



Pastoral Care Policy

Policy Area: Education

Date for Review: 2019

1. RATIONALE

St Helena's Catholic Primary School is in essence the face of Christ for its whole community. As a school, our role is to live in the image of Jesus and show 'the way, the truth and the life,' (John 14:6) in every aspect of our daily operation and our relationships..

Our mission statement serves as the core focus of all that we do and plan.

"As a community united in faith and trust, St Helena's Catholic Primary School seeks to provide a nurturing and diverse learning environment where our children contribute to the development of the kind of world envisaged by Jesus by living the ideal of doing Something beautiful for God".

It is from our desire to provide a nurturing environment for students, staff and families, that our need for a pastoral care policy and model stems. Our policy and model for pastoral care is designed to complement and support the principles set forth in the 'Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools' (2007).

The framework clearly states that, 'Parents are the first educators of their children and the role of the Catholic School is to assist in their education. Each school should appreciate the circumstances of its own community and apply the appropriate resources to meet the pastoral needs within a shared vision of a positive and inclusive school' (p.1). This is paramount to our school.

Through Pastoral Care, the community of St Helena's will provide a strong sense of well-being, belonging, compassion, care, understanding and love. Our school affirms each person in their dignity and worth and assists them to achieve their full potential as an individual - physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

Within our school, we have many learning opportunities that aim to reduce the stresses of the rigorous education program that we deliver to our students. Through these various opportunities we aim to promote a sense of purpose and self-worth in our students in an effort to strengthen the young person in coping with the pressures of society.

2. DEFINING PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools means enhancing the dignity of each person within a Catholic faith community. It is concerned with maximising learning and growth to enable all to become inner directed, contributing members of God's creation.

Pastoral Care is the expression of care in the school community which brings 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 of the curriculum and grounds the school's mission statement in the quality of daily relationships.

3. PRINCIPLES

1. St Helena's provides a safe and supportive school environment, a curriculum and a set of policies and practices based on the Gospels.
2. St Helena's enables students to attain the beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge, skills, practices and positive relationships which will allow them to achieve Christ's vision of the human person.
3. St Helena's is an environment where the care and development of each person takes place within the Catholic faith community.
4. St Helena's develops policies, programs and practices that are proactive, focus on prevention and intervention and that engage, nurture and promote the wellbeing of the whole school community.
5. St Helena's promotes care, respect and cooperation and values diversity.
6. St Helena's recognises that quality leadership underpins Pastoral Care and that policies and programs must regularly monitored and reviewed with evidence-based practice supporting decisions and improvements.
7. St Helena's takes action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect.
8. St Helena's ensures that, in providing a nurturing and safe environment, the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community are explicit and understood and that there is a commitment to ongoing professional development and training in pastoral care for the whole school community.

4. ELEMENTS OF PASTORAL CARE

Formulation of St Helena's Pastoral Care policy requires a collaborative approach and consideration of the following elements;

1. *Ethos and Environment*

The ethos and environment of St Helena's is thoroughly infused with the Catholic vision of Pastoral Care. The Evangelisation Plan of our school provides a strong basis through which Pastoral Care is developed.

Some examples of the aspects pertaining to these elements include;

- Prayer, liturgy, celebration and participation in the Sacraments
- Professional development of all staff in areas that reflect Pastoral Care
- School values, ethos, mission statement, motto, culture and structure

2. *Families, Partnerships and Services*

This element recognises the partnership between St Helena's, parents, carers and appropriate agencies for students to be provided with a nurturing and safe environment. For example;

- Relationships with the parish, clergy, parent community and past students
- Working closely with parents, guardians and carers

3. *Curriculum, Education and Training*

The curriculum at St Helena's is informed by the principles of Pastoral Care and caters for a variety of student needs and abilities in our school setting.

Appropriate levels of education, training and professional development relating to school policy and practice are available to all members of the school community. The following are some aspects of curriculum, education and training that are considered;

- Needs of all students
- Provision of an adaptable and flexible curriculum
- Explicit education and training in relation to bullying, harassment, violence and child protection is available to the whole school community

5. PROCEDURES

Students:

The following are the responsibility of all staff members St Helena's 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 students to recognise and believe in themselves and celebrate life with one another.
- Provide personal development and self-esteem programmes for students.
- Plan programmes which develop interpersonal skills.
- Implement the full curriculum based on Catholic Education of Western Australia and SCASA requirements, modifying these to suit the students by providing for specific needs, cater for individual differences and value the uniqueness of every student.
- Know the students, including their family background and education history of students considered at risk.
- Communicate with parents frequently and at any point of need.
- Provide programs that cater for students dealing with grief and loss.
- Provide programs for students that are feeling alone or isolated in the playground.
- Provide retreats for Sacramental year levels and camp for Year Six students.
- Provide programs for students to contribute to the wider community.
- Employ relevant support staff to work with students and families in need.

Staff

Pastoral Care is the responsibility of all staff. Staff work and lead together under the principles of the Bishops' Mandate with the aim of improving student learning and enhancing student instruction. A friendly, supportive and co-operative atmosphere amongst members of staff is essential to the whole school's well-being. Of equal importance is maintaining the development and application of teaching skills which require teachers to teach the curriculum in an explicit way, whilst also being able to nurture and develop the talents of all students.

Examples of these include

- Provide opportunities for staff to pray together.
- Provide opportunities for staff to regularly gather as a professional learning community to plan, share knowledge and attend in-service.
- Accept responsibility for the development of school based curriculum documents.
- Support and attend parish celebrations such as the celebration of the Sacraments.
- Provide a comprehensive induction program for new staff.
- Provide early career teachers with mentoring and support in their first years of teaching.
- Provide opportunities for personal faith development.
- Provide appropriate care and support for staff in times of need, for example, access to counselling services through the Employee Assistance Program (1300 66 77 00).
- Provide opportunities for staff to socialise together.

Parents and the Wider Community

The staff recognise and respect the role of parents as prime educators of their children. Parents and the school share the commitment to the education of children. The staff are responsible for maintaining avenues of co-operation and communication and accept the following responsibilities with and to parents;

- All staff ensure they are welcoming and available to parents.
- All staff conduct regular consultation and reporting meetings with parents on the individual development of students.
- All staff encourage the participation of families in school masses, liturgies and the Sacraments.
- All staff encourage families to communicate openly, for example, via email, newsletter, school website and social media.