

Introduction

Pastoral care is a demonstration of profound respect for the human dignity of each person who is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 26–27). This call to respect each person is inspired by the sacred Scriptures and brought to life by the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' life and teachings show all people 'the way, the truth and the life' (John 14: 6), inviting each to fullness (John 10:10). 'Throughout the Gospel, Jesus illuminates for us how we are called to live out our mission, approach our work and conduct our relationships with love, hope, dignity, compassion and forgiveness' (eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities, 2018, p.4).

The Church's teachings are central to the moral, legal and mission driven responsibility of all Catholic schools to create nurturing environments where children and young people are respected, their voices heard and where they are safe and feel safe. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, recognising that some children and young people are more vulnerable than others, and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) commits to providing the care and services required to support them and their families, and to ensure their safety within all Catholic schools (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

In Catholic schools, all relationships, including those with students, staff and parents/guardians/carers, are built on unconditional positive regard. Every person has a responsibility to understand the integral role they play, individually and collectively. For adults in Catholic schools, nurturing the pastoral care, wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

'Pastoral care' is brought to life in Catholic school communities through the actions, interactions and attitudes of all community members. It is evident in the school's vision and mission statements, policies, procedures, curriculum, student support services and partnerships with parents, who are the first educators of their children (General Directory for Catechesis 226 & 227).

Purpose

involves a commitment to creating safe, supportive, inclusive and hope-filled learning environments of welcome where human dignity is respected, diversity and inclusiveness are valued and authentic relationships are fostered

nurtures the wellbeing of every child in a MACS school, 'their unique story, giftedness and temperament must be understood and valued in a way that enables love, respect, compassion, forgiveness and hope to thrive' (Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing, 2017, p.3)

ensures that all members of the school community are responsible for creating a positive pastoral climate. Staff, students and parents/guardians/carers share responsibility for developing and maintaining open and cooperative relationships characterised by respect, trust, goodwill and a willingness to engage collaboratively. It is vital that all members of the school community work together to provide a consistent and supportive environment in which students may develop and grow towards maturity

identifies and nurtures partnerships with appropriate services and agencies to support the pastoral care and wellbeing needs of every student

responds to the pastoral and wellbeing needs of students and maintains appropriate confidentiality and privacy. Information is communicated, with necessary permissions, to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

Policy

MACS demonstrates effective pastoral care through the following strategies.

- 1. MACS supports schools to develop their pastoral care and wellbeing strategies by:**
 - 1.1. Providing coherent policy frameworks, guidance, and resources
 - 1.2. Developing targeted professional learning
 - 1.3. Monitoring compliance through existing protocols including cyclical review as part of school improvement and Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requirements.
- 2. MACS schools are bound to provide a safe and nurturing environment where the risk of harm is minimised, and students feel safe.**
 - 2.1. School communities are required to take reasonable and proportionate measures to provide safe and enabling learning environments which encompass the spiritual, mental,

- 4.4. Working in partnership with parents/guardians/carers and families to build resilience and promote a positive sense of self.
5. **Students contribute to developing positive pastoral learning environments and their own and other’s wellbeing by:**
 - 5.1. Treating all members of the school community with respect and courtesy
 - 5.2. Following school policies, procedures and guidelines
 - 5.3. Taking responsibility for their actions
 - 5.4. Reporting all concerns about wellbeing and safety
 - 5.5. Co-operating with teachers, school staff and their parents/guardians/carers.
6. **Parents/guardians/carers contribute to developing positive pastoral learning environments for their own and other children’s wellbeing by:**
 - 6.1. Working respectfully, collaboratively and in partnership with staff and members of the school community to create high expectations
 - 6.2. Explicitly teaching, modelling, and promoting socially responsible behaviours
 - 6.3. Promoting and upholding the core values of the school by supporting school policies and procedures.

Roles, responsibilities and reporting

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Publish each policy, procedure, form, and notice prescribed under the Care, Safety and Welfare of Students Framework	Annual attestation to the Executive Director

Definitions

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV)

The overarching, strategic-planning and policy-making body for the Catholic school system in Victoria, including MACS schools.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Framework

A board-approved overarching governance structure to enable compliance by MACS and its subsidiaries and MACS schools with a range of regulatory requirements, and to ensure good governance in the operations of MACS and its subsidiaries and MACS schools.

Guidelines

Recommendations and guidance to support the implementation of a policy or procedure. Guidelines are not mandatory and may be developed and approved by a MACS director or a principal/director in a MACS school for operation in a particular school.

Inclusion

The right to access and receive a full and engaging education.

MACS schools welcome all members of the community as equal, embracing diversity as a means for dialogue, engagement and deeper understandings of self, others and God. The uniqueness and sacred dignity of each person is celebrated, driven by the Gospel message of love and justice. These convictions guide the encounters, actions and pedagogical approaches that enable all children to learn and thrive.

MACS school or school

A school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by MACS, directly or through MACSS (as the context requires). References to schools or MACS schools also includes boarding premises of schools operated by MACS and specialist schools operated by MACSS.

Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese Schools Ltd (MACS)

MACS is a reference to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, and/or its subsidiaries (as the context requires).

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS)

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of MACS established to conduct and operate specialist schools.

Pastoral care

A demonstration of profound respect for the human dignity of each person who is created in the image and likeness of God.

Pastoral care includes the decisions, structures and practices that nurture, support and assist a student to flourish and reach their spiritual, physical, cognitive, social and emotional potential so that they may come to a deeper understanding of their own humanness. The pastoral care of students in MACS schools is focused on actions that promote health, wellbeing, resilience, academic outcomes, social capital and ethical decision making (Cross, 2014).

Policy

A high-level, principles-based directive that must be complied with across MACS and its subsidiaries.

Principal

Individual appointed by MACS as principal in a MACS school.

Procedure

A step-by-step or detailed instruction for the implementation of MACS policy that is mandatory across MACS and its subsidiaries.

School environment

Means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school/service hours:

a campus of the school

online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by MACS school for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)

other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events
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