

Over the past many months, at the direction of Cardinal Seán, the Catholic Schools Office has worked to develop an admission policy for our schools. Our goal has been to provide clarity and guidance for pastors, school principals, administrators and the wider school community.

During an extensive review process we consulted with the Presbyteral Council, Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Pastors, Principals and a number of lay and academic leaders. We sought a process that would allow us to reach consensus on a policy that would be appropriate in a Catholic school environment while understanding the diverse population of students we are entrusted with educating.

Catholic education is one of the most important ministries in the Church. Parents choose to send their children to a Catholic School because of our commitment to strong moral values inspired by Gospel teachings, a track record of academic excellence, and safe learning environments, among other reasons. They also choose Catholic education with the knowledge that the child always comes first. With the adoption of this admission policy we hope to clarify our overall commitment to serve families who are accepting of our approach to the academic and moral development of our students.

Following is the policy approved by the Cardinal.

## **Archdiocese of Boston ~ Catholic Schools Admission Policy**

### **Introduction**

In creating the Catholic Schools Admission Policy, we are guided by the words of the Holy Father, by Canon Law and by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

“No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.” (*Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Catholic Educators in Washington DC, April 17, 2008.*)

“As important as a sound Catholic school education is for the new immigrant and the poor, it continues to be of prime importance to those children and grandchildren of the generations who earlier came to our shores. Our Catholic schools have produced countless numbers of well-educated and moral citizens who are leaders in our civic and ecclesial communities. We must work with all parents so they have the choice of an education that no other school can supply—excellent academics imparted in the context of Catholic teaching and practice.” (“Introduction,” *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., 2005.)

"The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life. Pastors of souls have the duty of making all possible arrangements so that all the faithful may avail themselves of a Catholic education. Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young persons are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of

responsibility and a right use of freedom, and be formed to take an active part in social life." (*Code of Canon Law, Title III, Catholic Education, Canon 794-795.*)

"Young people of the third millennium must be a source of energy and leadership in our Church and our nation. Therefore, we must provide young people with an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education and faith formation designed to strengthen their union with Christ and his Church." ("Why We Value Our Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools," *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., 2005.)

"While we look with pride to the many successes and achievements of our Catholic elementary and secondary schools, the entire Catholic community must now focus on the future and the many challenges we face...We must then move forward with faith, courage, and enthusiasm because Catholic schools are so important to our future...In addition, Catholic schools should be available to students who are not Catholic and who wish to attend them. This has been a proud part of the history of Catholic schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We must continue this outreach in the new millennium." ("The Challenges of the Future", *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., 2005.)

### **The Policy**

The goal of our Catholic Schools is to present Catholic faith and Catholic teaching to our students in a rigorous academic, spiritual and moral education program. Catholic school students strive for high academic achievement, are taught to love and worship God, and live the Gospel teachings. Catholic school students work together, build community and give service to others.

Our schools welcome and do not discriminate against or exclude any categories of students. Admission is dependent both on academic qualifications and the desire to promote what is in the best interest of the student. Students are considered "academically qualified" if they meet a school's written academic criteria for admission. Academically qualified Catholic students may be given priority for admission to Catholic Schools.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students in Catholic schools must accept and understand that the teachings of the Catholic Church are an essential and required part of the curriculum.

### **Guidelines for Policy Implementation**

Pastors and principals should consult the Catholic Schools Office with any questions pertaining to admissions or the policy.

School admission policies must be written, included in the school handbook, consider the welfare and best interests of the child and be disseminated to prospective students and their parents prior to registration.

In accord with the principle of subsidiarity, pastors, principals, advisory and/or governing boards may develop specific admission policies for their school provided they are in conformity with the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Admission Policy.

Each school should implement a recruitment and marketing program to maximize its enrollment consistent with its capacity and location.