

ST PATRICK'S LITHGOW



PASTORAL CARE, STUDENT WELFARE AND WELLBEING POLICY

Vision Statement:

We believe that all children in our school should be given the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential.

In an atmosphere of love and concern, the whole person will be developed spiritually, morally, socially, academically, physically and emotionally.

We believe that each child who is immersed in a faith-filled Christian community will develop as an integrated person, striving for excellence, growing in relationship with God and having respect for self and others.

We will endeavour to provide them with the skills and knowledge that are necessary for them to take their place as fulfilled and enriched Christian members of our Australian society.

We at St Patrick's School endorse the Vatican Council's vision of a Catholic School and believe that:

- The authentic Catholic is founded on the person of Jesus Christ and is enlivened by Gospel values.
- The authentic Catholic School highlights the relevance of our faith to life and contemporary culture.
- The authentic Catholic School is committed to the development of the whole person.

Religious Education, which is taught everyday, permeates the whole St Patrick's School curriculum, especially in attitudes and values.

Pastoral Care Philosophy

Pastoral Care may be defined as the expression of care in the school community, which brings together the diverse academic, social, physical and religious aspects of a school's life. Pastoral Care is love in action and invites all members of the school community to grow and develop within an environment of care and concern. Children are encouraged to fulfill their destiny as sons and daughters of God, created in God's likeness.

By providing a strong sense of wellbeing and belonging, students, parents and staff within our school community are affirmed and valued. Each person is treated with dignity and respect and individual worth is always recognised.

At St Patrick's School, we believe that Pastoral Care expresses the ethos and philosophy of the school, reflected in the quality of daily relationships. It embraces the whole life of the school and is achieved through cooperation with parents, parish and community.

Pastoral Care is reciprocal, fosters growth and allows for the realisation of each person's potential. It embraces all facets of the curriculum and is sustained by values that revere life. The dignity of each person is always respected and the contribution they make to the school community is recognised.

We value Christ as the centre of our whole being and aim to live and teach as He did following His greatest commandment - "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34-35). The whole school community is therefore involved in an interaction of mutual love and respect. This is maintained by all staff working together to build and foster:

- care and concern for each other
- care and concern for the students
- caring interactions with parents

In the tradition of our founders, the Sisters of St Joseph, we fully embrace our school motto "Charity and Truth" and take our inspiration from Saint Mary MacKillop who believed we should never see a need without trying to do something about it."

Counsellor Program: A part-time School Counsellor is available at the school to support students, parents and staff. This Program supports our pastoral care and wellbeing initiatives throughout the school.

What Pastoral Care means to us:

At St Patrick's we aim to provide a happy and safe environment for all, with a focus on care, compassion, concern, justice, equity, love and forgiveness.

Pastorally we:

- respect the dignity and uniqueness of each and every person in our school community
- support and care for each and every member of our school community
- nurture and build the self-esteem of each and every member of our school community
- inspire and support others as they work toward fulfilling their full potential > promote leadership and citizenship
- promote social justice
- recognise our Duty of Care to all in our school community → embrace, value and nurture those with special needs.

Roles and Responsibilities in Pastoral Care

The Parish Priest

The Priest is responsible for the spiritual and pastoral needs of the parish. He provides opportunities for the children to participate in Liturgies (Masses, Reconciliation ceremonies, Benediction) and facilitates Parish based Sacramental programs. He provides guidance and support in the faith formation of staff, children and parents. The Parish Priest is supported in this role by other members of the Parish Team.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for leading Pastoral Care within the school.

The Assistant Principal

The Assistant Principal assists the Principal in dealing with the pastoral needs of the staff, students and parents. She takes on the role as leader in the absence of the Principal.

The Religious Education Coordinator

The Religious Education Coordinator assists the Principal in dealing with the pastoral needs of the staff, students and parents. She works closely with the Parish Priest and Parish Team in the organisation of Sacramental Programs and facilitates the Seasons for Growth Program.

The Learning Support Team

The Learning Support Team provides pastoral and behavioural support for children with funded and special needs. They are responsible for developing and implementing Individual Learning Plans in collaboration with the classroom teacher, parents and students. They also implement strategies for the identified needs of individual children and families.

The Aboriginal Education Worker

The Aboriginal Education Worker works with Aboriginal students and their families to ensure their cultural and learning needs are catered for.

Staff

Staff are responsible for providing pastoral support to the students in their care. Should individual students require additional support, they work with the School Leadership Team, the Learning Support Team and/or the Aboriginal Education Worker.

Parents

Parents work in collaboration with their child's class teacher and other support personnel to ensure the pastoral support required is received.

Students

Students work and play in an atmosphere of mutual respect for others and follow the Student Code of Conduct.

Expectations

Staff

It is expected that staff:

- develop and maintain quality interpersonal relationships with students, parents and other members of the school community
- establish clear, consistent boundaries and expectations for children's separating the deed from the doer and viewing instances of wrong doing as an opportunity for learning
- establish consistent and fair behaviour systems within their own classrooms, at the same time following the guidelines set by the School Behaviour Policy
- provide opportunities for children to have their opinions and thoughts heard on matters affecting their classroom and school
- create classroom environments that promote and reward high quality work, effort and positive behaviour.
- acknowledge and affirm the strengths of each child and encourage their efforts in all areas
- provide opportunities for all children in the classroom to be active participants in their learning
- provide children with effective and timely feedback when working towards achieving positive behaviour
- welcome formal and informal classroom visits from the Principal, Leadership and Support Team members and plan collaboratively with them when working toward behaviour and learning goals
- communicate with parents in an open and honest manner
- acknowledge and celebrate birthdays and special times with other staff members and the children
- prayerfully support families in need
- foster self-esteem of their students and colleagues
- build positive relationships and rapport with all members of the school community

Parents

It is recommended that the parents:

- support the spiritual development and faith formation of their children
- support their child's learning
- inform the school of matters that may affect their child or children at school
- take advantage of opportunities to be actively involved in the school community

Students

It is expected that the students:

- be active learners who are engaged and involved in the school community
- respect the rights of others and themselves to have a happy and safe learning environment and playground
- adhere to the St Patrick's Student Code of Conduct
- take responsibility for their behavioural choices and actions

Pastoral Care at St Patrick's School

Pastoral Care at St Patrick's is embedded in our policies and practices. These focus on:

Induction and Welcome

New members of the school community are welcomed and provided with support in order to establish themselves within the community in their role.

School Spirit

We aim to instill in all members of the school community a sense of school spirit, and in turn a sense of pride and love for our school. Teachers, students and parents are encouraged to participate fully in all school events and functions.

Student Management

Through our Behaviour Policy clear rules for behaviour are set, outlining expectations and consequences. All students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct.

Promoting Self Esteem

At all times, we are committed to nurturing the self esteem of each and every member of the school community through affirmation and acknowledgement of achievements.

Catering for Special Needs

St Patrick's is committed to providing a variety of activities and programs that cater for specific needs within our school community. The Learning Support Team has in place many individual plans and have implemented structures that support students who find social interaction on the playground challenging.

Health and Safety

St Patrick's is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that fosters respect and dignity for all members of the school community. Our Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying and WHS Policy ensure the safety of each individual.

Student Leadership

Year 6 students are encouraged to take on the role of leadership. Captains and House Captains are elected at the end of Year 5. School leaders are mentored in their leadership roles by the Principal and Year 6 teachers. The Student Representative Council (SRC) is a forum for student centred leadership.

Staff Welfare

The self esteem and well-being of all staff members are of great importance. By actively listening to, and supporting each other, at all times maintaining confidentiality, we establish solid working relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

The Leadership and Support Teams

The Leadership Team operates an 'open door policy' where they endeavour to make themselves available to any staff member who needs assistance of any kind. The Learning Support Team members are also available to assist teachers in any way they can when coping with children with special needs. Referral to an Employee Assistance Program through Centacare is available to those who wish to access outside support services.

Spiritual Environments

Maintaining the spirit of Mary MacKillop is of the utmost importance and, in turn, permeates at all levels of our school. The Spiritual tone of the school is strengthened through the teaching of Religious Education, participation in prayer and Liturgy and the creation of prayerful environments.

Community Outreach

Involvement in projects and initiatives that involve the wider community are encouraged and are a means of increasing awareness and understanding of the needs and issues that exist outside our school environment.

Agreed Practices

All interactions with one another, whether it is with students, parents or those in the wider community, must be undertaken with the message of Jesus in mind: "Love one another as I have loved you".

It is essential that Pastoral Care Leadership is assumed by the Leadership Team, however all teachers within the school must be responsible for Pastoral Care. It is crucial that the climate of care be nurtured by all those within the school community.

Effective communication between members of the school community - teacher to teacher, teacher to student, teachers to parent, teachers to priest, student to student, parent to teacher, school to the wider community - is of great importance and must be clear, constructive and frequent.

The dignity of each individual must be recognised, valued and upheld. Affirming all individuals within the school community is important. Built-in structures, such as our Awards System are very important, but should not replace the incidental affirmation that should occur within the classroom and on the playground every day.

To nurture a climate of care and concern it is paramount that individuals within the school community are treated with love and justice. Rules and regulations are to be upheld firmly and fairly, with each situation being considered individually.

Year 6 Student Leadership

At St Patrick's School, two School Captains and six House Captains are elected from Year 5 at the end of each year to take on leadership roles in Year 6 the following year. All children in Year 6 are given a 'School Leader' badge to reinforce the fact that they all hold a leadership role as Year 6 students.

Year 5 Leadership Day

During Term 4, the Year 5 children participate in a Leadership Day that is organised by the Assistant Principal and the Year 5 teachers. The day involves activities based on leadership, teamwork, self-esteem, role play and reflection. The focus is on good leadership and the qualities that role requires.

Voting for School Captains

After students have received sufficient input at the Leadership Day they vote anonymously for School Captains. The Assistant Principal is responsible for organising and supervising the school leaders' election process. The staff are given the opportunity to view the student voting data and voice their own nominations at a Staff Meeting. The staff are then asked to fill out a voting ballot. The Assistant Principal is responsible for collating the staff votes and presenting these, along with the student votes to the Principal, who will make the final decision. The Principal then contacts the parents of the nominated children. The children are asked if they are willing to accept this leadership role and to keep it private until an announcement is made at Graduation Mass.

Induction of School Leaders

At the Opening School Mass at the beginning of each year, the new school leaders are presented with their badges. Parents of the School and House Captains are invited to attend and be a part of the ceremony by presenting the badges to their children.

All of the Year 6 children are required to sign Leadership Agreements when they accept their badges, signifying that they are aware of the responsibilities that go with being a leader. A special morning tea for the newly inducted School and House Captains and their parents is held after the Mass. The Assistant Principal is responsible for preparing the morning tea.

Student Representative Council (SRC)

The Student Representative Council (SRC) is an elected group of students, representing the entire student body with representatives elected from Years 2-6.

Each class has one elected representative. The two School Captains are automatic representatives and co-chair the Council. The Council meets each month or twice a term as a minimum. A volunteer Staff SRC Co-ordinator attends the meetings and assists with meeting procedures and advises members as required.

Items for discussion can include: fundraising initiatives, policy clarification, suggestions on ways to benefit students and social justice projects.

Leadership Forum

The School and House Captains are offered the opportunity to attend a Young Leaders Day which is a leadership forum held in Sydney. Parents are required to accompany their children if they choose to attend.

The Sports Shed

A large role for the Captains involves being in charge of Sports Equipment - distributing equipment and packing it away. The Year 6 teachers are responsible for training the leaders in this job and for organising a Sports Shed Roster for the Captains to follow.

Mentoring

The School and House Captains are mentored by the Principal, Assistant Principal and Year 6 teachers. A meeting should be scheduled at the beginning of Term One and then as the need arises. Captains are encouraged to voice concerns or difficulties they may be experiencing in their role. The mentors use these meetings to praise and affirm the leaders.

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING:

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER:

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional, non-judgemental approach to dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour, whether reported by students, staff or parents.

In any incidents of bullying the teacher will speak to all students concerned, including any witnesses, to make sure that all sides of the story are heard.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the privacy and rights of all concerned.

Phase 1:

1. Incident reported.
2. When analysing incidents of reported bullying behaviour, teachers should ask questions of what, where, when, who and why to determine what occurred in a calm manner.
3. Incidents of 'one-off aggression will be dealt with according to the school's discipline policy.

Document reported incident and consequences in the playground books, the AP Behaviour Folder or class teacher Behaviour Record sheets.

Phase 2:

1. Repeated incidents.
2. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers should ask questions of what, where, when, who and why to determine what occurred in a calm manner.
3. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then as a group, where appropriate. Witnesses may also be interviewed to get a clear and accurate account of events. Every person has the right to be heard.
4. Have students write their own account of the incident using the 'Bullying Student Report Form' (Appendix A).
5. If it is determined that a student has been involved in bullying behaviour they must be made aware of the situation and help them to see the situation from the victim's point of view
6. Reassurance is given to the victim that the matter has been addressed and a commitment given by the bully to not repeat the behaviour.
7. Teachers who are investigating an incident of bullying behaviour must keep a written record of any discussion with those involved using the Incident Report (Appendix B). A copy of the incident report is to be returned to the Assistant Principal who will file reports in the Behaviour Folder.

At the discretion of the staff, parents/carers of the student/s involved will be informed.

Phase 3:

1. Serious incidents to be reported to the Assistant Principal and/or Principal.
2. Parents/carers will be contacted and a formal interview arranged. The situation will be explained and consequences outlined, in accordance with the school's discipline policy.
3. In consultation with parents and the student's classroom teacher, a behaviour contract will be prepared and implemented.
4. Failure to comply with the terms of the behaviour contract will result in a review of the child's enrolment

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