



# STUDENT WELLBEING & PASTORAL CARE POLICY (2015)

The *Student Wellbeing & Pastoral Care Policy* is the key welfare document and informs other policies/guidelines such as: *Student Management Guidelines, Mental Health Guidelines, Student Leadership Guidelines, Hands Off Policy, Prohibited Weapons Policy, Illegal & Prohibited Substances Policy, Prohibited Items Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Student Acceptable Use Agreement.*

## RATIONALE

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney have had a long history of exercising a role in the pastoral care of their students and it began with the work of the religious congregations. The very term 'pastoral care' traces its origins back to Jesus' description of himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21). This is an educational endeavour for the development of the 'whole person' and reflects

*'...the centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school'*

(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium no. 9).

It is recognised, in this regard, that schools have a primary purpose in education, and that they need to be sensitive to the fact that there will be instances in which the appropriate course of action is to work in partnership with or refer to other agencies within the Church, or more widely. Parent support for, and involvement in, their children's education is a critical factor in student engagement, achievement and wellbeing.

In our school, wellbeing is understood as a sustainable state characterised by positive relationships, positive attitudes, resilience and being able to maximise strengths and high levels of satisfaction with learning experiences (e.g. Noble and Wyatt, 2008). Wellbeing is best promoted in a safe and supportive school.

*In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.*

(National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), p.2)

A whole school approach to creating safe and supportive learning and teaching communities acknowledges the strong interconnections between student safety, student wellbeing and learning. Harassment, aggression, violence and bullying are less likely to occur in a caring, respectful and supportive teaching and learning community. Student safety and wellbeing are enhanced when students feel connected to their school, have positive and respectful relationships with their peers and teachers, feel confident about their social and emotional skills and satisfied with their learning experiences at school.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

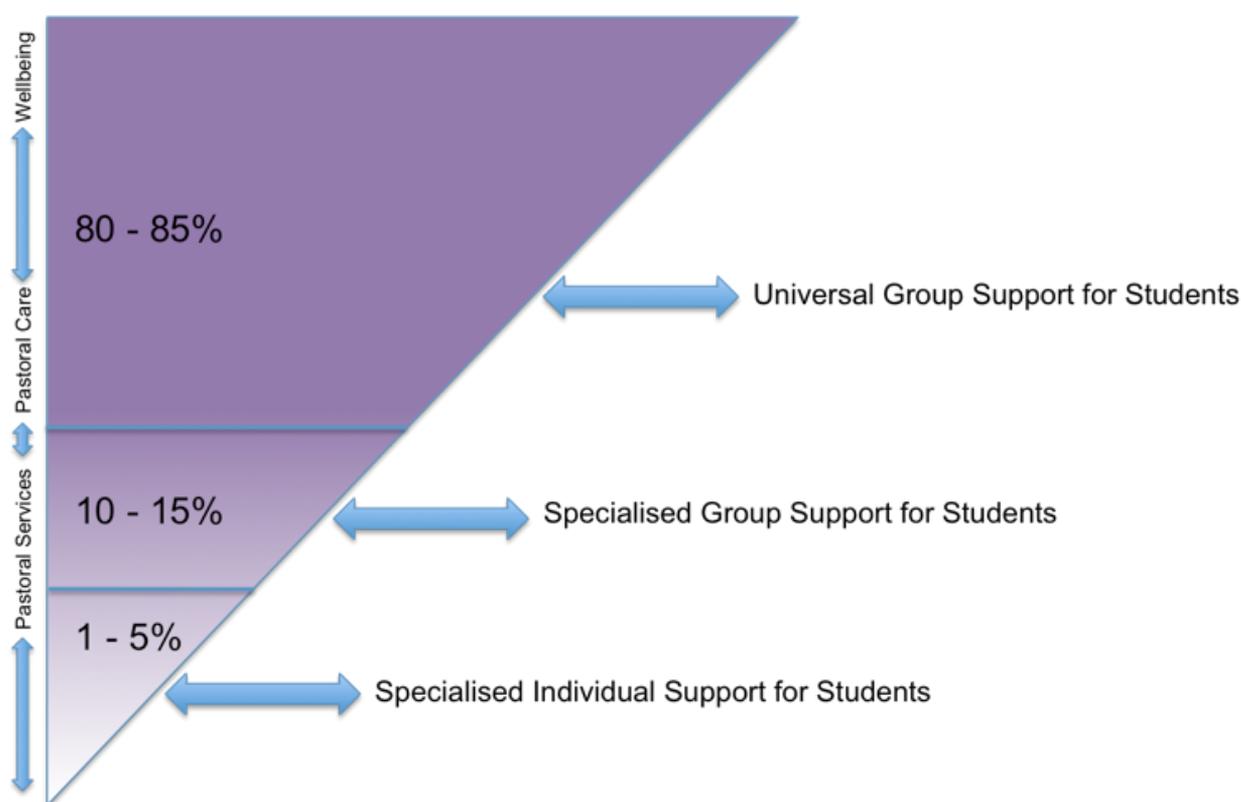
In the context of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney, the approach to wellbeing is based upon these beliefs:

- Wellbeing is central to learning
- Learning contributes to wellbeing
- Each student has inherent dignity
- Each student is unique

- Each student experiences life uniquely
- Students are active partners in the development and achievement of their own wellbeing
- Wellbeing is nurtured in the context of community
- Students can learn, and schools can teach, knowledge and skills that support the achievement of wellbeing
- Fostering and supporting the wellbeing of students is integral to being a good teacher
- Catholic schools seek to positively influence student wellbeing
- Catholic schools influence student wellbeing in distinctive and purposeful ways.

Wellbeing and pastoral care initiatives in Sydney Catholic schools should be seen in the context of a continuum. This is described below.

Holistic strategies and programs (i.e. Wellbeing and Pastoral Care) which foster positive states of mind are designed for *all* students. Most students (85%) respond, whilst a smaller percentage are 'at risk' (10-15%) and an even smaller group (1-5%) exhibit needs which require greater and more specialised level of support and professional intervention (i.e. Pastoral Services). This continuum of service and support is reflected in the following diagram.



Lewis & Sugai (1999)

## GUIDELINES

### The National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), (2011)

- The National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), (2011) has been adopted as the platform for the wellbeing of students enrolled in the College to equip them to act for their own and others' wellbeing. The Framework provides a vision and a set of guiding principles for safe and supportive school communities that also promote student wellbeing and develop respectful relationships.

- The NSSF ([http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/NSSFramework.pdf](http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/NSSFramework.pdf)) identifies nine elements to assist Australian schools to continue to create teaching and learning communities where all members of the school community both feel and are safe from harassment, aggression, violence and bullying. It also responds to new and emerging challenges for school communities such as cybersafety, cyber bullying and community concerns about young people and weapons.
- The College will use the NSSF support materials including an audit tool.
- Specifically tailored resources for students and parents can be found at the Safe Schools Hub (<http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/>).
- The Framework identifies nine key elements to assist schools in planning, implementing and maintaining a safe, supportive and protective learning community that promotes student safety and wellbeing.

#### **1. Leadership commitment to a safe school**

The school leadership team accepts responsibility for the development and maintenance of pastoral care and wellbeing structures that will support all members of the school community. These structures are regularly evaluated and reviewed with updates communicated to the whole school community.

#### **2. A supportive and connected school culture**

The school provides a clear demonstration of respect and support for student diversity through its inclusive actions and structures. Positive, caring and respectful relationships are evident throughout the school community.

#### **3. Policies and procedures**

Whole school, collaboratively developed policies, procedures and structures for supporting safety and wellbeing are clearly understood and followed by all.

#### **4. Professional learning**

Ongoing professional learning is undertaken to ensure that all staff are kept up to date with research and technology related to pastoral care and wellbeing. Staff are continually made aware of both the responsibilities and the limitations of their role.

#### **5. Positive behaviour management**

Fair, consistent, and positive approaches to student learning, support and challenge are understood and implemented by all staff. Students and, where appropriate their parents are involved in positive behaviour planning.

#### **6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum**

There is a strong focus on the enhancement of student engagement with learning. Relational teaching strategies are utilized and social and emotional skills are taught and modeled across all year levels.

#### **7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership**

Strengths based approaches to student learning and a range of opportunities for student ownership, decision making, student voice and leadership are evident.

#### **8. Early intervention and targeted support**

There is acknowledgement that some students struggle, for a variety of reasons, to successfully engage with learning. Effective and respectful processes exist for the early identification of students and families who require additional support.

#### **9. Partnerships with families and community**

The school works collaboratively with parents, carers and the wider community to extend support to students and families and provides opportunities for education on issues related to student wellbeing and safety.

These nine elements are based on a combination of good practice, research-based literature, and feedback from representatives from all educational systems, sectors and educators. Teachers are encouraged to be

both proactive in building safe and supportive learning communities as well as reactive in responding effectively to situations involving child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence and bullying. The nine elements also reflect a view that responsibility for the development and maintenance of a safe and supportive school community requires a respectful partnership among students, teachers, parents and carers, as well as the broader community and education systems and sectors

## **KEY PASTORAL/WELLBEING STRUCTURES & PROGRAMS @ASCSC**

### STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Structures include:

- The Parent Advisory Committee
- The Homeroom and Homeroom Teacher (see Appendix I)
- The College newsletter
- The College website
- The use of phone calls, SMS alerts, emails and interviews to facilitate communication
- Parent/Teacher Information Evenings
- Planning for the individual learning needs of students (e.g. Indigenous students, Students from ESL backgrounds, students with special learning needs)
- Individual Positive Behaviour Plans
- Individual Attendance Plans
- College Reports
- Parent/Teacher interviews

### PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM

‘PC Time’ occurs on the calendar regularly on Monday (period 3). Whole, or part day events occur at other times on the calendar. Wellbeing issues addressed as part of the broad Pastoral Care Programme include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dealing with complaints (including Bullying, Cyberbullying etc)</li> <li>● Driver education</li> <li>● Rights &amp; Responsibilities</li> <li>● Nutrition</li> <li>● Sleep</li> <li>● Transition support</li> <li>● Decision making and the law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student leadership</li> <li>● Drug &amp; alcohol education</li> <li>● Mental health</li> <li>● Resilience &amp; connectedness</li> <li>● Surviving the HSC</li> <li>● Study skills / Time management</li> <li>● Appropriate relationships</li> </ul>
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### KEY COMMUNITY BUILDING DAYS

#### *Broose Moose Day*

Broose Moose Day is a traditional pastoral day for Year 11. The program is designed to build community within the Homeroom and the Homeroom Teacher whilst allowing the students to get to know one another socially from all Homerooms in Year 11. The day also serves as an important part of the transition programme to the senior school. Points are recorded throughout the day and there is an overall Bruce Moose Champion Homeroom.

#### *All Saints Senior Christmas Celebration*

The focus of the informal proceedings is to raise money for the St. Vincent de Paul Society through various

activities such as a Chocolate Wheel, Staff song and baby photo guessing competitions.

#### *All Saints Day*

All Saints Day (1 November) is the official feast day of the College, as it is for the Liverpool Parish and the three other All Saints schools/colleges. Year 11 students will often attend Mass at All Saints Liverpool and then return to the College for celebratory activities.

#### *Community Day (Feast of the Assumption)*

Community Day begins with a Mass to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption (a Holy Day of Obligation in the Catholic Church). The rest of the day is spent participating in community building events (e.g. BBQ, Staff v Student games, tree planting, musical performances etc).

#### *Cafe Casula*

Open mic afternoon for the purpose of celebrating talent within the community and raising funds for Project Compassion

#### *Senior Retreat*

All Year 11 students attend an overnight Retreat focusing on:

- explore the Catholic ethos of the College
- the impact of College patrons
- exploring personal faith development
- Strengthening relationships within the College community

#### TRANSITION PROGRAMME

Transition is a major issue for the College. Not only are students moving from Year 10 to Year 11 the rigours of the HSC, but they are also leaving the familiarity of their teachers and their physical environment. In addition, most are transitioning from four years of single-sex education to a coeducational setting.

Elements of the Transition Programme include:

#### *Year 10 Orientation Day*

On this day in Term IV, all Year 10 enrolments are invited to spend a significant part of the day at the Senior College.

#### *First day of Year 11*

Year 11 commence the year a day before Year 12. This day is used to consolidate the learnings from Orientation Day as well as...

#### *Broose Moose Day*

Explained (above) under 'Key Community Building Days'

#### *Brent Sanders*

Addresses decision making in a social context and in the context of the law. In addition, Brent addresses preventative and protective behaviours for both male and female students

#### *Transition Survey*

A Transition Survey of all Year 11 students is conducted at the end of term I, Year 11 which has several goals including:

- Gaining a broad overview of how the cohort has transitioned
- Identifying particular students who are struggling with aspects of transition
- Staff/student relationships
- Whether students feel like they are being treated as young adults

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Students are to...

- Follow school policies, procedures and guidelines in relation to wellbeing
- Contribute positively to the development of safe and inclusive learning environments
- Report all concerns about their own wellbeing and that of fellow students.

### Parents, carers and families...

- Ensure children are aware of and understand the requirements of policies and procedures relating to wellbeing in school
- Work in partnership with schools to promote wellbeing in their children
- Be aware of the significant influence they have on their children's wellbeing
- Support CEO and school policies and procedures with respect to wellbeing.

### The Homeroom Teacher...

- Meets with his/her Homeroom every day after recess
- Greets students on a daily basis, delivers messages, collects absentee notes, checks the uniform etc
- Develops a strong relationship with each student, taking a focus on their social, emotional, spiritual and academic wellbeing
- Liaises with parents when required.

See College document: *Homeroom & The Role of the Homeroom Teacher*

### The classroom teachers...

- Creates and maintains safe and positive learning environments
- Models and promotes socially responsible values and behaviour
- Explicitly teaches socially acceptable and responsible behaviour
- Follows CEO and whole school policies and procedures to promote learner safety and wellbeing.
- Liaises with parents when required.

### The Year Coordinator (with the support of the Assistant Year Coordinator)...

- Oversees the welfare of all students in his/her Year group and works with the Assistant Year Coordinator and team of Homeroom teachers
- Develops a strong relationship with students, taking a focus on their social, emotional, spiritual and academic wellbeing
- Oversees student management issues that may arise
- Liaises with parents when required.

### The College Counsellor...

- Is available to assist students with personal issues and concerns
- Meets with students who make an appointment or are referred by the Year Coordinator
- Informs the Principal (or delegate) if he/she believes students are at immediate risk (e.g. Child Protection issues)
- Liaises with parents when required.

#### The KLA Coordinator...

- Oversees the academic progress of all students in his/her faculty and works with the team of teachers to ensure quality learning outcomes
- Oversees student management issues that may arise within the faculty
- Liaises with parents when required.

#### The Assistant Principal...

- Oversees the welfare of all students in the College and works with Year Coordinators, KLA Coordinators, Homeroom teachers, counselling staff and outside agencies, where appropriate.
- Oversees more serious student management issues that may arise
- Liaises with the College Principal and parents when required.

#### The College Principal...

- Implements the NSSF whole school approach for student wellbeing in curriculum and in school procedures
- Adopts and implements Archdiocesan policies that are aligned with the NSSF
- Observes all legislative requirements and engages as necessary with external agencies in relation to student wellbeing
- Engages internal and/or external specialist advice about wellbeing related matters as required
- Works in partnership with CEO, parents and the school and broader Church community to achieve the purposes of this policy
- Ensures that staff have a working knowledge of government and system policies and procedures
- Responds promptly to any breach of this policy
- Works with staff, students and parents to achieve the best outcomes for students
- Liaises with the Regional Consultant and other Catholic Education Office staff when required.

#### The CEO is to...

- Provide a coherent policy framework
- Provide professional learning activities to school and CEO personnel to support this policy
- Resource support structures and personnel
- Monitor compliance with this policy through existing protocols.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES & DEFINITIONS**

Student Wellbeing	<p>Student Wellbeing is a student's level of satisfaction about the quality of their life at school. Optimal (or desirable) wellbeing is characterised by positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships with other students and teachers, resilience, and satisfaction with self and learning experiences at school. (Noble, McGrath, Roffey and Rowling 2008).</p> <p>In Sydney Catholic Schools this definition is underpinned with the values and beliefs of Catholic Education. The wellbeing of all students is at the heart of Catholic Education enabling a learning environment which provides for the spiritual, physical, emotional, cognitive and social wellbeing of its students and staff.</p>
Positive Education	Positive education is the scientific inquiry of the social-emotional skills, relationships, strengths and behaviours that contribute to student wellbeing and resilience in the school context and the school and classroom practices that

	contribute to positive, safe and supportive teaching and learning communities. (Noble & McGrath 2014).
Pastoral care	<p>Pastoral Care refers to the overall climate of care that exists within a school. It includes the policies, processes, programs and practices delivered at school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of the students.</p> <p>It provides a foundation for relationships between students and staff based on mutual respect. In short, Pastoral Care is an authentic expression of the vision and mission of the school.</p>
Pastoral Services	Pastoral Services refers to a range of services available within and beyond the school which support students and their families, teachers, school leadership teams and CEO staff. These services include counselling, debriefing, case management, education, advocacy and liaison, all of which foster a holistic approach to learning and teaching.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

### 8.1 Key documents

The key resource for this policy is the National Safe Schools Framework. It has a series of supporting resources. Links appear below.

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2011). *National Safe Schools Framework*. MCEECDYA.**

- a. The Framework (pdf version)

[http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/NSSFramework.pdf](http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/NSSFramework.pdf)

- b. Support Materials

<http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/teachers/nssf/index.html>

- c. Safe Schools Hub

<http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/>

- d. Schools Audit Tool and Plan

The resource manual with the audit tool can be found [here](#). This is a pdf version.