

## Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy

### Rationale

Pastoral Care is based on respect for the dignity and uniqueness of the individual person who is made in the image of God. It is an individual and community response to Jesus' call to: love one another as I have loved you (John 13.34). When Catholic Education is faithful to the call of the Gospel, compassion, justice and reconciliation are evident throughout the life of the education community.

### Background

The Pastoral Care Policy respects the God given dignity of each person and focuses on the development of a community that is safe, supportive and inclusive of all.

The pastoral care and wellbeing of all is at the heart of Catholic Education enabling a learning environment which provides for the spiritual, physical, emotional, cognitive and social wellbeing of its participants.

### Scope

This policy applies to all schools operating under the formal and/or delegated governance of Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL). Other Catholic schools operating in the Diocese of Ballarat are required by the Bishop of Ballarat to have a policy of similar intent and standard.

### Definitions

**Pastoral Care:** Is defined as the action taken within the educational community by its leaders and community members to promote and enhance the wellbeing of the individual of a personal, social, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual nature. Key elements of wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience.

**Wellbeing** is defined as a state in which every person realises their own potential, can manage the normal stresses of life and work productively to make a contribution to their community.

**Wellbeing** is characterised by positive feelings resilience and satisfaction with self and learning experience at school. (Noble, McGrath, Rottey & Rowling 2008).

### Policy

1. Foundational to the nature of pastoral care in Catholic Education is the belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), with the inherent dignity that this implies. Each is created as a social being, with the mutual rights, obligations and needs that this implies.
2. Pastoral care in Catholic Education 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.'*
3. Schools in the Ballarat Diocese exercise their 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. Schools and families share responsibility for developing and maintaining such relationships of trust, characterised by respect for the goodwill of the other and a willingness to engage collaboratively.
5. Student and Staff 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 need 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 School Improvement.
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.
9. Awareness about the issues that impact on physical and psychological health and wellbeing need to be raised.
10. An environment that promotes health and wellbeing needs to be promoted.
11. Participation in health and wellbeing initiatives within and outside the community needs to be promoted and encouraged.
12. All should be made aware of issues relating to health and wellbeing

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (the Wellbeing Framework) is the foundational document that will provide schools with a set of guiding principles to support school communities to build positive learning environments, and to consider reviewing their current safety and wellbeing policies and support requirements.

The Wellbeing Framework provides school communities with best-practice advice on developing and implementing policies and support mechanisms to help all students from the first year of school to year 12. The five key elements of the Wellbeing Framework are:

- **Leadership:** Principals and school leaders play an active role in building positive learning environment where the whole school community feels included connected, safe and respected.
- **Inclusion:** All members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values, diversity, and fosters positive, respectful relationships.

- **Student Voice:** Students are active participants in their own learning and wellbeing, feel connected and use their social and emotional skills to be respectful, resilient and safe.
- **Partnerships:** Families and communities collaborate as partners with the school to support student learning, safety and wellbeing.
- **Support:** School staff, students and families share and cultivate an understanding of wellbeing and support for positive behaviour and how this supports effective teaching and learning.

All schools are to use the Well Being Framework and the [Student Wellbeing Hub website](#) including its audit tools as a key resource in developing and promoting positive and practical student safety, pastoral care and wellbeing processes.

A suite of excellent support materials is included on the website and specifically tailored resources for students and parents can be found at the Safe Schools Hub.

## References

Pastoral Care Policy CECV (2008)

Working with Children Act 2006

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (2018)

Critical Incidents Procedures (2015)

CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety 2016

## Appendix

Appendix 1 Policy Development and Review

## Policy Development and Review

A school's pastoral care policy, and all related policies and procedures, should be developed collaboratively and reviewed periodically. They should be published and readily accessible to staff, students, parents and guardians.

### Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

All Catholic schools are expected to have policies and procedures in place to address issues of bullying, harassment, child abuse and neglect. The Wellbeing Framework is the appropriate model and resource by which schools can develop, implement and monitor their policies and procedures.

### Management of Critical Incidents

Procedures are required for ensuring appropriate care for individuals and for the school community in times of stress, for example if there is a critical incident or a death in the school community. Support is available to school leadership personnel and school communities through the Catholic Education Office Ballarat. Schools ought to also have arrangements in place for engaging external providers of care when needed.

*Reference – 'Critical Incidents Procedures' (CEOB 2015)*

### Student Behaviour Management

Student behaviour management in Catholic schools ought to seek to protect personal and school community safety, heal destructive behaviours, restore relationships, encourage reconciliation, enhance wellbeing, foster responsibility, enable personal growth, and promote the common good.

The Catholic Education Office 'Guidelines for Behavioural Support' (2016) present guiding principles, expectations and recommended procedures for student behaviour management.

### Negotiated Transfer of Students in Circumstances of a Serious Nature

In some serious circumstances, a change of school or a move to an alternative setting may be judged the most appropriate means by which a student's wellbeing can be responsibly supported or restored. Such a change, known as negotiated transfer, offers opportunity for personal growth, and for a fresh start in an environment more suited to the student's needs and circumstances.

Negotiated transfer may also be an appropriate move by which the wellbeing of a school community can be protected (e.g. when a student's continuing presence poses a threat to that community's safety).

### Serious Wrongful Behaviour and Termination of Enrolment of Students

Under the most serious and extreme of circumstances, when a student has repeatedly engaged in serious wrongful behaviour and all other appropriate behaviour management processes have proved unsuccessful and the serious behaviour persists, it may be judged that the only responsible action left is termination of enrolment. This is to be avoided in Catholic schools wherever possible. **Only the principal has the authority to terminate enrolment of a student, after consultation with the Director of Catholic Education, Ballarat and the agreement of the Governing Authority and respecting the autonomy of the congregational authority.**