

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

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, 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 to discuss and resolve any issues, misunderstandings or concerns. For everyone's wellbeing, these matters should be carried out in the spirit of the parent charter, and all people treated with courtesy and respect.

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

Teachers are the 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 co-ordinator or the pastoral care co-ordinator.

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.

Members of the school leadership team are also available.

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.

Please be patient.

Schools are busy places where the main priority of each staff member is to provide a high-quality Catholic education to each student. Phone calls, emails or requests by parents for information or meetings will be responded to as quickly as possible.

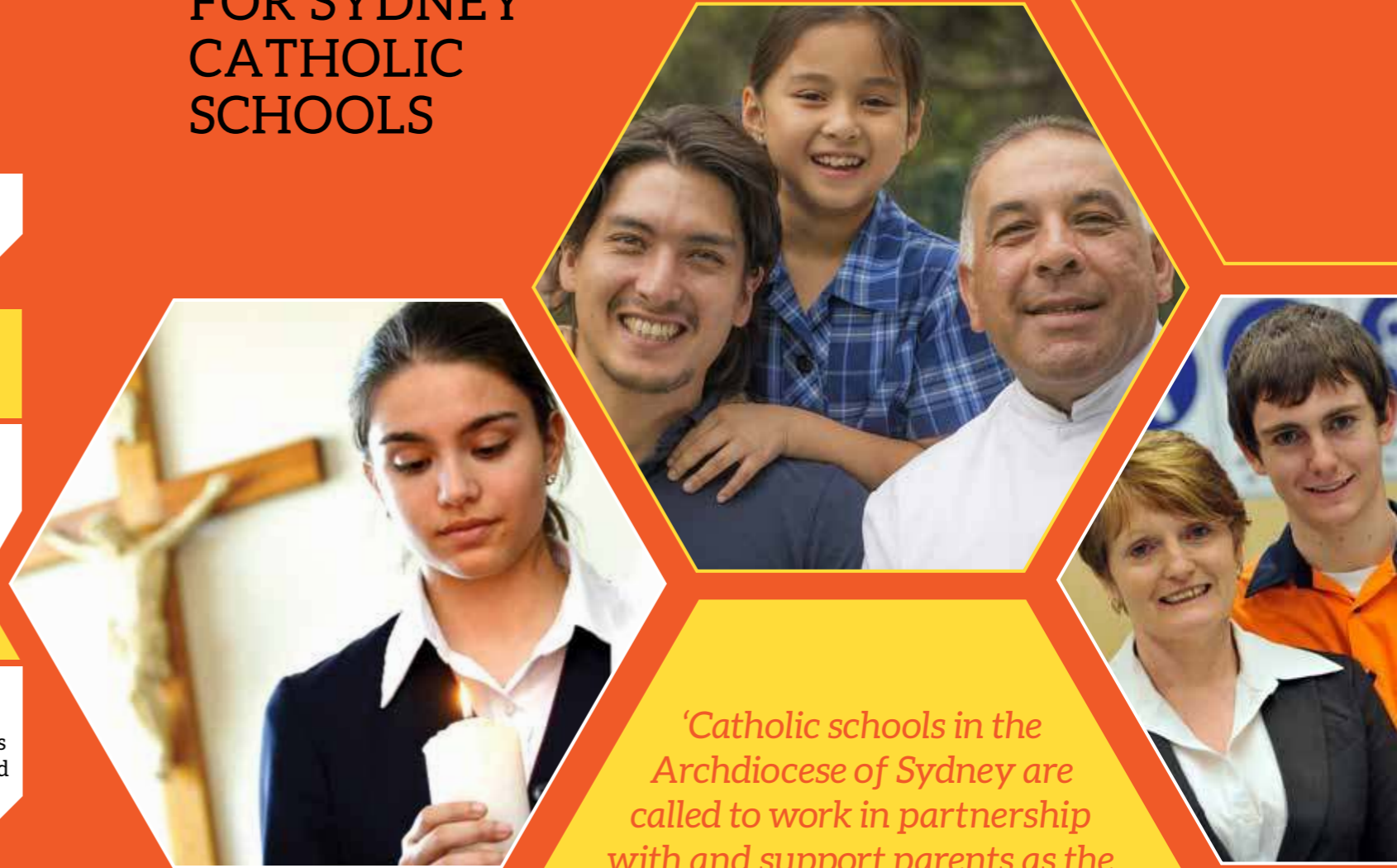
There will be times when parents disagree with a school decision or process. These matters are best addressed within a framework of dignity, respect and truth. Parents are encouraged to refer to the Resolution of Complaints policy for guidelines on the process of making and resolving a complaint.

In the rare circumstance where there are consistent and/or proven breaches of the parent charter, as determined by the principal and, where necessary, in consultation with the Regional Consultant, schools have the right to implement certain actions, which may include:

- an informal meeting between the parent/s with the principal or a member of the school leadership team to remind parents about the expectations outlined in the parent charter
- a formal meeting between the parent/s and with the principal and/or a member of the school leadership team
- a formal escalation of the matter to the Sydney Catholic Schools office where parents may be required to meet with staff and/or independent consultants
- exclusion of a parent from the school under the *Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 (NSW)*
- in the case of unlawful or aggressive behaviour, bullying or intimidation of school staff, the matter may be referred to the NSW Police or other appropriate agencies.

PARENT CHARTER

FOR SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



'Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney are called to work in partnership with and support parents as the primary educators of their children.'

THE ARCHBISHOP'S CHARTER
FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS,
ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY



At baptism, the Catholic Church makes the commitment to support parents in their role as the primary educators of their child. When children go to school, parents share their educational responsibility with the teachers, staff and parish priest of their local Catholic school community.

The partnership between parents and their school community is based on a spirituality of communion, which sits at the heart of every Catholic school.

The Parent Charter for Sydney Catholic Schools outlines for parents the principles and expectations that underpin the partnership between parents and schools. It is an important touchstone for all partners in Catholic education, to help build school communities based on the enduring values of faith, hope and love.



WORKING TOGETHER: PARENTS AND SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP

In choosing a Sydney Catholic school, parents enter into a partnership with the school where the responsibility of their child's education is shared between them, as the primary educator of their child, and their school community.

This partnership between parents and their school community is based on the guiding principles described in the Parent Charter for Sydney Catholic Schools. It takes place in an environment of open, respectful and two-way communication where the expectations for the partnership are understood by everyone involved.

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 and speak to their child's teacher or member of the school leadership team at a mutually convenient time
- allow any concern or complaint to be heard and that ongoing relationships will continue respectfully.¹

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 that 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 the commitments made at the time of enrolment, including the prompt payment of school fees.

PARENT CHARTER

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.

Parent is used in this document as a term to include natural, adoptive or foster parents, guardians and caregivers of students.

¹ In accordance with the Resolution of Complaints Policy (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2012)