



To : All Parish Priests, Principals, and Preference Committee Members

From : Bishop Steve Lowe

Date : 10 March 2017

Changes to Preference of Enrolment Criteria

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Last year I signalled to you, that along with my fellow Bishops, we were considering changes to the criteria for gaining preference enrolment in a Catholic School. The changes relate primarily to Preference criteria 5.4.

In November 2016 the Bishops' Conference released the new defined criteria. A copy along with the rationale for such a change and guidelines are **attached/enclosed**.

To ensure that the new criteria is read and understood by all, and to avoid giving parents seeking enrolment for their children false hope I ask that Parish Priests, Principals and Preference committees meet together to discuss **all the criteria**.

In particular Criteria 5.4 refers to **an adult with a familial connection who is actively involved in the child's upbringing**. The guidelines further elaborate that this adult must **live in close proximity** to the child. Close proximity does not mean cyber proximity or family members living in the next city! However, close proximity may vary for **your parish and school community**. As the local Parish Priest, Principal and Preference Committee you need to be in agreement on your understanding of how **being actively involved in the child's upbringing and close proximity** work in your parish, hence the importance of these meetings. Your local decisions need to be documented so there is consistency when there is a new priest or principal.

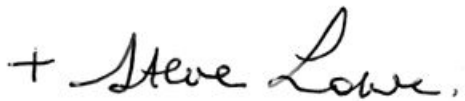
I recognise that the implementation of the new policy will have an adverse effect on families who currently have been granted preference under 5.4. It is not my intention to see families split by this change in policy, therefore if you have a pupil in your school who is 5.4, their siblings should be automatically granted Preference 5.4 for your school using the old criteria.

For students leaving our primary schools to go to one of our Colleges, the new 5.4 criteria will apply unless a sibling is already in the College and enrolled as a 5.4 student.

For all other families seeking Preference for Enrolment, the new criteria applies.

New Preference cards are currently being printed and will be available before the end of March.

Yours sincerely in Christ the Good Shepherd

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Steve Lowe,". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

✠ Steve Lowe
BISHOP OF HAMILTON