required by families. Indigenous families may apply for enrolment on the basis of 'special pastoral circumstances'.
- 2.11. Wherever feasible, students who attend a CEDWW 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. CEDWW schools are open to all Catholic families, 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. CEDWW schools have a co-responsibility to ensure a sustainable level of enrolments for each school within the Diocesan system, so as to maximise the opportunity for Catholic families to access Catholic schools.

### **3.0 Policy**

All systemic Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga will apply the Guiding Principles, Procedures and Enrolment Criteria outlined in this policy.

- 3.1. Each school must have an Enrolment Committee (should this be a sub-committee of the School Council) to provide advice to the Principal during major enrolment intake periods).
- 3.2. 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.

- 3.3. The membership of the Enrolment Committee will be broadly representative of key stakeholder groups in the school.
- 3.4. The parish priest will be provided with the opportunity to be a full participant in all enrolment decisions, through membership of the Enrolment Committee.
- 3.5. All schools undertake to enrol prospective students within the prescribed CEDWW enrolment period as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- 3.6. 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 3.12.
- 3.7. On enrolment, all parents are required to give an undertaking that they will be jointly & severally responsible to meet 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 CEDWW School Fee Management Policy.
- 3.8. 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.
- 3.9. When enrolling a student with disability and additional needs, the Principal, in consultation with appropriate personnel is required to follow the Ascertainment Process for the Enrolment of Students with Diverse Learning Needs.
- 3.10. If a student on a visa seeks enrolment, the Principal and CEDWW personnel must validate requirements.
- 3.11. The CEDWW Application for Enrolment form, Offer of Enrolment and Acceptance for return are mandatory for use in all CEDWW schools in its entirety and without alteration.

3.12. **Enrolment Criteria: Systemic Primary Schools & Secondary Schools**

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

- 3.12.1. Baptised Catholic children of regularly worshipping Catholic families with strong demonstrable links to the designated Catholic parish or parishes. For secondary colleges, students currently enrolled in CEDWW Primary schools receive priority for enrolment in a secondary college.
- 3.12.2. Siblings of children already attending the school whose families have demonstrated ongoing support for the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3.12.3. 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.
- 3.12.4. Children of Catholic families not covered above, or who are outside the local designated Catholic parish.
- 3.12.5. Children of regularly worshipping families from other Christian denominations.
- 3.12.6. Children of families from other faith traditions 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 Director of Catholic Education 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 CEDWW 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 Albury and Wagga schools where demand may exceed 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 Ascertainment Process must be completed by the Principal, in consultation with appropriate personnel from CEDWW.
- 4.1.7. Using the Ascertainment Process, 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 CEDWW schools regarding a student's academic, pastoral, wellbeing, disability and additional needs including transitioning students' Personalised Plans.
- 4.1.9. The Principal (or their delegate) should verify that families already enrolled in CEDWW schools are up-to-date with meeting their fee commitments before accepting the enrolment of siblings.

### 4.2. Responsibility of Enrolment Committee

- 4.2.1 The composition of the enrolment committee is determined by the Principal, but will usually consist of one executive staff member to chair the panel and at least one teaching staff member nominated by the principal, the Principal, the Parish Priest and one school community member, nominated by the school's Parent Advisory council. The school's community member and all panel members should be asked to confirm they do not have any conflict of interest when considering the applications for enrolment.

- 4.2.2 It is preferable that the principal is not the chair of the Committee, so that appeals in the first instance can be considered by the principal.
- 4.2.3 Some schools may be unable to create a full panel due to issues such as remote location and/or staff numbers are small. I. The principal will determine the most equitable method of assessing enrolment applications in partnership with the System Performance Leader CEDWW.
- 4.2.4 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
- 4.2.5 The panel should consider all enrolment applications in a timely manner. The Committee must record all decisions and keep minutes of meetings which are to be available on request by the System Performance Leader CEDWW. The chairperson's role is to ensure that the established criteria are applied equitably to all applicants. The school will notify families of the result of their application in a timely manner. Families may request a written explanation of the decisions of the Committee.

#### 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 ethos 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**

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.

- 5.1. 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 written approval of the Director of Catholic Education.
- 5.2. In circumstances where **all** attempts to collect outstanding school fees have been exhausted, the Assistant Director - Corporate Services may recommend to the Director of Catholic Education that a student/s ongoing enrolment at CEDWW Schools be terminated in the following school year in accordance with the School Fee Management Policy.

## 6.0 Catholic Education

For the purpose of this document, education in systemic Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga will be compliant with all applicable legislation (e.g. the Education Act (1990) NSW).

By law students must commence school before they turn six years of age. Children can start Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn 5, on or before 31 July that year. All students must complete Year 10, or be 17 years old before they leave school.

### Catholic Families

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.

#### 6.1. CEDWW Enrolment Period

- 6.1.1. WW Secondary colleges will enrol prospective students in the year preceding the intended enrolment and prior to the commencement of a transition program.
- 6.1.2. WW Primary schools will enrol prospective students in the year preceding the intended enrolment and prior to the commencement of a transition program.

#### 6.2. Exceptional ability, disability, complex social and emotional needs or other additional needs

- 6.2.1. 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.
- 6.2.2. The term disability refers to students who meet the criteria as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

#### 6.3. Ascertainment Process for Students with Disability

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 personnel

#### 6.4. Parish Community

- 6.4.1. 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.
- 6.4.2. Parish community include 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.

#### **6.5. 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.

#### **6.6. K-12 Pathways**

In the Wagga Wagga Diocese , there are a number of geographically linked Parish Primary and Parish Secondary schools, that operate as a kindergarten to Year 12 Pathways so as to provide students with an enriched, integrated educational and faith development experience. Once enrolled at the primary school, students receive priority for enrolment in the Secondary College.

#### **6.7. Designated Feeder Parish/Feeder Schools**

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 Diocese. Therefore, the five Catholic systemic Secondary colleges have strong pastoral links to a number of parishes and primary schools in their local areas.

#### **6.8. Application of Secondary Enrolment Criteria**

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

#### **Related policies:**

- Complaints Handling Policy
- School Fee Management Policy

### **7.0 Supporting documents**

- Zoning Map for Albury and Wagga Primary Schools - (Currently under development)
- Ascertainment Process (Currently under development)

### **8.0 Appendices**

### **9.0 Classification**