

Pastoral Care Policy STM

RATIONALE

Pastoral care is an individual and community response to Jesus' call to 'love one another as I have loved you' (John 13:34).

Mary MacKillop's motto: 'Never see a need without doing something about it.'

Pastoral care is based on a deep respect for the dignity and uniqueness of the individual person who is made in the image of God and is lived out in all dimensions of Catholic school life. Pastoral Care is the network of care, which exists in a school. Students, staff, parents, the parish, parish priest and wider community all contribute to this care.

Staff at St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School have a holistic approach to education, and seek to develop the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social aspects of the child in the service of others. All school curricula, policies and practices are designed to enhance the dignity and worth of the human person.

All school members have the right to feel safe and have their concerns addressed in an appropriate and unbiased manner.

DEFINITION

"Pastoral Care may be defined as the expressions of care in the school community which bring together the diverse aspects of school life, academic, social, physical and religious. Pastoral Care is love in action. It invites students, staff and parents to make choices about life which fulfil their destiny as sons and daughters of God, created in God's likeness. Pastoral Care embraces the whole gamut of the curriculum and environment, the school's mission statement and in the quality of daily relationships." (Treston, 1992 p.27, 28)

At St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School we strive:

- To foster children's faith in Christ so that they are able to become more like God.
- To provide a total caring environment in which each child's dignity as God's creation is respected and developed.
- To affirm, respect and develop the individuality and God-given gifts of each child, staff member and school community member.
- To respect and develop in each person the God-given gift of free will.
- To provide opportunities for all children to develop culturally within their own environment and to understand, respect and embrace the cultures of others in our multicultural school.
- To develop the parents' role in their child's education.

- To develop a staff community in which each person is encouraged to grow and develop in faith for the benefit of themselves, the staff, the children and the wider school community.
- To endeavour to work as a total school community in meeting the needs of each member.

AIMS

That Students, Staff And Parents:

- Feel secure and comfortable within the school
- Are encouraged to participate in the life of the school
- Feel they are trusted and valued members of the community
- Treat each other's ideas with respect
- Are encouraged to develop within themselves confidence in their own abilities
- Accept and enjoy the diversity of cultures within our school and community
- Share in and enjoy the richness of our heritage.

SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS, STAFF, STUDENTS, PARENTS, WIDER COMMUNITY

STAFF

At St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School our staff endeavours to provide a model of Christian goodwill and co-operation.

Strategies

- Respect, accept and support each other as professional people with specific individual talents.
- Demonstrate commitment to students.
- Share problems and assist when difficulties arise.
- Welcome and include new members
- Provide a network for constructive advice and communication.
- Provide opportunities for shared prayer.
- Encourage occasions for staff celebrations.

STUDENTS

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School encourages students to develop as confident Christians, secure in their strengths, aware of their needs, and able to work academically to the best of their ability.

Strategies

- Provide situations which encourage children to recognise and believe in themselves and celebrate life with one another.
- Provide personal development and self-esteem programmes for children.
- Plan programmes which develop interpersonal relationship skills.
- Implement the full curriculum based on Catholic Education Office and Ministry of Education requirements and modify these to suite the children.
- Encourage the individuality of children by extending to them the courtesies expected in a caring society –
 - Addressing them by name
 - Taking time to listen to them
 - Making realistic demands which recognise a variety of abilities and qualities.

- Provide for children with specific needs, giving recognition and help where appropriate.
- Cater for individual differences in students' abilities.

PARENTS

The staff respects the role of parents as prime educators of their children. As both parents and teachers are committed to the education of children, courtesy, honest communication and cooperation enhances the prospects of a successful educational partnership.

Multicultural issues, socio-economic pressures, single parent families, language differences and religious situations require understanding and mutual respect.

Avenues of Co-Operation and Communication

- Regular consultation and reporting with parents on the individual development of students.
- Parent orientation meeting early in Term 1 to explain class systems of discipline, homework etc.
- Education meetings e.g. Sacramental Programme, Literacy, Numeracy, Reading Recovery, Shared planning for classes and students
- Parent nights.
- Parent/teacher availability for discussion outside school times.
- Utilising parents' resources and welcoming and encouraging their participation in the school.
- Weekly newsletter.
- Use the P. & F. as a forum for consulting with the parent body on issues related to the management of the school and the teaching/learning programs provided.
- School activities e.g. camps, incursions and excursions.
- Social and fund-raising occasions.
- Special Occasions e.g. Mother's Day, Father's Day, School Sports Carnivals.

PARISH

The Parish has a supportive role to play in the pastoral care programme of the school.

Strategies

- Be supported by staff and parents in the school's liturgical events.
- Be supported by staff and parents in the preparation of the Sacraments.
- Through the parish council the school/parish relationship is further developed and opportunities where parish can support school and school support parish are adopted and acted upon.
- Social and fund-raising events.

WIDER COMMUNITY

The school sees the community as a vital and integral part of each child's education and so should be seen to be actively involved in community events.

Strategies

- Develop community pride through participation in various projects and events e.g. Caritas, Walk with Me, Welcome BBQ and Bookweek

- Encourage the children to take part in the community's educational programmes
- Invite members of the community to enrich curriculum experiences e.g. NAIDOC Week, St Vincent de Paul and St Giles presenters
- Resources available both in the school and in the community should be reciprocally used whenever possible.
- Share resources and ideas with other schools.
- Encourage multiculturalism through attitudes and involvement e.g. learning languages, customs and cultures.
- Participate in sporting, cultural and interest activities with other schools.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT – *Improve student learning and enhance teacher instruction.*

A friendly, supportive and co-operative atmosphere amongst members of staff is essential to the whole school's well-being. Parallel in importance is the maintenance, development and application of teaching skills which include not only the ability of class teachers to teach a comprehensive range of subjects in an interesting way but also, being able to nurture and develop the talents of all children.

Strategies

- Providing opportunities through staff prayer and in-services for ongoing faith development of staff members.
- Regular in-service to develop teaching skills, techniques and update knowledge.
- Sharing knowledge gained at such in-service e.g. by reporting to staff.
- Accepting responsibility for organising and developing some area of the curriculum.
- Organising celebrations and programmes within the school for annual events such as *BookWeek, Mission Week and NAIDOC Week.*
- Implement effective programming which reflects the spirit of the school policy, significant church and educational statements and the professional image of the informed and caring teacher.
- Support in developing classroom management skills will be given to teachers commencing their professional career.
- Further Professional Development of individual staff members.
- Upgrading of religious knowledge to ensure the children are nurtured into the modern church.
- Staff new to St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School need to be introduced to the procedures of the school directly by the Principal and indirectly by all staff members.

Overarching Goal:

To follow our mission statement at all times.

