

- the accessibility of surrounding Catholic schools
- alternatives to current or future educational provision.

Community Issues

- the level of integration of the school into the life of the parish or surrounding parishes
- the way in which the Church's mission to the community will be continued in the future
- the effect on surrounding schools and communities of change to educational provision for an existing school.

Legal and Employment Issues

- the industrial requirement to provide alternative ongoing employment for staff employed in an ongoing capacity
- assistance to be provided to the employment search for casual and contract staff should changes to staffing be required

References

Archdiocese of Brisbane. (2001). *Queensland bishops' Catholic schools research project Archdiocese of Brisbane 1998–2001*. Brisbane Catholic Education. Brisbane.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1998). *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium*. St Paul's. N.S.W.

Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. (2004). (Reprinted) *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001*. Brisbane. QLD.

- the need to communicate with government – local, state and commonwealth.

Equity Issues

- the financial burden on the Archdiocesan Catholic education community in provision of education at a particular school
- the capacity of the local community to continue to resource the school appropriately
- the history of the school and the contributions made by parishes, religious institutes, Archdiocesan agencies and governments
- appropriate finalisation of debt, rationalisation of assets and sharing of any proceeds from disposal of property or plant.



**Catholic
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**ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE
CATHOLIC EDUCATION COUNCIL**

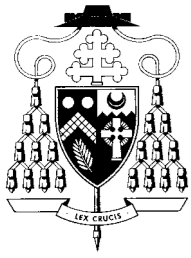
POLICY

STATEMENT

**Modification and Closure of
Systemic Schools**

**FOR BRISBANE CATHOLIC
EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

FEBRUARY 2005



Foreward

The *Modification and Closure of Systemic Schools Policy* reflects an inevitable aspect of life in a rapidly changing diocese. The Archdiocese of Brisbane, while having areas of considerable growth, will also, over time, have areas where a decline in school-aged population is experienced. The closure or amalgamation of a school is an occasion of sadness and sometimes hurt for the community affected.

In relation to these significant decisions regarding the provision of Catholic schooling, it is essential that there be criteria and processes to assist local parishes and schools to work in partnership with Archdiocesan authorities to manage these changes. This policy aims to guide and resource local Catholic communities and Archdiocesan bodies regarding a range of issues relevant to the ongoing educational provision of a school community.

This policy has been formulated following a review process and extensive consultation with stakeholders across the Archdiocese. Clergy, the Archdiocesan Finance Council, school principals, senior administration staff, and parents were among those who contributed to its development.

I commend this policy to all in the Archdiocese involved in Catholic schooling. May it guide us in making the important decisions regarding the assessment of schooling requirements in the Archdiocese.

Sincerely in Christ

Most Rev John Bathersby DD
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

FEBRUARY 2005

MODIFICATION AND CLOSURE OF SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS

POLICY

The Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to achieving the educational vision of the Archdiocese through the regular criteria based review of the location and nature of Catholic schools.

INTRODUCTION

This policy seeks to provide clear direction on the review and decision-making process regarding the viability of, and proposed changes to, the provision of educational opportunities in existing schools. It is recognised that, over time, the Archdiocese of Brisbane will have significant areas of population growth as well as areas of school-age population decline. Issues of demography and future curriculum provision give impetus for a review of, and possible changes to, the nature and location of existing schools.

RATIONALE

Parents, as first educators of their children, can legitimately expect that, wherever possible, there is access to an "authentic experience of Catholic Christian community".¹ Catholic schools, as one part of the church (communio) within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, provide this opportunity.

"Catholic schools, like state schools, fulfil a public role, for their presence guarantees cultural and educational pluralism and, above all, the freedom and right of families to see that their children receive the sort of education they wish for them".² Brisbane Catholic Education is committed to the equitable provision of high quality and inclusive schools that meet contemporary educational needs across the Archdiocese.

As part of ongoing strategic renewal, either the local community or Brisbane Catholic Education might initiate a process to examine modification or closure of a school. The question of equitable distribution of resources and the capacity of the community of schools to continue to support diverse needs are major considerations.

Modification of a school is a change in direction within parameters defined by Brisbane Catholic Education and Archdiocesan policy. This may affect either the accreditation criteria or the canonical responsibility for a school. Because the local school

may be one part of a sustainable local Catholic community, closure is a serious decision. The criteria for the decision will vary according to local and pastoral needs.

The Executive Director of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane is responsible for defining the process of consultation and decision making to be followed and making a recommendation to the Catholic Education Council.

The decision to modify or close a school is taken by the Archbishop on the recommendation of the Catholic Education Council.

CONSEQUENCES:

In implementing this policy, Brisbane Catholic Education in collaboration with the local community will consider:

Pastoral Issues

- the views of both staff, and existing and prospective parents on possible changes to educational provision
- the level of support of local clergy and parish communities for the option proposed
- the need to provide pastoral support for parents, students and staff where major changes are proposed
- the way in which any decision of the Archbishop is communicated to the school and parish community.

Educational Issues

- the appropriateness of current and planned curriculum and pastoral care strategies in relation to the size of the school
- the level of staffing and student enrolment and its capacity to provide appropriate interaction and social development
- the adequacy of current and planned resources for the provision of quality education

¹ Archdiocese of Brisbane, *Queensland bishops' Catholic schools research project Archdiocese of Brisbane 1998-2001* Brisbane, 2001, p.15

² Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium*, N.S.W., 1998 n16, p.20