

***St Benedict's School***  
***Applecross–Policy Statement***  
**Pastoral Care Policy**

Released: 2001

Reviewed: 2002

Reviewed: 2010

Due for Review: 2012

Reviewed :2015

**Definition of Pastoral Care**

*Pastoral Care in Catholic schools refers to the Ministry of care and counselling provided by staff, parents and the community with a focus on healing, reconciling, guiding and sustaining the personal wellbeing in each person.*

**Vision Statement**

*Saint Benedict's is a school where Christ's example of Hope, Belief and Love is our foundation for a happy, engaging and successful school.*

**School Mission Statement**

*Saint Benedict's School, following Christ's example, is a nurturing and inclusive community that develops the potential of all in our care today so that they positively contribute to God's world tomorrow.*

**Mission Values**

**Learning**

- We hold a deep belief that all students have the ability to strive for personal success with an emphasis on the education of the whole child. We collaborate to create learning environments that are safe, engaging and meaningful. Our students are provided with opportunities to become successful learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by providing them with challenging programs that are designed to cater for the individual's needs, interests and abilities.

**Engagement**

- Central to our school is the creation and sustaining of a strong sense of community forged by an authentic teaching of the Catholic ethos. Links between our school and parish are close and deeply respectful. There is a whole school commitment to provide students with an experience of Jesus as present and active in their everyday lives. We provide an outstanding pastoral care program through daily prayer and Religious Education lessons, taught by a committed staff, active in modelling Christian values.
- As a community, we share high expectations and hopes for our students. We believe in their future and in their potential to live lives of purpose and contribution. We strive to establish a strong partnership with families and the parish in achieving the best for our children.

**Accountability**

- The staff at St Benedict's work together with professional diligence to develop and share strong contemporary practice with an aim for continuous improvement. Staff members show empathy and care for the individual student while promoting diversity and difference. They often go above and beyond their designated duties to ensure the best outcomes for their students. They share their knowledge, wisdom and resources generously and openly. Above all, our staff continuously strives to bear active and effective witness to the love of Jesus in their daily work.

## **Discipleship**

- Our commitment to pastoral care is embedded in our educational programs, which ensures that our students feel secure and nurtured in an environment dedicated to their growth as young people. In the spirit of Jesus, all people are valued equally at St Benedict's. The Gospel values underpin our pastoral practices and values. The care of staff for nurture our students to be resilient, respectful, grounded people who show compassion to others.
- St Benedict's school is a place of Christian embrace where all people are made welcome and challenged to live out their highest possibility. We welcome all with open hands.

## **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 programmes, 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. The school community of St Benedict's needs to recognise the special pastoral circumstances of its community, including the families, and then to mobilise resources, personnel and programs needed to meet those pastoral needs.

## **Learning:**

- Children's work is displayed prominently in classrooms and around the school.
- Classes prepare an assembly once a year.
- The school provides a balanced curriculum, addressing students' academic, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and vocational needs.
- The school provides various incursions/excursions and a Year 6 camp, which are valuable learning experiences for children.
- Teachers encourage the development of children's conflict resolution skills.
- Teacher assistants work with children to support the classroom programme.

## **Engagement:**

- Staff meet with the School Board for an annual gathering.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in Masses and Liturgies of the Word.

- Through Sacramental Parent Meetings, parents are helped to prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Staff meet with the School Board for an annual gathering.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in Masses and Liturgies of the Word.
- Through Sacramental Parent Meetings, parents are helped to prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Children's birthdays are recognised at morning assembly.
- The school newsletter reports on significant events occurring within the school community.
- Parents are welcomed into the school to share in school based activities.
- The Parents and Friends Association meets monthly as a support group for the school community.
- The School Board meets monthly.

### **Accountability:**

- Children are encouraged to develop an appreciation of the environment in their school by keeping the school clean and respecting property and facilities.
- A relaxed environment is encouraged and valued in the staff room.
- Staff are invited to come together on a social basis.
- Induction for students and parents entering Kindy.
- Collaborative decision-making takes place wherever possible. This shared responsibility results in common goals and an informed staff.
- Staff support for each other is valued.
- The gifts and talents of each staff member is affirmed and appreciated.
- Staff to show a willingness to be present for children in times of personal need.
- Compassion and care is extended to students who are ill or have been injured.
- Compassion and care is extended to students who are experiencing grief.
- An educational psychologist is available to assist children and their families who are in special need of support.
- A social worker is available to support children with social issues at school.
- Parent/Teacher meetings and Parent Information meetings are held throughout the year.
- Understanding and support are shown to those families experiencing financial difficulties.
- Staff development days are held to enable staff to value personal and spiritual development.
- Staff have opportunities for professional development through in-servicing
- Verbal handover between teachers for the following year concerning students for the New Year.
- Merit Certificates are presented to students for academic achievement and Christian Leadership.
- Citizenship awards are presented to the senior class to acknowledge service to the school community and present a Christian Leadership award.
- Pre-Primary end of year awards go to up to two students in each class for Making Jesus Real
- Year's 1-6 end of year awards for years 1-6 pertaining to: academic achievement, endeavour and Making Jesus Real awards.

### **Discipleship:**

- Prayer and Liturgical celebrations for students are an important part of school life and faith development.
- School gathers each week to pray.
- Teachers prepare students for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. Parents and the Parish are support for these programmes.
- Staff to gather for prayer.
- Students are encouraged to participate and worship in their parish community.
- Fundraising is an opportunity to show empathy and compassion for the poor and marginalised.

## **PRINCIPLES:**

The function of Pastoral Care at St Benedict's School 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 people through educational means.
2. Enable students to attain the beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and practices, which will enable them to achieve Christ's vision of the human person. St Benedict's School community's concern will be students' integrated development as Christian men and women as responsible, inner directed individuals of Christian virtue, capable of free choice and of making value-judgments enlightened by a formed Christian relationship.
3. Ensure that the care and development of each person takes place within the Catholic faith community. In the 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 well-being 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 through the care they all show for their students. From the pastoral dimension of the total school life, students learn their own value and dignity.

## **Pastoral Care Roles**

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In the school's daily and routine life, the ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and wellbeing. The responsibility of high quality interpersonal relationships among staff, students and parents is a responsibility shared by everyone. Staff in particular set the tone and priority of pastoral care by their witness and example.

The Class Teacher is one of the first people in the network of pastoral care. The relationship between the class teacher and each individual student in the class is at the heart of the pastoral care programme. No other pastoral strategies can compensate for a failure in the caring approach of the teacher to each student in the class. The teacher is the significant adult to whom the members of that group relate, fostering a sense of belonging within that group. The class teacher liaises with the Head of School in matters relating to the students' progress and welfare.

The Religious Education Coordinator (AP's) has a special responsibility to co-ordinate Pastoral Care initiatives within the school liaising where necessary with the relevant bodies. In consultation with the Principal and Assistant Principals is responsible for the planning and implementation of the school's curriculum, within a pastoral care context, recognising and appreciating the different needs of individual staff members and students.

The Assistant Principals, have the overall responsibility for the pastoral care needs of the students, integrating the work of all those involved in the administration of pastoral care. They work directly with the students in certain year groups and integrate the work of the class teachers, as well as other appropriate pastoral care personnel. The Assistant Principals of School liaise with the Pastoral Care Committee.

The Principal works with the Assistant Principals, REC and the Pastoral Care Committee. The Principal needs to affirm the roles of the above pastoral care team. They should ensure the link between the pastoral care policy, the school vision statement, the discipline policy and Gospel values is maintained. They need to be a modifying and positive influence within the school community in the light of this policy.

The Administration Team needs to ensure that the policy and practice of pastoral care permeates all areas of school life, concentrating on the needs of students, teachers and parents.

The Pastoral Care Committee will consist of four members from across the range of staff. Nominations will be called for people to volunteer for these positions. The Parish Priest and the school's Religious Education Coordinator will hold membership too. They will meet once a term or as necessary, **to discuss pastoral care matters/problems related to staff or students.**

This committee will be chaired by the Religious Education Coordinator and will liaise with the staff via staff meetings, Social Committee or other committees or individuals where necessary.

### **Pastoral Curriculum at Saint Benedict's School**

The Pastoral curriculum should enable the students to develop an understanding of themselves and help them in their personal growth.

Our pastoral curriculum focuses on:

- Self-knowledge and covers a range of general areas such as self-concept, human physiology, psychology, sexuality, gender, family relationships, society and ethnicity.
- Self-management and self-appraisal within a social context (the school community and society) and includes the treatment of moral development, study skills, time-management, drug education and social etiquette.
- The concept of a satisfying Christian lifestyle, including the student's self-awareness (personality, interests, aptitudes, abilities), vocational development, career awareness as an interpretation of the needs and demands of occupations and fields of work, and the practice of decision-making skills.
- Affective development where students are able to express their feelings and respond in a personal, sensitive manner be it through music, dance, the visual arts or spoken language.
- Leadership development, through the Student Leaders, School Captains, Mission Days, fund-raising activities and other opportunities for service.

This pastoral curriculum is delivered formally in sessions of a developmental nature, for example, in Religious Education, Health Education classes and in organised Pastoral Care group activities. It is also integrated with all other curriculum areas.

It is also pursued informally, by means of extra-curricular activities. This informal pastoral curriculum allows students to express their gifts and strengths, in their own areas of competence, and in turn use these talents in service. Examples of such activities are sports days, athletics and swimming carnivals, school concerts, choir, fete and mission days, excursions, camps, retreats, assemblies and leadership activities. Children will also be encouraged to take part in parish activities.

### **Pastoral Care and Managing Student Behaviour**

The school's Discipline Policy has been developed in a separate document. However, the practices involved in managing student behaviour are based on the structures, principles and objectives in this pastoral care policy.

## **ELEMENTS OF PASTORAL CARE**

*The Religious Dimension of the Catholic School infuses all aspects of school life. The elements of Environment, Curriculum and Policy are established collaboratively. The dignity of the human person is enhanced when all elements are interlinked.*

### **Environment**

Children are encouraged to develop an appreciation of their environment.

All members have a right to feel important and to share compassion, love and respect for one another.

### **Life of Faith:**

Prayer, together with Liturgical celebrations and Sacramental programmes, are an integral part of school and parish life and faith development.

Important Liturgical seasons and events are celebrated.

### **Community Dimensions:**

All members of the school community are encouraged to value giving and tolerance.

It is recognised that a combination of different family types, backgrounds and cultures is what makes our school community unique.

### *Administrative Sector*

Staff support for each other is valued. The gifts and talents of each staff member are affirmed and appreciated. Collaborative decision-making is encouraged. This shared responsibility results in common goals and an informed community.

### **Policy and Practice**

Our school employs policies and practices that enhance the dignity of the human person. The Principles of Pastoral care are reflected in all policies.

### *The Student*

Physical, spiritual, emotional and academic needs of each student are nurtured and enriched in all areas of school life.

### *The Leadership and Administration*

The needs of the school community members are reflected when formulating policies and practices and allocating resources.

- See Behaviour Policy
- Excursion Policy
- **Transition guide for children with special needs**

Parental involvement is encouraged and valued within our school through ongoing reporting and communication.

### *School Personal*

Professional Development enhances practices and supports staff needs. Opportunities are made available to enable staff to enrich their personal and professional development.

### **Curriculum**

Within the Curriculum at St Benedict's School, each child is valued as an individual and provision is made for its needs.

Within the community, student's achievements are acknowledged through a diverse range of reporting and assessing. St Benedict's School works collaboratively with the parents to maximise success.

The acquisition of concepts, the learning of facts, development of life skills, examination of attitudes and an exploration of student beliefs and values is fostered.