

Q&A

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY PARENTS
ABOUT CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN BROKEN BAY



Community of Catholic Schools
Diocese of Broken Bay

ENROLLING NOW FOR 2018 AND BEYOND



The Diocese of Broken Bay is one of three dioceses within the Sydney metropolitan area. It covers Sydney's North Shore, Northern Beaches and Central Coast regions. Its name was chosen because Broken Bay, the mouth of the Hawkesbury River, is the heart of the Diocese. The map shows the schools within Broken Bay.

There are 53 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay. Of these, 44 are administered by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). They are sometimes referred to as systemic schools. The other nine schools are owned and operated by Religious Institutes.

This publication covers the arrangements in Catholic systemic schools, those owned and administered by the Diocese. Specific information about Catholic congregationally owned schools should be requested from those schools.

Why choose a Catholic School?

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN A MAJOR PART OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION FOR NEARLY 200 YEARS. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ENROL APPROXIMATELY 20 PER CENT OF AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS, PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION IN A FAITH CENTRED ENVIRONMENT.



Schools that form part of the Community of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay are staffed by highly qualified and professional teachers who cater to the diverse learning needs of our students.

In addition to striving for the highest educational outcomes for every student, our schools also seek to provide opportunities for students to grow in relationship with God in Christ, which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others.

In fostering a strong sense of community, our schools typically welcome new families through parent information nights, student orientation days and transitional programs.

Catholic schools are integral parts of the parish or parishes that they serve and families are encouraged to belong to their local parishes.

Our schools have well-equipped library/resource centres and utilise the latest technology to engage students in their learning.

Are there any selective Catholic schools?

Our schools provide a comprehensive education so all students experience an equally high standard of instruction. Hence, there are no selective schools within the Diocese. Where a child shows particular aptitude or talent, schools will seek to develop that talent through enrichment programs or acceleration, as appropriate.



How do I enrol my child?

ALL CATHOLIC SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS IN BROKEN BAY ARE INDIVIDUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN ENROLMENTS.

If you are interested in enrolling your child you need to contact the school principal or enrolment secretary, who will advise you of the procedures to follow.

Each school has an enrolment committee which includes the principal and parish priest. Parents are usually interviewed by the principal and/or member of the enrolment committee before the enrolment is finalised.

What documents are required?

Documents needed at the interview include birth and baptismal certificates, immunisation records, a reference from your parish priest, and passport if you are newly arrived in Australia.

Secondary schools may also require academic results or reports from the previous school.

When do enrolments commence?

The enrolment period runs from March to May every year, but parents may apply to enrol their children at any time.

It is advisable to enrol your child as early as possible in the year before your child commences primary school. Children enrolling in Kindergarten must reach age 5 by 31 July in the year of commencing school. By law, students must commence school before they turn six years of age.

For secondary schools the enrolment period may commence when students are in Year 5. Enrolment in a Catholic secondary school is regarded as a new enrolment.



Who can attend a Catholic School?

Catholic schools consider enrolment of all school aged children, but priority in enrolment will be given in this order to:

- Children whose Catholic families are known and involved members of the parish
- Children whose Catholic families express an intention to commit to Catholic discipleship and the worshipping parish community
- Children whose Catholic families express an understanding of and commitment to the educational and religious life of the school
- Children whose families of other Christian traditions are known and involved members of their worshipping community and express an understanding of and commitment to the educational and religious life of the school
- Children whose families express an understanding of and commitment to the educational and religious life of the school.





What curriculum is offered in Catholic schools?


Our Catholic schools offer a diverse curriculum. Expectations of achievement and conduct are high. With a strong focus on the individual, a broad curriculum caters for a wide range of interests and abilities.

All primary and secondary schools in the Broken Bay Diocesan School System implement NSW Education Standards Authority syllabuses. This means that Catholic schools offer the same curriculum as government and independent schools in NSW. In addition, Studies of Religion or Catholic Studies in Stage 6, and Religious Education (up to Stage 5) are undertaken as part of every student's course of study.

In primary schools the curriculum is divided into six Key Learning Areas (KLAs): English,

Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE), Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). All KLAs are taught in accordance with NSW Education Standards Authority requirements.

Secondary schools offer a broad choice of subjects, including Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses. Subject selection processes are designed to maximise student choice and cater for students' needs. Secondary schools also offer a range of extra-curricular activities including debating and public speaking, chess, Duke of Edinburgh Award, mock trial, music, eisteddfods, a wide range of sports and involvement in community action and social justice groups.



What part does Religious Education play in the curriculum?

Religious Education is at the heart of Catholic education. The Catholic worldview informs and influences all learning in the school and is integrated throughout the primary and secondary curriculum.

Each of our schools provides a range of learning experiences that invite students to grow in relationship with God through Jesus and to find meaning and purpose in life through service of others.

In the classroom, students follow the Religious Education Curriculum approved by the Bishop of Broken Bay.

Students also participate in the liturgical and prayer life of the school, retreats and social justice initiatives. Working in partnership with our parishes, Broken Bay Catholic schools support families in their role as the first educators in faith.

How is positive student behaviour encouraged and supported?

Catholic schools expect high standards of student behaviour and appearance. All schools have policies relating to behaviour management and anti-bullying which are guided by the Diocese of Broken Bay Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning. These policies and their associated programs are based firmly on Catholic values and focus on building quality relationships and fostering resilience.

School expectations, standards and procedures are outlined within these policies addressing matters such as school rules, responsibilities, reward systems, support structures, programs and services.

Each school is committed to creating a safe and supportive learning environment for its students, staff and families.

What support is there for students with special needs?

The first point of contact for enrolment of students with special needs into a Catholic school is the principal of the school in which you wish to enrol.

Parents or caregivers will be involved in discussions with the principal about the student's special needs. The school will consult with the family to establish the level of adjustments required to support the student for access and participation.

The CSO offers various special support services for students with special needs, including:

- Consultation services to class teachers to assist them in the provision of reasonable adjustments for students with special needs
- Services to students with hearing and vision impairment
- Special education services to assist schools develop and implement an inclusive model of support for students with disabilities
- Transition planning support for students with disabilities

A variety of support is also offered to cater for students of different abilities, especially gifted and talented students.

How are Aboriginal students and their families supported?

The CSO considers the educational, cultural and social needs of Aboriginal students to be of critical importance. The numbers of Aboriginal students in our schools continues to increase, and the learning outcomes of the students are strong. The CSO offers support and assistance to Aboriginal students and their parents in a range of ways through the Aboriginal Education Officer and Aboriginal Education Workers. The Aboriginal Education Workers are based in several schools on the Central Coast to support Aboriginal students to improve their educational outcomes and to work in partnership with teachers, parents and community to ensure they achieve their full potential. The Aboriginal Education Officer is also available to support and advise parents of Aboriginal students on school related issues including enrolments and students experiencing educational or social difficulties.



What about students from non-English speaking backgrounds?

Schools with a significant number of students from language backgrounds other than English are usually given a staffing allocation to support the engagement of a teacher with specific TESOL training (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). These teachers then work closely with classroom teachers to develop programs and teaching strategies that directly respond to the needs of students.

Newly arrived permanent resident students needing intensive English support may be eligible for such support through the ESL-NA program, funded by the Australian government.

Are parents encouraged to become involved?

Catholic schools support families in their role as the first educators in faith and actively encourage parents to become engaged in their children's education.

Parents & Friends Associations, Broken Bay Catholic School Parents (CSP) and school advisory groups are vehicles for meaningful parent engagement. These teams allow dialogue, consultation and engagement with a broad range of parents within the school and diocesan community.

The CSP is the official parent body recognised by the Bishop and CSO. The CSP plays a key role in representing the interests of parents of all children attending Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay.

Further information: www.brokenbayparentcouncil.com

School Fees

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS RECEIVE FUNDING FROM BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARENTS VIA THE PAYMENT OF SCHOOL FEES. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AIM TO KEEP THEIR FEES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE AND CAN PROVIDE FLEXIBLE PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR FAMILIES.

Catholic schools have a commitment to support Catholic families who wish to access schooling for their children. Importantly, no student who meets the enrolment criteria is denied enrolment in a Catholic school purely on the basis of a genuine inability to pay fees and other charges.

The Commonwealth Australian Education Act 2013 includes 'Capacity to Contribute' rules which school systems must follow in relation to setting school fees. As a result, in 2015 the Diocese of Broken Bay introduced differential categories of tuition fees determined by the socio-economic status (SES) of the school community. This fee policy setting continues in 2017. There are three levels of annual fees:

1. ANNUAL DIOCESAN TUITION FEES

Annual tuition fees for children attending Catholic systemic schools are set by the Diocesan Schools Finance Committee, who are committed to keeping fees to a minimum. Tuition fees represent the difference between government funding and the cost of educating children in Catholic schools. Along with contributing to salary costs the tuition fee covers the cost of NAPLAN tests for students in Years 7 and 9, copyright fees, student accident insurance for school activities, internet access, download and network costs.

YEAR	SCHOOL CATEGORY			
	A*	B*	C*	D*
Primary K-6	\$1,537	\$1,952	\$2,214	\$2,414
Secondary 7-8	\$2,097	\$3,013	\$3,294	N/A
Secondary 9-10	\$2,222	\$3,146	\$3,421	N/A
Secondary 11-12	\$2,680	\$3,614	\$3,914	N/A

2. DIOCESAN BUILDING LEVY

A Diocesan School Building Levy is also charged to support the building of new schools and major renovation of existing schools. Most schools in the Diocese have loans needing to be serviced. The current level of this debt is \$104 million. In 2017 each family K-12 will contribute \$940 per annum to help service loans.

3. SCHOOL BASED CHARGES

In addition to fees and the building levy, school-based charges are set at the local level. Each school will set its own school-based charge to cover such items as excursions, retreats, sport and other school needs.



Are flexible payment arrangements available?

School fees are billed on an annual basis with a third of the amount due payable at the beginning of school terms 1, 2 and 3. Families may also make arrangements with the individual school to pay fees weekly, fortnightly or monthly. All schools have facilities for families to pay fees by BPay, EFTPOS, credit card (VISA and Master Card only), cheque or cash.

What if I can't afford the fees?

No student is denied enrolment in a Catholic school purely on the basis of a genuine inability to pay fees and other charges. Principals have the discretion to reduce or waive tuition fees, building levies and other charges, in whole or part, for those families that can demonstrate they are experiencing genuine financial difficulties.

* Please contact your school of choice to confirm their category. Discounts on tuition fees are provided for siblings. Fees for the first child are charged at 100 per cent, for the second child at 80 per cent, and the third child at 50 per cent. The fourth child and subsequent children attending systemic schools concurrently are exempt from tuition fees.



More information

Please contact your local school for more information, including:

- **Public transport:** most schools are easily reached by public transport and/or a dedicated school bus service.
- **School uniform:** each school has an official school uniform that is agreed on by the school principal and parents.
- **Before and after school care:** a growing number of schools provide out of hours care or are close to Council or privately run centres.
- **Pupil-free days:** on four days each year schools have pupil-free days so staff can undertake essential whole-school planning and professional development. On these days students are asked not to attend school. The first day of school each year is nominated as a pupil-free day and three other days throughout the year.



2018 School Calendar

	Schools Resume	Schools Close
Term 1	Monday 29 January	Friday 13 April
Term 2	Monday 30 April	Friday 6 July
Term 3	Monday 23 July	Friday 28 September
Term 4	Monday 15 October	Friday 21 December



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