

PASTORAL CARE

STATEMENTS TO ASSIST WITH THE CLARIFICATION AND ARTICULATION OF OUR SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY IN RELATION TO PASTORAL CARE.

“Catholic schools provide an incalculable service to the common good... The Catholic school is a witness to the truth that genuine education seeks to do more than simply impart knowledge or train people to perform an economically productive task. All education worthy of the name seeks to bring forth as it were a full person, a person in whom moral excellence is no less developed than are the theoretical and productive abilities.” (Pope John Paul II, Address to English Bishops, 1992)

Catholic schools must be formational schools in today’s society. It must be “an institution where young people gradually learn to open themselves up to life as it is and to create in themselves a definite attitude to life as it should be” (The Catholic School, #31)

Students in Catholic schools should be encouraged to reflect on their experiences and see how their faith is intrinsically tied to their lives. Students should be helped to “ascribe a Christian meaning to their own existence, to place their experiences under the light of the Gospel and to understand that experience can make the Christian message more intelligible.” (General Catechetical Directory, No 74)

Marcellin Flynn speaks of education as transaction and transformation. “Education as transaction places primary importance on the interaction between teacher, the curriculum and the learner. Education as transformation recognises the wholeness of the learner and stresses the connection between the inner spiritual world of the learner and the outer world of the curriculum” (The Culture of Catholic Schools, 1993, p15)

Pastoral care is the school’s expression of concern for individuals. Members of our school need to believe that they belong to this school community. There are three components necessary for a sense of community. 1) A system of shared and understood values. 2) Shared activities, which signify membership of the school. 3) A distinctive pattern of caring social relationships. (The Culture of Catholic Schools, 1993, p87)

“By their witness and their behaviour teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision. This must aim to animate them as witnesses of Christ, especially regarding a Christian Vision.” (The Catholic School, #78)

The school vision statement states that the school community will provide challenges for the growth of the whole person. Within a framework of Catholic values, we strive to live in harmony with each other and our environment by living our motto “Love one another”.

Jesus instructed us:

Love one another as I have loved you. By this will all know that you are my disciples.

SOME BASIC UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF PASTORAL CARE

PASTORAL CARE:

- is central to the whole endeavour of education
- concerns the total welfare of all community members
- is an effective vehicle by which the school can hand on its culture and traditions
- assists in providing a sensitive, warm, thorough and realistic learning environment
- involves offering guidance, advice and a framework for growth
- enhances the formation of positive relationships between parents, staff and students
- creates feelings of belonging to the community
- is seen as part of everyday life and linked to the curriculum
- develops an attitude of co-responsibility for others
- is based on the person of Christ as revealed through the Gospels
- involves and includes all members of the community
- facilitates within individuals the development of problem solving strategies, flexibility and adaptation necessary for life in a changing society

THE AIMS OF PASTORAL CARE FOR STUDENTS AT OUR SCHOOL

1. To provide support for individuals or groups who require such assistance
2. To ensure that there is an effective crisis management process in place
3. To break down the impersonality of the school caused by large numbers
4. To improve communications within the school
5. To help students with personal and school problems
6. To put needy students in touch with appropriate skilled persons or agencies
7. To help students develop a healthy respect for themselves and others
8. To match the curriculum intervention process with student needs
9. To help students reflect on their Christian values and behaviours
10. To help students develop appropriate social skills
11. To provide a plan for the management of student behaviour
12. To help in the development of a warm relationship between students and staff
13. To help in the development of warm relationships between students
14. To help develop a sense of pride in belonging to this school community
15. To assist in the evaluation of the stated school goals

FRAMEWORK FOR PASTORAL CARE

THERE ARE FIVE COMPONENTS ASSOCIATED WITH OUR MODEL:

CRISIS INTERVENTION.

Our school will offer individual assistance to students experiencing social, emotional or educational problems.

AN APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM

Our school will give all students the opportunity to develop the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve their academic and social goals. The nature of classwork will be such that individual differences are catered for as far as possible. The school has high expectations of all.

A CARING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Our school policies and practices will create a sense of belonging and ownership. Students will have a set of agreed rules to follow with known consequences for anyone who breaks the rules. The school motto "Love one another" will constantly be referred to and translated from rhetoric to practical behaviours.

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FOR PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life and is a whole school responsibility. Planning will involve both staff and students as well as parents. resources, including all possible staff, will be provided and one period a week will be given to ensure that pastoral issues are continually addressed.

NETWORKS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Problems that go beyond the expertise of school personnel or are outside school boundaries will be referred to appropriate agencies. Those in the community with particular skills or responsibilities (such as priests, police or grief counsellors) will be invited into the school to work with individuals needing specific support.

PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN PASTORAL CARE

All members of the school community have an on-going role to play in pastoral care. Most individuals will not require individual attention or be singled out for particular assistance. School policies and practices encourage working together by all for the common good. However, there will undoubtedly be individuals who need support either physically, spiritually, emotionally or socially.

Class teachers are usually the first to become aware of student needs although members of the Administration team may also take this responsibility from time to time. It is imperative that no one member of staff keeps information about a child's needs to themselves. A judgement has to be made once the needs of a student become known. Who do you share the information with?

The following people are available in our school:

the parish priest	HOPE mothers
the school psychologist	school secretary
non-teaching staff	parents
the principal	school bursar
peer teachers	special education teacher
teaching assistants`	specialist teachers
remedial support staff	therapists(others) from outside agencies
the school counsellor	members of the CEO
canteen staff	uniform shop staff

There must be a clear understanding of what the roles of individuals are, the process to follow when dealing with pastoral concerns and how to effectively communicate all information so that confidentiality is respected and yet all significant players in the equation are aware of what is being done for a student.

EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL MODEL

Once the pastoral care model has been in action for a period of twelve months, an evaluation needs to be carried out to establish what aims have been clearly achieved and what if any have not been achieved. The evaluation should also consider whether the needs of the students have in fact been met and whether the resources allocated were appropriate and adequate.

STAFF PLANNING FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF STUDENTS AT SSP SCHOOL

Rationale.

Staff doing daily duty have found that many children do not know other children in the school unless they are in the same class. Frequently children don't know the name of the staff member on duty and staff don't know the names of many of the students being supervised. Unacceptable behaviour and poor manners have been noticed too frequently and the comment made that children don't know the basic rules of courtesy. With over 800 children in the school, a formal process for addressing some of these issues is needed.

One period of pastoral care a week has been organised in an attempt to remain faithful to our school goals and our vocation as workers in a Catholic school. The initial focus of each weekly meeting will be "getting to know you." Classes will be paired up for one term and older and younger children will engage in organised activities developed/set up by the Pastoral Care Organising group.

**The selected period will be straight after lunch each Monday.
It is imperative that this period is kept free for the entire year.**

A simple lesson plan for the session will be provided to each staff member. (This means no extra work for you!!) However, lesson plans will need to be discussed by paired classes so that the activity is modified if necessary to be age appropriate and the organisation of the children is owned by you.

Classes can agree to meet in any place that suits their needs. However, if you wish to use a common area such as the Hall, negotiation with similar minded staff will be necessary.

There is only a period of 30 minutes for this activity and it is essential that children arrive on time and finish promptly, otherwise other periods may be affected.