



*St Lawrence Primary School*

# **PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

Originally Released: Prior to 2002  
Revised: 2004  
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Due for Review: 2018

### ***St Lawrence School Vision***

*The vision of St Lawrence Catholic Primary School, Balcatta is to share the message of God's love and friendship in a community of learners, developing the full potential of each child.*

#### **RATIONALE**

Pastoral Care in a Catholic school is informed by and given its spirit by the school's place as part of the evangelical ministry of the Church. The Catholic school is in essence the face of Christ for its whole community and its pastoral role needs to infuse every aspect of its operation and its relationships.

The life of every human person is seen to have a God given value and meaning which is enhanced in a school community whose atmosphere is permeated with the Gospel spirit of freedom and love. All members of the school community have a fundamental right to be treated with respect and, for students and school staff, to learn and teach in a safe and supportive environment.

Pastoral Care is the concern of all involved in Catholic education. Every aspect of the school's educational ministry needs to be infused by the Church's understanding of what it means to be a community of believers. Pastoral Care cannot be confined to organisational or curriculum areas. There should be a clear articulation of specific ways that Pastoral Care will assist in developing the potential of each member in the school community such that all feel nurtured, safe, supported and educated.

Parents (and guardians or carers) are the first educators of their children and the role of the Catholic school is to assist in their education. Each school should appreciate the circumstances of its own community and apply the appropriate resources to meet pastoral needs within a shared vision of a positive and inclusive school.

Catholic Schools operate within an organisational framework that has particular requirements in relation to the educational and social needs of students and staff. Catholic schools are also bound to adhere to the legislative requirements of State and Australian Governments. Pastoral Care policies and practices must adhere to these obligations.

#### **DEFINING PASTORAL CARE**

Pastoral care in Catholic Schools means enhancing the dignity of each person within a Catholic faith community. It is concerned with maximising learning and growth to enable all to become inner-directed, contributing members of God's creation.

#### **PRINCIPLES**

1. Catholic schools provide a safe and supportive school environment, a curriculum and a set of policies and practices based on the Gospels.

2. Catholic schools enable students to attain the beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge, skills, practices and positive relationships which will allow them to achieve Christ's vision of the human person.
3. Catholic schools are environments where the care and development of each person takes place within the Catholic faith community.
4. Catholic schools develop policies, programs and practices that are proactive, focus on prevention and intervention and that engage, nurture and promote the wellbeing of the whole school community.
5. Catholic schools promote care, respect and cooperation and value diversity.
6. Catholic schools recognise that quality leadership underpins Pastoral Care and that policies and programs must be regularly monitored and reviewed with evidence-based practice supporting decisions and improvements.
7. Catholic schools take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Catholic schools ensure that, in providing a nurturing and safe environment, the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community are explicit and understood and that there is a commitment to ongoing professional development and training for the whole school community.

### **ELEMENTS OF PASTORAL CARE**

Formulation of a school's Pastoral Care policy requires a collaborative approach and consideration of the following elements:

### **ETHOS AND ENVIRONMENT**

The ethos and environment of a Catholic school should be thoroughly infused with the Catholic vision of Pastoral Care. The Evangelisation Plan of the school should provide a strong basis through which Pastoral Care is developed. Examples of the aspects pertaining to these elements are as follows:

### **RELIGIOUS DIMENSION**

- Prayer, liturgy, celebration and participation in the Sacraments
- Reflection of values of the Sacraments in school policies and practices e.g. acceptance and forgiveness

### **ADMINISTRATIVE SECTOR**

- School values, ethos, mission statement, motto, culture and structure
- Quality and style of leadership
- Managing incidents of abuse and victimisation
- Support for students
- Pastoral Care of staff and the broader school community
- Strategic management plan involving consultation, involvement, participation and ownership
- Establishment of agreed policies, programs and procedures (including those of the CECWA and those required by legislation)
- The whole school community is conversant with the school's Pastoral Care policies and practices and of individual rights and responsibilities

### **POLICIES & PRACTICES**

The policies and practices that a school employs should enhance the dignity of the human person. All policies and practices should reflect the principles of Pastoral Care. The following are examples of such policies and practices:

## **PASTORAL CARING PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN**

- ❖ Behaviour management
- ❖ Managing bullying, harassment and violence
- ❖ Child protection
- ❖ Duty of care
- Prayer and liturgical celebrations for children are an important part of school life and faith development
- Children are encouraged to participate and worship in their parish community.
- Teachers prepare children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation, with parish and parental support.
- Throughout the year, children have opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Mission Fundraising is an opportunity to show empathy and compassion for the poor and marginalised.
- Christmas gifts are brought in by families for St Vincent DePaul each year
- Children are encouraged to value unconditional giving.
- The “Making Jesus Real” programme has been adopted by the school and these principles underpin all aspects of school life.
- A Christmas letterbox is set up for children to spread good cheer by posting Christmas cards to one another.
- The School provides a balanced curriculum, addressing students’ academic, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and volitional needs.
- Buddy programme between paired classes throughout the school.
- Kagan Collaborative Learning practices are utilised throughout the school in presenting the curriculum to develop social skills between students.
- Children’s work is displayed prominently in classrooms and around the school.
- Children have opportunities to develop an appreciation of the Performing and Visual Arts by joining the school choir or partaking in the Performing Arts Festival or other local performances.
- Students are given the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of sporting activities at a school and inter-school level.
- Classes take turns to prepare an Assembly once a term, reflecting what is learned in the classroom.
- At weekly Friday morning assemblies the Pre Primary to Year 6 children gather to pray together, share forth-coming events and distribute a number of awards.
- Children’s birthdays are recognised at Line Up assemblies each week. The child comes up to the front, announces their name, age and date of their birthday. The children of the school then sing Happy Birthday and the child receives a birthday sticker.
- The School provides excursions, incursions and camps, which are valuable learning experiences for children.
- LOTE (Italian) is part of the School programme and children are encouraged to develop an appreciation of the cultural heritage of self and others.
- It is recognised that children come from differing family types and backgrounds and cultures
- Children are encouraged to develop an appreciation of environmental aestheticism in their school by maintaining the school vegetable garden and orchard, keeping the school clean and recognising classes who keep their designated areas clean.
- The School newsletter reports on significant events occurring in the School Community.

- Staff show willingness to comfort students in times of personal need.
- Teachers encourage the development of children's conflict-resolution skills.
- A School Psychologist is available to assist children and their families who are in special need of support.
- Significant events in the lives of individual students and their families are acknowledged in the newsletter or by sending cards.
- Compassion and care is extended to children who are ill or have been injured.
- Compassion and care is extended to children who are experiencing grief.
- Certified First Aid is provided by designated members of staff.
- An Orientation Day is held at the end of each year for Kindergarten and Pre-Primary in preparation for the following year.
- The School's Transition Programme assists students moving from Pre Primary to Year One.
- Handover sessions occur at the end of the year between teachers concerning students for the new year.
- Leadership areas of responsibility are allocated to Year 6 children to develop self-esteem and initiative in senior students e.g. Hygiene, Sports etc.
- Education Assistants work with children where there is a need to support the classroom programme.
- School practices are aimed at fostering high self-esteem
- Merit certificates are presented to children for academic achievement and Christian leadership and personal achievement.
- Annual Citizenship Awards awarded to Year six children for service to the school community and Christian leadership.

#### **PASTORAL CARING PRACTICES FOR STAFF**

- ❖ Employment, professional and faith development
- ❖ Professional development of all staff in areas that reflect Pastoral Care
- ❖ Management of harassment of staff in schools
- ❖ Dispute and complaint resolution
- ❖ Health and wellbeing of staff
- Staff meet regularly to pray together.
- Special events, such as birthdays, kris kindle and teacher's and secretary day, are celebrated.
- Staff are invited to come together regularly on a social basis.
- Staff meet with the School Board and Parents and Friends for an annual gathering.
- A relaxed environment is encouraged and valued in the Staff Room.
- Staff Faith Formation/Spirituality days enable staff to value personal and spiritual development.
- Staff have opportunities for professional development through in servicing.
- Collaborative decision-making is encouraged. This shared responsibility results in common goals and an informed staff.
- Staff support for each other is valued.
- The gifts and talents of each staff member are affirmed and appreciated.
- New staff have mentors/buddies amongst more experienced staff members.
- Parish priest and school psychologist are available to assist staff in special need of support.
- Opportunity is provided to share class successes with other staff members.

## **MANAGEMENT**

- ❖ Allocation of resources
- ❖ Enrolment policy
- ❖ Response to drug use
- ❖ Uniform requirements and standards
- ❖ Crisis management plan
- ❖ Management of confidential information

## **PASTORAL CARE PRACTICES FOR PARENTS**

- Parents are encouraged to be present at and participate in School and Class masses, prayer services.
- Through Sacramental Parent Evenings parents are helped to prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Parents are welcomed into the School to share in school-based activities.
- Parents are invited to be involved in Faith formation run by the Parish.
- Involvement in planning for the future of the School (School Board, P&F, committees.)
- A weekly newsletter provides communication from the School to home.
- The Parents and Friends Association meets monthly as a support group for the school community.
- The School Board meets monthly. Its members can be drawn from the parent body of the school
- A school psychologist is available to assist parents in special need of support.
- Parent - teacher meetings and parent information evenings are held throughout the year.
- Parents are given opportunities to share their skills and talents with the wider School Community.
- Understanding and support are shown to those families experiencing financial difficulties.
- An annual Parent Helper morning tea is put on for parents by the school as a thank you gesture.
- Various social gatherings organised by the P&F, for parents and their children are held during the school year eg. Christmas Carol evening, Welcome B-B-Q.
- Kindergarten Parent Evening held for families.

## **THE COMMUNITY**

- ❖ Reporting and communication
- ❖ Parent/guardian/carer engagement
- ❖ Reconciliation
- ❖ Privacy

Interaction with the local community enhances the scope of Pastoral Care. Those at St Lawrence Primary School interact with the wider community through such activities as:

- worship
- involvement in the life of the local Church Community
- responding to invitations from community groups

- excursions\incursions
- guest speakers
- fundraising for specific causes
- sharing of resources
- school nurse

The interchange between School and Community gives students an insight into the communal nature of being a person in our world.

### **FAMILIES, PARTNERSHIPS & SERVICES**

This element recognises that real partnerships need to exist between the Catholic school, parents, carers and appropriate agencies for students to be provided with a nurturing and safe environment.

- Working closely with parents, guardians and carers
- Interpersonal relationships within the school community
- Relationships with the parish, clergy, religious orders, parent community and past students
- Reconciliation
- Relevant cultural aspects are acknowledged and celebrated
- Awareness and support of those who are alienated

### **CURRICULUM, EDUCATION & TRAINING**

Curriculum is the total, school-directed experience of students during schooling. The curriculum needs to be informed by the principles of Pastoral Care catering for a variety of student needs and abilities in a Catholic school setting.

Appropriate levels of education, training and professional development relating to school policy and practice should be available to all members of the school community.

The following aspects of curriculum, education and training are considered:

- Needs of all students
- Provision of an adaptable and flexible curriculum
- Appropriate methods of assessment, evaluation and reporting
- A curriculum informed by the principles of Catholic Social Justice teachings
- Acquisition of concepts, the learning of facts, development of life skills, examination of attitudes and an exploration of their beliefs and values
- Explicit education and training in relation to bullying, harassment, violence and child protection available to the whole school community

### **CONCLUSION**

Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools is concerned with enhancing the dignity of the human person within a safe and supportive Catholic faith community.

The aims and purpose of this Framework are to assist schools in developing and refining its approach to Pastoral Care.

The elements set out above are not exhaustive, but they are intended to provide a stimulus in examining Pastoral Care in a Catholic School.

Policies need to be evolving and to include a review process inbuilt every 3-5 years so that the unintended consequences are addressed.

It is through the dynamic and inter-related nature of the elements that the dignity of the human person is enhanced.

At St Lawrence Primary School the Pastoral Care Policy will be evaluated in an on-going basis throughout the year and also at the end of the year. This will be done via Leadership team discussion, staff discussion and may also include the gathering and collating of student, parent and community impressions of Pastoral Care in the School.