



ST MONICA'S COLLEGE, EPPING

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Preamble

Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. In the same way, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Cor 12:12-13)

Pastoral care extends directly to the community of St Monica's College – its students, their parents/guardians and staff. It is a term used to describe both an attitude and a process, and is based upon a belief in the dignity of the person. It is expressed through the development of quality relationships, the provision of effective teaching and learning experiences and effective networks of care.

Definitions

Key elements of student wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience.

According to the Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) Policy 2.26 "*Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools*" (June 2016-Revised) pastoral care endeavours "to promote and enhance student wellbeing of a personal, social, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual nature. Key elements of student wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience".

Guiding Principles

The College acknowledges that "enhanced student wellbeing contributes significantly to improved student learning outcomes". Therefore, effective pastoral care promotes the personal, social and academic development of students.

Pastoral care draws its spirit and direction from the gospel values of Christ. Pastoral care has as its core the unique nature of each individual. It affirms and values each person, recognises his/her uniqueness and celebrates differences between human beings. Through love and respect, individuals may mature and develop values and beliefs, talents and skills.

All members of the community of St Monica's College are responsible for pastoral care.

"The school values the sacredness and wellbeing of all students, staff and parents/guardians and is committed to serving the young people of the northern suburbs of Melbourne."
(St Monica's College Mission Statement)

"We promote the truths and values of Jesus Christ and fidelity to the message of the Gospels. Through prayer and perseverance, we nurture genuine and harmonious relationships based on restorative principles." (St Monica's College Mission Statement)

Policy

1. Dimensions of Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care at the College has both formal and informal dimensions. The College continues to develop the following dimensions to enhance Pastoral Care offerings and effectiveness.

These dimensions include:

- 1.1 Promotion of positive relationships
- 1.2 Formation in self-discipline and responsibility
- 1.3 Pastoral curriculum and programs
- 1.4 Comprehensive and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning
- 1.5 Supportive school/family relationships
- 1.6 Effective networks of care
- 1.7 Coordinated and supportive organizational structures.

2. Implementation of Pastoral Care

St Monica's College is committed to each member of its community. Through a shared sense of community, each person should feel welcomed, experience a sense of belonging and display responsibility for the wellbeing of others. Pastoral Care should be evident in all aspects of College life, particularly in relationships between staff, students and parents/guardians. Pastoral Care is promoted through; the pastoral curriculum, programs, structures, academic curriculum, assessment and reporting procedures, student wellbeing practices, counselling services, Restorative Practices and culture, and Career education. All channels of communication within the College community should reflect our pastoral care ethos.

Pastoral care is implemented at St Monica's College in the following ways.

2.1 Promoting positive relationships

Positive relationships are demonstrated through genuine respect and care in all interactions within the community. Staff members are pivotal as they often set the tone and manage the relationships within the College's physical and online landscapes. The College too is committed to Restorative Practices to repair relationships when they are negatively impacted.

2.2 Student Formation

Students are provided with opportunities to be guided and to learn in different contexts which encourage self-discipline and an appropriate level

of responsibility. This is enhanced through the embedding of Restorative Practices.

2.3 Pastoral Care curriculum and programs

Pastoral programs form a core part of the curriculum for Years 7 - 12. These programs focus particularly on the social and emotional development of students. Students may also participate in a range of community service programs and co-curricular activities that affirm their self-worth and provide opportunities for personal growth.

2.4 Inclusive approach to teaching and learning

A comprehensive and inclusive curriculum is provided for all year levels, which is responsive to the diverse needs of individual students. Teachers are responsible for delivering a curriculum that is accessible to all students that incorporates both wellbeing and curriculum priorities. The Educational Support Faculty also has a particular responsibility in this area.

2.5 Parent partnerships

The College seeks to develop relationships of trust, cooperation and partnership with its families and remains sensitive to and respectful of diverse cultural values and family structures. The College is committed to supporting families making the transition to St Monica's and recognizes the special needs of new arrivals and refugee families. Regular Parent-Teacher conferences are held as well as a variety of information evenings. The Parent Portal provides families with information, links to community services and offers an avenue for contact with the College. Through the Parent Network, parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet and to become actively involved in College life. The College Counselling Service is available to assist families in times of need.

2.6 Effective networks of care

Students are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and supported. Therefore pastoral care is the responsibility of all members of staff who work in partnership with students and families. The College Counselling Service can support students through challenging times and consult with parents/guardians regarding their child's wellbeing as the need arises. Effective networks of care are established and utilised within the College and, as appropriate, referrals are made to organisations and other professionals within the wider community.

2.7 Coordinated and supportive organizational structures.

The College's organisational structures support the delivery of pastoral care. These include: Year Level Leader and Home Room structure; the Counselling Service; Student Wellbeing Faculty; Educational Support Faculty; Career Education and Community Service.

3. Appendix

Supporting policies, structures and procedures:

- 3.1 College Mission Statement
- 3.2 Restorative Justice Framework
- 3.3 Positive Relationships Policy
- 3.4 Attendance Policy
- 3.5 Bereavement Protocol
- 3.6 Critical Incident Policy
- 3.7 Drug Policy
- 3.8 Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- 3.9 Educational Support Policy
- 3.10 Equal Opportunity Policy
- 3.11 Human Relations Policy
- 3.12 Seasonal Heat Policy
- 3.13 Trespassers Policy
- 3.14 Discipline Policy
- 3.15 Religious Education Policy
- 3.16 Careers Centre
- 3.17 Counselling Service
- 3.18 Student Formation and Leadership Development
- 3.19 Year 8 Stepping Stones program
- 3.20 Year 10 “On the Edge” Retreats
- 3.21 Uniquely Year 9 Experiences
- 3.22 Student Formation Days
- 3.23 Parent Information Sessions

These policies, structures and procedures have been developed over time to respond in a variety of ways to the pastoral needs of the College community. They are listed here to show not only what has been done but what is possible. These are evaluated, reviewed and renewed to ensure that the College’s philosophy of Pastoral Care remains relevant and responsive over time.

This policy was approved by the College Board in 2020 and will be revised in 2023.

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