“It is from its Catholic Identity that the school derives its original characteristics and its structure as a genuine instrument of the Church, a real and specific pastoral ministry. The Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out.” n 11.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millenium 1997
A Letter from the Director of Schools

Sheet 1  Promoting Why?
Sheet 2  Promoting What?
Sheet 3  Promoting By Whom?
Sheet 4  Promoting How - Promotional Basics
Sheet 5  Practical Ideas - General Basics
Sheet 6  Written Communications
Sheet 7  Promotional Materials

Inclusions

Action Sheets 1 - 7
Diocesan Catholic Schools Brochure | Wollongong CEO 2006
Marketing for Better Schools Book Cover | Sydney CEO 2003
School Posters | Stella Maris, Shellharbour, St Michael’s, Nowra & Holy Spirit College, Bellambi
School Brochure | Stella Maris Parish Primary, Shellharbour
General School Enrolment Poster | Learn, Lead, Support, Grow
General Enrolment Poster | Diocese of Wollongong Enrol Now
School Media Release Example
Australian Catholic Schools | National Catholic Education Commission
Media Contact List
Enrolment Letters | School, Parish, Child, Baptism
Promoting Why?

The promotion of Catholic School Education in our Diocese is a means of:

- Acknowledging the school as a vital part of the Parish
- Spreading an understanding of Catholic faith, doctrine and tradition
- Acknowledging and understanding the unique mission of the Catholic school
- Recognising and celebrating our excellence and achievements
- Reinforcing the communal nature of our schools
- Sustaining our schools and the system of schools

Promoting our Catholic Schools is no longer an option it is an imperative.

Our schools are involved in competition for:

- students
- staff
- government funding
- community acceptance and support

Parents will make decisions about their child’s schooling based not on what has gone before but on what you convince them is the best education to meet the total needs of their child. They have choice and they will exercise it. If you don’t tell them about your school, they will go to the people who do communicate with them.
Promoting What?

School promotion should:

• Clearly outline the Christian values that underlie our Catholic schools

• Foster relationships between schools, their communities and the Diocese of Wollongong System of Schools

• Encourage collaboration and unity in diversity between Catholic schools

• Provide an understanding of the educational values of a school and an overview of its curricula and activities

• Invite, inform and welcome Catholic families and those seeking a Christian education in the Catholic faith, to Catholic schools.

• Recognise and Celebrate quality learning and teaching,

• Recognise and Celebrate school, staff and student achievement
We have an excellent product to promote: Quality Catholic learning and teaching in a faith-filled, caring and secure environment. We know it’s a good product but unless we promote it, future generations will never know.

Yours is a Catholic School where Christian Values and a Catholic Tradition underlie all that you do. Yours is a school which Celebrates being Catholic as part of the Catholic parish community. As an educational institution you must surely promote the breadth of the curriculum and the quality learning experiences to which children will be exposed. In addition, any extra-curricular activities should be highlighted.

In “Super Marketing your School” Tedd Myers emphasises that marketing a school is not simply advertising to sell:

“…it is about the way the principal presents themselves, about leadership style, the way they deal with parents, about the appearance of the school, the students, their behaviour in and out of school. It’s about every conversation and speech you make – every written communication. It’s about the breadth of your school’s curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Marketing is especially about the effectiveness of classroom teaching and learning.”

As a living community, your school should be its best advertisement. In many ways it is fair to say that the best advertisement for your school is a happy and well educated child. Our schools must be first and foremost, places of educational excellence where the lessons of today prepare us for the challenges of tomorrow.

Parents want to know that their children are in a safe and supportive environment. All duty of care should be constantly emphasised with staff and all pastoral care of students emphasised with parents. This includes having strong and effective anti-bullying practices.
Even the best quality products must be promoted to sell. Promoting Catholic schools is a means of promoting the “Good News.”

The Catholic Education Office has a role at a general promotional level but each school has a role in its own self promotion.

Having staff on side means that the whole school appreciates the value of all the school does to promote itself. All staff have a role and it is a shared role. Staff may have many useful ideas. Ask them.

A Promotions Committee that looks after the schools media profile can help share the load.

Students have many useful ideas about making the school look more appealing. Ask them and listen.

The Parish Priest is in a unique position to spread the word, to promote and welcome enrolment in the Parish Primary School and to support enrolment in Diocesan Secondary Schools.
Promoting How?

Some Promotional Basics

Promotion is based upon the idea that you have something worthwhile to offer, and that when people find out about it, they will want it! It is the process or technique of promoting, selling, or distributing a product or service.

It usually involves the six P's.

People: This refers to any person who could be interested in a Catholic school.

Price: The tuition/fees structure.

Product: The academic, physical, spiritual, emotional and co-curricular programs you offer.

Place: The school’s buildings as well as your demographic location and community.

Positioning: Identifying features that make you stand out from your competitors.

Promotion: Consists of all programs, events, publications, advertising, media that enhance the quality, understanding, awareness, appreciation and image of your school in the minds of students, the people with whom it relates and the general public.

If you are to successfully promote your school the focus should be on the needs of the potential users of the school.

That means you have to pay attention to what your students and their parents/caregivers need from you. You have to be responsive to those needs. The response will always be guided by your school’s Vision and Mission and by available resources.
Some Practical Ideas

**General Basics**

**School Signage**

How adequate is school signage?

Is it clear and easily seen by a person entering the school grounds?

Is it friendly: does it anywhere say welcome?

If you have a large changeable sign, is its news always current?

**The Reception Area**

What is it in your school Reception Area that says *WELCOME*?

What images say that yours is a Catholic School?

What training about enrolment enquiries has your Reception staff been given?

**Telephone Reception**

The person who answers the phone is your school’s frontline to the community.

Is there a standard manner which is expected for answering the phone?

Is there a standard script when people enquire about enrolment?
The School Website

This is very important especially for those moving into an area. It needs to be welcoming. The School Newsletter and the News & Events pages should be current.

Building Relationships between High School and Feeder Primary Schools

The closer the relationship between the High School and the Parish Primary Schools which are viewed as feeder schools, the greater the likelihood that students will proceed to the Catholic High School.

Open Days/Information Evenings/Tours of School facilities

These need to be well advertised through your own Newsletter but also in Parish Bulletins and the local paper where appropriate. Certainly, Year 7, Year 11 and Kindergarten Information sessions are standard practice but some schools offer an opportunity to visit facilities on a regular basis throughout the year.
School Assemblies & Mass
What better way to have a positive relationship with your school and parent community than by having them witness achievement and recognition at school gatherings including regular and special event assemblies.

Parents and Grandparent Days and Masses, Special Class or Year Grade Mass and the like are promoting your Catholic school and spreading confidence that it is a good and caring school.

Visitors
Every visitor to your school is a potential source of promoting the school. Be they a VIP who receives a welcome and gets a good impression or a parent or grandparent attending an assembly or special mass or other function, the quality of their reception and the impression with which they leave will be transferred into the community at large.

Speak to students about the way they can be hospitable when a visitor enters the school.

A greeting and “can I help you?” from a student creates a very positive impression.
Baptism and Confirmation Records

Making contact with potential enrollees via the Parish records of Baptisms and Confirmations can be a useful tool for informing parents about Kindergarten or Year 7 Enrolment.

A letter to a potential Kindergarten student’s parents based on their baptismal record is a way of reminding those who do not have regular contact with the Parish that a Catholic Primary School is a real option for them.

Even offering some basic school and parish information at the point of Baptism may be useful in maintaining a link with parents.

Likewise, parents who may not have their child in the Parish Primary School but who have supported their child’s Confirmation, can be reminded that application to a Catholic High School is a real option open to them.

Visiting Local Preschools

Principals of Primary Schools have a natural market through the preschools in their local area and with the parents who use those preschools.
Written Communications

Letter of Offer of a Place
This is the first written communication that you will have with new parents. It is vitally important that it send a welcoming message and make a first good impression!

It is a practice in some schools for a combined letter of welcome from both the principal and parish priest. This practice can set a tone of welcome from the school and the parish.

Some schools send the enrolling student a letter of their own welcoming them to their new school.

School Newsletter
The School Newsletter is an avenue for good communication with parents as well as a means of celebrating student achievement and keeping the school community in touch with the wider community.

It is well to remember that school newsletters have an audience beyond parents. Friends and relatives read them and form impressions about the school from what is reported and the tone that the principal’s message and other staff messages take.
Notes and Letters
A properly written note or letter says that your school is a professional organisation which maintains business standards.

School Reports & Interviews
Standardised reporting has become prescribed but comments on reports must always be couched in positive language.

Likewise, parent-teacher interviews should be seen as an opportunity to demonstrate that the school cares for the academic and social well-being of children and young people.

The Annual School Report
This is another opportunity to project a positive image of the school. There is a great deal of latitude on how the principal reports on various aspects of school life and lists major achievements for the past year. Disclosing public information on finances and student achievement on State-wide tests demonstrates an openness that says that the school is responsible to its community.

The School Magazine
All High Schools and some Primary Schools are able to collate their achievements and community memories in a Year Book or Annual School Magazine. The audience will reach far beyond the children and their parents and will be an archive of the school life for years to come. The quality of the magazine will reflect on the perceived quality of the school.
Promotional Material

Enrolment Application Portfolio
It is common for each school to have a package of material to hand out to prospective parents. This usually consists of a folder in which can be placed the Enrolment Form and Policy, together with any brochures or other advertising materials for newcomers. A copy of a current School Newsletter might also be included. A list of School Fees and charges could be included. It is useful to have a simple colourful school brochure that outlines your school philosophy and strengths, makes clear your geographic location and gives clear contact details. This doesn’t have to be new material. It is the same basic information that should be posted on your School Website: Principals Message, Profile of the School etc.

Enrolment Advertising
Schools need to consider the placement of Local Newspaper Advertisements throughout the year but especially during Term 1 and 2. Consideration should be given to these advertisements being made with two or three neighbouring schools as you will get the benefit of running the advertisement three times for the same cost of one school running it only once. Enrolment Advertisement copy needs to cover the basic information of Who, What, When and Where and include a good graphic (photo of children preferred).

If you have a school brochure do you make it available through the local Real Estate Agent or other commercial business?

School News in Local Papers
Regional Local Newspapers are pleased to include short School News items especially when a good digital photograph accompanies the text. Get in touch with your local classifieds paper and be prepared to run advertisements with them at other times. e.g. They might offer a special rate for Features. Running a regular enrolment’s advertisement once a fortnight might get you a cut rate.
Promoting Educational Excellence

Every opportunity to showcase the work of teachers and students to the public should be utilised. This may be as simple as having displays of student work in the library or foyer of the school, where parents and visitors may be given a sense of student achievement, to publicity in the local media when a student or students make a notable achievement in Public Speaking, Performing Arts, Sports excellence etc.

In a more formal manner, the Awards Systems that exist at local, state and national level must be considered as opportunities to promote quality educational achievement. These exist for work by students, teachers and support staff and by parents. A prepared nomination for the Diocesan Excellence in Schooling Awards in September would also serve for submission to the National Awards for Quality Schooling in October or the local Australian College of Educators Awards.

Enrolment Banner

Many schools are in prominent locations. A colourful Enrolment Banner displayed at eye level will be seen by passers-by and regular visitors alike. It is a visual reminder that applications are open.
Using the Catholic Education Office Circular to Schools, Diocesan News Publications and CEO Website.

All schools are in a position to submit News Stories and photographs for publication in the Circular to Schools, the Diocesan News and the CEO Website. These are avenues for promoting your school which cost nothing and which are seen by thousands of readers or viewers.

The News section of the Website is accessed by colleagues, peers, students and members of the public. Public Diocesan events are reported and a gallery of photos can be accessed. Stories from schools can also be featured. This is an easy way for an audience to download photographs taken at an event. The same story would no doubt be posted on your own school website.

The Circular to Schools is a fortnightly publication and records Diocesan and local school student events. A good photograph will tell the story so only a paragraph or two is needed to accompany photographs. The Circular is distributed to all schools, system and congregational as well as all staff in Catholic Church Offices, Leaders of Congregations and all parish priests. The same effort in writing a news story for the Circular can be shared by sending it also to the local newspaper.
The Diocesan News is a quarterly publication of the Diocese of Wollongong and is distributed to all schools and to all parishes. An Education News Page and a two or three page In Schools spread are usually included. Small snippets and accompanying photographs are all that is required for In Schools.

**Technologically Aware Parents**

Many parents are technology natives.

Can you capitalise on this?

- Do you send emails and text messages?

- Can parents access children’s home work or school work through the internet?

- Is the current School Newsletter posted on your website?

- Can parents leave voice messages on your phone system?

- Can fees be paid electronically?