



TASMANIAN
CATHOLIC
education commission

STUDENT EQUITY POLICY

RELATED DOCUMENTS

TCEC Pastoral Care Policy
TCEC Enrolment Policy
Student With Disability Enrolment Guidelines
Individual Education Plan Guidelines
Narrative Reporting Guidelines

Policy No: 02:2015

RATIONALE

Tasmanian Catholic Education ensures that all students have equitable access to the benefits of education for life.

'All in the school...community should recognise it as a place where all people, including those who live in poverty or who are marginalised, disenfranchised or suffering from health conditions, have their rights and dignity upheld.'

Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools, 2008

The concept of equity extends well beyond education to society itself. In Tasmanian Catholic Education, equity is based on the philosophy that schools should, without question, and on the same basis, provide for the needs of all children in their communities. Schools welcome all children and adolescents to a place of learning, and celebrate diversity in ability, as well as cultural, racial, ethnic and social background. It is a commitment to educate each student to their potential in a mainstream educational setting.

'Australian Schooling promotes equity and excellence which means that governments and all school sectors must provide all students with access to high quality schooling that is free from discrimination based on gender, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy, culture, ethnicity, religion, health or disability, socio-economic background or geographic location...'

*The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young
Australians, December 2008*

Tasmanian Catholic Education focuses on creating an environment that supports and nurtures all students. Equity in Catholic Education is founded in the Catholic tradition and informed by current research and legislation.

DEFINITIONS

Equity '...the concept of equal access to school education and the fair and just distribution of benefits from the school education system. The concept is based on the belief that all children have the right to an effective education'.

The National Strategy for Equity in School, 1994

The term **equity** encompasses a wide variety of educational adjustments, programs, and strategies that enable access and participation to educational programmes on 'the same basis' as other students.

It requires an allocation of support and resources according to a student's level of need and includes a recognition that some students require additional resources in order to have an equal opportunity.

IMPACTS OF LEGISLATION ON THIS POLICY

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

In Australia, people with disabilities have their rights protected through the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). **Disability**, in relation to a person, means:

- (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
 - (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
 - (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
 - (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
 - (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
 - (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
 - (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;
- and includes a disability that:
- (h) presently exists; or
 - (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - (j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that

disability); or
(k) is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a **disability** that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability. It ensures that people with disabilities are treated on the 'same basis' as non-disabled people.¹

Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education (2005)

The Disability Standards for Education (2005) specify how education and training are to be made accessible to students with disabilities. They provide clarity around the responsibilities of education and training service providers under the Disability Discrimination Act, and the rights of people with disabilities in relation to education and training.²

Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act (1998)

In 1998, Tasmania enacted anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination in relation to a wide range of attributes, including disability.

POLICY

Catholic Education Tasmania is committed to providing accessible and equitable educational opportunities to its diverse student population.

In making this commitment, Catholic Education Tasmania:

- recognises that all students can learn and achieve according to their individual potential.
- aims to provide learning and teaching practices that promote equity, and are socially and culturally responsive, in order to ensure equitable opportunities for each student's success.

¹ <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/comlaw>

² <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/comlaw>

PRINCIPLES

1. All personnel in the school community contribute to equity in education. Principles of equity inform and permeate all policies and practices.
2. Students with a wide range of ability and educational needs are supported in all levels of Catholic education with effective provision and use of human and material resources.
3. Schools should respond to diversity of need and experience, respecting distinctive cultural and racial identities, and valuing contributions of all ability groups by making appropriate educational provision within the curriculum. Educational services provided will reflect the diverse needs and varying preferences of all students.
4. Schools provide a learning environment that is free from harassment, bias and discriminatory practices and promotes personal respect and physical and emotional safety.
5. Schools should aim to educate all students enrolled with programs to match the capabilities and needs of the students in the least restrictive environment. The content, language and methodology of the education programs should be differentiated in order to meet the diverse educational needs of students.
6. Schools should provide processes for collaborative decision-making involving parents, carers, teachers, professionals, support personnel and children and young persons. This process recognises that there may be differing views and expectations of the purpose of education which need to be acknowledged and valued in order to develop effective partnerships.
7. Financial support for students, as identified in criteria set by the Commonwealth and State Governments, is a co responsibility of all those involved in Catholic Education in Tasmania, and will be allocated as per the current funding agreements and guidelines.
8. Educational services to students with disabilities will be provided in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and related Disability Standards for Education (2005), and the Tasmanian Education Act (1994).

INDICATORS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Indicators - System, Region and Schools

- Principles of equity and social justice are embedded in policy, practices and decision-making at all levels.
- Professional learning opportunities are provided to enhance an understanding of the recognition of differences and the factors that contribute to educational disadvantage, especially an appreciation of factors such as: poverty, gender, disability, sexuality and cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Community capacity is built through effective partnerships within the school community and of the agencies responsible for supporting children, young people and their families.
- Evidence of effective delivery of inclusive education is documented and disseminated.
- Plans reflect an ethos, organisation, culture and values underpinned by principles of social justice and democratic processes.
- Data on access, participation, outcomes and retention of diverse groups are used to evaluate progress, to identify priorities for further action, to plan for improvement and to inform professional learning communities.

Indicators – Learning and Teaching

- There is a culture that is underpinned by high expectations for all.
- Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are aligned and meet the needs of diverse student groups.
- Curriculum programs are informed by student outcome data and by current research relevant to diverse student needs.
- Teachers make connections between the knowledge and skills that students bring from their homes and communities to the knowledge and skills they need for success in schooling.

- Students, parents/carers are recognised as partners together with teachers in the teaching/learning process and opportunities are provided for communication between all.
- Evaluation of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment provides evidence that the interests, skills, knowledge and experiences of diverse groups are central features in the design of learning.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Tasmanian Catholic Education Office:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Student With Disability Enrolment Guidelines
- Individual Education Plan Guidelines
- Narrative Reporting Guidelines

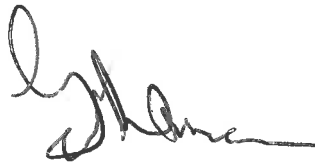
FORMS

Nil

APPENDICES

Nil

SIGNED:



Chairman of the TCEC

DATE:

6 August 2015

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