



St John XXIII Primary School

Pastoral Care Policy

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

RATIONALE

A fundamental belief for St. John XXIII 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 statement, policies, procedures, programs, teaching and learning curriculum, student activities, student support and wellbeing services, behaviour management processes, family engagement, community partnerships, and school climate.

(C.E.M. Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools)

PRINCIPLES

1. At St. John XXIII we believe 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 St. John XXIII 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 our school.
3. St. John XXIII exercises our 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. St. John XXIII and families share responsibility for developing and maintaining relationships of trust, and respect
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 needs 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.

PASTORAL CARE

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

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

ADMINISTRATION

- School values, ethos, vision statement and culture
- Quality and style of leadership
- Managing incidents
- Support for students
- Pastoral Care of staff and the broader school community
- Establishment of agreed policies, programs and procedures (including 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
 - Bullying policy
 - Child Safety
 - ESmart
 - Child Protection
- Prayer and liturgical celebrations for children are an important part of school life and faith development
 - 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.

- The School provides a balanced curriculum, addressing students' academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs.
- Buddy programme.
- 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. Gather to pray together, share forth-coming events and distribute a number of awards.
- The School provides excursions, incursions and camps, which are valuable learning experiences for children.
- The School newsletter reports on significant events occurring in the School Community.
- Teachers encourage the development of children's conflict-resolution skills.
- A School Counsellor 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.
- 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.
- The School's Transition Programme assists students moving from Primary to Secondary.
- Handover sessions occur at the end of the year between teachers concerning students for the New Year.
- Education Support Staff work with children where there is a need to support the classroom programme.

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 are celebrated.
 - Staff are invited to come together regularly on a social basis.
 - 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.
 - Parish priest and CEM Pastoral team are available to assist staff in special need of support.
 - Opportunity is provided to share class successes with other staff members.

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.
- Involvement in planning for the future of the School
- A fortnightly 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 Advisory Committee meets regularly. Its members are drawn from the parent body of the school
- 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.
- Various social gatherings organised for parents and their children are held during the school year e.g. Christmas Carol evening, Welcome B-B-Q.

CONCLUSION

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