



Wherever you
choose, belong to
something greater

2026 school selection
made simple



Catholic Schools
Parramatta Diocese



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It's usually after making the biggest decisions of our lives that we realise how much our choices have shaped our journey and who we are.

The same applies to choosing a school for your child. We don't underestimate the importance of this process. It will shape your family for years to come. We understand this can be an overwhelming thought, but this guide has been created specifically to give you comfort and confidence that you are asking the right questions to set your child up for success and be all they can be - at a school that is suited to them.





Step 1: Source reputable information.

When researching different schools, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the massive amount of information available and unsure where to begin. It helps to focus on these key sources of truth:

- **Word of mouth:** Speak to family and trusted friends about their schools.
- **In-person:** Visit schools by calling and arranging a time to take a tour or attend an open day.
- **Official school channels:** Check out school websites or social media pages, collect brochures or flyers from schools, and scan your local paper for features about schools in the area.

School websites host policies and annual reports, which can be incredibly insightful. Many school websites now also feature virtual tours if you are unable to visit the school in person.

- **Government resources:** To find out which schools are available to you, use the [Australian Government's My School website](#) to find government, Catholic and independent schools across Australia.





Step 2: Identify your must-haves.

Consider what your ideal school looks like by identifying the factors that will be most important to you and your child to make a decision. These can be:

- **Location:** Do you need the school to be within walking distance or are you comfortable with the public transport options?
- **Cost:** Can you afford the fees, uniforms, books and equipment required? If unsure, does the school have any financial assistance or scholarships available?
- **Religion or values:** Is religious education a key consideration for your family? Or does your chosen school need to align with your values?
- **Eligibility:** Are you eligible for the school you are considering, or are there any waiting lists? You can contact the schools directly to find out more about their requirements.

Step 3: Consider the whole experience.

The best schools recognise the importance of social as well as academic growth. They take every opportunity to celebrate the achievements of all students. This type of school offers an environment where every child feels valued, important and supported in their learning and development, and empowered to strive for greatness.

If this is important to you, start by asking the school you are considering the below questions.

- How will this school actively encourage the whole experience of your child?
- What are the extracurricular activities available to your child?
- Does this school embrace complex conversations and learning about the issues that face the younger generation? Discussing important topics like mental health, personal and online safety, etc.
- Does this school embrace continual learning and striving for excellence for its staff too?
- Does this school interact positively with the wider community? This can be through volunteering, fundraising and connecting with community groups from all walks of life.
- Is communication at this school consistent, open and accessible to you and your child?





Step 4: Consider your child's abilities and interests.

The most crucial step in the school selection process is deeply considering your child's interests, abilities and needs. The aim of education is to ensure that every individual child achieves their full potential and is empowered to strive for greatness.

Ask yourself and your child the below questions to find out what's important to you both.

- Does your child have any special learning, language or physical needs?
- What is your child's learning style? i.e. visual, verbal, hands-on, in groups, or by themselves?
- Is your child interested in a particular sport, language, creative or performing arts?

Your choice of school should reflect what best suits your child.

Is your child starting school for the first time?

If your child is turning five years old on or before 31 July, they are eligible for enrolment in Kindergarten that year. All children must be enrolled in school by the time they turn six. During this time, consider your child's school readiness.

School readiness is something you can discuss with your child's prospective school. As part of an enrolment interview, a school representative will meet with you and your child and will be able to provide professional advice. You can also seek advice and feedback from your child's daycare centre or preschool.

Start by asking yourself these questions.

- Does your child have the confidence to ask for help or assistance when they need it?
- Can they identify their own belongings?
- Can they open a school lunch box?
- Can they eat and drink by themselves?
- Does your child play and relate well with other children?
- Are they able to accept direction from others?
- Are they able to go to the toilet by themselves?
- Is your child able to settle themselves when they get upset?





Step 5: Look long-term.

Think about your child in the next 5-10 years and consider whether the school you are looking at has the opportunities, experienced staff and resources to help your child reach their full potential.

A good way to get an understanding of this is to enquire about the school's alumni network. Are past students reflective of the kind of person you want your child to look up to for inspiration? Learn about the notable former students who have gone on to be successful in their lives. Look at the awards and achievements of the school and its students over time.



Step 6: Attend an Open Day or plan a school visit.

One of the best ways to determine the culture of a school is to visit. Go during school hours on a regular day, if possible, to see how things work day-to-day. Don't be afraid to ask questions to get a better understanding of the school environment.

Below are some suggested questions you may find useful for a school visit.

- How will my child learn? (This is much more useful than just asking what they will learn, which is mostly the same across all schools in NSW).
- How will you get to know my child as a learner?
- How will you make learning relevant for my child?
- How will you involve my child in learning?
- What does the learning environment look like?
- How will you measure success in learning? (The answer should be something more than test scores and NAPLAN or HSC results.)
- How will you involve us as parents/carers in our child's learning and in the life of the school?
- How do you use technology to enable learning?
- What will parent/carer engagement, including communication, look like?
- What are some of the other opportunities available to my child at the school?



Looking for a Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) school?

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) leads 80 schools (known as systemic or Diocesan schools) across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. When your child attends a CSPD school, they belong to something greater. They become part of a network that upholds, honours and strives for excellence so that your child can achieve their full potential.

The shared goal across all CSPD schools is to provide an education that cultivates the whole child - academically, socially, spiritually and emotionally.

As well as a broad and flexible curriculum, and a range of extracurricular activities, our schools have state-of-the-art facilities and technologies to enhance learning - both inside and outside the classroom.

We offer a number of different pathways, additional learning opportunities and support programs to cater to your child's individual needs, whatever their interests, skills, strengths or challenges as learners may be. At a CSPD school, your child's wellbeing and safety are important to us. Our schools are places where students are nurtured to grow, belong and strive for greatness.



Affordable alternative to private schools.

We understand the financial demands placed on families. That's why CSPD schools are an affordable alternative to high-fee private schools - they are funded by the Australian and NSW governments in addition to modest school fees and fundraising.

We seek to keep fees as low as possible to allow access to a Catholic education for all families so that no child who meets the enrolment criteria will be refused enrolment or disadvantaged because of a family's financial circumstances.

As a guide, the cost of a Catholic education is around \$8-\$9 per day for Kindergarten and \$15-\$16 per day for a child in Year 7. Significant discounts apply for siblings - see our website for full fee details. Flexible payment options are offered to all families in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Parramatta at the start of each year. This provides families with the opportunity to select a payment plan that best suits their financial circumstances. Payments can be made via direct debit/credit card or BPay on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis at no additional charge.

No child will be refused enrolment in a Catholic school because of a family's inability to pay school fees. Support with fees is available - please make an appointment for a confidential conversation with the school principal.

A place to belong

Students in our schools are from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs. Your child will not feel out of place if they attend a Catholic school and don't share this faith. Our education, including classroom teaching, is respectful of all learners and is based on the foundational belief in the dignity of every person. Moving from a government school to a Catholic school is perfectly fine and there is no requirement that your child must attend a Catholic primary to be accepted into a Catholic secondary school. When spaces are limited, preference is given based on the CSPD enrolment policy.

While our schools share our Catholic faith, families of all backgrounds and beliefs who wish to apply for enrolment are welcome.

Unlike government schools, CSPD schools do not have 'catchment zones' that dictate which schools your child can attend, so you can apply to enrol your child in any of our schools, regardless of where you live.

We accept enrolments in all grades at any time of the year (where places are available), although the main enrolment period for Kindergarten and Year 7 is in March one year prior to your child's proposed starting year at the school.

Learn more

For more information about our CSPD schools, Vocational Education and Training, trade training opportunities, the **CAPTIVATE** creative and performing arts program and much more, visit parra.catholic.edu.au.



parra.catholic.edu.au

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