Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy

PASTORAL CARE

RATIONALE

As an agent in the mission and ministry of the Church, St Joseph’s School has a responsibility to receive and educate its students with respect and love. Together with St Joseph’s Parish we have formed a community which can provide a strong sense of well-being, belonging and security so that our students are given every opportunity to be affirmed in their dignity and worth and are assisted to grow to the fullness of their potential. All members of our school community can contribute to another’s growth and journey towards wholeness.

In responding to our vision of community, St Joseph’s school endeavours to provide for each member, students, parents, staff and clergy, the experience of high quality inter-personal relationships of care and support. Each member participates, to some degree, in Pastoral Care, just as each is a recipient of such care.

Our school community, a reflection of the Gospel of Jesus, is committed to the values of compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice. Pastoral care supports and provides a context for the growth and expression of these values in all aspects of school life.

Pastoral care in our school endeavours to uphold and sustain those policies and practices which foster the values of mutual respect, responsibility and service within the community. A commitment to democratic processes, co-operation and concern for the common good are principles which our students are progressively encouraged to emulate in their relationships with others.

In addition, our Pastoral Care Program aims to ensure that opportunities for students and all members of the community are not hindered by differences brought about by factors such as socio-economic status, gender, ethnic origin, race or disability. Our school community seeks to respond with increasing sensitivity to the social and cultural diversity of our members. It is through Pastoral Care that much can be done to promote respect and support for such things as diverse family structures and awareness of cross-cultural issues.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Pastoral Care has its source in the life of Jesus Christ.
- Pastoral Care supports and provides a context for the growth and expression of gospel values in all aspects of school life.
- Pastoral Care permeates the total climate of relationship within this Catholic School.
- It has the individual as its focus.
- It enables individuals to see themselves as having a significant role as part of a wider community.
- It encourages individuals to take responsibility for their actions and learning.
- It has a life giving focus which enables all to grow to their full potential.
- It enables all to be affirmed in their dignity and worth as people.
- It enables people to appreciate themselves.
- It enables people to develop skills in building personal relationships.
- All members of our school community can contribute to another’s growth and journey towards wholeness.
- Pastoral Care is based on mutual respect, responsibility and service within our community.

OBJECTIVES

At a time when economic hardship and social pressures on families are increasing, and the cultural backgrounds of our students diversify, our Pastoral Care Policy aims to reflect our practice and commitment to the following:

- Quality Of Relationships
- Formation In Self Discipline And Responsibility.
- Pastoral Programs
- Comprehensive And Inclusive Approaches To Teaching And Learning.
- Supportive School / Family Relationships.
- Effective Networks Of Care.
- Coordinated And Supportive Organisational Structures.
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UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

• Quality of Relationships
  The fostering of high quality inter-personal relationships among staff, students and parents is a responsibility shared by everyone. Teachers, in particular, set the tone and priority of Pastoral care by their witness and example. Teachers at St Joseph’s School are 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 friendship among their peers.

• Formation In Self Discipline And Responsibility
  Pastoral Care in this school 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. Pastoral Care also contributes to students’ recognising that their fundamental freedoms and rights are reciprocated by responsibilities. Our Discipline Policy, Rules and Consequences are intended to promote good order and are, as such, positive concepts. We view them as aids to the fostering of self-discipline and responsibility. Students progressively grow in their capacity to exercise moral judgement, democratic values and concern for the common good.

• Pastoral Programs
  As a staff, we endeavour to discern the life needs of the students in our care and to provide them with every opportunity to value themselves and to experience well-being. Our Curriculum program is inclusive and provision is made for program directly related to the development (on a group and individual basis) of self esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, drug awareness, sexuality, health and personal safety.
  Our school staff maintain regular contact with students and their families and are receptive and sensitive to needs as they emerge.

• Comprehensive and Inclusive Approaches to Teaching And Learning
  Our school is central to the lives of the children and it plays a very significant role in the shaping of their futures. For this reason, our school curriculum needs to be comprehensive and of the highest possible quality to ensure that our students are afforded the competence, confidence and right to participate in the cultural and productive life of society. In many cases this responsibility lies almost entirely with the school as many parents are not in the position to be able to assist in their children’s education because of language, social or other difficulties. Linked to this is the development of fair and just assessment procedures which are responsive to the special needs of our students. We need to redress any educational disadvantage brought about by such factors as socio-economic status, gender, ethnic origin and race.

• Supportive School / Family Relationships
  Our school staff considers the maintaining of close and effective communication between home and school to be essential. Relationships of trust, co-operation and partnership must be developed in order to carry out our very important task of looking after the pastoral needs of our students. In our school, moreso than most, this requires that the staff maintain a very high respect for and sensitivity to diverse cultural values, family structures and situations as they present. Whilst we respect the privacy of the lives of our students and their families, a great many of them actively seek the support of the school in times of crisis and instability. We have had to build on the resources and expertise at our disposal in order to be able to respond to the ever-increasing problems which present to us. Our school is committed to the total well-being of our students and we do our best to provide support where necessary - this often takes us away from the realms of education and into the field of social work. To many of our families we are the most secure and consistent contact they have with Australian ‘Institutionalism’ and we must ensure that we are perceived as being welcoming and supportive.

• Effective Networks Of Care
  Our school belongs to St Joseph’s Parish Collingwood. Our school and parish have a long-standing history of care for the disadvantaged and we have developed an excellent network of carers who assist us in our pastoral work. Our Breakfast program, run in partnership with the Australian Red Cross and KPMG, joins parish programs such as the Collingwood Cottage (Foodbank), the
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Wellington Centre and St Vincent de Paul Programs in providing for basic needs in the area of food, clothing, health and social support
Our school also has partnerships with the wider community through agencies such as The Smith Family and the Salvation Army as well as links with the Victoria Police Youth Initiative, the Department of Human Services, the Austin Hospital, the Nth Yarra Community Health Centre, City of Yarra, the Songroom and the Catholic Education Office.
In a time when our school is being called upon more and more to support the special needs of our students and their families, the establishment and co-ordination of Networks of Care represents a major priority in our Pastoral Care Policy.

- **Co-ordinated and Supportive Organisational Structures**
  A very effective Student Welfare and Support Group (S.W.S.G) operates in our school to assist with the detection of and solving of problems as they arise. Together with the principal, this group also monitors the involvement of outside agencies and other support.
  At any time of the day the Principal or First Assistant must be able to be made available to respond to and deal with crisis situations which presenting our community.

THE STUDENT WELFARE SUPPORT GROUP

This group provides a co-ordinated and supportive structure which aims:

- To support students who are experiencing difficulty at school in the areas of behaviour, learning, social and emotional development.
- To support teachers by generating information, strategies and ideas.
- To support parent liaison and communication.
- To recommend and facilitate referrals where appropriate to services outside the school.
- To ensure that students are monitored and reviewed consistently.
- To make efficient use of the expertise of specialists, within and outside the school.
- To promote a positive school climate and consistent approach to student management.
- To ensure that the ‘Assertive Discipline Program’ used as a matter of Policy in our school is maintained and supported.
- To provide curriculum support where appropriate.
- To overview the development of a student welfare policy in our school.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Student Welfare Support Group Co-Ordinator

The SWSG CoOrdinator will:

- Distribute referral sheets to Staff and ensure that at least 5 minutes of Staff Meeting Agenda is reserved for reference to referrals.
- Collect Referrals 24hrs prior to SWSG Meetings.
- Prepare an Agenda for the SWSG meeting and distribute to members.
- Invite support staff or other teachers to attend the SWSG meeting if they have concern or input relevant to the referral. Otherwise written reports may be provided and added to the original referral form.
- Chair the meeting and ensure that the time allocation is observed.
- Make sure that the referral is completed and copied for the meeting.
- See that confidentiality is maintained and notes are destroyed after use.
- Ensure that Minutes of each meeting are recorded accurately.
- Follow up the strategic recommendations to make sure that they have been implemented.
- Organise the periodic review of referrals.
- Compile annual SWSG Report in December.
DISCIPLINE

RATIONALE

Our school’s discipline practice is closely linked to our Pastoral Care Policy. This practice is intended to promote a respectful, secure and healthy environment in which students can develop and prosper. Our school, like all others, does, on occasion, have students whose personal and social problems manifest themselves in behaviours which are either disruptive to the teaching and learning program, disrespectful of the school rules and codes of conduct and/or harmful to the well-being and security of other students and teachers.

In the context of Pastoral Care, our disciplinary measures and sanctions are designed to heal the hurt, foster responsibility for actions and change patterns of behaviour. Disciplinary practices in our school aim to facilitate the experience of responsible self-discipline and Christian attitudes among students and to foster the well-being and good order of our school community.

As a Christian community we are committed to Gospel Values:-

- The expectation of forgiveness.
- A commitment to justice.
- The obligation to search for the truth.
- Respect for the rights of others.
- The reciprocity of rights and responsibilities.
- A concern for the well-being of all members of the community.

OUR PROGRAM

Our Program is based on Lee Canter’s Assertive Discipline Program, Lee Canter and Associates, Santa Monica, 1992

A summary outlining the components of the program is attached as an Appendix.

This program was introduced at St Joseph’s School, after extensive staff professional development, during 1995/96. Staff members who are new to the school are inducted to this program through participation in a professional development program.

SCHOOL RULES

Our school rules have been formulated giving consideration to:

- The age and stages of development of our students.
- The capacity of our students to understand what is required of them and reasons for this.
- The particular circumstances of life the student is currently experiencing.
- The need for adequate supervision of students.
- Research findings into the effectiveness of various rules and sanctions. (Based particularly on the work of Lee Canter and Bill Rogers)

Our School Rules possess the following characteristics:

- They have been co-operatively formulated.
- They are positive, purposeful, just and reasonable.
- They convey a sense of healing and forgiveness.
- They are supportable and enforceable.
- They are communicated regularly, in clear and accessible language to students and parents.
- They contribute to the development of justice in our school.
- They contribute actively to changing and healing destructive behaviours.
CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE PLANS

An individual Classroom Discipline Plan is formulated by each teacher coming into contact with groups of students. These are based on the model presented in the Assertive Discipline Handbook.

A Sample Classroom Discipline Plan

Rules
1. Follow Directions
2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
3. Hands up if you need to say something.
4. Keep our room tidy.
5. Always walk when inside.

Rewards
Cooking
Free Play
Go to the Park
Stickers
Show other teachers your work.
Letter to mum and dad.

Consequences
1. Warning
2. 5 minutes time out
3. 10 minutes time out.
4. Go to the Principal's Office
5. Parents contacted.

SERIOUS OFFENCES

In our school a serious offence is one in which the behaviour of a student:
1. Seriously undermines the Catholic Ethos of our school.
2. Consistently and deliberately fails to comply with any lawful order of the principal or a teacher.
3. Is offensive, or dangerous, to the physical or emotional health of any staff member or student or themselves.
4. Consistently and deliberately interferes with the educational opportunities of other students.

The Student Welfare and Support Group has been set up in an attempt to deal with problems as they arise.

In some instances, where the behaviour of a student is deemed to cause immediate or ongoing harm, distress or danger to others, it may be necessary to withdraw or suspend him/her from the student community, pending the deliberations of the SWSG, the Principal, outside agencies (if appropriate) and the parents of the child.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT is not permitted under any circumstances.
PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Our Assertive Discipline Program has been extended to include a set of procedures for playground management. These procedures are as follows:

Rules
1. Follow directions
2. Play in your own area.
3. We do not hurt anyone.
4. We speak nicely to each other.
5. We eat at the eating seats.
6. We look after trees, gardens, buildings and equipment.

Positives
Lucky Number Grid - Friday draw for special prizes.

Consequences
1. Warning
2. Time Out - 5 minutes
3. Time Out - 10 minutes
4. Removal from yard for the rest of play-time.
5. Parents contacted.

Serious misbehaviour
Automatic removal from yard - parents contacted.

Procedures

- Teachers on Yard Duty are to collect the yard folders from the Staff Room prior to commencing duty. These folders contain Behaviour Tracking Sheets, Yard Rules, Rewards and a pen.

- All warnings and other consequences are recorded on the Tracking Sheets.

- The Time Out Seat is located near the staff room door.
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BULLYING

RATIONALE
At St Joseph’s School in Collingwood we do not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of our school community are committed to ensuring a caring and safe environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem.

We believe that all members of our school community have the expectation and right to a safe environment. They also have the right to be treated fairly with respect and courtesy. We believe these rights have concurrent responsibilities which include accepting others and treating them with dignity and respect.

Definition
Bullying is repeated intimidation over time of a physical, verbal or psychological nature of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons. Rigby & Slee

Bullying can take the form of:

- Social banter.
- Hurtful teasing.
- Humiliation.
- Pushing.
- Nasty body language.
- Exclusion.
- Playing mean practical jokes.
- Phone abuse.
- Email abuse.
- Sexual harassment
- Damage to property.
- Physical violence.
- Threats of violence.
- Stand over tactics.
- Criminal acts

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Everyone has the right to feel and be safe.
- Any behaviour which is the illegitimate use of power in order to hurt others is bullying.
- Bullying can be either an individual or group action.
- The focus must always be on the ‘bullying behaviour’ and people must avoid labelling individuals as ‘bullies’.
- The child who is more likely to become the victim is very sensitive and easily hurt.
- Bullying can occur anywhere at school, on the way to and from school, or where groups of children congregate.
- Bullying damages children. It can affect them physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially and can also affect their self-esteem. Trauma, school refusal or social phobia may develop, and victims of bullying are more likely to develop a mental illness, turn to drugs and alcohol, suffer anxiety attacks or to commit suicide.
- Children who tell no-one about the bullying have to contend with the additional stress of receiving no support or understanding.
- Children must be made aware that silence and secrets are dangerous and must be encouraged to talk to a parent, teacher or other trustworthy person about the bullying.
- Expressing feelings is a form of power. Children can abuse, lose or use this power.
- The family, teacher and bystander can also be affected when a child is bullied.
- Parents may also have painful feelings which may need to be dealt with so that they can more effectively help their child.
- Individuals who demonstrate bullying behaviour also need help, otherwise they will find themselves on a down path for the rest of their lives.
- Children who have been bullied need to get rid of faulty beliefs. Then they will be able to change their attitudes and, consequently, their behaviour.
- Children need to build their self-esteem in order to handle bullies and create a better social life for themselves.
- Children need to improve their communication skills to deal with bullying. Communication skills involve our eyes, face and body language, our voice and our words.
- Bullying needs to be acted upon.
- There are many reasons why children are bullied, including genetic, personal, environmental, cultural, family and the school.
Signs That Children Are Being Bullied

- Children not wanting to go to school.
- Loss of motivation.
- Frustration.
- Powerlessness.
- Unable to make friends.
- Isolation.
- Shyness.
- Lowered self-esteem.
- Depression.
- More likely to move schools.
- Unable to stand up for rights.

What we do to prevent bullying at St Joseph’s School?

As a school community we endeavour, through a variety of approaches and in collaboration with all the parties concerned (staff, students and parents) to prevent bullying.

This requires staff to:

- Faithfully follow our Assertive Discipline Program and designated procedures.
- Be role models in word and action, model assertive rather than aggressive approaches to interpersonal interaction.
- Be observant to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by patrolling the playground carefully whilst on yard duty.
- Arrive at class, to yard duty and to class line punctually.
- Take steps to help victims and those exhibiting bullying behaviour.
- Listen to concerns, offer support and, if necessary, assistance.
- Take heed of parent’s concerns.
- Include in the curriculum, programs which assist children to develop positive self-esteem, moral judgement and values.

This requires students to:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying incidents.
- Don’t stand by and watch – get help.
- If you know of serious bullying tell a trusted staff member. The victim may be too scared to tell.
- If bullying occurs where and when you are present, if appropriate, take some form of preventative action. Show that you and your friends disapprove.
- Report the incident (or suspected incident) even if you are not directly involved.

The school recommends that parents:

- Watch for signs of stress in their children e.g. unwillingness to attend school, damaged clothes, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment.
- Advise your child to tell his/her teacher or other trusted staff member about the incident.
- If possible, allow your child to deal with the problem his/her self.
- Inform the school that bullying is suspected.
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate. This may compound the problem.
- Parents and offending students are required to attend interviews at school if a continuance of the offence occurs.

Other Prevention Strategies
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- Staff receive relevant professional development in order to effectively carry out our Assertive Discipline Program and recognise bullying behaviour.
- At the beginning of each year class teachers formulate their Classroom Discipline Programs and focus on the school rules and consequences with their children.
- At the beginning of each term the Principal reminds children of the school playground rules, rewards for positive behaviour and the consequences for misbehaviour.
- The Discipline Policy (including the Bullying Policy) is communicated to parents through our Parent Handbook and through School Newsletters.

Consequences of Bullying at St Joseph's School

The Bully

Step 1
The consequences of Bullying behaviour at St Joseph's School are the same as those outlined in the general Discipline section of this document.

Children who are considered by staff to be repeated offenders (Bullies) are dealt with under the following clause:

Serious Offences
In our school a serious offence is one in which the behaviour of a student:
1. Seriously undermines the Catholic Ethos of our school.
2. Consistently and deliberately fails to comply with any lawful order of the principal or a teacher.
3. Is offensive, or dangerous, to the physical or emotional health of any staff member or student or themselves.
4. Consistently and deliberately interferes with the educational opportunities of other students.

Step 2
The child will be referred to the Student Welfare and Support Group which has been set up in an attempt to deal with problems as they arise. The SWSG will make recommendations to the Principal.

When the situation or behaviour warrants it the Principal will interview the child, together with his or her parents, to outline the problem and seek possible solutions. At this interview support for the child will be offered.

Step 3
Assistance from outside agencies may be sought e.g. Sth Central Zone Educational Co-ordinator and Psychologist.

Step 4
In some instances, where the behaviour of a student is deemed to cause immediate or ongoing harm, distress or danger to others, it may be necessary to withdraw or suspend him/her from the student community, pending the deliberations of the SWSG, the Principal, outside agencies (if appropriate) and the parents of the child.
If this is to be the course of action the school will follow the procedures outlined in the Catholic Education Office document ‘The Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools.’
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The Victim
Step 1
Children who are victims of bullies will be assisted by their teachers to develop positive self-esteem and assertive behaviour.

Advice to Victims
If you feel you have been or are being bullied begin with:

- Ignoring it. Show outwardly that it doesn’t upset you or
- Confront the bully and, as calmly as possible, state that their behaviour or action is unwanted and that you want them to stop it and leave you alone. ‘I don’t like it when ………….” Be assertive. Look and sound confident.
- Talk it over with others, such as friends or parent, who may help to make constructive plans or
- Take the matter to your class teacher, a trusted teacher or other significant adult, where the issue will be dealt with effectively and confidentially or
- Bullies will not stop if they think they can get away with it. This is not dobbing. You have the right to talk it over in confidence and ask that it not be reported further.

Step 2
The child will be referred to the Student Welfare and Support Group which has been set up in an attempt to deal with problems as they arise. The SWSG will make recommendations to the Principal.

If the problem persists the Principal will interview the child, together with his or her parents, to talk about the problem and seek possible solutions. At this interview support for the child will be offered.

Step 3
Assistance from outside agencies may be sought e.g. Sth Central Zone Educational Co-ordinator and Psychologist.
APPENDICES

The Student Welfare Support Group Model

SWSG Student Referral Form

Assertive Discipline Program – Overview

Behaviour Tracking Sheet

Discipline Notice to Parents