



Good Shepherd Catholic School

— Lockridge —

215 Morley Drive, Lockridge, W.A. 6054

Phone: (08) 6278 9500 • Fax: (08) 6278 9540 • Email: admin@gsl.wa.edu.au

Website: www.gsl.wa.edu.au • ABN 86 853 294 544

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Pastoral Care is the devolution of our school's Vision Statement on a daily basis, to support the children in their journey through to adolescence.

Vision Statement

Many Gifts, One Spirit.

Good Shepherd Catholic School is a community growing together in faith, based on the model of Jesus Christ. We are guided by the traditions and beliefs of the Catholic Church.

The School endeavours to provide a family atmosphere of openness, truthfulness and acceptance of different backgrounds and needs.

This community promotes the dignity of each member by developing freedom, uniqueness, self worth and respect for others. Its focus is the development of the individual child.

Overview

The Pastoral Care Policy is the umbrella from which a number of other policies evolve. These policies support the aims of the Pastoral Care Policy and the practical aspects of the implementation of the Pastoral care Policy.

Principles

1. The Pastoral Care Policy brings to life the efforts to live out the school's Vision Statement.
2. Each individual is of value and shall be respected as they are made in the image of Christ.
3. Individuals learn by their life experiences.
4. There are rules and expectations that come from living within a community and each person within that community is accountable for their actions.

Polices issued under the Pastoral Care Policy include:

1. Managing Student Behaviour Policy which includes:
 - a. School rules
 - b. Managing Student Behaviour Class Plans
2. Homework
3. Bullying Policy
4. Communication between:
 - a. Parent - Staff
 - b. Child - Staff
 - c. Staff - Staff
 - d. Board, Parents & Friends to Staff
 - e. Board, Parents & Friends to Parents
 - f. Principal to Staff
 - g. Principal to Children and Parents

Rationale

Pastoral Care in a Catholic School is informed by and given its spirit by the school's place as part of the evangelical ministry of the Church. The Catholic school is in essence the face of Christ for its whole community and its pastoral role needs to infuse every aspect of its operation and its relationships.

The life of every human person is seen to have a God given value and meaning which is enhanced *in a school community whose atmosphere is permeated with the Gospel spirit of Freedom and Love*. In this setting the students experience their dignity as people before they know its definition.

Pastoral Care is the concern of all involved in Catholic education and has both implicit and explicit elements.

At the implicit level every aspect of the school's educational ministry needs to be infused by the Church's understanding of what it means to be a community of believers. This means that Pastoral Care cannot be confined to organisational or curriculum areas alone.

At the explicit level there needs to be a clear articulation of specific ways the Pastoral Care of each member or group in the school community is to be assisted to develop his/her potential, be nurtured, be healed and educated. It is here that programs, structures and specialist personnel are necessary to ensure that specific needs are met in a systematic fashion. It is recommended that a collaborative approach be taken in implementing the Framework.

Parents are the first educators of their children. The role of the Catholic school is to assist parents in the Catholic education of their children. Each school needs to appreciate the special pastoral circumstances of its own community, including families, and then to mobilise the resources, personnel and programs needed to meet those pastoral needs.

Defining Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools means enhancing the dignity of each person within a Catholic faith community. It is concerned with maximising learning and growth and developing the beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and practices to enable all to become inner-directed, contributing members of God's creation.

Principles

The function of *Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools* is to:

1. **Provide an environment, a curriculum and a set of practices based on the Gospels;** *Catholic education draws from approaches that understand a school to be a community committed to the students' development as fully integrated through education means.*
2. **Enable students to attain the beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge's, skills and practices which will enable them to achieve Christ's vision of the human person;** *Every Catholic school community's concern will be the students' development as Christian men and women – as responsible, inner-direct individuals of Christian virtue, capable of free choice and of making value-judgements enlightened by a formed Christian conscience.*
3. **Ensure that the care and development of each person takes place within the Catholic faith community;** *In school, students should see Christian values actively lived rather than merely spoken of, and experience them in sincere interpersonal relationships.*
4. **Be concerned with the nurturing and wellbeing of all who impact on the school community,.** *A school's pastoral dimension will show itself in the mutual care and support administrators and staff show towards each other, as well as though the care they all show for their students. From the pastoral dimensions of the total school life. Students learn their own value and dignity.*

The full dignity of the human person is enhanced when all the elements are interlinked.

Formulation of a school's Pastoral Care policy requires a collaborative approach and consideration of the following elements:

I. Environment

The environment permeating a Catholic school should be thoroughly infused with the Catholic notion of Pastoral Care. Examples of the aspects pertaining to the environment element are as follows:

Life of Faith

- ❖ Prayer, liturgy, celebration and participation in the Sacraments;
- ❖ Reflection of value of the Sacraments in school policies and practices e.g. acceptance, forgiveness and nourishment;
- ❖ Traditions of the Church (liturgical calendar, feast days, founders day, etc).

Community Dimensions

- ❖ Interpersonal relationships within the school community;
- ❖ Relationships with clergy, religious orders, parent community and past students;
- ❖ Reflection of the school's mission statement and motto;
- ❖ Relevant cultural aspects;
- ❖ Awareness and support of those who are alienated.

Administrative Sector

- ❖ Style of leadership;
- ❖ Support for students as they move from one stage of schooling to another;
- ❖ Pastoral care of staff;
- ❖ Strategic management plan involving consultation, involvement, participation and ownership;
- ❖ All school personnel are conversant with the school's Pastoral Care policies and practices.

II. Policy and Practice

The *policies* and *practices* that a school employs should enhance the dignity of the human person. All *policies* should reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care. The following are examples of such policies:

STUDENTS

- * Student management
- * duty of care

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- * reporting and communication
- * parental involvement

ADMINISTRATION

- * allocation of resources
- * uniform requirements and standards
- * enrolment policies
- * crisis management

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- * employment, professional and faith development
- * professional development of teachers in pastoral care

BOARDING HOUSE MANAGEMENT

III. Curriculum

Curriculum is the total, school-directed experience of students during schooling.

The curriculum needs to be informed by the Principles of Pastoral Care catering for a variety of students needs and abilities in a Catholic school setting.

The following aspects of Curriculum are considered:

- ❖ Consideration of the needs of all students
- ❖ Provision of an adaptable and flexible curriculum
- ❖ Appropriate methods of assessment, evaluation and reporting
- ❖ A curriculum informed by the Principles of Catholic Social Justice teachings

- ❖ Acquisition of concepts, the learning of facts, development of life skills, examination of attitudes, and an exploration of their beliefs and values.

Conclusion

Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools is concerned with enhancing the dignity of the human person within a Catholic faith community.

The aims and purpose of this Framework is to assist schools in developing and refining it's approach to Pastoral Care. The elements set out above are not exhaustive, but they are intended to provide a stimulus in examining **Pastoral Care in a Catholic School**.

Policies need to be evolving and to include a review process inbuilt every 3 – 5 years so that the unintended consequences are addressed.

It is through the dynamic and inter-related nature of the elements that the dignity of the human person is enhanced.

References

1. Second Vatican Council (1965), **Declaration on Christian Education**, Dominican Publishers.
2. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1983), **The Catholic School**, Society of St Paul, NSW.
3. Bishops of Western Australia (1993), **Mandate Letters from the Bishops of WA**, #37 & 46, Catholic Education Office, WA.
4. Bishops of Western Australia (1993), **Mandate Letters from the Bishops of WA**, #7, Catholic Education Office, WA.
5. Bishops of Western Australia (1993), **Mandate Letters from the Bishops of WA**, #15, Catholic Education Office, WA.
6. Bishops of Western Australia (1993), **Mandate Letters from the Bishops of WA**, #15, Catholic Education Office, WA.
7. Bishops of Western Australia (1993), **Mandate Letters from the Bishops of WA**, #17, Catholic Education Office, WA.
8. Ministerial Committee to Review Curriculum Development (1995), **Review of School Curriculum Development Procedures and Processes in WA**, Education Policy and Coordination Bureau, WA.