



# PASTORAL CARE OF STUDENTS POLICY

*“I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)*

## Rationale

The College Mission Statement articulates the desire that students have an ability to build bridges with others. Underpinning this is a recognition that, in order to reach beyond self, it is important to have an understanding of self in relationship with others and an appreciation of the biblical teaching that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God.

Pastoral care at Our Lady of Sion College reflects the values of respect, compassion and care for the individual, as well as an understanding of the needs of the school community that may transcend those of the individual. All relationships, including those with students, staff and parents/carers, are built on unconditional positive regard. Every person has a responsibility to understand the integral role they play, individually and collectively. For adults in Catholic schools, nurturing the pastoral care, wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

The Pastoral Care of Students Policy embraces aspects that specifically recognise the diverse spiritual, intellectual, cultural, social, emotional and physical needs and development of those within this community. We also “have a moral, legal and mission driven responsibility” (CECV) to ensure that we remain strongly committed to a culture of child safety and a zero tolerance for child abuse.

This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

## Purpose

The Pastoral Care of Students Policy ensures that Our Lady of Sion College has a pastoral care policy that documents strategies for creating and maintaining a school culture which is culturally safe, and which ensures that children and young people are known, and feel safe, valued and respected. The school’s pastoral care policy should articulate procedures and practices that:

- develop and enhance every student’s wellbeing and sense of connectedness and belonging to their school as a faith-filled learning community
- cultivate safe, physical, emotional, mental, social, and online environments that comply with relevant legislative and legal requirements
- ensure that the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.

## Definitions

**Inclusion** is the right to access and receive a full and engaging education. Our Lady of Sion College welcomes all members of the community as equal, embracing diversity as a means for dialogue, engagement and deeper understandings of self, others, and God. The uniqueness and

sacred dignity of each person is celebrated, driven by the Biblical message of love and justice. These convictions guide the encounters, actions and pedagogical approaches that enable all children to learn and thrive

**Pastoral care** is a demonstration of profound respect for the human dignity of each person who is created in the image and likeness of God. Pastoral care includes the decisions, structures, and practices that nurture, support and assist a student to flourish and reach their spiritual, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional potential so that they may come to a deeper understanding of their own humanness. The pastoral care of students at Our Lady of Sion College is focused on actions that promote health, wellbeing, resilience, academic outcomes, social capital, and ethical decision making (Cross, 2014).

**Student wellbeing** is a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships, and experiences at school (Noble & Wyatt, 2008, p.21).

At Our Lady of Sion College, a positive sense of pastoral care and wellbeing supports a base for rich learning that enables children and young people to flourish, give expression to their authentic selves and realise their unique potential. This holistic view recognises the sacredness, dignity and giftedness of each person (Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing, 2017, p.3).

## **Principles**

Pastoral care at Our Lady of Sion College:

- involves a commitment to creating safe, supportive, inclusive and hope-filled learning environments of welcome where human dignity is respected, diversity and inclusiveness are valued, and authentic relationships are fostered
- nurtures the wellbeing of every child, 'their unique story, giftedness and temperament must be understood and valued in a way that enables love, respect, compassion, forgiveness and hope to thrive' (Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing, 2017, p.3)
- ensures that all members of the school community are responsible for creating a positive pastoral climate. Staff, students and parents/guardians/carers share responsibility for developing and maintaining open and cooperative relationships characterised by respect, trust, goodwill, and a willingness to engage collaboratively. It is vital that all members of the school community work together to provide a consistent and supportive environment in which students may develop and grow towards maturity
- identifies and nurtures partnerships with appropriate services and agencies in order to support the pastoral care and wellbeing needs of every student
- responds to the pastoral and wellbeing needs of students and maintains appropriate confidentiality and privacy. Information is communicated, with necessary permissions, to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

## **Policy**

Our Lady of Sion College demonstrates effective pastoral care through the following strategies.

### **1. Our Lady of Sion College develops pastoral care and wellbeing strategies by:**

- 1.1. providing coherent policy frameworks, guidance, and resources (refer to Related Resources section)
- 1.2. developing targeted professional learning
- 1.3. monitoring compliance through existing protocols including cyclical review as part of school improvement and Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requirements.

## **2. The Principal and Leadership Team work to enhance the school's pastoral care and wellbeing by:**

- 2.1. utilising the Our Lady of Sion College Pastoral Care of Students Policy, Horizons of Hope education framework, 'eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities, Identity and Growth: A perspective for Catholic schools' and the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework as the basis to inform and guide their curriculum planning, policies and practices
- 2.2. supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their understanding of core Catholic principles including the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person
- 2.3. engaging students and their parents/guardians/carers to collaboratively develop and periodically review practices
- 2.4. ensuring whole-school approaches are known, understood and readily accessible to all members of the community.

## **3. Teachers and school staff support the pastoral care and wellbeing of students by:**

- 3.1. creating and maintaining safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments that enable the unique potential, gifts and innate qualities of each student to unfold and thrive
- 3.2. understanding their duty of care and accountability in regard to legislation and compliance
- 3.3. using relationship-based approaches to establish consistent expectations for behaviour
- 3.4. working in partnership with parents/guardians/carers and families to build resilience and promote a positive sense of self.

## **4. Students contribute to developing positive pastoral learning environments and their own and other's wellbeing by:**

- 4.1. treating all members of the school community with respect and courtesy
- 4.2. following school policies, procedures, and guidelines
- 4.3. taking responsibility for their actions
- 4.4. reporting all concerns about wellbeing and safety
- 4.5. co-operating with teachers, school staff and their parents/guardians/carers.

## **5. Parents/guardians/carers contribute to developing positive pastoral learning environments for their own and other children's wellbeing by:**

- 5.1. working respectfully, collaboratively and in partnership with staff and members of the school community to create high expectations
- 5.2. explicitly teaching, modelling, and promoting socially responsible behaviours
- 5.3. promoting and upholding the core values of the school by supporting school policies and procedures.
- 5.4. abiding by the College's Code of Belonging

## **Procedures**

### **1. School policy and procedures**

- 1.1. Our Lady of Sion College must have a Pastoral Care Policy in place
- 1.2. In developing and enacting the Pastoral Care Policy, the College must ensure the policy is:
  - a. tailored to the local context of the College

- b. made publicly available (i.e. on the College website)
- c. communicated to the school community on a regular basis
- d. regularly reviewed and considered
- e. integrated into other school policies and procedures, curriculum and key school documents.

## **2. School environment**

- 2.1. Our Lady of Sion College is bound to provide a safe and nurturing environment where the risk of harm is minimised, and students feel safe.
- 2.2. The College community is required to take reasonable and proportionate measures to provide safe and enabling learning environments which encompass the spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of the student.

### **Related Policies - Internal**

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy

PROTECT Identifying and Responding to Abuse Reporting Obligations Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

Staff Recruitment Policy

School Anti-Bullying Policy (Including Cyberbullying)

Student Behaviour Management Policy

Counselling Policy

### **Related Resources – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools**

eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities

Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context

Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing

Horizons of Hope: Learning Diversity

Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners

Identity and growth: A perspective for Catholic schools

### **Related Resources – Australian Government**

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (2018)

Student Wellbeing Hub

### **Related Legislation**

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)

Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic.)

Privacy Act 1988 (Vic.)

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