

DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



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Over the years, Catholic schools have made a significant contribution not just to the life of the Catholic Church, but also to the life of the nation as a whole. Catholic schools are places of great ethnic richness, they are characterised by tolerance, respect, a genuine spirit of enquiry and the search for truth. The education and formation that takes place in our Catholic schools is part of our contribution to the *Common Good* of society as a whole. Perhaps for these reasons and for the way children are cared for and valued, so many parents choose to send their children to a Catholic school.

Education is one of the most powerful weapons in combating poverty and in helping children to reach their full potential as human beings. So Catholic education is part of the Church's effort to realise Christ's desire for us all that we might "*have life, and have it to the full.*" (John 10:9) This is achieved not just in the teaching of RE, but by a whole system of gospel-based values encompassing the way everyone relates to each other in all that we do and in extracurricular activities, in other words by the whole Catholic ethos of the school. Here we find a genuine means of exposing young people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and of helping them to respond to Christ's invitation to "follow me".

I am particularly grateful for those who participate in Catholic education and who craft this great treasure. Parents who choose a Catholic school and often go the extra mile to contribute to its life and help in practical ways with the running of a school. Over the years our forefathers fought hard to establish and maintain Catholic Education in these lands. Now it is our turn to work together to ensure that Catholic Education is maintained, supported and enabled to grow and develop for the future generations of children across the Diocese of Brentwood.

Rt Rev Alan Williams, sm
Bishop of Brentwood

I am delighted to be able to encourage you to apply to your local Catholic school, Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School. Our Catholic schools foster values of honesty, respect and tolerance and encourage an atmosphere of high expectation conducive to hard work. At the same time, our schools are places where you will see Christ at the centre of the enterprise with a Catholic ethos that is palpable. Our teachers and support staff strive to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential, explore their individual talents and learn to appreciate, nurture and protect the world in which we live.

Learning opportunities are challenging and stimulating, both within the classroom and through a wide range of activities out of it. Each child is supported to grow in confidence and develop attitudes and skills to enable them to make a significant contribution to wider society. The education of the whole child is a fundamental principle that underpins the approach taken in our Catholic schools.

Making the decision about which school a parent sends their child to is an extremely important one and as a teacher I hope the information that you have received enables you to make an informed choice that is right for you. I encourage you to visit your local Catholic school when you have the opportunity to do so, in order to feel the sense of warmth, commitment and excellence provided to our young people.

Our Catholic schools look forward to working with parents as they are the child's first, best and most important educator. Schools recognise that developing this partnership with parents is crucial because with mutual understanding and shared responsibility towards achieving the best educational outcomes for children we are more likely to succeed.

Robert Simpson
Director of Education