# Roman Catholic Orphan School

1837 – 1844
**Other Names:**   • Institute for Destitute Catholic Children

# Details

The Roman Catholic Orphan School was established at Waverley House, a large home in Waverley, in 1837. It was the first Catholic orphanage in Australia. It was opened in response to community concerns about Catholic children being placed in the government-run Protestant orphan schools, where they were raised as Protestants, not Catholics. The home was run by the Catholic archdiocese of Sydney, but received financial support from the State Government. The Home had capacity for approximately 100 children. It took in both girls and boys, housing them in separate 'schools'. The children were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and were sent to apprenticeships once old enough. The Home closed in 1844.

In December 1840 it was reported in the *Australasian Chronicle* that a dinner had been held for the children at the Orphan School, funded by a local benefactor. The children ate roast beef, mutton, vegetables, and plum pudding. The benefactor requested that the dinner be an annual event for the children, held at her expense.

In November 1841 the Roman Catholic Orphan School was struck by lightning during a large storm, which resulted in the deaths of three children at the Home, and many others being knocked to the ground but not receiving significant injuries. The Home itself was also damaged during the storm.

In 1844, following the opening of the Roman Catholic Orphan School at Paramatta, the school at Waverley closed, and all 114 children in residence were transferred to the Paramatta Home.

## Gallery



**Waverley House**

**Description:** This is a photograph of Waverley House, which housed the Roman Catholic Orphan School from 1837-1844, and then the Church of England Orphanage during the 1890s and 1900s, before it was demolished in 1904. The photograph shows the front a two-storey mansion facing the road, with a front path leading through hedges up to the house. A man can be seen walking past the house. This photograph is undated, the date given is an estimate.

# More info

## Related Entries

**Run by**

- Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney (1821 - current)

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