Pastoral Care in a Catholic school is anchored in the plea of Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12)

It is love in action. Pastoral Care may be defined as the expressions of care and the energy of concern which integrates the academic, social and religious dimensions of the school. Pastoral Care is about nurturing each person in the school community by accepting and treasuring their uniqueness within a network of supportive relationships.

Rationale

St. Joseph's School comprising staff, parents, students, the parish and wider community acknowledges its responsibility within the teaching ministry of the Church. Pastoral Care and Religious Education are regarded as being intrinsic to the quality of Catholic Education and the structures, policies, procedures and practices within the school should be in harmony with Gospel values.

St. Joseph's Pastoral Care Policy aims to assist each member of the school community to develop their full potential with Jesus as model. To fulfil our vision of nurturing each person in a Christ-centered environment we aim to see the face of Jesus in every member of the community.
Thus we will work towards:

- developing quality relationships within the school community which support the growth of the individual;

- helping everyone realise that it is the responsibility of all members of the school community to collaborate in the provision of a caring environment within the school.

- providing satisfying learning experiences.

- establishing effective care networks.

- developing self-discipline based on justice, self-esteem and reconciliation.

**Principles of Pastoral Care**

- Pastoral Care is for staff, students and parents; All staff are involved in pastoral care;

- Each child is an individual with particular and special needs;

- Pastoral Care permeates every phase of the school day and is not confined to a stated period of pastoral care;

- Pastoral Care cannot be imposed on a staff but emerges from the personal, social and religious needs of the community;

- Students, parents, staff, pastor, and community agencies all have a part to play in the formulation and implementation of the pastoral care program;

- Pastoral Care programs need to be regularly evaluated and everyone is invited to be involved in the process of evaluation;

- Pastoral Care is explicit in its intentional planning as well as implicit in the everyday life of the school;

- Pastoral Care is an expression of the ethos of the school;

- Particular services and support are provided for children with special needs;

- Inservice and resources are offered to staff to assist them in effective pastoral care;

- Pastoral care programs are responses to discerned concerns of people in a local school.
Pastoral care has legal implications through duty of care responsibilities; Each child should have access to a teacher at a one-to-one level;

- The confidentiality of personal information is respected;

- Pastoral Care is not problem centered;

- Pastoral Care is an authentic manifestation of the school's philosophy of a human person;

- Spirituality of pastoral care is an integrating influence on all the activities of pastoral care, inspired by the symbol of Jesus as shepherd;

**Dimensions of Pastoral CarePolicy**

Pastoral Care has many faces in the school some of which include Behaviour Management, Well Being, Playground & Classroom procedures and other programs incorporated into our school programs eg LAP. Positive steps in creating an effective pastoral care network include the following aspects of School Culture.

**Climate**

Positive school climate may be developed by:

- The welfare and well being of the students being the focus of all school activities;
- Restorative practice is used to manage concerns;
- The development of quality and respectful relationships among staff - students - parents - priest.
- Parents being actively involved in the life of the school.
- Staff sharing a common vision and presenting a professional and unified front.
- The provision of satisfying learning experiences which are relevant and challenging.
- The school's stores being recorded and shared.
- Special occasions being celebrated.
- Rituals being developed to mark important events in the life of individuals and the school, eg. Birthdays.
- Everyone being addressed by name.
- Ensuring there are welcoming and farewelling rituals.
- Ensuring orientation days are arranged for new pupils.
- Ensuring school social activities are planned regularly.
- The school being considered as one family not separate class units.
**Affirmation**

Affirmation recognises the giftedness of others, develops self worth and self confidence. Avenues for affirmation include:

- Warm greetings;
- School assembly presentations;
- Items in newsletters.
- Merit Awards.
- Positive acknowledgments valuing efforts, projects, personal qualities and contributions.
- Positive comments on work.
- Display of work samples.
- School reports.
- Recognising success in out-of-school activities.
- Children sharing examples of their talents and skills.

**Informal Interaction**

Presence of Informal Interaction may be seen in:

- The teacher's greetings to children and the addressing of all by name.
- Personal interest shown in children, parents and teachers.
- Spending time with children on playground and bus lines.
- Attending school/class functions, eg. BBQ’s, dances, farewells and liturgies.
- The caring role of school support staff, e.g. secretary, librarian.
- Spending time with other staff members at recess and lunchtime.

**Communications**

Good communication is vital for school morale. Good communication may be developed by:

*Basic communication networks used effectively, e.g.*

- Newsletters
- Staff Newsletters
- Staff whiteboard
- Up-to-date notice boards
- School assemblies
- Staff meetings
- School reports
- Restorative meetings
- Use of Playground & Class Behaviour books
- Parent meetings
- Person to person interaction
- Opportunities are provided for the improvement of skills - speaking listening, conflict resolution.
- Speaking in a positive manner.
- Confidentiality is respected.
- Time is taken to listen to one another.
• Staff take time to communicate with one another.

**School Environment**

The physical environment can be a positive influence on the atmosphere in the school. This can be improved by:

• Creating a welcoming feel to the school;
• Keeping classrooms ordered and clean.
• Clearly indicating the administrative area of the school
• Greening the school indoor and out.
• Creating bright, pleasant and tidy classrooms.
• Arranging furniture appropriately.
• Displaying children's work.
• Displaying the school badge and motto.
• Caring for school buildings and grounds.

**Student Participation**

Developing ways in which students can be involved develops a positive climate of trust. This can be achieved by students:

• Leading assembly and prayers.
• Being responsible for school procedures, e.g. flag raising, tasks at school.
• Welcoming and thanking visitors.
• Forming a student council.
• Being Kinder buddies.
• Taking positions of leadership in school, e.g. school captains, sport house captains.
• Arranging fundraising events, e.g. mission appeals, Mini Vinnies
• Being actively involved in planning concerts, demonstrations and special events
• Being involved in wider community activities, e.g. Anzac Day March
• Buddy class activities-Shared reading/class activities.

**Staff Involvement**

Teachers, mindful that much real pastoral care occurs in their normal classroom learning situations, can improve their classroom management by:

• Developing an atmosphere which will enhance enthusiastic, meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences.
• Encouraging pupils to contribute ideas to the curriculum and accept responsibility for their learning.
• Encouraging the children to accept themselves and each other as unique individuals.
• Encouraging an acceptance and tolerance of, and respect for others ideas, talents, values, abilities and limitations.
• Giving children the confidence to attempt tasks, take sensible risks and to accept failure as part of the learning process.

• Positively affirming children for all their efforts and attempts.

• Being open to changing their minds and apologising if they have acted unjustly.

• Maximising pupils' comforts in the learning situation.

• Ensuring that the children have the materials and resources that learning experience requires.

• Being well prepared, well planned and well organised.

• Having a sense of humour and sharing it with the pupils.

• Maintaining a friendly interaction between ourselves and parents / carers

**Parent Involvement**

The parent partnership in education means that they have a vital role in the pastoral care program. Ways of improving home-school co-operation in pastoral care include:

• Communicating to parents the meaning of pastoral care and its implications for the school.

• Parent responses to be used in planning and implementation of pastoral care.

• Resources to be available for parents to receive pastoral care in times of personal or family crisis.

• Social gatherings of parents and staff.

• Maintaining class parent reps as contact people for parents and teachers.

• Using parents as resource people.

• Involving parents in welcoming new families, eg. taking an active role in new parent orientation.

• Inviting parents to participate in liturgy and prayer services.

• Inviting parents to school celebrations and activities, eg. assembly.

• Encouraging parents to visit school and classrooms.

• Recognising the place of parents, eg. Family Week, Mother's/Father's Day.

• Arranging parent information evenings, eg. curricula development, teaching methods.

• Regularly reporting to parents about the children's progress.

• The celebration of Family Day

**Local Community**

Interaction with local community adds to the dimension of pastoral care in the school. This may be achieved by:

• Children visiting the sick/lonely/elderly.

• Involving pupils in community celebrations, eg. Alstonville Show.

• Supporting community projects, eg. CWA
Using community resource people in school/class activities.
Sharing 'good news stories of school life' in local newspaper.
Referring parents to appropriate community services.
Raising children's awareness of the local area.

**Special Programs**

Programs have been introduced or developed to respond to the particular needs of children. Examples include:
- Social Skills Training Program.
- Life Education.
- Seasons.
- Individual Education Plans (I.E.P’s)
- Enrichment and Extension
- Reading Recovery.
- Restorative practice, meetings & circle time
- Learning Assistance Program (LAP) being introduced.
- Integration of children with disabilities.
- Special consideration for children under specific medical care.
- Parish Programs: LinC Alstonville, Care & Concern, CentaCare, etc.
- Availability of School Counsellor.
- GTAL Cluster Programs.
- You Can Do It Program.

**Camps, Cultural Activities, Excursions, Sports, Competitions**

Activities such as these provide opportunities for students to:
- Develop school spirit.
- Learn about teamwork.
- Gain knowledge and develop new skills.
- Channel their energies into worthwhile pursuits.
- Experience success and failure.
- Interact with fellow students, teachers and parents on a different level

**Relaxation**

Relaxation is an important aspect of pastoral care. The school can help develop an atmosphere of relaxation by:
- Creating a 'quiet time' each day.
- Practising different forms of prayer.
- Introducing forms of meditation.
- Conducting sessions on stress management and relation skills.
- Providing Spirituality Day / Reflection Time for staff / parents and children on a
regular basis.
- Regular Staff Prayer
- The use of school library & technology room during lunchtime for quiet time.
School Structures and Policy

How the school functions can dictate the character of pastoral care. School structures and policies should reflect the values and vision of the school. Therefore it is crucial that the school continue to:

- Ensure the integration of learning in the school curriculum.
- Develop meaningful assessment procedures.
- Adapt to changing educational demands and children's needs.
- Remain aware of current curriculum development and implementation
- Be open and positive to new ideas and strategies
- View education in a positive light.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parish Priest

The Parish Priest has a special role in the pastoral care program by:

- Influencing others by his informal presence.
- Providing spiritual support and affirmation for parents, staff and children.
- Leading the school in prayer, liturgy and celebration.
- Being available to the children on a regular basis.
- Being available to those in need
- Representing the Church's concerns for her people.

The Role of the Principal

The Principal has the ultimate responsibility for carrying out this Pastoral Care Policy. In carrying out this policy the Principal should:

- Make the total school community aware of the Policy
- Ensure that support agencies are in place.
- Communicate with the Parish Priest and the Catholic Education Office in cases of major importance.
- Be aware of all children who are being assisted by Pastoral Care Policy.
- Maintain a school of professional and Christian standards.
- Set leadership and Christian examples.
- Reflect upon his/her behaviour and its effect on others.
- Be available
- Act with equality for all staff.
- Act with equality and care for all children.
- Provide opportunities for the personal growth of staff through: social activities, celebrations, recognition/affirmation, skills development, personal development inservice.
**Role of Classroom Teacher**

Teachers are responsible to parents for the welfare of their children. Implicit in this duty of care is the right to carry out procedures outlined in this policy. In carrying out this policy teachers should:

- Act consistently.
- Act justly.
- Adhere faithfully to all aspects of the Pastoral Care Policy.
- Be aware of children in need of assistance.
- Be aware of the wider ramifications of Government, Educational Authorities and School Pastoral Care.
- Foster a professional relationship with parents concerning the welfare of their children.
- Set a Christian example.
- Reflect upon their behaviour and its effect on others.
- Be aware of relationships between each other and act as role models to children in this area.

**The Role of the Parent**

All parents share the responsibility with the school for implementing and evaluating the Pastoral Care Policy.

- All parents need to become familiar with and support the school's Pastoral Care Policy.
- All parents need to be aware of the implications of the Pastoral Care Policy.
- Parents are asked to contact the school, at an early stage, if any problems are evident in the care of the child.
- Gossiping within the community does not support anybody.

**The Role of the Student**

All students have the right to:

- be happy and to be treated with understanding;
- to be treated with respect and politeness.
- to be safe.
  * to expect their property to be safe
  * to obtain maximum benefit from all lessons and classes - other students should not deprive them of this by their behaviour.
  * have a pleasant, clean and well-maintained school and environment.

All students have the responsibility to:

- treat others with understanding - not to laugh at others, not to tease others or hurt their feelings.
- treat others politely and with respect.
- respect the authority of teachers.
- make the school safe by not threatening, hitting or hurting anyone in any way.
• not steal, damage or destroy the property of others.
• co-operate with teachers and other students to make sure that lessons proceed and that they keep up-to-date with required work.
• not behave in a manner so as to interfere with other students' right to learn.
• care for the school environment, to keep it neat and clean and to be prepared to remove litter.
• tell the teachers about any defective buildings or fittings. Students should accept that teachers may more readily see dangers than they do and should obey the teachers' instructions.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring the effectiveness of our Pastoral Care program is an ongoing process. A vibrant community experiences change and growth, thus the needs of such a community will vary over periods of time. Every member of the school community is encouraged to reflect upon the effectiveness of the pastoral Care procedures adopted by the school and to contribute in a positive way to the nurturing of our Christ-centred environment.

Once the policy has been released, the following areas should be reviewed in light of the policy:

i. staff support network;
ii. enrolment procedures;
iii. student involvement and leadership;
iv. orientation of new students, staff and parents;
v. discipline (refer to Behaviour Management section);
vi. methods of grouping for learning;
vii. assessment and reporting procedures;
viii. internal and external referral networks;
ix. crisis care, including child abuse;
x. peer support programs;
xi. parents - communication, involvement, education programs;
pii. parish and community involvement;
xiii. co-curricula activities;
xiv. legal responsibilities of teachers regarding pastoral care;
ixv. playground use, behaviour, supervision.
xvi. social skills / anti-bullying program use and success.
Behaviour Management

At St Joseph's behaviour is managed in a sequential way. Students need to be fully aware of the following code:

St Joseph’s School Alstonville
COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR CODE

At St Joseph’s School Alstonville we value the following behaviours for ALL members of our school community.

A) SAFETY
School community members will act in a responsible manner that presents no danger to the physical or emotional security of themselves or others.

Safety is exhibited in conduct such as:
- a) Following supervisor instructions
- b) Using equipment correctly
- c) Observing rules and procedures
- d) Resolving conflict peacefully
- e) Following OH&S procedures
- f) no bullying or harassment

B) EFFORT
School community members will be mindful of the fact that the primary aim of schooling is student learning. Each member will actively fulfil their role in promoting this process to the best of their ability.

Effort is exhibited in conduct such as:
- a) Attempting to complete set tasks
- b) Punctuality
- c) Being prepared and organized
- d) Involvement
- e) Connectedness

C) RESPECT
School community members will treat each other with courtesy and consideration at all times, being mindful of the rights and differing responsibilities of each person. Such courtesy will be reflected in both action and communication.

Respect is exhibited in conduct such as:
- a) Speaking and acting politely to others
- b) Using equipment carefully
- c) Following supervisor instructions
- d) Active listening
- e) Accepting of differences, rights and feelings

D) SELF RESPONSIBILITY
School community members will endeavour at all times to make appropriate behaviour choices relative to the social context, and accept accountability for the outcomes of their actions.

Self-responsibility is exhibited in conduct such as:
Behaviours that challenge these school expectations will be addressed in levels and each level has a series of consequences.

Classroom and Playground Monitoring

At St Joseph's inappropriate behaviour is monitored using a Playground Behaviour Monitoring Slip and separate Classroom Behaviour books.

Class Behaviour books are kept on the teacher's desk in an easily assessable location. The Playground Monitoring Slip is kept in the staffroom and checked by Principal or Assistant Principal each week.

The Affirmation aspect of both books is for recording examples of exceptionally good behaviour observed by the Teacher. The children should be acknowledged through a Principal's/Assistant Principal's Award at the weekly School Assembly.

The Behaviour Book or Slips are checked by the Assistant Principal on a regular basis and in consultation with the School Executive, Parents and Class Teachers, suitable discipline procedures will be put in place.

Behavioural Management Levels

Level One: The Warning Stage

Examples of inappropriate behaviour at this level would include:

- Displaying a poor attitude
- Playing roughly
- Being disruptive to others
- Arriving late to class lines
- Using inappropriate language
- Acting uncooperatively
- Fighting
- Being out of bounds
Early intervention should be consistent across the school. Strategies used in early management of minor disruptive behaviour could include:

**Eye contact**
**Verbal reminder of expectations**
**Mirroring/modelling session**
**Social skill deficit checklist**
**Encouragement-- 'What is a better way'**

**Level Two:**

Negative behaviour that becomes frequent, regular or is of a more serious nature (i.e. warning does not necessarily need to be given) would be recorded on a Playground Behaviour Slip and the consequences would include:

**Verbal/written apology to class or teacher**
**Modelling of desired behaviour-one-on-one counselling**
**Change of position in class**
**Time-out (still in view of lesson)**
**No play (after eating time)**
**Community service**
**Time out at Buddy class**
**Detention supervised by the classroom teacher**
**Loss of privileges**
**Phone call to parents**
**Informal parent/teacher interview**

**Level Three:**

Level three deals with students who continue to make poor choices in their behaviour. This level would see the student being collectively managed by the school executive, the class teacher and the parents.

Behaviours that would be included in this stage are serious breaches such as:

- Persistent bullying of a serious and proven nature
- Deliberately hurting or assaulting others
- Wilful and premeditated damage to property
- Stealing
- Abuse of a teacher
- Use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol
- Continual disregard for the school expectations

Strategies will be negotiated by the executive, parent and student and will involve the class teacher in working closely to monitor and mentor a course of change. This level of the Behaviour Management Plan would include:
A formal parent interview

A social skills plan

A behaviour management plan

Appropriate sanctions

Support networks if warranted

Level Four:

In the event of a student persisting with serious misbehaviour and after all reasonable avenues have been exhausted, the Principal in conjunction with the parents may withdraw the student from class &/or school. Any decisions will be made in accordance with Catholic Education Office Diocese of Lismore’s Suspension and Expulsion of students Policy and Procedures. HOWEVER, the teacher needs to ensure they have recorded all problems and interventions in class behaviour book. Other concerns outside the classroom will need to be noted in other areas eg Playground slips, notes kept in file, etc.

This is a serious indicator to the student that strategies planned to modify their behaviour are running out. A formal letter that outlines the school’s position will be forwarded to the parents. Following this may require formal indication that St Joseph’s, after a period of intervention, can no longer meet the needs of the student.

Physical Harm on other Persons

In cases where a student causes physical harm on another person, it is required that the student causing harm is removed from the situation and sent to the Principal or Assistant Principal. The teacher in charge at the time should call an Executive team member for assistance to remove the student.

Any child found to be responsible for causing physical harm to another person will automatically be placed on an internal suspension for 2 days and Parents/Guardians are contacted.

In-Class Misbehaviour

In-class discipline is generally the province of the class teacher and the following procedures may prove effective in correcting unacceptable behaviour:
Conference with pupil

A reproof given privately, sincerely, calmly and firmly.
Brief periods of isolation from the group but always within view of the teacher.
Deprivation of privileges and responsibilities
Interview with parents.
Time at Buddy class
Child's name and misdemeanour to be recorded in Class behaviour book.
At times it may be necessary for a child to conference with Assistant Principal or Principal, who will record behaviour.

Positive behaviour should also be recorded in the Class behaviour book so that affirmation may be offered.

The Assistant Principal or Principal will monitor children’s behaviour and will advise parents when a child is not responding to correction. In addition to this, if problem behaviour has been evident in many areas of school life, a conference will be sought and a management plan implemented. This may include appropriate sanctions for the child. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used.

A single outrageous behaviour that violates our Policy will automatically require parent contact. This contact may advise parents that home suspension is imminent or to be applied or an alternate management plan may be devised.

Playground Award System

At St Joseph’s School Alstonville we strive to encourage positive behaviour, self-discipline and respect for others in a positive and consistent manner. To assist in this regard we have a Playground Award system which runs in conjunction with our School Discipline Policy. Under this system children who demonstrate Positive Behaviour on the playground will be recognized.

- Caught Being Good certificates will be awarded for Positive Playground Behaviour. Each duty-teacher will be encouraged to have a supply of awards which are readily available to be distributed to deserving students. A supply will also be kept in the Staffroom. Teachers give the award to the child who will then be responsible for placing it in the box in the administration office. Early Stage One children may require the teacher to do this or may seek the assistance of a senior student.
- The award is presented to the child ‘on the spot’.
- It is then the responsibility of the award recipients to place their award in the special awards Box which is located at the desk of the administration office.
- Each name will be recorded on a list that will be given to the school secretary for publication in the school newsletter.
- During each term the awards will be emptied and the process will begin afresh the following term.
Written: Draft Feb 2007
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To be reviewed: December 2012

Consulted:
√√Parents
√Staff
√Students