Pastoral Care & Discipline Policy

RATIONALE
Pastoral Care is integral to the daily life of the school and cannot be restricted to a particular program or curriculum. It fosters growth and embraces the total life of the school by building relationships through the cooperation of parents, families, Parish and the wider community. Pastoral Care is the summation of a school’s endeavours:
To educate and motivate students towards their futures
To be socially responsible and committed to building a better world
To base their decisions on their knowledge and teaching of Gospel values and the life of Jesus Christ
Pastoral Care at St Joachim’s is the integration of the academic, social, emotional and religious dimensions of the school. It is reflected in our respect for the people’s rights, responsibility and individuality.
All groups within St Joachim’s School community share in the responsibility for the personal development of each child. They need to be approachable, supportive and caring. They need to support Christian family and life and respond to the needs of each person and each group.

PASTORAL CARE: DIMENSIONS AND FEATURES
While St Joachim’s is unique in its composition, vision and spirit, it shares with other schools many common social purposes, as well as similar social challenges. At a time when economic hardships and social pressures on families and young people are increasing, and when the social and cultural backgrounds of students are becoming more diversified, the scope and character of each school’s pastoral response requires constant review.
The following dimensions and features of Pastoral Care are derived from an analysis of current practice in Catholic schools. They reflect fidelity and commitment to the Christian vision of Pastoral Care, and include:
- Quality of Relationships
- Formation in Self-Discipline and Responsibility
- Pastoral Programs
- Supportive School-Family Relationships
- Effective Networks of Care
- Coordinated and Supportive Organisational Structures.

STATEMENT OF COMMON BELIEFS
- Pastoral care supports & provides a context for the growth and expression of the gospel values of compassion, tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation in all aspects of our school’s life.
- To identify and experience the revelation of Jesus by celebrating together and modelling our faith and the opportunity to live our faith.
- Every person has the right to feel safe, secure and loved in St. Joachim’s.
- Pastoral care endeavours to uphold and sustain the values of mutual respect, responsibility and service within the community
- Staff, students, parents etc. work cohesively for the good of St. Joachim’s
- All members of the St Joachim’s school community gain an understanding of their importance and influence within the school community
- Pastoral care aims to provide our students with a strong sense of well-being, belonging & security. Students will be given every opportunity to be affirmed in their dignity and worth and assisted to grow to the fullness of their potential
- Children have the opportunity to learn in a caring, safe enriching environment.
- To put in place strategies to enhance individualized learning.
- Pastoral care seeks to respond to the social & cultural, family and economic diversity of the members of our community to ensure equality of opportunity for those members.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**Quality of relationships**
Pastoral Care is achieved or forfeited in the quality of relationships established in the school. In the school's daily and routine life, the ways in which people interact with each other is a significant determinant of each person’s sense of self worth, belonging and well-being.

The fostering of high quality interpersonal relationships between teachers, students, parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone. Teachers in particular set the tone and priority of Pastoral Care by their witness and example. They need to be known as caring, compassionate adults who take a real interest in the lives of their students. Similarly, students need to recognise their own potential for building acceptance, trust, esteem and friendships amongst their peers. Such recognition brings with it a responsibility to uphold and nurture these life-giving values and qualities.

**Formation in self-discipline and responsibility**
Pastoral Care in Catholic schools is vitally concerned with the fostering of students’ self-discipline. At the heart of this endeavour is the development of persons who are responsible and inner directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience (The Catholic School, n. 31).

Pastoral Care also contributes to students recognising that their fundamental freedoms and rights are reciprocated by responsibilities.

The Discipline Policy, school rules and sanctions are intended to promote the good order of the community and as such they are positive concepts. They can also be viewed as aids to the fostering of self-discipline and responsibility, wherein students progressively grow in their capacity to exercise moral judgment, democratic values and a concern for the common good.

**Pastoral programs**
Pastoral Care endeavours to discern the life needs of students and to provide them with every opportunity to value themselves and to experience well-being.

The provision of pastoral programs represents a specific and planned means of achieving this ideal. Such provision include programs for self-esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, sexuality and health and personal safety. Drug awareness programs and programs dealing with grief and loss should also be included in the school's pastoral curriculum.

The complexity and increasing tensions of family and community life require that pastoral programs be attentive to the changing needs of students, and to the unique needs of individual students. Appraisal of priorities needs to be ongoing and based on good communication between teachers, students and their families.

**Comprehensive and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning**
The provision of a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum is inextricably linked to the highest ideals of pastoral care.

St Joachim’s is central to the lives of our students in which their aspirations for the future are shaped. In light of changing educational priorities, economic uncertainties and limited employment prospects, St Joachim’s curriculum aims to be comprehensive and of the highest quality so that students are afforded the competence, confidence and right to participate in the cultural and productive life of society.

Such curriculum provision is essentially concerned with deeper understandings of how individual students learn, with improvement in the quality of teaching and with the establishment of fair and just assessment procedures. It is responsive to students with special needs, and it endeavours to redress educational disadvantage brought about by such factors as socio-economic status, gender, ethnic origin and race.
Pastoral Care is the summation of our school’s endeavours to educate and to motivate students towards their futures. As such, it supports and provides a context for the provision of a comprehensive and socially responsible curriculum that reflects and finds its source in the Catholic Faith.

**Supportive school-family relationships**
For the majority of students, the family unit and the school are amongst the most formative influences in their lives. It is therefore essential that relationships of trust, cooperation and partnership be developed and supportive between the school and family members, and, that at all times, school personnel maintain respect for and sensitivity to diverse cultural values and family structures.
While Pastoral Care initiatives must respect the privacy of students’ lives, some students and their families actively seek the school’s support in times of crisis and instability. Within the limits of its resources and expertise, St Joachim’s, committed to the total well-being of its students, endeavors to provide this intensified support.

**Effective networks of care**
Everyone in the school community is involved in Pastoral Care. A commitment to partnership and shared responsibility amongst staff, students, parents and other family members is an integral feature of Pastoral Care.

**DISCIPLINE POLICY**
**Introduction:**
St Joachim’s discipline practice is closely linked with its Pastoral Care insofar as each seeks to promote respectful, secure and healthy environments in which students can prosper.
In a variety of ways, St Joachim’s strives to create an environment which is supportive of individuals and groups with special needs, which is conducive to worthwhile learning, which enhance a sense of belonging and which demonstrate a caring concern for the well-being of all of its members.
However, St Joachim’s has some students whose personal and social problems manifest themselves in behaviors which are either disruptive to the teaching and learning program, disrespectful of school rules and codes of conduct, and/or harmful to the well-being and security of its members. In this context, Pastoral Care ensures that disciplinary measures and sanctions are approached not as merely punitive actions but as concerted attempts to foster responsibility for actions, and to both change and heal destructive behaviors and breaches of order.

**Discipline practices, rules and sanctions**
Disciplinary practices at St Joachim’s aim to facilitate the development and experience of responsible self-discipline among students. They also seek to promote the well-being and good order of the community.

**Rights and Responsibilities**
The rules and consequences included in this document are aids to the fostering of self-discipline within pupils. Our ultimate aim is for self-discipline where pupils develop to their full potential and are responsible for their own behaviour. The staff and students have worked in collaboration to develop four school rules. In doing so, everyone shares a common language and understanding as to the expectations of our school.

*Follow Directions.*

*Keep Hands, Feet & Objects To Oneself.*

*Ignore Inappropriate Behaviour*

*Speak Appropriately*
Consequences

When a pupil exhibits unacceptable behaviour the staff member involved will instigate a consequence that will be appropriate to:
I. the action and
II. the age of the pupil.

It is the responsibility of the staff member to see that the consequence is carried out. The staff member may use a suggested consequence from the following list:

- reminder of the rule and / or a verbal warning
- asked to reflect on behaviour
- set some goals for future behaviour
- an apology for infringing the rights of others (in writing or verbally)
- time to cool off (isolation from others)
- time out in the class room or area of the playground supervised by the teacher
- time out away from the class room or specific area of the playground supervised by another teacher
- repeating the action in a correct manner
- sanctions such as completing a task e.g. cleaning up
- completing unfinished work during recess or lunch time, supervised by the teacher (detention will not exceed more than half of recess or lunch time)
- removal of privileges
- loss of equipment e.g. ball
- severe reprimand

Responding to serious offences

A school’s response to a serious offence represents a critical test of its pastoral identity. A serious offence by a student challenges the school to be responsive to the rights, welfare and special needs of the perpetrator of an offence, and at the same time demonstrate a commitment to the welfare, rights and well-being of all of its members. In such a context, the response to serious, repeat or bad behavior will be as follows:

For more serious, and repeated, bad behaviour:
- parents notified about unacceptable behaviour (verbally or written)
- meeting between teacher, parent and pupil regarding the pupil’s behaviour
- meeting between teacher, parent, pupil and principal regarding the pupil's behaviour
- the development of an individual behaviour plan
- loss of privileges for an extended time period
- exclusion from school excursions or incursions
- supervised removal from the class or playground for an extended period
- referral to an outside agency for professional assistance
- suspension following Catholic Education Commission of Victoria guidelines
- in the event of a student’s behaviour or action that is a danger to themselves or another, it may, given the specific circumstances, be necessary to restrain the student in order to ensure their and others safety and wellbeing. In the event of this occurring, a staff member must adhere to the process outlined in the policy document titled “St Joachim’s Serious Offences that Require Restraint Policy 2009.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria offers the following support material and policy statements, organised under the following headings:
- Definition of a serious offence;
- Civil and diocesan requirements; and
- Dealing with serious offences: a suggested process.
DEFINITION OF A SERIOUS OFFENCE

Conforming to the Education Act 1958 (Education Regulations 1988), the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria proposes that a serious offence should be defined as activities or behavior of a student which:

i) seriously undermines the ethos of the Catholic school; or
ii) consistently and deliberately fails to comply with any lawful order of a principal or teacher; or
iii) is offensive, or dangerous, to the physical or emotional health of any staff member or any student; or
iv) consistently and deliberately interferes with the educational opportunities of other students.

Civil and diocesan requirements

Serious Offences (CECV Policy, 1993)

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria requires that each school prepare its own written policy on the nature of serious offences. This policy is to be available to all members of the school community after it has been developed by them and it is to be reviewed by them annually.

Some serious offences are by their nature criminal offences, and schools are obliged to observe certain legal requirements. For further information and guidance, refer to:

2) Legal Issues in Schools, a statement of CECV, pars 34–39.

Expulsion (Bishops’ Statement)

We, the Archbishop of Melbourne and Bishops of Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst, consider expulsion of students in Catholic schools and colleges to be a severe form of sanction, to be used only in most serious circumstances. If, after appropriate processes, a school authority deems a student be transferred for his/her good, such a transfer should be negotiated according to the processes laid down by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.

If however, in most serious circumstances, such processes fail, the prior approval of the Director of Catholic Education of the diocese must be sought before a student is dismissed.

Suspension (CECV Policy 1993)

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria declares that suspension of a student from the school is a serious disciplinary measure and should only be used when other disciplinary measures have not produced a satisfactory outcome.

Corporal Punishment (CECV Policy)

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria declares that corporal punishment is inappropriate within the Catholic school and must not be used.

This declaration is in total accord with the Education Act 1958 (Education Regulations 1988 section 5.5).

EVALUATION

This policy and program will have a major review every three years.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

Use of annual parent / student survey to measure satisfaction and perception of policy performance.