Catholic Education Office
Diocese of Wollongong

Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools in partnership with Centacare
Contents

Part A

1. The Context of Pastoral Care of Students in a Catholic School 3
2. The elements of successful Pastoral Care 3
3. Expectations 4
4. Strategies to foster Pastoral Care 5
5. The Outcomes of successful Pastoral Care 6
6. Structures and Networks to develop Pastoral Care in schools 6

Part B

1. The Relationship With Centacare 7
2. Role Statement and Accountabilities 8
3. Services Available 9
4. The Student Welfare Advisory Committee 10
5. Communication Structures 10
6. Professional Development 11
7. Accountability of Staff 11
Part A

The Context of Pastoral Care of Students in a Catholic School

Catholic schools are founded on the person of Jesus Christ. Consequently, Catholic schools must be guided by Gospel values and share the evangelising mission of the Church. Catholic schools give witness to this by their actions and by placing faith development in the context of everyday life and culture. To adopt this vision as a way of approaching life requires an acknowledgment of the Gospel truth that we are all called to “have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). As a result Catholic schools have a responsibility to develop the whole person.

This provides the framework for the consideration of Pastoral Care in Catholic schools. It very clearly places Christian ministry in the context of Relationships: relationship with God, relationship with others and relationship with self. Each person is called to actively promote the well being of all members of the school community.

Consequently, Pastoral Care is the unifying focus for the spiritual, academic, social and emotional aspects of school life.

Successful Models of Pastoral Care will:

- respect the basic dignity of the human person
- provide witness to Gospel values as a means to living out daily life
- adopt an holistic approach which develops the full potential of the individual by integrating spiritual values with life
- include care structures which identify and meet the special needs of individuals in crisis
- are nurturing, liberating, empowering, just and promote self discipline
- recognise affirmation of students as an essential part of Pastoral Care
- enhance school climate and build community through shared responsibility and the relationships which exist amongst parents, teachers and students
- are recognisable through the just discipline practices of the school
- are both pro-active and reactive to needs
- promote an environment of safety for all members of the school community
Expectations

The expectations of schools in relation to Pastoral Care are that:

- the school community will accept responsibility for the Pastoral Care of all the members of its community

- the rights and responsibilities of all members of the community regarding Pastoral Care will be acknowledged and clearly communicated

- all schools will have a Pastoral Care Plan that includes appropriate structures, adequate resources and professional development that provides for effective implementation. This plan will be tied to the overall Strategic Plan of the school

- relevant school policies will be linked to the school Pastoral Care Plan in a way that recognises Pastoral Care as a unifying focus for the spiritual, academic, social and emotional aspects of school life

- a member of the school executive will have responsibility for the supervision of Pastoral Care

- all staff involved in Pastoral Care will have a clearly defined role description

- school discipline policies will be integrated with the Pastoral Care policy of the school and contain a clear statement about corporal punishment

- all members of the community will be involved in the development, ongoing review and formal evaluation of Pastoral Care programs

- schools, Centacare and the Catholic Education Office will work in partnership through the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM

- Pastoral Care policies will recognise, respect and welcome cultural and other individual differences

- Pastoral Care policies will have a special focus on support for the disadvantaged, devalued and marginalised of the community

- the Catholic Education Office will be informed, through the Head of School Cluster, of any serious student welfare incidents, critical incidents or sensitive issues
Strategies to foster Pastoral Care

In order to use a range of strategies schools will:

- create opportunities for collaboration between school, family and the wider community
- work collaboratively with Centacare to ensure the effectiveness of the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM is enhanced
- celebrate as a school through assemblies, liturgies, retreats and recognition of special events
- promote the culture of the school through affirmation, recognition, validation and reconciliation processes
- ensure the implementation of the discipline policy is living witness to the values of the school's Pastoral Care policy by providing justice for individuals and opportunities for reconciliation and self development
- create opportunities and structures that enable members of the community to actively contribute to Pastoral Care
- develop Pastoral Care teams with responsibility for specific groups within the school community
- provide communication structures that recognise and respond to the individual and collective needs of the school community
- ensure clear communication of policies and procedures which are subject to regular and ongoing evaluation
The Outcomes of successful Pastoral Care will be that:

- living faith values will be developed
- the self-esteem and resilience of members of the community will be enhanced
- peaceful environments will be created through affirmation and reconciliation
- a sense of belonging will be created
- a sense of purpose will be felt by individuals as life skills and competency grow
- social responsibility and citizenship will be a feature of the community
- a sense of social justice will be evident

Structures and Networks to develop Pastoral Care in schools

- Education Officers from the Catholic Education Office and Centacare personnel are available to assist with the planning, review, evaluation and support of Pastoral Care programs in schools

- The Catholic Education Office will provide suitable networks and professional development for staff involved specifically with the pastoral care of students

- Centacare, through the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM, will work with schools to provide support for students

- A member of the school executive has the oversight of the pastoral work of the school

- A resource list of relevant agencies is available through the Catholic Education Office or Centacare

- The support of Centacare and the Catholic Education Office, through the Head of School Cluster, will be provided to schools in dealing with critical incidents or in sensitive matters

- Ongoing dialogue is to occur between Centacare, the Catholic Education Office and schools in sensitive areas
Part B

The Relationship With Centacare

The Catholic Education Office’s ‘Pastoral Care Policy & Guidelines’ statement highlights the responsibility of Catholic schools to develop the whole person.

To assist schools in this task the Catholic Education Office has contracted Centacare to provide a range of services through the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM (SSFP), that support schools as they strive to meet this responsibility.

To ensure that a collaborative approach is taken and that the most efficient use of resources occurs, the following tasks have been undertaken:

1. role statements have been developed that identify the major accountabilities of both the Catholic Education Office and Centacare

2. a Student Welfare Advisory Committee has been established to make recommendations to the Director of Schools and the Director of Centacare

3. communication structures have been established to maintain a collaborative approach to student welfare and facilitate the efficient management of resources

4. joint professional development activities have been planned as part of the collaborative approach

5. accountability guidelines have been developed for both Centacare counsellors and staff in schools with specific pastoral care responsibilities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Catholic Education Office</strong></th>
<th><strong>Centacare</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Accountability</strong></td>
<td>To support school staff in their work of providing for the well being of students in Catholic systemic schools</td>
<td>To support the well being of students in Catholic systemic schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Assisting principals and relevant staff to meet the welfare needs of students in their care</td>
<td>Working with students either individually or in group situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing policy and procedure to support schools in this work</td>
<td>Working collaboratively with principals and school personnel to assist them in meeting students' welfare needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liaising with other agencies, in particular Centacare, to ensure that the appropriate range of support services is provided within the limits of financial resources</td>
<td>Working directly with parents to assist them in their role as the primary care giver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Services Available

Schools are expected to have a Pastoral Care Plan that identifies a range of strategies to be used in meeting students' welfare needs.

Centacare through the SSFP and the Centacare counsellor, will support schools by:

1. working, on an individual basis, with students who may be referred by principals, teachers, parents, or by self-referral in secondary schools

2. identifying an issue(s), in consultation with the principal, that could be more appropriately dealt with through group work or on a whole school basis

3. developing and implementing appropriate pastoral care programs

4. collaborating with and supporting school staff in addressing student welfare issues

5. working with parents in their role as primary carers

6. assisting with the development and implementation of policies and procedures, professional development and parent meetings within the guidelines contained in this document

7. identifying/liaising with appropriate external agencies to provide additional or more relevant support

The Catholic Education Office, through the Education Officer, Pastoral Care
K-12, will support schools by:

1. assisting with planning
2. assisting with policy and procedural development
3. facilitating appropriate professional development
4. working with staff on either an individual or group basis
5. liaising with external agencies and supporting external agendas
6. assisting schools with parents’ needs

The Catholic Education Office is focussed on supporting staff who have specific pastoral care responsibilities for students in diocesan schools. The Centacare counsellor's role is focussed on addressing students' needs. This may involve a range of either direct or indirect strategies. The responsibility for issues related to the pastoral care of staff rests with the Catholic Education Office.
The Student Welfare Advisory Committee

The Student Welfare Advisory Committee has been jointly established by the Director of Schools and the Director of Centacare to promote communication and cooperation amongst those involved in student welfare in diocesan schools. The committee membership includes representatives of the Catholic Education Office, Centacare and schools. Management of the committee is the joint responsibility of the Manager of the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM (Centacare) and the Head of Education Services (CEO). The key function of the committee is to provide advice to the Director of Schools and the Director of Centacare on student welfare issues.

Consequently, the work of the committee is to:

1. clarify the roles of those with specific responsibility for the welfare of students
2. review staffing and resource levels within available financial means
3. identify the changing needs of schools
4. evaluate the effectiveness of programs in use
5. identify appropriate professional development

Communication Structures

The maintenance of harmonious relationships between the Catholic Education Office, Centacare and school personnel will enhance the provision of efficient and effective student welfare services in diocesan schools. Formal structures to ensure effective communication will include:

1. Student Welfare Advisory Committee meetings each term
2. regular meetings between Heads of School Cluster Services (CEO), Head of Education Services (CEO), Education Officer - Pastoral Care and the Manager and Team Leaders of the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM (Centacare)
3. formal opportunities for relevant Centacare personnel to meet with school principals
Professional Development

The Student Welfare Advisory Committee will develop a plan for the provision of professional development that meets the system needs of staff involved in student welfare. In particular, the provision of joint professional development programs will be investigated.

Where a short-term need is identified within the school, principals may negotiate the provision of school-based professional development within the allocated SSFP time. Where major professional development or policy development is required, this support should be negotiated through the relevant supervisors, ie. the Team Leaders of the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM and the Head of School Cluster Services.

Accountability of Staff

Staff who are involved in student welfare have a responsibility to contribute to the effective management of the welfare program. Equally, they have a right to expect necessary support in their role and a safe, conducive workplace. Clear lines of accountability are essential to ensure this occurs.

Centacare counsellors are employees of Centacare. As such they are responsible to the Manager of the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM who will provide and organise appropriate supervision. However, when working in a school they are under the jurisdiction of the principal and work within the parameters of school policy and procedure. In larger schools the initial point of contact may be with the coordinator of pastoral care programs.

To avoid conflict the principal and school staff need to understand the parameters of the SCHOOL, STUDENT and FAMILY PROGRAM and the range of services available to them.

Each staff member should have a clearly defined role description. These role descriptions and the inclusion of the Centacare counsellor in the pastoral care structures and plans developed by the school will minimise the chance of any conflict arising.

Where a perceived conflict arises that cannot be resolved by negotiation between the counsellor and principal, the issue should be addressed through the particular employee’s own management structure.