Questions Frequently Asked by Parents about Catholic Education in Broken Bay

Community of Catholic Schools Diocese of Broken Bay

Enrolling now for 2017 & beyond
The Diocese of Broken Bay is one of three dioceses within the Sydney metropolitan area. It covers Sydney’s North Shore, Peninsula 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 area covered by 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. The person of Jesus Christ is the inspiration of staff and is the model offered to students. Students are offered opportunities to grow in relationship with Jesus as His disciples.

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

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

Schools welcome enrolments from all Catholic families and those who support the ethos of a Catholic school.

It is advisable to enrol your child as early as possible in the year before your child commences primary school. 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.

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

Children enrolling in Kindergarten must reach age 5 by 31 July in the year of commencing school.

Each school has an enrolment committee which includes the principal and a parish priest. Parents are usually interviewed by the principal and/or member of the enrolment committee before the enrolment is finalised. Documents needed at the interview include birth and baptismal certificates, immunisation records, and passport if you are newly arrived in Australia.

Secondary schools may also require academic results or reports from the previous school, a reference from the parish priest, and medical records.

Most schools have an orientation day in Term 4 for children starting school the following year. Many schools also hold information nights for parents in Term 4 or in Term 1 of the year of commencement.

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

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 activities 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.
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 BOSTES NSW 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 BOSTES 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.

How is positive student behaviour encouraged and supported in Broken Bay schools?

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.
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 involved in their children’s education.

Parents & Friends Associations, the Diocesan Parent Council (DPC), and school advisory boards are vehicles for meaningful parent involvement. These teams allow dialogue, consultation and engagement with a broad range of parents within the school and diocesan community.

The DPC is the official parent body recognised by the Bishop and CSO. The DPC 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

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. The preferred method of payment is via BPAY.

How are Aboriginal students and their families supported in Broken Bay schools?

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.

Further information: www.brokenbayparentcouncil.com

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.
How much are the school fees?

Annual tuition fees for children attending Catholic systemic schools are set by the Diocesan Schools Financial Committee. It is policy to keep 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.

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 2016 each family K–12 will contribute $910 per annum to help service loans.

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.

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 that they are experiencing genuine financial difficulties.

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 socioeconomic status (SES) of the schools. This fee policy setting continues in 2016.

How does Government funding assist Broken Bay Schools?

Commonwealth and State Governments provide recurrent grants to Broken Bay Catholic systemic schools. This funding accounts for 84% of the cost of educating a student in the Diocese of Broken Bay. Parental contributions fund the remainder that enables the Diocese to provide a quality education for your children.

The partnership of Commonwealth Government, State Government and parents provides the three sources of income for Broken Bay Catholic schools. Ongoing Government support is appreciated.

Annual tuition fees - 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SCHOOL CATEGORY</th>
<th>A*</th>
<th>B*</th>
<th>C*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary K-6</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,492</td>
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<td>Secondary 7-8</td>
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<td>Secondary 9-10</td>
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<td>Secondary 11-12</td>
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<td>$2,601</td>
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*To confirm which category please contact your school of choice.

Family discounts on tuition fees are provided for siblings. Fees for the first child are charged at 100%, for the second child at 80%, and the third child at 50%. The fourth child and subsequent children attending Broken Bay systemic schools concurrently are exempt from tuition fees.

School year calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Schools Resume</th>
<th>Schools Close</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 1</td>
<td>Monday 30 January</td>
<td>Friday 7 April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>Monday 24 April</td>
<td>Friday 30 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>Monday 17 July</td>
<td>Friday 22 September</td>
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<td>Term 4</td>
<td>Monday 9 October</td>
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