



## PASTORAL CARE POLICY

### Vision Statement

St. Columba's Catholic Primary School is committed to the total development of the whole child in a nurturing family community revealing Jesus Christ.

We hope to achieve this through the following School Goals:

- To lead children to know and love Jesus so that they may follow his example in their own lives.
- To provide a loving and caring environment in which children can develop to their full potential spiritually, academically, physically, socially and emotionally.
- To affirm, respect and develop the individuality and God-given gifts of each child, staff member and school community member.
- To provide a sense of security and hope through encouragement of self-esteem and sound relationships with others and with God.
- To develop an informed awareness of Church teachings and prepare students for their life in a rapidly changing society.
- To develop the parents' role in their child's education.
- To develop a staff community in which each member is encouraged to grow and develop in Faith for the benefit of themselves, the whole staff, the children and the wider school community.

Pastoral Care means enhancing the dignity of each person within a Catholic faith community. The school vision statement should reflect the Pastoral Care Policy of the school.

The dignity and respect of each person in the school's community are considered as fundamental in the entire educational process. Pastoral care infuses all aspects of the school life. 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.

Our school aims to demonstrate 'Christian Forgiveness' through the use of an assertive discipline policy, centered on our behaviour management.

It is important for students to see common beliefs, attitudes and goals between their home and their school. Communication with parents, carers and guardians is of vital importance. To prevent misunderstandings, parents need to be informed of changes, encouraged to be involved in the School and have confidence that they have chosen the most supportive school for their child. Parent, staff and student collaboration is an ongoing process, which will help strengthen our Pastoral Care program over time.

Our Pastoral Care also includes the services of a Social Worker who is available for the school community by appointment. All members of the Leadership team are available to hear concerns, but parents are asked to

discuss classroom issues with the class teacher first. Also, because parents often see it as a convenient time to see the Leadership team at the start and end of each day, it is important that appointments are made so quality time can be set aside.

Communication is the important element of Pastoral Care. Issues can be discussed and various strategies implemented with the support and cooperation of all parties involved. Individual programs and plans may be developed and implemented, in conjunction with parents, teachers and children involved, to help increase self esteem, stop bullying, deal with crisis, help those in need and develop behaviour plans if needed.

Our framework is flexible in order to account for the individual needs of each student knowing that all policies within the school are influenced by the Pastoral Care policy. The integration of culture and faith, and of life and faith is considered in our policy.

Administrators and staff will be role models in the mutual care and support they show each other and the students. It is from the Pastoral dimension of the total school life that students learn their own value and dignity. Every staff member shares some responsibility for the pastoral dimension of the Catholic School.

Pastoral Care at St. Columba's :

1. Has the individual as its focus.
2. Permeates all aspects of the curriculum.
3. Is exercised mutually by all members of the school community.
4. Promotes respect for the rights of every person.

At St. Columba's we have a 'hands off' approach with the students, but a teacher may take physical action that is appropriate to prevent or restrain a student from acting in a manner which places at risk his / her own safety, that of another student or a member of the staff of the school.

No teacher should be alone with a student in a room. It is wise to ensure that teachers have witnesses to any disciplinary action that may occur.

The classroom teacher in collaboration with the School Principal will decide on any 'punishment' measures required.

The Principal may invoke a suspension, after a discussion with parents, of no more than five consecutive days.

Detentions and Suspensions are only used after other strategies have previously been tried or for serious misconduct deemed to be prejudicial to the good order and reputation of the school.

Exclusion is an extreme disciplinary step reserved for cases of gross misconduct, serious breaches of school rules or behaviour that is persistently disruptive or contrary to the mission statement of the school. It is used as a last resort; after all other measures have failed. The decision to exclude a student will be the right of the Principal.