

# Pastoral Care Policy

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## Introduction

Pastoral Care is foundational to our Catholic faith and tradition. It assists in the cultivation of the spiritual, personal, emotional, physical, academic, moral, social and aesthetic development of young people as they grow to become learners for life in our changing world. Through enacting the principles of Catholic social teaching, the school community contributes to the development of a healthy and just society.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) refers to the responsibility of schools, with students, parents, carers, families and the community, to promote the development and wellbeing of young Australians. When grappling with school policy and governance, it is vitally important to maintain focus on the centrality of the young people in our schools: 'It is our moral obligation to give every child the very best education possible' (Tutu & Van Roekel, 2010).

The Lavalla Catholic College (the College) Pastoral Care Policy is firmly embedded in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. 'Pastoral Care' can be traced back to Jesus' giving of the New Commandment: 'Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another' (Jn 13:34). This challenge has been echoed by Pope Francis (2013), 'Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place – on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey'.

Pastoral Care includes the decisions, structures and practices taken to challenge, nurture and support individuals whilst maintaining the dignity of each one, honouring the richness of diversity as each person 'is created in the image and likeness of God' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, para.1701).

Pastoral Care is the responsibility and the right of all – students, parents / guardians, employees in Catholic education facilities and the wider community.

## Purpose

This policy is to inform the College community of the principles and responsibilities in providing effective pastoral care.

This policy to be used by the College to further develop and enact pastoral care responses for the school community.

## Principles

- Pastoral care is informed by the principles of Catholic social teaching:
  - The dignity of the human person;
  - The common good;
  - Subsidiary;
  - Solidarity.
- The foundation of each relationship in the College community is pastoral care; 'Every contact is a pastoral care contact' (Cross, 2014).
- Pastoral care is enacted in school environments that are safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering.
- In responding to pastoral issues and concerns, appropriate confidentiality must be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

- Schools exercise their pastoral responsibilities under the leadership of the Principal. Parents / guardians exercise their responsibility by providing positive support and collaborative engagement with the school in support of student and school community wellbeing.
- Purposeful training of staff in pastoral care is necessary for the wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 schools' own pastoral initiatives.

## Definitions

**Pastoral Care:** '...all measures to assist an individual person or community reach their full potential, success and happiness, coming to a deeper understanding of their own humanness' (Grove, 2004). This includes promoting health and wellbeing, building resilience, enhancing academic care, building human and social capital (Cross, 2014) and ethical decision making.

**Social Capital:** Social cohesion of a community, and a sense of belonging, demonstrating cooperation between individuals involving levels of trust, mutual responsibility, respect and reciprocity.

**Human Capital:** The development of the necessary knowledge and skills of people.

**Academic Care:** Building an environment that enhances learning, organisational structures and relationships in and beyond the classroom.

**Catholic social teaching:** The permanent principles of the Church's social doctrine.

**Partnership:** Relationships characterised by:

- actively working together;
  - showing mutual respect and trust;
  - communicating with each other in clear and open ways;
  - respecting each others' insights, priorities, goals, ideas, differences and experiences;
  - valuing each others' knowledge and expertise, and bringing these together in complementary ways;
  - jointly agreeing on aims and outcomes and sharing responsibility for fulfilling tasks;
  - negotiating decisions and resolving disagreements and conflicts.
- (Davis & Day, 2010)

## Procedures

The successful implementation of this policy will include:

- having appropriate structures to support wellbeing, including, but not limited to, Homeroom / Learning Advisor teachers, counsellors and designated staff in positions of leadership in this area.
- the school community working in partnership with its members and associates (agencies, services) to promote pastoral care for all within its cultural context;
- regularly communicating this policy to staff and promoting the importance of pastoral care for all;
- educating students and staff in Catholic social teaching, wellbeing and social justice;

- educating school staff to understand all school policies (for example wellbeing, child protection and anti-bullying, communication, OH&S, learning and teaching) and making clear connections between them in relation to this policy;
- supporting students and their families to access appropriate services;
- maintaining appropriate confidentiality of information and providing it to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

#### **The Principal will:**

- observe all legislative requirements and engage as necessary with external agencies in relation to student wellbeing;
- implement a whole-school approach for positive student wellbeing in curriculum and in school procedures related to positive behaviour support and social-emotional learning;
- engage as required internal and/or external specialist advice about wellbeing-related matters;
- regularly communicate this policy to staff and promote the importance of pastoral care for all;
- provide access to appropriate training for staff in areas of pastoral care;
- work in partnerships with parents / guardians and families, Marist Schools Australia, CEO Sale, students, staff and the wider community to achieve the purposes of this policy;
- enable staff to have a working knowledge of government and system policies and procedures;
- respond promptly to any breach of this policy in accordance with current guidelines and the law;
- manage critical incidents, seeking and providing support where appropriate;
- use positive relationship-based approaches in regard to student behaviour.

#### **School staff will:**

- create and maintain safe and positive learning environments;
- model and promote socially responsible values and behaviour;
- work in partnerships with parents / guardians and families;
- explicitly teach and/or support socially acceptable and responsible behaviour;
- participate in appropriate training in areas of Pastoral Care;
- follow College policies and procedures.

#### **Students will:**

- abide by College policies, procedures and guidelines;
- work in partnership with parents / guardians and families;
- contribute positively to the development of safe and inclusive learning environments;
- report concerns about their own wellbeing and that of fellow students.

#### **Parents, guardians and carers will:**

- work in partnership with the College;
- be aware of the significant influence they have on their children;
- support College policies and procedures.

## **Expected Outcomes**

- Students become successful lifelong learners, confident and creative individuals, active, informed and hope-filled citizens contributing to a just society and the Church's mission.
- Students display knowledge and appreciation of self and others.
- Pastoral care is active and visible.
- College community members work respectfully and collaboratively with families and communities.
- Student wellbeing and learning outcomes are strengthened.
- Students recognise their uniqueness and strive to reach their potential.
- Growth in understanding of pastoral care is evident.
- Pastoral care of all students in Catholic schools is carefully considered and facilitated.

## References

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## Related Policies

**Child Protection Policy**

**Failure to Protect Policy**

**Failure to Disclose Policy**

**Grooming Policy**

**Mandatory Reporting Policy**

**Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy**

**Child Protection Code of Conduct**

**Privacy Policy**

**Occupational Health & Safety Policy**

**Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Policy**

**Critical Incident Management Policy**