



Catholic Education
Diocese of Cairns
*Learning with Faith
and Vision*

Policy

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Inclusive Practices

Purpose

This policy provides direction to Catholic schools regarding the establishment and maintenance of inclusive practices to meet the diverse needs of students.

Policy

Catholic Education - Diocese of Cairns is committed to supporting schools in their work of fostering cultures of inclusion that respond to the educational needs of students regardless of their abilities, backgrounds and aspirations. In addition Catholic Education - Diocese of Cairns is committed to supporting schools to develop inclusive practices that are supportive of Church teaching and legislative requirements.

Rationale

Catholic Education - Diocese of Cairns strives to "Be welcoming to all who seek to share their life" as one of its seven defining features of a Catholic School. Inclusive practices are fundamental to the ethos of Catholic schools and form part of the pastoral, spiritual, intellectual, physical, cultural and social development of all students.

The concept of inclusion is based on the provision of an educational environment that promotes the human dignity of each student.

An inclusive practice is defined as, 'the practice of providing (educational opportunities) for students with a wide range of abilities, backgrounds and aspirations in regular school settings'. (1)

Inclusive practices value the diversity of students, recognise their rights, provide equitable access to the curriculum and work towards meeting their education needs within a supportive Christian community.

The concept of inclusion recognises:

- the uniqueness and the diversity of students as children of God
- the need for belonging within a community
- a whole school approach to planning, curriculum development and school organisation
- access to differentiated resources and learning opportunities to facilitate the participation of students

"The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school". (2)

Consequences

Catholic Education - Diocese of Cairns advocates that Catholic schools establish appropriate policies and procedures that:

- commit to working towards meeting the needs of all students in the Catholic education community, drawing on shared knowledge and skills relating to all facets of education
- encourage collaborative planning and decision making which includes students, families and educators as integral members of the school community
- encourage collaborative partnerships and service agreements with agencies beyond the school to support the particular needs of students
- allow flexibility in system approaches, school structures, procedures and curriculum that facilitates options and pathways for students
- promote the professional development of all staff to support the equitable participation of all students
- encourage the development of physical environments that are accessible, stimulating, safe and welcoming.

Reflection

1. van Kraaynoord, C. E., Elkins, J., Palmer, C., & Rickards, F. (2000) *Literacy, Numeracy and students with disabilities, Volume 2 – the literature review*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
2. Cfr. John Paul II, *Address to the National Meeting of the Catholic School in Italy*, in "L'Osservatore Romano", 24 November 1991, p. 4.

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

Congregation for Catholic Education (2007). *Educating Together in Catholic Schools*.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20070908_educare-insieme_en.html