



# Good Shepherd Catholic School

— Lockridge —

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## School Retreat Policy

### **1. Rationale**

Good Shepherd Catholic School retreats are an integral part of the life-long faith formation of young people. They promote systematic, intentional catechesis as part of the comprehensive evangelisation of students.

Catholic school retreats are relational at heart. To be effective, retreat programs acknowledge the individual's unique reality and bring the power of the Gospel into contemporary culture in a way that engages and empowers young people.

The Catholic school retreat aims to put students in 'communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ' (GDC 80).<sup>1</sup> Through the retreat experience students come to know Christian love and are exposed to a Gospel centred way of life. Students hear the Gospel and are empowered to connect the Gospel message to their lives and to find ways of continuing the Church's mission. They participate in the life of the Christian community through liturgy and through activities which emphasise growth in Christian faith.

### **2. Definitions**

The term retreat refers to time away from the normal school program where participants have the opportunity to reflect on their relationship with God. The emphasis is on students' awareness of the presence of God in their lives. Retreats may vary in style and duration. They include experiences of prayer, discussions, reflective silence and quiet time alone. The celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist is strongly encouraged.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

### **4. Principles**

4.1 Retreats aim to provide experiences for students to know, contemplate and celebrate Jesus.

4.2 Retreats are an integral part of Catholic school life. They need to be inclusive, purposeful, meaningful and take into account the culture, developmental needs and experiences of students.

4.3 Retreats complement the catechesis experiences offered by the school.

4.4 Retreat planning needs to take into consideration the charism, ethos and mission of the school.

4.5 Retreats need to be planned in a way that engages students in rich experiences of Catholic symbol and ritual.

4.6 Retreat staff will be committed to the faith formation of young people.

## **5. Procedures**

5.1 Each school shall have its own retreat planning policy which is compatible with this policy statement.

5.2 A school's retreat planning policy shall follow the Catholic Education Commission Policy statement 2-B4 'School Camps and Excursions'.

5.3 Parents and students shall be informed about the nature and purpose of the retreat and the level of student involvement required.

5.4 A school retreat program shall consider the religious and cultural backgrounds and the developmental needs of the students.

5.5 A school retreat program shall include appropriate prayer and liturgical experiences.

5.6 A school retreat program shall include creative and engaging activities and approaches with young people which connect to systematic catechesis.

5.7 Staff involved in a school retreat shall be familiar with the retreat program and its expectations prior to and during the retreat.

5.8 The roles of retreat staff shall be clearly defined.

5.9 The retreat program shall include appropriate evaluation procedures, including feedback from students.

## **6. References**

<sup>1</sup>General Directory for Catechesis (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) 80

## **7. Related Documents**

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, Policy statement 2-B4 'School Camps and Excursions'

## **8. Next Review**

2016