St Mary's Catholic Primary School
ARMIDALE

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

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make it work

Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Armidale

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

What is Pastoral care?

Pastoral Care is the care exercised for the 'whole person', i.e. for the individual's spiritual, intellectual, social, physical and psychological wellbeing. It originates in profound respect for the dignity of the individual person and is prompted by the imperatives of the Gospel of Christ. Because it is central to the whole purpose of Catholic Education, Pastoral Care is:

- to permeate all activities of the school;
- to be the unifying focus for the spiritual, academic, social and emotional aspects of school life;
- all school policies should be intrinsically linked to pastoral care;
- to be the basis for commitment to partnership and shared responsibility amongst priests, staff, students, parents and other family members to develop the whole person and enhance the whole school community; to be reciprocal, moving not only from teacher to student and parent, but also from student to student, parent to teacher, student to teacher, teacher to teacher.
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Our Approach

At St Mary's , Pastoral Care is expressed through:

- the development of quality relationships;
- the provision of satisfying learning experiences;
- the establishment of an effective care network.

Pastoral Care Outcomes

In the words of "The Catholic School" (Congregation for Catholic Education 19th March 1977, n.47) "The Catholic School differs from others which limit themselves to forming men and women. Its task is to form Christian men and women, and, by its teaching and witness, to show non-Christians something of the mystery of Christ"

Thus, among the outcomes of successful pastoral care are included:

- the Christian formation of students according to Catholic Faith and Practice;
- the enhancement of self-esteem;
- the development of self-discipline, social responsibility, citizenship and a sense of social justice;
- the creation of a peaceful environment through affirmation and reconciliation;
- the fostering of a sense of belonging to, and pride in, the school;
- the creation of an environment in which each person is respected, welcomed, and enabled and encouraged to develop to their full potential.

Strategies to Foster Pastoral Care

Strategies for promoting Pastoral Care include:

- the development of relationships which are based on Catholic ideals;
- the fostering of self-discipline and personal responsibility;
- the pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning;

- the establishment of an effective care network which utilises approved resources of the wider community (e.g. welfare and respite groups, family and health services, etc), and
- which is built on collaboration within the school, and between school, family, parish and wider community;
- collaboration between school, family, parish and the wider community;
- the celebration of special events through assemblies and liturgies;
- the clear communication of policies and procedures which are subject to regular evaluation;
- the development of structures that enable members of the community to contribute to pastoral care ;
- programs which assist in the growth of the whole person by developing self-esteem, social relationships, Christian sexuality, moral maturity, health and personal safety awareness, drug awareness, and by providing a support in grief and loss;
- programs which provide a support in grief and loss;
- commitment to social justice and the service of others;
- the lived example within the school community of the value of democratic processes and mutual cooperation in achieving the common good.

Key Pastoral care policies and procedures

Our key pastoral care policies and procedures include:

Faith

The Mission of Catholic Systemic Schools in the Armidale Diocese is to provide education in the Catholic tradition in partnership with rural communities. The vision of St Mary's is the promotion of faith development, learning and service in an educational environment that is manifestly Christian and Catholic.

Teaching & Learning

Quality teaching and learning strategies responsive to the individual learning needs of students are addressed at school. By engaging students in this way, they are encouraged to become reflective, self-directed learners who accept personal responsibility for their participation in school whilst disciplining themselves.

Student Safety & Welfare

St Mary's has implemented a comprehensive work health and safety program and a student care program designed to ensure the ongoing safety and welfare of students. Key policies and procedures include those relating to:

- Child Protection;
- Student Supervision;
- Managing Student Health;
- Managing Student Behaviour;
- Students with Disabilities;
- Managing Extracurricular Activities;
- Building and Grounds Maintenance;
- School Security; and
- Critical Incident Management.

Students with Disabilities and Special Needs

St Mary's has implemented detailed policies and procedures for managing students with disabilities and special needs.

Mentoring

We recognise that students benefit from the advice and experience of their peers.

Leadership

The development of student's leadership qualities is an important outcome of their schooling. To this end St Mary's has developed a Student Leadership Policy.

Counselling

Counselling is an important part of a student's development and allows care givers to address the needs of students on a one on one basis.

Students are encouraged to talk to the counsellor, in accordance with our Counselling Services Policy.

Who is responsible for Pastoral care?

All teachers and staff at St Mary's are responsible for pastoral care, and for administering pastoral care in all classes and extra-curricular activities.

Implementation

Pastoral care within the school is implemented through a combination of:

- effective policies, procedures and framework;
- effective incident notification procedures; and
- allocation of the overall responsibility for the effective implementation of pastoral care to a senior staff member.

Related Policies

Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools Pastoral Care Policy Statement 2002

A Framework for Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

Pastoral Care Appendix