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 Ambrose 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 Ambrose 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 Ambrose 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. Ambrose.
- 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. Ambrose
- All members of the St Ambrose 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 Ambrose 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 Ambrose 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 Ambrose, 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 Ambrose 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 Ambrose 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 Ambrose has some students whose personal and social problems manifest themselves in behaviours 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 behaviours and breaches of order.

**Discipline practices, rules and sanctions**
Disciplinary practices at St Ambrose 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.

The discipline policy at St Ambrose is based on Lee Canter’s Assertive Discipline Model and Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices seek to ensure that the consequences for inappropriate behaviour focuses on repairing harm and restoring and building relationships. Restorative Practices promotes empathy, individual responsibility, respect and fairness.

Specific expectations are established. Positive consequences are identified for students following school expectations and a logical series of consequences are put in place for inappropriate behaviour.

The behavior management policy determines acceptable student behaviour. This behaviour is directly related to the principles and values of the gospel and to the school’s commitment to the Pastoral Care...
policy which accepts responsibility for promoting a respectful, secure and healthy environment in which the students can prosper. In being both positive and assertive the teachers set the parameters of appropriate behaviour for the students. Positive behaviour will be recognised and supported, just as inappropriate behaviour will not be accepted. Particular attention will be given to developing in each person a sense of identity as a worthwhile and valued individual, a sense of purpose, and a sense of achievement.

Corporal punishment is not permitted in the school.

To assist the students to grow and develop in these areas the school will enlist the support and cooperation of the parents and of the school community as a whole.

Rights and Responsibilities
All members of our school community have the following rights:
- to be safe and happy
- to be treated with respect
- to teach, learn, work and play

Teachers have a responsibility to:
- provide a safe, Christian and supportive environment for our students
- treat our students with respect and consideration
- provide quality curriculum that reaches all our students
- nurture a positive relationship with our students and their parents
- value and support fellow staff

Students have a responsibility to:
- show respect to all staff and one another
- take responsibility for their own actions
- actively engage in the learning process
- play fairly
- show care for their own, other people’s and school property

Parents have the responsibility to:
- provide a safe, Christian and supportive environment for their children
- treat their children with respect and consideration
- nurture a positive relationship with their children and teachers
- support and endorse the school discipline policy
- support the school’s learning and teaching program
- support the school’s mission and vision statement
- support the staff in implementing the assertive discipline policy
School Expectations

Responsibilities:
1. Show respect to all
2. Take responsibility for your own actions
3. Actively engage in the learning process
4. Play fairly and safely
5. Show care for people, property and the environment

Rewards:
- Praise
- Recognition / Awards
- Certificates

Consequences:
1. Warning - name recorded on playground incident report or classroom tracking sheet
2. Time away within the teacher's view for 5-10 minutes depending on the seriousness of the offence.
3. Time away (15 min) in another classroom and completion of "Thinking Sheet"
4. Lunchtime for 10-20 min supervised by Teacher to complete a "Thinking Sheet" and "Apology" or "Sorry note/card" if required.
5. After school reflection (30 min) or withdrawn from school excursions or sports outings (Parents notified)

Playground Safety Requirements
- Students must wear their hat from 1st September to 1st May. Students without hats must stay under verandah.
- Ask for teacher permission if you are required to leave school grounds
- Stay within 3 metres of boundary fences.
- Eat food in area near canteen.
- It is dangerous to climb, swing or sit on handrails.
- Stay off garden areas.
- It is not safe to run or play tiggy or chasey in the adventure playground or garden area.
- No running, skipping or ball games in covered walkways.
- Classrooms or corridors are to be entered only if you have the permission of a teacher.
- Grabbing or tackling is dangerous and is therefore not allowed at school.
- Football: no bumping allowed; two-hand tag results in free kick; one bounce only allowed.
- Rugby: touch rugby only allowed.
- Cricket: tennis ball only, no fielding within 10 steps of the bat.
- Soccer: no foot tackling from behind.
What is Restorative Practices?
Restorative Practices is a strategy that is used in many settings to repair the harm that has affected victims. The strategy is based on the premise that when conflict is resolved people are much happier and ready to forgive and forget. Restorative Practices is the process that the offender and the victim go through to restore the relationship that has been damaged. It focuses on repairing the harm and connecting people again - “a commonly accepted definition used internationally is: Restorative Justice is a process whereby parties with a stake in a specific offence collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.” (Marshall, T 1998)

In the school setting, Restorative Practices is used with students to build relationships that have been affected by conflict. It is “based on the notion that people need to take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour on other people and that the consequences of harmful behaviour is that relationships are damaged and people get disconnected.”

The Philosophy of Restorative Practice
The philosophy of Restorative Practices informs a positive and formative approach to student behaviour management. A commitment to Restorative Practices has as its aim the promotion of resilience in the one harmed and the one causing harm. Restorative measures help the students learn from their mistakes, grow in self-discipline, take responsibility for their actions, recognise the impact of their actions on others, and reconcile and resolve conflict in others.

Restorative Dialogue
• Reflect on the impact that the behaviour or incident has had on you and others
• This may include you as a teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal
• Consider the effect on other students, the class, the year, other teachers, parents or the school community as a whole.

Affective Questions - Staff
These questions are provided to school staff to assist in managing conflicts or potential conflict situations and working towards resolution. They focus on:
• Specific behaviours or incidence without blaming
• Relational questions to draw out who was affected and how they were affected
• Direct questions towards problem solving what needs to "make things right"

Affective Questions - Students
These questions are provided to students to assist in managing conflicts or potential conflict situations and working towards resolution. They focus on:
1. What happened?
2. How did it happen?
3. How did you act in this situation?
4. Who do you think was affected?
5. How were they affected?
6. How were you affected?
7. What needs to happen to make things right?
8. If you find yourself in the same situation again how could you behave differently?
Focus on the specific behaviour or incident without blaming.
Draw out who was affected and how they were affected.
Direct questions toward problem solving what needs to happen to ‘make things right’.

Pastoral Care & Discipline Policy developed by D. Noack – Principal March 2015.
Restorative Practices in Schools
Restorative Practices focuses on high control and high support. In a school, this would be displayed by:
- Positive, kind and supportive relationships
- Effective discipline plans
- Orderly classrooms
- Students feeling safe
- Mistakes viewed as part of learning

In the classroom, it would look like:
- Happy learners
- Regular circle time
- Trusting relationships
- Displaying Empathy
- Reflecting on behaviours

Use of Circle Time in the Classroom
Circle time is used in the classrooms to build relationships amongst the group, and to create a safe forum where students can discuss issues that are worrying them. Circles enable students to develop listening and communication skills, empathy, self reflection, problem solving and accountability. When students come to the circle they know that they feel accepted and equally valued.

Circle time is a structured process where a class group meets in a circle to speak, listen, interact, enhance relationships and share concerns. Content is flexible and adaptable based on age and needs of the class. Circle time develops relationships via knowledge and understanding of self and others, emotional literacy and interpersonal skills.

The key elements of circle time are:
- Having positive relationships with classmates
- Understanding and valuing oneself
- Understanding and valuing others

When used regularly, circle time helps young people to develop an appreciation of self, a sense of belonging, to have feelings of empathy with other members of the class, and to become empowered to use positive problem solving behaviours. It indicates that a group is working together to support one another and take responsibility for addressing issues.

Students sit in a circle so that everyone can be seen and feel included. There are rules that all students are required to abide by and all students are made to feel respected and that they are listened to. The three important rules are:
- Listen when others are speaking
- The right to pass
- Be positive. No put downs

Circles can be used at the beginning or end of the school day or week to enable students to reflect, highlight positive experiences and share social learnings.

Reflection
Reflection in school and after school is a consequence for higher order unacceptable behavior. This may vary from 10 to 20 minutes during the first half of lunchtime recess the following day, to 30-45 minutes after school the following week on a nominated day.
In school lunchtime reflection is not to exceed 20 minutes and after school reflection is not to exceed 45 minutes. The duty teacher will supervise lunchtime reflection and after school reflection will be supervised by the issuing teacher, the Deputy Principal or Principal.

During reflection, students will complete a Thinking Sheet, Apology letter or Sorry Card/Note as defined in the hierarchy of consequences for unacceptable behavior. The student’s name will be recorded in an online database and the apology letter or sorry note written will be passed on to the victim the following day via the office basket message system. In the event of a student completing the restorative practice task within the reflection time period, the remainder of the time is spent sitting in silence.

**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
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:


**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).

**ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES**

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