

Introduction

Pastoral care is a demonstration of profound respect for the human dignity of each person who is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 26–27). This call to respect each person is inspired by the sacred Scriptures and brought to life by the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' life and teachings show all people 'the way, the truth and the life' (John 14: 6), inviting each to fullness (John 10:10). 'Throughout the Gospel, Jesus illuminates for us how we are called to live out our mission, approach our work and conduct our relationships with love, hope, dignity, compassion and forgiveness' (eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities, 2018, p.4).

The origin of the phrase 'pastoral care' is in the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd given to us in John's Gospel (John 10: 1–18). Here the Good Shepherd is the one who looks after his sheep and who is prepared to lay down his life for them. Likewise in the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15: 1–7; Matthew 18: 12–14) is found the image of a shepherd who has compassion for the 'little ones' who are at risk. Pastoral care of students then, is the kind of care that is exemplified for us by the person of Jesus Christ.

The Church's teachings are central to the moral, legal and mission driven responsibility of all Catholic schools to create nurturing environments where children and young people are respected, their voices heard and where they are safe and feel safe. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety, 2016, p.1).

In Catholic schools, all relationships, including those with students, staff and parents/carers, are built on unconditional positive regard. Every person has a responsibility to understand the integral role they play, individually and collectively. For adults in Catholic schools, nurturing the pastoral care, wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

'Pastoral care' is brought to life in Catholic school communities through the actions, interactions and attitudes of all community members. It is evident in the school's vision and mission statements, policies, procedures, curriculum, student support services and partnerships with parents, who are the first educators of their children (General Directory for Catechesis 226 & 227).

Purpose

The Pastoral Care of Students policy ensures that all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne have a pastoral care policy that documents strategies for creating and maintaining a school culture which ensures that children and young people are known, and feel safe, valued and respected. The school's pastoral care policy should articulate procedures and practices that:

- develop and enhance every students' wellbeing and sense of connectedness and belonging to their school as a faith-filled learning community
- cultivate safe, physical, emotional, mental, social and online environments that comply with relevant legislative and legal requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Definitions

Inclusion is the right to access and receive a full and engaging education (Introduction to the Principle of Inclusion: Child Safety in Catholic Schools in Victoria, 2018, p.4).

Catholic schools welcome all members of the community as equal, embracing diversity as a means for dialogue, engagement and deeper understandings of self, others and God. The uniqueness and sacred dignity of each person is celebrated, driven by the Gospel message of love and justice. These convictions guide the encounters, actions and pedagogical approaches that enable all children to learn and thrive (Introduction to the Principle of Inclusion: Child Safety in Catholic Schools in Victoria, 2018, p.4).

Pastoral care is a demonstration of profound respect for the human dignity of each person who is created in the image and likeness of God.

Pastoral care includes the decisions, structures and practices that nurture, support and assist a student to flourish and reach their spiritual, physical, cognitive, social and emotional potential so that they may come to a deeper understanding of their own humanness. The pastoral care of students in Catholic schools is focused on actions that promote health, wellbeing, resilience, academic outcomes, social capital and ethical decision making (Cross, 2014).

Student wellbeing is 'a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships and experiences at school' (Noble & Wyatt, 2008, p.21).

In Catholic school settings, a positive sense of pastoral care and wellbeing supports a base for rich learning that enables children and young people to flourish, give expression to their authentic selves and realise their unique potential. This holistic view recognises the sacredness, dignity and giftedness of each person (Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing, 2017, p.3).

Principles

Pastoral care in Catholic school communities:

- involves a commitment to creating safe, supportive, inclusive and hope-filled learning environments of welcome where human dignity is respected, diversity and inclusiveness are valued and authentic relationships are fostered
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- nurtures the wellbeing of every child in a Catholic school, 'their unique story, giftedness and temperament must be understood and valued in a way that enables love, respect, compassion, forgiveness and hope to thrive' (Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing, 2017, p.3)
- ensures that all members of the school community are responsible for creating a positive pastoral climate. Staff, students and parents/carers share responsibility for developing and maintaining open and cooperative relationships characterised by respect, trust, goodwill and a willingness to engage collaboratively. It is vital that all members of the school community work together to provide a consistent and supportive environment in which students may develop and grow towards maturity
- identifies and nurtures partnerships with appropriate services and agencies in order to support the pastoral care and wellbeing needs of every student

- responds to the pastoral and wellbeing needs of students and maintains appropriate confidentiality and privacy. Information is communicated, with necessary permissions, to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

Policy

School communities in the Archdiocese of Melbourne demonstrate effective pastoral care through the following strategies.

1. **Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools** supports schools to develop their pastoral care and wellbeing strategies by:
 - 1.1. providing coherent policy frameworks, guidance and resources (refer to External References section)
 - 1.2. developing targeted professional learning
 - 1.3. monitoring compliance through existing protocols including cyclical review as part of school improvement and Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requirements.
2. **Principals and school leaders** enhance their school's pastoral care and wellbeing by:
 - 2.1. utilising MACS Policy 2.26 Pastoral Care of Students, Horizons of Hope education framework, eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities, Identity and growth: A perspective for Catholic schools and the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework as the basis to inform and guide their curriculum planning, policies and practices
 - 2.2. supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their understanding of core Catholic principles including the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person
 - 2.3. engaging students and their parents/carers to collaboratively develop and periodically review practices
 - 2.4. ensuring whole-school approaches are known, understood and readily accessible to all members of the community.
3. **Teachers and school staff** support the pastoral care and wellbeing of students by:
 - 3.1. creating and maintaining safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments that enable the unique potential, gifts and innate qualities of each child to unfold and thrive
 - 3.2. understanding their duty of care and accountability in regard to legislation and compliance
 - 3.3. using relationship-based approaches to establish consistent expectations for behaviour
 - 3.4. working in partnership with parents/carers and families to build resilience and promote a positive sense of self.
4. **Students** contribute to developing positive pastoral learning environments and their own and other's wellbeing by:
 - 4.1. treating all members of the school community with respect and courtesy
 - 4.2. following school policies, procedures and guidelines
 - 4.3. taking responsibility for their actions
 - 4.4. reporting all concerns about wellbeing and safety
 - 4.5. cooperating with teachers, school staff and their parents/carers.

5. **Parents/guardians/carers** contribute to developing positive pastoral learning environments for their own and other children's wellbeing by:
 - 5.1. working respectfully, collaboratively and in partnership with staff and members of the school community to create high expectations
 - 5.2. explicitly teaching, modelling and promoting socially responsible behaviours
 - 5.3. promoting and upholding the core values of the school by supporting school policies and procedures.

Procedures

Pastoral Care at Emmanuel College

Emmanuel College's Catholic ethos is expressed in a safe and secure environment based on values of dignity, respect, justice and forgiveness, which fosters the development of the learning and faith community. The climate of Emmanuel College is what we impart by our attitudes and behaviours, about the values and ethics we maintain - it is the visible expression of faith, demonstrated by our concern and care for each other, especially the young people entrusted to our community.

Organisational structures have as their objective the total climate of relationships within the school community. They have the individual as their focus, and reflect the support, encouragement and loving care shown and experienced in the ethos of Gospel-based communities. With our life-giving focus, organisational structures should enable all to grow, to be affirmed in their dignity and worth as persons, to appreciate themselves, and to develop skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing and to develop interpersonal relationship skills.

The College has vertical homerooms and operates a house structure to:

- Increase students' social repertoire by broadening the range of social contact to which they are exposed
- Foster connectedness to the whole school community
- Provide proactive measures to improve mental health, resilience, safety and wellbeing
- Increase students' sense of responsibility for others in the school community.

A multi-aged homeroom provides an alternative peer group to:

- Enable opportunities to mix and be exposed to other intellectual, physical, social and emotional levels
- Help to minimize the impact of mid-adolescence, where students developmentally are more likely to have issues with regard to self-esteem, anti-social and high-risk behaviours.
- Provide extra support and connectedness
- Expose students to caring and positive relationships.

House operation is the responsibility of House teams and classroom teachers, convened and facilitated by the House Leaders, with the support of Pastoral Coordinators. This pastoral leadership team is convened and facilitated by the Deputy Principal, Campus Leader. All levels of college operation, including the work of house teams, subject departments, and pastoral/learning leadership teams converge in the core business of the college: working with young people in teaching-learning which is always underpinned by the wellbeing and safety of young people. These two areas are inextricably linked.

House teams are supported by other wellbeing teams including:

- Student Support Team - School Counsellor/Psychologist/Youth worker
- Careers Counsellors
- Learning Support Team
- Student Services
- External Partnerships and referrals

The Pastoral Leadership Team

Pastoral Care at Emmanuel College is our expression of faith in action, demonstrated by individual care and concern. This program is a commitment to and a structure for building community between staff, students, parents and teachers through the establishment of right relationships.

Through a conscious focus on each individual, it seeks to affirm personal dignity and worth, build appreciation and value of self and develop interpersonal relationship skills.

House operation is the responsibility of House teams and classroom teachers, convened and facilitated by the House Leaders and of the pastoral co-ordinators, convened and facilitated by the Campus Leader. All levels of college operation, including the work of house teams, subject departments, and pastoral and academic councils, converge in the core business of the college: working with students in teaching-learning.

Career Counselling

The Careers Department seeks to assist students in their career exploration process through effective counselling, provision of vocational information and organisation of work placements.

Areas of Assistance

- Individual student consultation via appointment.
- Assistance with subject selection, tertiary entrance requirements and VTAC procedures.
- Assistance with transition issues ie HECS, scholarship applications and accommodation.
- Provision of an up-to-date collection of careers' resources and software packages to assist with career exploration.
- The organisation of work experience placements.
- Administration of the Morrisby Career Analysis Test.

Learning Support

The role of the Learning Support Leader is to facilitate the working of the Learning Support Team and coordinate the development and implementation of support programs for students with a disability. Through this role, Emmanuel College offers specialist support to students eligible for inclusion in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) for Students with Disability count for funding and their families. The Learning Support Leader works directly with students to assist them in all areas of the curriculum and to help them become fully functioning members of the Emmanuel College community.

Areas of Assistance

- Case Management of students with disability (SWD).
 - Liaison contact for CEM Support Services:
 - Speech Pathologist
 - Visiting Teachers
 - Educational Psychologist
 - Special Education Curriculum Advisor
 - SCOPE therapists
- Ongoing liaison between students, families and classroom teachers.

Related Emmanuel College Policies

Student Behaviour Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Attendance Policy
ICT Acceptable Use Policy
Counselling Services Policy
Child Safe Policy

External references

Related Policies – Department of Education and Training (DET)

[Policy and Advisory Library](#)

Related Resources – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

[eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Learning Diversity](#)

[Identity and growth: A perspective for Catholic schools](#)

Related Resources – Australian Government

[Australian Student Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#)

[Student Wellbeing Hub](#)

Related Legislation

Children and Young Persons Act 1989 (Vic.)

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)

Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic.)

Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic.)

Working with Children Act 2006 (Vic.)

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