



Holy Eucharist Catholic Primary School St Albans South.



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Holy Eucharist Catholic Primary School Commitment Statement to Child Safety

A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people at our Catholic school

The moral focus embedded in Catholic school culture, to uphold the dignity of each person and to strive for the full flourishing of each student, obliges Catholic schools to establish and continually improve the culture of child safety throughout all levels of the organisation. Preventing child abuse and responding appropriately to allegations and concerns needs to be embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of all within the school community.

Every person involved in Catholic education has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. Therefore, Holy Eucharist School has in place policies, processes and practices ensuring child safety is key within its culture and that these represent best practice. (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd 2016/Holy Eucharist School Commitment Statement).

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of all our pastoral work.
He provides the model on which we base all our dealings with people.

We acknowledge that Pastoral Care involves care of, for and by the total community.

As children come into contact most often with staff, it is they who must provide
A model of 'care' and all that is implicit in that role.

Every person in the Holy Eucharist School community is a participant in our Pastoral Care Program.

Holy Eucharist School maintains a 'culture of child safety' by actively implementing strategies in accordance with its moral and legal obligations and Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870. We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, and volunteers. As part of this commitment we have implemented the Victorian Child Safe Standards to help protect children and young people under the age of 18 from child abuse and neglect, including cultural safety for Indigenous children and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Rationale

A fundamental belief for Catholic schools is that in Jesus is seen God's image and likeness in its human expression, and that Jesus' values and teachings show all people 'the way, the truth and the life' (*John*14:6). In accordance with this belief, values to be promoted within a Catholic school's understanding and practice of pastoral care include love, respect, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation and justice.

Pastoral care of students in the context of this policy refers to action taken within a school by its leaders and community members to promote and enhance student wellbeing of a personal, social, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual nature. Key elements of student wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience.

Pastoral care of students is effected in many aspects of school life, and especially in a school's vision and mission statements, policies, procedures, programs, teaching and learning curriculum, student activities, student support and wellbeing services, behaviour management processes, family engagement, community partnerships, and school climate.

Catholic Education Melbourne expects every Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Melbourne to formulate its own policy on Pastoral Care and related policies and procedures in areas such as special needs provision, student behaviour code, student behaviour management, safe school environment (anti-bullying), and critical incident management. Such policies and procedures should be consistent with the principles expressed in this policy statement and be compliant with relevant legal requirements.

Principles

1. Foundational to the nature of pastoral care in Catholic schools 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, and all are created as social beings, with the mutual rights, obligations and needs that this implies.
2. Pastoral care at Holy Eucharist Catholic Primary School 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: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.'
3. Staff at Holy Eucharist School exercises 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.
4. Respectful and cooperative school-family relationships provide an effective channel of pastoral care for students. The school 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.
5. Student 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.
6. 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.

7. 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.
8. 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.

Procedures

Policy development and review. Holy Eucharist school's pastoral care policy, and all related policies and procedures are developed collaboratively and reviewed periodically. They are published and readily accessible to staff, students, parents and guardians.

Safe and supportive learning environments. Holy Eucharist School 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 our school has used to develop, implement and monitor 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 Catholic Education Melbourne. Schools ought also have arrangements in place for engaging external providers of care when needed.

Student behaviour management. Student behaviour management at Holy Eucharist School seeks 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.

Catholic Education Melbourne's [Guidelines for Behaviour Support](#) present guiding principles, expectations and recommended procedures for student behaviour management.

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).

Student wrongful behaviour of a serious nature

Suspension and expulsion 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 expulsion. This is to be avoided in Catholic schools wherever possible. Only the principal has the authority to expel a student, having sought the prior approval of the diocesan Executive Director of Catholic Education.

Holy Eucharist School ensures that policies and processes associated with negotiated transfer, suspension and expulsion align with this policy, Catholic Education Melbourne's Policy 2.26 Pastoral Care of Students.

Beliefs About Pastoral Care

At Holy Eucharist School we believe that **PASTORAL CARE** is a complex process of:

- Building community through a sense of relationships.
- Growth and care of each individual - through personal interaction which acknowledges that each child is a unique gift from God.
- Preparing our children to live a happy and fulfilling life within a community.
- Meeting the specific needs of individuals through early intervention and provision of after care.

Methodology

At Holy Eucharist School we practice Pastoral Care in all that we do with other people, particularly with the children in our care.

There are many ways in which our Pastoral nature is displayed, these can include:

- Positive encouragement to all individuals
- Supporting individuals in their endeavours
- Celebrating successes
- Recognising achievements
- Developing personal relationships with each child
- Positive reinforcement
- Student awards at whole school assemblies
- Recognising birthdays
- Weekly whole school celebration of the Eucharist
- Parent consultation in appropriate situations
- Personal contact from the school to home
- A welcoming attitude to all visitors to the school
- A positive caring role model for children

Much of our Pastoral teaching at Holy Eucharist is done through our Religious Education Program and the area of Pastoral Care can never be divorced from this. The attitudes and practices of our R.E. program go a long way to developing caring people who are able to pastorally care for others.

Circle Time: Philosophy

Our Circle Time adopts a solution - focussed, strengths based approach. It promotes group agency to encourage our students to take responsibility for themselves and each other. Specific problems and incidents are never discussed in Circles, only issues and directions for change. The focus away from the personal to consideration of topics that impact young lives and make Circles a safer and more comfortable place for both teachers and students.

The principles of Circles; respect, agency, positivity, inclusion, democracy and safety should be embedded throughout the day and across the school so that our outcomes can become more sustain able.

Circles aim to promote wellbeing for all students, both vulnerable and the achieving. This includes healthy relationships, resilience in the face of adversity and responsible behaviour. We believe these three aspects together lead to more effective learning environments and flourishing individuals.

Circle Time Structure:

- Timetabled session to coincide with the school's SEL program Highway Heroes.
- Well planned sessions to coincide with the Personal, Social and Ethical Capabilities set out in the Victorian Curriculum
- Follow set structure that can be adapted
- Focus/Learning Intention is clearly articulated at the beginning of each session
- Focus/Learning Intention is needs based, but linked to SEL competencies: Self - awareness, Self - management, Social - awareness, Social management
- The teacher is an active participant to enable and strengthen the students' understanding and skills

Strategies:

Pastoral Carers may implement strategies and actions including:

General:

- Parental contact and interaction
- Encouraging and supporting others
- Taking the time to learn about others, to 'hear' their story
- Personalising our interaction with others by talking with them
- Being aware of moods, emotions, responses of others
- Encouraging and maintaining positive, honest communication
- Giving affirmation

Children

- Involvement in personal growth programs
- Combining year level experiences i.e. Whole School Liturgies, Assemblies, Buddies etc.
- Being active participants in the Pastoral life of the school.
- Providing breakfast for students who have gone without through our Breakfast Program
- Providing lunches for students who do not have anything to eat at school
- Providing students with an early lunch break (at 11am) for student who have come late and have missed out on breakfast.
- Providing uniforms for our students whose parents cannot afford to purchase items of clothing.

Parents

- To be encouraged to be involved in school and parish activities
- To be active participants in the Pastoral life of the school
- To support and encourage children, teachers and other parents in their roles within our community.
- Supporting parent who are experiencing financial hardships ie: school fees, Parish Food Bank.

Staff

- Being positive and acting justly in the guidance of children
- Shared staff decision making
- To support and encourage parents in their role
- To support and encourage fellow teachers and staff in their role
- To provide for regular discussion of Pastoral care needs and issues
- To attend specific In services as necessary
- Implement Personal Growth programs
- To demonstrate a commitment to Pastoral Care and Pastoral Care programs.

Notes and References

Key legislation affecting pastoral care policy and procedures include the *Working with Children Act 2006* (Vic); the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic); and the *Children and Young Person's Act 1989* (Vic).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos 1878–1882.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, no. 9. Quotation is from Pope John Paul II, *Address to First National Meeting of the Catholic School in Italy*, Nov 1991.

For information and resources available under the Australian Government's [National Safe Schools Framework 2004](#), visit the website of the [Department of Education and Training](#) (DET).

Catholic Education Melbourne June 2016 (Revised)

Ratified:

This policy was developed in December 2017.