

The pastoral care of students in Catholic systemic schools

School-based pastoral care refers to the total care of the student. It is a term used to describe both an attitude and a process, and is based upon a belief in the dignity of the person. In a Catholic school, it is expressed through:

- the development of quality relationships
- the provision of satisfying learning experiences
- the establishment of an effective care network
- the provision of experiences and structures that provide for the integrated spiritual and human growth of students

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PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

The Diocesan Schools Board recognises that the Catholic School is a significant means of the Church making visible and real its teaching ministry and that those who work in Catholic Schools assist the Bishop and priests in their pastoral role and teaching mission. The Board affirms that the Catholic school is more than an educative institution: it is an instrument of the Catholic Church, an essential element in the Church's mission. Therefore it recognises that teachers in Catholic Schools are ministers in the name of the Catholic Church.

Pope John Paul II stated that teachers in Catholic Schools are called to bring professional competence and a high standard of excellence to their teaching but that their responsibilities make demands that go far beyond the need for professional skills and competence. He added that teachers in Catholic schools must enable students to see and know the richness and the joy of a life lived in accordance with Christ's teaching.

Teachers in Catholic schools therefore, have special responsibility for the care and guidance of students. This is based on the belief that:

- 1.0 the development of a well-integrated person, with Jesus as model, is an essential aim of Catholic education;
- 2.0 a school climate which is based upon quality relationships, and which supports the growth of the individual within a community, is fundamental to effective learning and genuine pastoral care;
- 3.0 it is the responsibility of all members of the school community to collaborate in the provision of a growth-promoting environment within the school;
- 4.0 the provision of both relevant and satisfying learning experiences and appropriate Christian adult role models is essential for individual student growth;
- 5.0 the development of self-discipline is based on justice, self-esteem and reconciliation and hence, any punishment, which lowers the dignity of the person, is inappropriate;
- 6.0 structures, policies, procedures and practices in every school need to be in harmony with and based on Gospel values;
- 7.0 concern for the total development of each individual, including pastoral care and religious formation, is intrinsic to the provision of authentic Catholic education.

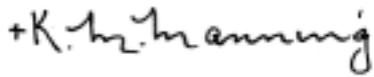
ESSENTIAL PROVISIONS

The following provisions are essential to the implementation of the policy:

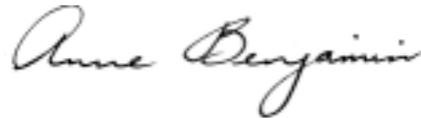
- 1.0 Each school formulates a pastoral care policy.
- 2.0 The school pastoral care policy includes statements on:
 - 2.1 the school philosophy of pastoral care;
 - 2.2 structures, roles, responsibilities and procedures relating to the development and care of students;
 - 2.3 appropriate practices which link the life of the parish and school in the provision of care for students;
 - 2.4 a school discipline policy which accentuates the value of social equality, mutual respect, co-operation and shared responsibility;
 - 2.5 procedures relating to the enrolment of students, assessment and reporting of students' progress, communication with parents and crisis care, including suspected or disclosed child abuse;
 - 2.6 procedures for the induction of new staff members into the pastoral care process within the school;
 - 2.7 procedures for the evaluation of pastoral care;
 - 2.8 the legal responsibility of teachers with respect to pastoral care.
- 3.0 The principal:
 - 3.1 develops and implements a pastoral care policy;
 - 3.2 distributes to members of the school community copies of the pastoral care policy;
 - 3.3 appoints a member of staff to be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the school's pastoral care policy;
 - 3.4 provides opportunities for staff to develop skills appropriate to their needs;
 - 3.5 selects staff whose values and professional behaviour are congruent with the philosophy of this policy statement;
 - 3.6 develops appropriate disciplinary measures which establish clear guidelines for student behaviour and challenge them to self-discipline;
 - 3.7 ensures that corporal punishment is not used within the school;
 - 3.8 adheres to the published diocesan policy on the suspension and expulsion of students.

4.0 Staff members of each school:

- 4.1 contribute to the development of the school's pastoral care policy;
- 4.2 ensure that the principal is informed of any special needs of the students;
- 4.3 are supported and advised by the principal;
- 4.4 implement the school's pastoral care policy;
- 4.5 refrain from using any form of discipline which is contrary to the philosophy of this statement.



Bishop Kevin Manning
Chairman
Parramatta Diocesan Schools Board



Anne Benjamin
Executive Director of Schools