



## **Catholic Education Diocese of Ballarat**

### **Pastoral Care Policy**

#### **RATIONALE**

Pastoral Care is based on respect for the dignity and uniqueness of the individual person who is made in the image of God. It is an individual and community response to Jesus' call to: *love one another as I have loved you* (John 13.34). When Catholic Education is faithful to the call of the Gospel, compassion, justice and reconciliation are evident throughout the life of the education community.

#### **DEFINITION**

*Pastoral Care:* The action taken within the educational community by its leaders and community members to promote and enhance the wellbeing of the individual of a personal, social, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual nature. Key elements of wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council, through the Catholic Education Office, requires every Catholic school in the Diocese to formulate its own policy and procedures on Pastoral Care. Schools will also develop related policies and procedures in the areas of

- Safe school environment (anti-bullying and anti harassment)
- Student behaviour management
- Negotiated transfer of students in circumstances of a serious nature
- Serious wrongful behaviour and expulsion of students
- Special needs provision, including gifted and talented students
- Critical incident management
- First Aid and medication
- Safe Internet use
- Occupational Health and Safety.

Such policies and procedures should be consistent with the principles expressed in this policy statement and be compliant with relevant legislative requirements.

#### **PRINCIPLES**

- Foundational to the nature of pastoral care in Catholic Education is the belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis 1:27*), with the inherent dignity that this implies. Each is created as a social being, with the mutual rights, obligations and needs that this implies.

- Pastoral care in Catholic Education affirms and gives expression to the belief that *‘the person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching.’*
- Schools in the Ballarat Diocese exercise their pastoral responsibilities under the leadership of the Principal. Parents exercise their responsibility by providing positive support and collaborative engagement with the school in support of student and school community wellbeing
- Respectful and cooperative school-family relationships provide an effective channel of pastoral care for students. Schools and families share responsibility for developing and maintaining such relationships of trust, characterised by respect for the goodwill of the other and a willingness to engage collaboratively
- Student and Staff wellbeing is best achieved within a school environment that is safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering, where diversity is respected and valued, where human rights and the common good are honoured, where inter-relationships are positive, where students experience connectedness and engagement, and where those experiencing difficulty or special need receive particular care and support
- Enhanced student wellbeing contributes significantly to improved student learning outcomes. Effective pastoral care is therefore recognised as promoting the achievement of learning outcomes and thus contributing to a School Improvement Framework
- Effective whole-of-school approaches to pastoral care require age-appropriate behavioural education and skilling of students, and pastorally driven management of student behaviour through processes focused on both individual and community wellbeing, and on ensuring a just and reasonable balance of individual and community rights, needs and responsibilities
- Effective school-community partnerships offer opportunities for networks of pastoral care for students. Appropriate local services and agencies may be identified, and links or partnerships developed, to support the needs of students and their families and to enhance the school’s own pastoral initiatives.

**RATIFIED BY:** BDSB May 20, 2010

**To be reviewed:** 2015

## **NOTES AND REFERENCES**

Diocesan Vision Statement

Diocesan Strategic Plan 2009 – 2011

Pastoral Care Policy CECV (2008)

Working with Children Act 2006

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority Minimum Standards

National Safe Schools Framework 2004

## APPENDIX ONE

### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

- All members of Catholic Education Communities
  - Recognise the dignity of the human person
  - Contribute to a welcoming and inclusive community
  - Recognise the importance of quality relationships for a healthy community
  - Be compassionate and forgiving
- The rights and responsibilities of all members of the education community regarding Pastoral Care will be acknowledged and clearly communicated
- Relevant policies will be linked to the Pastoral Care Policy and Procedures in a way that recognises Pastoral Care as a unifying focus for the spiritual, physical, academic, social and emotional aspects of Catholic Education (See below)
- Pastoral Care policies and programs will recognise, respect and welcome cultural and other individual differences
- All members of Catholic Education Communities will
  - Provide contemporary teaching and learning
  - Foster networks of care
  - Respect and support diverse family structures
  - Value different cultural perspectives and traditions
  - Provide opportunities for the development of pastoral care
  - Commit to organisational structures that benefit individuals and the education community
- All members of Catholic Education Communities will
  - Enhance school climate and build community through shared responsibility and the relationships which exist amongst parents, teacher and students
  - Celebrate Catholic Education in the Diocese through liturgies, dinners, conferences and special events
- Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Ballarat will explore Pastoral Care programs which assist in the development of an environment which is safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering
- Pastoral Care programs will be grounded in Catholic values and address the developmental needs of students
- Programs will address relationships, drug education, child protection, peer support, grief and loss, sexuality, self worth, values education and resilience
- Schools will implement current and relevant programs to achieve student well being (See Appendix 2)
- Each school in the Diocese will offer a curriculum which is
  - comprehensive and inclusive based on the principles of quality learning for all
  - characterized by the use of quality teaching strategies and responsive to the individual learning needs of students

- School discipline policies will be integrated with the Pastoral Care Policy of the school and contain a clear statement **forbidding** the use of corporal punishment
- Student behaviour management in Catholic schools ought to seek to protect personal and school community safety, heal destructive behaviours, restore relationships, encourage reconciliation, enhance wellbeing, foster responsibility, enable personal growth, promote the common good and the significance of resilience
- Education Officers from the Catholic Education Office, Centacare personnel and personnel from other agencies will be invited and available
  - to support the needs of students and families as required
  - to assist with planning, review and evaluation of Pastoral Care programs in diocesan schools.
- All members of the education community will
  - Be involved/consulted in the development and ongoing review and formal evaluation of Pastoral Care Policy
  - Ensure clear communication of policies and procedures which are subject to regular and ongoing evaluation
  - Develop Pastoral Care teams with responsibility for specific groups within the education community
  - Be supported by the Catholic Education Office which will provide suitable networks and professional learning for staff involved specifically with the pastoral care of students.

## APPENDIX TWO

Guiding principles, expectations and recommended procedures for developing and implementing behaviour management protocols and procedures are listed below in line with the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy

### **Policy development and review**

A school's pastoral care policy, and all related policies and procedures, should be developed collaboratively and reviewed periodically. They should be published and readily accessible to staff, students, parents and guardians.

### **Safe and supportive learning environments**

All Catholic schools are expected to have policies and procedures in place to address issues of bullying, harassment, child abuse and neglect. *The National Safe Schools Framework* is the appropriate model and resource by which schools can develop, implement and monitor their policies and procedures.

### **Management of critical incidents**

Procedures are required for ensuring appropriate care for individuals and for the school community in times of stress, for example if there is a critical incident or a death in the school community. Support is available to school leadership personnel and school communities through the Catholic Education Office Ballarat. Schools ought to also have arrangements in place for engaging external providers of care when needed.

### **Student behaviour management**

Student behaviour management in Catholic schools ought to seek to protect personal and school community safety, heal destructive behaviours, restore relationships, encourage reconciliation, enhance wellbeing, foster responsibility, enable personal growth, and promote the common good.

### **Negotiated transfer of students in circumstances of a serious nature**

In some serious circumstances, a change of school or a move to an alternative setting may be judged the most appropriate means by which a student's wellbeing can be responsibly supported or restored. Such a change, known as negotiated transfer, offers opportunity for personal growth, and for a fresh start in an environment more suited to the student's needs and circumstances. Negotiated transfer may also be an appropriate move by which the wellbeing of a school community can be protected (e.g. when a student's continuing presence poses a threat to that community's safety).

### **Serious wrongful behaviour and termination of enrolment of students**

Under the most serious and extreme of circumstances, when a student has repeatedly engaged in serious wrongful behaviour and all other appropriate behaviour management processes have proved unsuccessful and the serious behaviour persists, it may be judged that the only responsible action left is termination of enrolment. This is to be avoided in Catholic schools wherever possible. **Only the principal has the authority to terminate enrolment of a student, after consultation with the Director of Catholic Education, Ballarat and the agreement of the Canonical authority and respecting the autonomy of the congregational authority.**