



Sydney
Catholic
Schools

ENROLMENT INFORMATION





Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for applying to enrol your child in a Sydney Catholic school. Choosing a school for your child is an important decision for every parent and carer.



Catholic schools are warm, welcoming communities and we focus on the development of the whole child. Our Catholic identity, supported by the Gospel values of love, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness, sits at the heart of everything that happens in our schools. The learning environment is dynamic, our teachers are highly trained and there are opportunities for every student to thrive.

Please take the time to read this booklet and complete the Application to Enrol carefully. You will notice that there are links in the enrolment form to important system policy documents, and it is important to read these documents as well.

If you require assistance completing the form, please contact your local school. They will provide you with the support you require.

Thank you again for considering a Catholic school for your child. We hope to be able to welcome you into one of our school communities in the near future.

With my warmest wishes

A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads "Dan White".

Dr Dan White
Executive Director, Sydney Catholic Schools



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ENROLMENT

CHOOSING A SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Sydney Catholic Schools inspires minds and spirits to help students grow both academically with a rigorous, well-rounded education, and mentally and spiritually in an environment enhanced by the Catholic faith and strong moral values, such as kindness, generosity and hospitality.

We promote the growth of our students holistically in an education system increasingly focused on test-based academics. We are equally proud of our excellent educational outcomes, and of those students excelling in sport, music, and other co-curricular activities, as well as those students who are improving year-on-year.

Students' individualised needs are catered for through our specialised services and programs for gifted and talented students, those with diverse learning needs and those with a first language other than English. We also have a strong focus on student wellbeing and social outreach.

Encompassing over 150 low-fee primary and secondary schools in the inner-west, south and east of Sydney, Sydney Catholic Schools educates more than 70,000 students. Teaching and learning resources are developed in consultation with principals and teachers, and we support our schools with professional services in the fields of finance, IT, property maintenance, administration, WHS, employment and marketing.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Principals at each of our schools lead the way in creating a culture of continuous improvement, bringing about improved learning outcomes and opportunities for all students. Each Sydney Catholic school uses the School Review and Improvement (SRI) framework to engage with students, parents, pastors and the wider community on their learning improvement journey, and keep up-to-date with state and federal government accountability and compliance requirements.

Principals and senior staff (including the Assistant Principal and Religious Education Coordinator) are appointed through a rigorous selection process conducted by Sydney Catholic Schools. Principals appoint teachers and other personnel to work in their schools, as well as their school executive, and are responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.

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ENROLMENT PRINCIPLES

Helping families nurture their Catholic faith is a primary goal of Catholic schools. Enrolment preference is given to families who have children baptised in the Catholic faith and who regularly worship at their local Catholic parish.

This said, we welcome enrolment enquiries from all families and assess them according to our enrolment criteria. If you have questions about enrolment at any time of the year, your local school's principal would be happy to answer them.

These are our enrolment guiding principles, which give direction to school principals and enrolment committees in determining enrolment processes and procedures for their school.

- 1** Embedded within the parish community, Sydney Catholic schools are committed to the development of the whole person and share with their parish in the evangelising mission of the Church.
- 2** Sydney Catholic schools, as part of a parish community, have a responsibility to support parents/caregivers in honouring the commitment to practise their faith they undertook on behalf of their child/ren at the time of baptism.
- 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 close collaboration between the parish priest and the school.
- 4** The nature of systemic education facilitates information sharing, resource efficiency and the development of comprehensive programs to support the spiritual, academic and social development of all our students.
- 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.
- 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 Sydney Catholic school, priority in enrolment will be given to their siblings.
- 7** The preferential option for the poor and marginalised is fundamental in Catholic schools. Sydney Catholic 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.

- 8** Sydney Catholic 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 into account the school's capacity to provide reasonable adjustments. Students' educational and wellbeing needs are of paramount consideration within the enrolment process.
- 9** Planning and provision for the educational and wellbeing needs of the student is dependant on full and frank disclosure both at the point of enrolment and throughout the course of a student's education.
- 10** Sydney Catholic schools have adopted an explicit policy of providing educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the provision of a bursary program. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families may apply for enrolment on the basis of 'special pastoral circumstances'.
- 11** Wherever feasible, students who attend a Sydney Catholic 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.
- 12** Sydney Catholic schools are open to all Catholic families, as well as to families from Orthodox churches, 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.
- 13** Sydney Catholic schools have a co-responsibility to ensure a sustainable level of enrolments for each school within the Archdiocesan system, so as to maximise opportunities for Catholic families to access Catholic schools.



ENROLMENT

ENROLMENT PRIORITY

Sydney Catholic schools strive 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.

The below priorities serve as a basis to assess students where demand exceeds the number of available places. All Sydney Catholic schools enrol children according to the enrolment priorities below.

Primary schools

Enrolments in systemic Catholic primary schools are prioritised as follows:

- 1** Baptised Catholic children of regularly worshipping Catholic families with strong demonstrable links to the local designated Catholic parish or parishes.
- 2** Siblings of children already attending the school whose families have demonstrated ongoing support for the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 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.
- 4** Children of Catholic families not covered above, or who are outside the local designated Catholic parish.
- 5** Children of regularly worshipping Orthodox families who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 6** Children of regularly worshipping families from other Christian denominations who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 7** Children of Orthodox families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 8** Children of families from other Christian denominations who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 9** Children of families from other faith traditions or non-religious backgrounds who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.

Secondary colleges

Enrolments in systemic Catholic secondary colleges are prioritised as follows:

- 1 Baptised Catholic children of regularly worshipping Catholic families with strong demonstrable links to the local designated feeder parish or parishes.
- 2 Siblings of children already attending the college whose families have demonstrated ongoing support for the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 3 Children of families currently enrolled at the designated Catholic feeder schools who have demonstrated ongoing support for the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 4 Children of families who have 'special pastoral circumstances' as assessed by the enrolment committee or, where appropriate, the school principal and/or priests of the associated parishes in conjunction with the principal.
- 5 Children of Catholic families not covered above or who are outside the local designated Catholic feeder schools/parishes.
- 6 Children of regularly worshipping Orthodox families who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 7 Children of regularly worshipping families from other Christian denominations who have strong demonstrable links to their faith community and who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 8 Children of Orthodox families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 9 Children of families from other Christian denominations who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.
- 10 Children of families from other faith traditions or nonreligious backgrounds who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church.

ENROLMENT

ENROLMENT QUESTIONS

How do I enrol my child?

If you are interested in enrolling your child in a Catholic systemic school, you will need to contact the principal or enrolment secretary at that school.

Formal enrolment periods commence in March and continue until the end of May, but if there are vacancies available, enrolments can occur year-round.

Before an enrolment is finalised, parents/carers are usually interviewed by the principal or a delegated staff member. Documents required at this interview include the completed enrolment form, parish priest reference, birth certificate, baptism certificate, immunisation or relevant medical records, and passport if you are newly arrived in Australia. Secondary schools may require academic results or reports from the student's previous school.

Once your enrolment is finalised, your child will likely be invited to an orientation day in Term 4 for children starting school the following year. Parents are often invited to attend an information evening around this time, or just after their child has begun school.

When should I enrol my child?

By law, students must commence school before they turn six years of age. There is no longer a minimum age for enrolment, but students must be able to demonstrate a capacity to move to Year 1 the following year. Generally, students in NSW start school around the age of five.

Secondary schools enrol prospective students two years prior to their commencing at the school. For example, students in Year 5 can enrol to start high school in Year 7.

The NSW government raised the minimum school leaving age from 15 to 17 in 2009, with exceptions for students who meet set criteria. As such, students no longer need to be re-enrolled for Year 11.

Who can enrol a child?

Any person with parental responsibility or guardianship can enrol a child.

Can I list biological parents, stepparents and other caregivers on the enrolment form?

Yes, the Sydney Catholic Schools enrolment form contains four fields in which to list parents, carers and other contacts.



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What documents do I need to provide to enrol my child?

You will require:

- The child's birth certificate and/or adoption paperwork.
- Any interim/final Family Court orders concerning parental responsibility.
- Any Apprehended Personal Violence Order (APVO) or Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) which names the child as a protected person.

What name will my child be enrolled under?

Your child will be enrolled in the name on their birth certificate and their legal name will be used for all formal purposes, though they may be known by a nickname.

You may change your child's name legally by seeking an order of the Family Court or applying for a change of name through the NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages. You must provide change of legal name documentation to the school.

Who needs to be listed as a parent/carer on the enrolment form?

If there is a Family Court order stating that one parent has sole parental responsibility, only that parent needs to be listed on the enrolment form. In all other circumstances, both parents need to be listed on the enrolment form.

All parents/carers with legal parental responsibility need to be listed on the enrolment form and their contact details must be provided.

Who needs to be involved in the enrolment process?

It is best practice that where a child is being enrolled in a school both parents attend the enrolment interview and sign the enrolment form.

If one parent is applying to enrol a child and another parent listed on the birth certificate/adoption paperwork/court orders is not present, the school will contact them to advise them of the enrolment.

The school will confirm with both parents in writing the enrolment of the child at the school.

How do I fill out my child's enrolment form?

Please see the separate fact sheet 'Enrolment Application Information' for more information on how to complete an enrolment form for your child.

How will my information be used?

Sydney Catholic schools are subject to Australian privacy legislation including the Privacy Act 1988, and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

The information you provide in your enrolment application will be used to process your child's application for enrolment, which may include a risk assessment. The Standard Collection Notice, which can be found on page 15 of the Application to Enrol at Sydney Catholic Schools, specifies the reason for collecting information about students and their families and the way in which the school will use the information. It will only be used or disclosed for the following purposes:

- General student administration relating to the education and welfare of the student
- Communication with students and parents or carers
- To ensure the health, safety and welfare of students, staff and visitors to the school
- State and national reporting purposes
- For any other purpose required by law

The information will be stored securely. You may access or correct any personal information by contacting the school. If you have a concern or complaint about the way your personal information has been collected, used, or disclosed, you should contact the SCS Privacy Officer on (02) 9569 6111.

Health-related information collected on your enrolment application is subject to the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. It is being collected for the primary purpose of ensuring the health and safety of all students, staff and visitors to the school. It may be used by and disclosed to medical practitioners, health workers, other government departments, and schools for this primary purpose or for other, related purposes.

ENROLMENT

SCHOOL FEES

Sydney Catholic Schools utilises a differentiated school tuition fee model. This means that there will be slight variations in tuition fees from school to school, depending on the socio-economic makeup of the area, so please request the total school fees from your local Catholic school.

On average tuition fee ranges for 2019 are as follows.

Primary

\$1,133-\$1,376 per year

Secondary

Years 7-8: \$1,617-\$1,903 per year

Years 9-10: \$1,792-\$2,110 per year

Years 11-12: \$2,388-\$2,811 per year

As well as tuition fees, there are separate school-based charges which can vary from school to school depending on a school's individual circumstances. These charges can be for excursions, specialist sports or non-standard subjects such as music lessons, languages, coding, etc. In secondary colleges, they may be subject specific in order to cover the cost of providing resources for Construction or Hospitality courses, for example.

Parents at all schools are also required to pay a School Building Levy. This is used to help pay loans taken out by Sydney Catholic Schools to cover building works, repairs and maintenance in school buildings.

Fee assistance

Sydney Catholic Schools endeavours to offer an affordable Catholic education of the highest quality and there is a deeply held philosophical commitment at all levels (Archdiocesan, system, parish and school) that no Catholic family should be denied a Catholic education due to a genuine incapacity to pay all, or part of, their children's school fees.

Parents who need support to meet the cost of educating their child in a systemic Catholic school may be eligible for a bursary from the Catholic Education Foundation. Information about the Catholic Education Foundation can be obtained from your local Catholic school.

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

2019

- Term 1** Tuesday, 29 January (staff)
Wednesday, 30 January (students) – Friday, 12 April
- Term 2** Monday, 29 April – Friday, 5 July
- Term 3** Monday, 22 July – Friday, 27 September
- Term 4** Monday, 14 October – Friday, 20 December

2020

- Term 1** Tuesday, 28 January (staff)
Wednesday, 29 January (students) – Thursday, 9 April
- Term 2** Monday, 27 April – Friday, 3 July
- Term 3** Monday, 20 July – Friday, 25 September
- Term 4** Monday, 12 October – Friday, 18 December



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LEARNING

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is at the heart of Catholic education. It informs all aspects of school life and contributes to the mission of the Catholic Church in announcing the good news of Jesus Christ.

All students are expected to participate in the religious life of the school. This includes being part of formal religious education that follows a curriculum and uses the textbook series *To Know, Worship and Love*.

Catholic schools explicitly teach religious education in all years, supporting students in understanding how much God loves them, drawing them in to a love of God and others, before they are invited into a deeper and more intimate relationship with God through their exploration of the Scriptures, their participation in personal and communal prayer and their living out of Catholic social and moral teaching.

Students also participate in the Sacraments, liturgy, prayer, reflection days and retreats, and community service and social justice programs.

CURRICULUM

We are proud of our excellent educational outcomes and frequently achieve well above state average results in standardised tests, such as NAPLAN.

Teachers in Sydney Catholic schools follow the same Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum as teachers in state and independent schools, with our Catholic values underpinning everything that we do. This means all primary and secondary schools follow the NSW Education Standards Authority syllabuses and fulfil the requirements of the NSW Education Act 1990.

In primary schools, the curriculum includes the following key learning areas or subject areas: Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, History, Geography, Creative Arts, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

Systemic Catholic secondary colleges offer a full range of courses within each key learning area or subject – English, Mathematics, Science, Human Society and Its Environment, Technological and Applied Studies, STEM, and Creative and Performing Arts.

Sydney Catholic schools offer a range of sporting and co-curricular activities such as debating, the Pope Francis Award, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, mock trial, Extension 1 and 2 subjects and a range of social justice and community service activities.

LEARNING

DIVERSE LEARNING

Sydney Catholic schools have a long tradition of supporting students with diverse needs, and have programs in place to assist students with a disability, gifted and talented learners, and children whose first language is not English.

Students with a disability

In 2016 Sydney Catholic Schools opened the Eileen O'Connor Catholic College at Lewisham, the first dedicated school for students with disabilities in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The establishment of the college is an important component of an overarching plan to better equip schools in the provision of high-quality support for students with disabilities. The provision of alternative programs for students with disabilities will give parents greater choice about educational placements for their children with special learning needs.

In 2019, the college will cater for students from Years 5-11 with moderate intellectual disabilities and complex learning needs. It will eventually be the hub for a special school network of satellite classes in both primary and secondary schools across all three regions.



Additionally, all our schools have staff dedicated to supporting students with diverse learning needs and can draw on the specialist services of personnel in central and regional offices.

Gifted and talented students

The Newman Selective Gifted Education Program provides opportunities for gifted and talented learners to reach their potential and be academically extended, challenged and accelerated in their learning across all subject areas within a differentiated curriculum.

A growing number of our schools have become accredited Newman schools, indicating that they have been endorsed through a rigorous and comprehensive accreditation process and have dedicated teachers in each subject area qualified in Gifted Education.

Newman schools offer enrichment opportunities in creative arts, coding, literacy, and Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), along with extension in each of a student's timetabled subjects.



LEARNING

Parents can also nominate their child for entry in the Newman Selective Gifted Education Program in secondary schools, where available. They can show evidence of their child's ability in the form of test results, certificates, and letters from university-based school-holiday extension programs to support their application.

Students with a first language other than English

Children learning English for the first time are supported by dedicated staff in schools, staff from our regional and central offices, and hub-based reception programs for new arrivals. Refugee students can access our three Catholic Intensive English Centres, which ease students into life in Australia and offer an accelerated English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) experience.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

All secondary Catholic colleges offer VET courses, enabling students to achieve nationally-recognised VET qualifications at Certificate levels I, II and III. All courses have dual accreditation with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

VET courses provide students with practical learning that gives them a head start with their career. Many VET courses may be counted towards the ATAR and are suitable for students on both academic and vocational pathways.

At our industry-standard Trade Training/Skills Centres students have the opportunity to gain their HSC with a focus on vocational programs and School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs).





SCHOOL LIFE

ATTENDANCE

Sydney Catholic Schools values your child's education. We believe that regular attendance at school teaches students valuable life skills and is essential for them to achieve to their academic potential.

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children from the age of six years to the minimum school leaving age of 17. The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at and regularly attend school or are registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for homeschooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

It is important to note that a parent may be reported for 'Education Neglect' through Family and Community Services when a child or young person is of compulsory school age and they are either not enrolled or habitually absent from education.

Sydney Catholic Schools recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school. We work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance, believing that when children attend school each day learning and maintaining friendships becomes easier.

Lateness

Arriving at school and class on time:

- gives students time to greet their friends before class
- ensures students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- reduces classroom disruption.

Lateness and early departures are recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

SCHOOL LIFE

Absences

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday (other than Catholic Liturgical events, which are celebrated at school)
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral).

Following an absence from school, you must ensure that you provide your child's school with an explanation for the absence within seven days of the first day of absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within two days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances, your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens, the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long-term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the principal can record the absences as unjustified.

Appointments and activities

NSW schools have mandatory hours in each subject that students are required to meet. When a student misses a regular part of the day, they can fall behind and miss vital learning.

For this reason Sydney Catholic schools do not permit students to miss school for external activities except in exceptional circumstances where the disruption is short-term.

Travel

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, please discuss this with the principal at your child's school.

An Application for Extended Leave will need to be completed for leave greater than 10 school days, while leave 10 days and under can be approved if a note is provided prior to the child's absence.

There may be consequences for travel:

- completion of assignments may be required prior to departure
- alternative assessments may be scheduled
- marks may be lost due to missed assessments
- progress may be hindered by gaps in learning
- reassessment may be required in order to determine progression to the next year group.

A principal may decline approval for the absence if it is not in the best interests of your child's education. Approval will only be granted prior to the travel and evidence of return dates may be requested (e.g. airline tickets).

If the leave is approved, absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances, students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.



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MARIST DRAGONS

Unacceptable levels of absence

If your child refuses to go to school, contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The principal may seek further support from the SCS Regional Wellbeing Team to develop an attendance improvement plan.

It is important to understand that Sydney Catholic Schools may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school. Here are the steps we take.

STEP 1 • Attendance improvement plans

The school may contact you regarding frequent absences and request an interview with you and your child. Your child may be placed on an attendance improvement plan that will assist in more regular attendance.

STEP 2 • Compulsory schooling conferences

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a compulsory schooling conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop a plan to support your child's attendance at school.

STEP 3 • Compulsory schooling orders

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory SCS may apply to the Children's Court for a compulsory schooling order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a compulsory schooling conference to be convened.

STEP 4 • Prosecution in the local court

School and SCS staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address any issues that are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs, further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine up to \$11,000.

SCHOOL LIFE

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

Sydney Catholic schools expect high standards of student behaviour, and student wellbeing and pastoral care policies exist to ensure Catholic schools remain safe and highly productive learning environments. These policies are underpinned by The National Safe Schools Framework and other support programs.

Catholic schools work in partnership with parents in developing a sense of social responsibility in young people and implementing logical consequences for irresponsible behaviour. Social and emotional competency skills are taught throughout the curriculum with particular focus on self-discipline, well-developed interpersonal skills and resilience.

ANTI-BULLYING

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment, including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, or in the workplace.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- verbal (e.g. name-calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats)
- physical (e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting)
- social (e.g. ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures)
- psychological (e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones).

Bullying can happen:

- face-to-face (e.g. pushing, tripping, name-calling)
- at a distance (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone)
- through information and communications technologies (e.g. use of SMS, email, social media).

Some conflicts between children are a normal part of growing up and are to be expected. These conflicts or fights between equals, and one-off incidents, are not considered to be bullying, even though they may be upsetting and need to be resolved.

Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict
- single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

Identifying bullying can sometimes be difficult. Bullying is often conducted out of sight of teachers, and children may be reluctant to report it.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information communication technology by an individual or group to carry out deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others.

Children who are cyber-bullied are also likely to be bullied face-to-face.

Examples of cyber-bullying can include:

- sending insulting or threatening text messages
- publishing someone's personal or embarrassing information online
- repeatedly hanging up on calls
- creating hate sites or starting social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.

SCHOOL LIFE

Signs your child is being bullied

Your child's behaviour can change for a variety of reasons. However, the following signs could indicate your child is being bullied:

- does not want to go to school or participate in school activities
- does not appear to have friends
- is missing belongings
- has torn clothing
- seems to have become fearful and anxious
- has more mood swings, and seems to be crying more
- seems to have a drop in academic performance
- has poorer physical health and changes in sleep habits
- has increased negative self-perception.

The signs of possible cyber-bullying can be the same as signs of other bullying, but include certain behaviour with phones and computers, for example:

- being hesitant about going online
- seeming nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears
- being visibly upset after using the computer or mobile phone, or suddenly avoiding it
- minimising the computer screen, or hiding the mobile phone when you enter the room
- spending unusually long hours online (in a more tense, pensive tone)
- receiving suspicious phone calls, emails or packages
- withdrawing from friends, falling behind in schoolwork, or avoiding school.



You need to consider what you know about your child and the details of the situation to make the best decision for your child.

Let your child know that you will take the bullying seriously and that you can help them to report it to the school. Additionally:

- stay calm and positive
- talk with your child
- do not advise your child to fight with the other child
- report the bullying to the school
- seek help for your child to improve his/her social skills
- discuss cybersafety
- stay informed and supervise your child's interactions online.

Signs your child is a bully

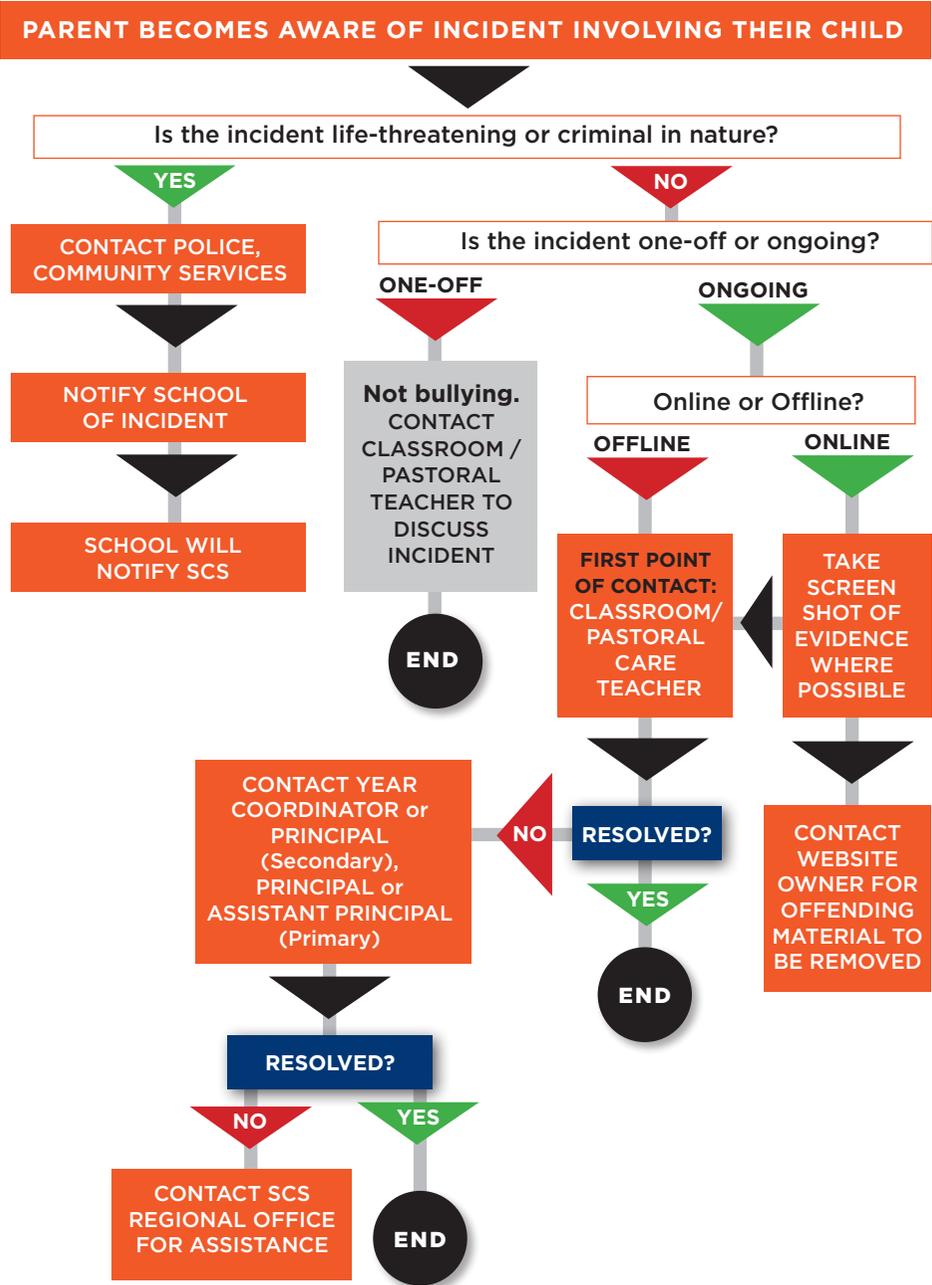
You may see or hear from others that your child:

- repeatedly teases, imitates or makes fun of the same child
- appears to repeatedly dominate or control others
- shows no compassion for someone who is experiencing bullying
- repeatedly excludes or ignores the same child
- whispers about the same child behind their back on a frequent basis.

It can be upsetting to be told that your child has bullied others. Children who use bullying behaviours need support to learn better ways of relating to others. Stay calm and learn more about your child's behaviour so that any bullying behaviours can be addressed, and:

- discuss with your child why they might be behaving this way
- discuss the behaviours with the school
- consider what is going on at home
- explain why bullying is unacceptable
- make clear rules and consequences for your child's behaviour.

SCHOOL LIFE



Directing your concern

All partners in Catholic education are committed to ending bullying in our schools.

All incidents should follow the steps on the left to get the most effective and efficient response. Reports which escalate the point of contact will be redirected to the most appropriate level for resolution.

PRIVACY

Secure internet access and email

Students are provided with an internet, email account and where applicable, student information system to enable learning opportunities in a protected and secure environment. Students must abide by the school's policy when using their internet, email and student information system services.

Parents will need to inform the school in writing if they do not want their child to have access to the school's internet, email and student information system facilities.

Photographs at school

Taking photographs of students can constitute a collection of their personal information.

Occasionally photographs are taken of individual students and classes of students at school.

If you do not wish your child to be photographed under any circumstances, please make sure you have specified this on the Publication/Media Consent Form within our enrolment pack.

SCHOOL LIFE

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Sydney Catholic Schools recognises that parents and caregivers are a child's primary educators, and uses 'parent' to refer to natural, adoptive or foster parents, guardians and caregivers of students.

Research demonstrates that when schools, families and the parish work together, children have better social and emotional skills, are more engaged in their learning and attend school more often, leading to better long term outcomes.

Parent and community engagement is an ongoing strategic goal of Sydney Catholic Schools and we are continually working to deepen the culture of partnership between families and their school.

Sydney Catholic Schools provides families a broad range of opportunities to engage with their child's school, and parents and carers are invited to be involved in parent groups, school planning, review processes, volunteer capacities and more.

Our partnership

At baptism, the Catholic Church commits to supporting parents in their role as the primary educators of their children. When children go to school, parents share their educational responsibility with the teachers, staff and parish priest associated with their local Catholic school.

In choosing a Sydney Catholic school, parents enter into a partnership with that school. This partnership is based on the spirituality of communion, which sits at the heart of every Catholic school.

Such a partnership should always be marked by open, respectful and two-way communication, and expectations for the partnership should be understood by everyone involved.

Outlined below are some of the important principles and expectations that underpin such a partnership. They are an important touchstone for all partners in Catholic education, and will help build school communities based on the enduring values of faith, hope and love.



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SCHOOL LIFE

Sydney Catholic schools strive to nurture a partnership between parents and schools where:

- all relationships are based on mutual respect, trust and a spirit of collaboration in accordance with the ethos and values of the Catholic Church
- parents are recognised for the primary role they play in their child's faith formation, learning and wellbeing
- teachers and staff are respected for their professional skills and competence in educating students in the context of Gospel teachings
- parents, schools and parishes work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for each student.

Parents at Sydney Catholic schools can expect that their child's school will:

- offer a loving, faith-filled environment where each student comes to know the person of Jesus Christ
- be a place where each student can learn and feel safe
- treat every member of the school community with courtesy and respect
- involve them in decisions that affect their child's faith formation, learning or wellbeing
- provide timely and accurate information about their child's progress
- enable them to ask questions of and speak to their child's teacher or members of the school leadership team at a mutually convenient time
- allow any concern or complaint to be heard while allowing relationships to continue respectfully in accordance with the Resolution of Complaints Policy.

Sydney Catholic schools can expect that parents in their school community will:

- model responsible and respectful behaviour within the school community in both the real and digital worlds
- treat every member of the school community with courtesy and respect
- listen, talk collaboratively and share relevant information with teachers and school staff to understand and resolve any issues, misunderstandings or concerns
- respect the privacy of every member of the school community
- uphold the school rules and guidelines, which are in place for the wellbeing and effective learning of students
- contribute to a safe school community where intimidation, bullying or harassment are not tolerated
- adhere to all commitments made at the time of enrolment, including the prompt payment of school fees.

Where parents have consistently breached Sydney Catholic Schools guidelines, schools have the right to:

- schedule an informal meeting between the parent/s and the principal or a member of the school leadership team to remind parents about the expectations outlined in this document
- schedule a formal meeting between the parent/s and with the principal and/or a member of the school leadership team
- formally escalate the matter to Sydney Catholic Schools, which may require parents to meet with Sydney Catholic Schools staff and/or independent consultants
- exclude a parent from the school under the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 (NSW)
- refer the matter to NSW Police or other appropriate agencies in the case of unlawful or aggressive behaviour, or bullying or intimidation of school staff.

SCHOOL LIFE

Communication

Sydney Catholic schools strive to be welcoming communities of faith, hope and love, where communication takes place in an environment of openness, trust, mutual respect and is in the interests of all students.

Schools provide many opportunities to communicate and meet with parents through regular school newsletters, online portals, mobile alerts and formal meetings, such as parent teacher interviews and information nights.

It is natural that there will be other times that parents will need to speak with their child's school teacher or members of the school leadership team. For everyone's wellbeing, these matters should be carried out in the spirit of our partnership with schools, and all people treated with courtesy and respect.

As welcoming and inclusive communities, Sydney Catholic schools encourage two-way communication with parents. So that communication can take place in a respectful and meaningful way, parents are asked to observe the below guidelines when communicating with their child's school:

Teachers as first point of contact

To discuss your child's learning or experiences at school, parents are asked to make an appointment to meet with the appropriate teacher so these issues can be discussed constructively.

In primary schools, the appropriate teacher will be the classroom teacher. In secondary schools, the appropriate teacher may be the year coordinator or the pastoral care coordinator.

Contacting the leadership team

If the appropriate teacher cannot resolve the issue or concern, members of the school leadership team are also available to talk with parents. Parents are asked to make an appointment to meet at a mutually convenient time.

Parents should not approach other students or parents to clarify any issues or concerns involving their own child. All matters should be discussed with the appropriate teacher who can then discuss the matter with the relevant staff and students.

Complex family situations

Separation, divorce, remarriage and other complex family situations can be hard on families, and can sometimes make communication between parents and schools more difficult.



Schools are always eager to support parents and families if things are difficult or in the midst of change, but the safety and quality education of all our students is always our top priority.

Communication with separated parents

Wherever there is joint parental responsibility for a child by court order, or in absence of a court order, the school will always copy in both parents in any communications unless there is a relevant ADVO or APVO.

Similarly, both parents should attend meetings or parent teacher interviews together. This will ensure that both parents are briefed equally on any matters impacting their child.

Where there is joint parental responsibility either parent is entitled to:

- access to the school's online parent portal (where available)
- attend school events
- receive a copy of school reports, newsletters and any other communications
- collect their child from school
- meet with their child's teacher at parent-teacher evenings.

Visits at school

Parents are not allowed to visit their child on the school site during school hours, as this is disruptive to their child's learning and the learning of other students.

School pick-up

Schools are not a party to Family Court orders and cannot enforce them. Where a person with parental responsibility attends a school site to collect their child we cannot prevent them doing so even where it is not their allocated day. In this situation we would notify the other parent and police if required.

If there is an ADVO or APVO in place protecting the child and a parent attempts to pick up the child in contravention of that order, we will phone the police.

Changes to court orders

If you have entered into new Family Court orders reflecting changes to existing arrangements – for example, changes to childcare arrangements or primary residence – please provide the school with a copy of the most recent sealed orders for their records.

SCHOOL LIFE

Complaints

Resolving concerns and complaints satisfactorily within a framework of dignity, respect and truth provides our staff opportunities to model the love of Christ.

We believe that:

- students, parents and guardians have a right to voice complaints
- complaints help us to improve our services
- restoration of 'right relationships' is most often best achieved through 'restorative practice'.

We work to ensure that:

- complaints will be resolved as promptly as possible
- complaints will be handled fairly, objectively, and confidentially
- students, parents and guardians will not be adversely affected by making a complaint.

Students and parents and guardians should:

- work with school employees to resolve the complaint
- provide the school with a clear description of the complaint and desired outcome
- provide all relevant information and documentation
- understand that resolving complaints may take some time
- inform the school of changes affecting the complaint
- cooperate in a respectful way with school employees and understand that unreasonable conduct may lead to the complaint not being processed.

Contacting the correct person is of utmost importance. Please see page 40 for our guidelines for communicating with your school.

Requests for review

Requests for an independent review of any decision made as the result of a complaint can be made in writing to the school's regional consultant. The regional consultant will then assess the complaint to determine whether a review is required. Complaints about principals must be submitted in writing to the Sydney Catholic Schools Central office or via email to parentcommunity@syd.catholic.edu.au.

Response timeframes

The time required to resolve a complaint depends on the complexity and nature of the complaint, as well as employee availability. Receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible. Additional time may be required if a complaint is submitted toward the end of a school term, or outside of school terms.



ST JOHN VIA
Catholic Primary School
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Sydney Catholic Schools

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