

St Mary's



Pastoral Care Policy

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St Mary's Pastoral Care Policy

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Our Belief's about Pastoral Care

The key to good teaching and learning at St Mary's Primary is the learning environment, and the quality of this environment is significantly determined by the human relationships within the school. Pastoral Care cannot be thought of in separate terms from the teaching and learning at St Mary's; it is a key determinant of successful learning.

Good Pastoral Care is exemplified by:

- quality teaching and learning
- appropriate student management
- high expectations of student performance
- teachers who take an interest in the lives of their students

At St Mary's we believe that Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and involves all members of our school community – students, teachers, parents, and all other adults who contribute to the well being of each student.

Pastoral Care is concerned with fostering students' self discipline. It aims to develop persons who are responsible and inner-directed, and capable of choosing freely in accordance with their conscience.

Pastoral Care should also help students to recognise that their fundamental freedoms and rights are reciprocated by responsibilities. It fosters an environment of mutual respect where the needs of each individual are catered for.

Student Management seeks to promote a respectful, secure environment where students can prosper. It is intrinsically related to the principles and values of the Gospel, and to the Christian vision of Pastoral Care.

Practices and procedures for student management at St Mary's are based upon restorative practices.

As a philosophy, Restorative Justice at St Mary's provides a framework of student management that moves away from the traditional punitive response, to one which, while still providing limits and consequences, looks for ways to repair and improve existing relationships.

St Mary's aims to provide pastoral care through the following strategies;

- The continual focus on Gospel values which are actively promoted at a classroom and whole school level.
- The Restorative Justice Program which is used as the basis of our student management policy along with a clearly established set of rights, rules and responsibilities. Restorative Justice has the following focus areas;
 1. Focus on specific behaviours or incidents without blaming.
 2. Draw out who was effected and how where they affected.

3. Direct questions towards problem. Solve what needs to happen to make things right.
- The Buddy System which comprises both Year 6 & K and Year 5 & Year 1. The senior students in our school are given a younger buddy. They work together on occasional classroom activities and share lunch together once a term. These buddies are placed in the same Peer Support Groups and Daily P.E Groups.
 - Peer Support Groups where Year 6 students are given the responsibility of leading multi age groups in Peer Support Sessions as they cover topics relating to Anti Bullying Program and positive relationships at school and in the wider community.
 - Peer Led Daily P.E where Year 6 students are given the responsibility of leading multi age groups in a variety of fitness and ball skills building activities.
 - Our participation in community visits to Holy Spirit, Lourdes Hospital, Oznam Villa, Orana Gardens, Dubbo Nursing Home, Westhaven and Bracken House. All of the grades at St Mary's are assigned a community organisation who they visit at least once a year. This is greatly appreciated by the residents at each of these organisations and the students enjoy the feeling of giving something to other members of our community.
 - Children are rewarded for their positive contributions to the school community in a number of ways.
 - Merit awards
 - Student of the Week awards
 - Citizenship Awards which are given out each term
 - Mary's Birthday Awards
 - Children can also be given house points for good behaviour in the playground or in the classroom. These points are tallied each term with a morning tea as a reward for members of the winning house. Points for the whole year are tallied to determine the winner of the Annette Storer Shield, perpetual trophy named to honour a long serving and much loved former teacher and principal.
 - Children who are experiencing problems which require counselling can be referred to Centacare under a program initiated by the CEO in 2008. Staff who are in need of counselling or critical incident debriefing also have access to the services available at Centacare.

Rationale

St Mary's School motto is "Christ is My Light." The students are encouraged to reflect, in their behaviour and attitude, the example set by Jesus. The philosophy underpinning this policy is centred on the Gospel values & Restorative Justice. The uniqueness of each person is acknowledged and encouragement will be given to all to achieve self-discipline.

We believe each person has rights and with these rights come responsibilities. So, central to this policy is the area of positive reinforcement as well as the welfare and discipline levels. Procedures are set in place where we acknowledge students for following school rules and displaying acceptable behaviour. These procedures combined with levels of consequences for inappropriate behaviour, provide a balanced and supportive approach to the management of student behaviour that encourages students to develop self-confidence and a sense of responsibility.

The enhancement of a school climate that encourages students to develop a positive self-esteem, own their own behaviour and respect the rights of others provides the focus for this policy.

The pastoral care of all students is paramount. The care and welfare of all students is implicit in this policy. The discipline of students will be achieved effectively with compassion, understanding and justice and taking into account each student's individual needs, background and maturity level.

A unified whole school approach characterised by a common understanding and language is the key to the success and fulfilment of this policy. The support and cooperation of staff and parents/guardians is paramount.

Aims of the Pastoral Care Policy

As members of the St Mary's community we aim to:

- See ourselves as a faith community, not just an educational institution, and as a Catholic community we personally accept and put into practice our beliefs.
- Provide Pastoral Care within the school community that contributes to creating a "Christ-centred learning community" that features "trusting relationships in a caring and supportive environment" as outlined in our school vision statement.
- Provide Pastoral Care within the school community which fosters supportive and positive experiences between families, teachers and students.
- Provide Pastoral Care within the school community which adheres to the principles of the Restorative Justice approach.
- Provide Pastoral Care, which has the individual as its focus and reflects support, encouragement and care as shown and experienced in our gospel based community.
- Provide Pastoral Care which enables all to grow, to be affirmed in their dignity and worth as persons, to appreciate themselves and to develop skills in building personal relationships.
- Provide Pastoral Care which is based on mutual trust and respect, highlighting justice and dignity for all and is owned and carried out in genuine faith.
- See Pastoral Care as a 'two-way' process – both in giving and receiving.
- Be tolerant of differences and aware of those with special needs.
- Acknowledge and respect the parents as the primary educators of their children in faith and life.
- Ensure that discipline at St. Mary's is based on responsible behaviour, respect for self and others and the care of property and the environment.

Student Management

St Mary's student management practices seek to promote respectful, secure and healthy environments in which students can achieve success.

At St Mary's, each community member values each individual and are therefore committed to upholding the rights of each person. Students must learn to accept that they are responsible for their behaviour and its effects on others in the classroom and school environment.

St Mary's management of students is consistent with the 'Child Protection Code of Professional Conduct for Employees in Catholic Schools' and 'Professional Teaching Standards, Institute of Teachers.'

Teachers use their own professional judgement when dealing with Student Management issues, depending on the issue and the students involved. This discretion and judgement ensures teachers take ownership of the procedures outlined in this policy.

To assist in the implementation of this policy the school community has adopted the following protocols:

- Establish clearly the rights, rules and responsibilities.
- Adhere to the Principles of Restorative Justice in our dealings with students.
- Intentionally minimise embarrassment and hostility.
- Maximise student's choice over behaviour.
- Be aware that our expectations affect our behaviour as classroom facilitators.
- Follow up and follow through (consistency).
- Utilise wide support (peers, executive and parents).

The achievement of these aims depends upon careful planning, which must take account of three related aspects of discipline:

Preventative action:	action to prevent unnecessary disruptions.
Corrective action:	action to correct problems when they arise.
Supportive action:	action to employ support procedures and processes.

(Further details can be found in Discipline Policy)

The Principles of Restorative Justice are:

1. **Promote a sense of others. Foster awareness in the student** of how others have been affected.
2. **Avoid scolding or lecturing.** This often results in the student reacting defensively. It distracts them from noticing other people's feelings.
3. **All behaviour has meaning: Involve the student actively.** Instead of simply doling out punishment, which the student is expected to accept passively, in a Restorative intervention the student is asked to speak. They face and listen to those who have been affected by their inappropriate behaviour. They help decide how to repair the harm and make a commitment to this. The student is held accountable.
4. **Accept ambiguity.** Often fault is unclear and people can agree to accept the ambiguous situation.
5. **Separate the deed from the doer.** We can recognise a student's worth, their virtues and accomplishments while disapproving of their wrongdoing.
6. **See every serious instance of wrongdoing and conflict as an opportunity for learning.** Negative incidents can be used constructively to build empathy and a sense of community in the hope that there is a reduction of negative incidents in the future.

7. **Restorative practices must be systemic, not situational.** Every attempt on an individual level to use these principles needs to be well supported by the broader system.
8. **Quality Relationships Promotes Quality Learning.**

Rights and Responsibilities

The following fundamental rights are important in our school. With these rights come also responsibilities.

1. I have the Right to be treated with dignity and respect.

I have the responsibility to

- ❖ Treat others politely and with respect.
- ❖ To respect the authority of staff, parents and community members in and out of school.
- ❖ Listen considerately to others.
- ❖ Express my point of view politely and at the right place and time. If necessary I should be able to disagree without being disagreeable.

2. I have the Right to be safe.

I have the responsibility to make the school a safe place by:

- ❖ Not threaten, hit or hurt anyone in anyway.
- ❖ Not place others or myself in a dangerous situation.
- ❖ Keep within supervised and secure areas of the school and its grounds.
- ❖ Not bring dangerous objects to school.
- ❖ Tell a responsible person about any dangerous situation.
- ❖ Tell a responsible person if another student is being bullied.

3. I have the Right to learn according to my ability.

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Not interrupt others while they are learning.
- ❖ Not to ridicule others for expressing their opinions and feelings.
- ❖ Accept the way that each person learns.
- ❖ Seek and offer assistance when needed.
- ❖ Do my best at all times.
- ❖ Cooperate with all teachers and staff.
- ❖ Encourage other students positively.
- ❖ Be punctual and have correct equipment.
- ❖ Allow lessons to proceed without disruption
- ❖ Keep up to date with all work.

4. I have the Right to expect that my property will be safe.

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Take good care of property and not steal, damage or destroy the property belonging to others or the school.
- ❖ To hand in property that I find.

5. I have the Right to a pleasant, clean and well-maintained environment

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Care for the school environment, to keep it neat, clean and to place rubbish in bins.
- ❖ To report and not touch any syringes or broken glass found near or on school grounds.

6. I have the Right to personal privacy.

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Respect the privacy and property of others.

7. I have the Right to protection from discrimination.

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Accept others as they are and to report discrimination to a responsible person.

8. I have the Right to Practice my Faith.

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Respect others when they pray.
- ❖ Be reverent, when visiting St Brigid's Church, during Mass or school liturgies.
- ❖ Participate in school and class prayer.
- ❖ Behave in a Christian way to others.

9. I have the Right to Parish and Community Support.

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Behave in a way that will bring credit to the school.
- ❖ Wear my school uniform with pride in and out of school.
- ❖ To conduct myself with courtesy and consideration for others and use acceptable language, travelling to and from school, on excursions, at sporting events and social activities.

10. I have the Right to be informed of what is happening in the school.

I have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Listen attentively at assemblies.
- ❖ Take newsletters and other notes home and return replies promptly.

Award Structures

It is important that excellent behaviour is recognised and affirmative encouragement is given to all students to reinforce the positive contributions they make to the safety and well being of the school. The Award Structures are a vital component of this Policy and encompass major awards, minor awards and the House Award System.

Major Awards

Citizenship Award

The Citizenship Award is given to one student from each class at the whole school assembly at the end of each term. Selection process is as follows:

1. Each class teacher nominates one student two weeks prior to whole school assembly, for demonstrating such qualities as good citizenship and service to the school community, responsibility, positive attitude to work, initiative, fairness and excellent behaviour in all aspects of school life.
2. Teachers to ensure balance for gender and previous Citizenship Awardees in the current school year and notify Assistant Principal of student to receive award.
3. Assistant Principal to coordinate preparations for presentation at whole school assembly.
 - Students to receive Award and book voucher.
 - Parents invited.
 - Name published in newsletter

Student of the Week Award

The class teacher presents the Student of the Week Award to one student from each Stage at the stage or whole school assembly. Criteria for selection includes, for example, displaying outstanding behaviour and excellent work habits, effort or achievement. Student's name published in newsletter.

Mary's Birthday Awards.

An appropriate individual award is awarded to each student on the 8 September. This award is to focus on positive behaviours demonstrated by each student. These awards are presented in class.

Minor Awards

As well as the Citizenship and Student of the week Awards, a number of other awards, certificates and recognitions of student achievement are also used to help promote an atmosphere of acceptance, encouragement and support for the endeavours of the students.

Recognitions:

Class Presentations

- Positive comments, stickers, classroom awards, visit another class to display work
- Reporting to Executive for display of work or commendation for behaviour
- Special mention at assembly or in newsletter.
- Reporting to Principal with display of work for Principal's Award sticker.

Stage Assemblies

Birthday Awards

Presented to children who have celebrated a birthday in the week of the assembly. Children at assembly sing 'Happy Birthday' after presentation.

Merit Awards

Presented to children who deserve recognition for any worthwhile endeavour, displaying excellent behaviour or achievement/effort/attitude in class work.

House Certificates –

Presented to students who receive ten House points as part of the House Award System.

Whole School Presentations

Participation Awards

Presented for achievement in special events. For example: Credit, Distinction or High Distinction in Australasian Schools Competitions, Maths Olympiad, Les Irvine Debating Competition, Diocesan, Polding or State Representation in Sport, PSSA awards, etc.

Division Champions

A medal presented to the boy and girl Champions following the Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals for the highest individual point scorers in the senior, 11years and Junior sections.

Age Champions

In Cross Country a medal presented to the boy and girl Age Champion.

Sporting Shields -

Athletics: Harvey Cup - House that achieves the greatest number of points for the carnival.

St Mary's Staff Marching Award – Marching Shield to House for best marching in the March Past;
House Cheering Shield donated by Blanch Family to House with most points for cheering at the carnival.

Porter Family Encouragement Award – Shield presented to a boy and girl for positive effort and attitude. Each child also receives small trophy to keep.

Swimming: St Mary's School House Point Score Swimming Shield to House which achieves the greatest number of points for the carnival.

House Cheering Shield donated by Blanch Family to House with most points for cheering at the carnival.

The Walkom Family Perpetual Shield Swimming Encouragement Award - Shield presented to a boy and girl for positive effort and attitude. Each child also receives small trophy to keep.

Cross Country: Brophy Cup – House with highest points score.

House Shield –

Presented to the House at the end of each term to the House with the most points as part of the House Award System.

House Award Systems

House Award Point System is to recognise students for demonstrating positive behaviour, schoolwork, effort and attitude to build House spirit across the school.

STEP 1

- Each class to have a “Class House Award Chart.” Teacher to give a point (e.g. tick, stamp) each time a student displays appropriate behaviour (approximately 1 or 2 per class per day).
- House points marked on classroom chart.
- In the playground, if children exhibit exemplary behaviour the teacher on duty gives them a school stamp. The stamp will be converted to house points on the classroom chart.

STEP 2

- After ten house points, student to be eligible for a certificate in House colours.
- Teachers to be responsible for writing own certificates and to be given to the Principal for signing.
- Certificates presented at Stage Assemblies.

STEP 3

- At the end of each term the Principal with the assistance of the Public Relations and Communications Committee tally and record points for each class.
- House Shield presented to the House with the most points and to be displayed in the front foyer of the school.
- The winning House and students to be acknowledged in the newsletter.

STEP 4

- In Terms 1-3 members of House receive special morning tea.
- In Week 8 Term 4 points tallied for whole year.
- House Shield presented to the House with the most points.
- Special reward given to students in House e.g. special luncheon. Shield to be placed alongside the current sporting shields in the foyer.

List of Possible Behaviours to consider for Awarding of a House Point

* In the Classroom: -

- Being helpful and thoughtful towards others.
- Undertaking work to the best of one’s ability
- Being neat and tidy in work presentation
- Working quietly
- Obeying the class rules
- Displaying efforts to improve work and attitude
- Being attentive and patient
- Speaking clearly
- Listening to instructions
- Being courteous

* In the playground

- Being helpful and thoughtful towards others.

- Showing good sportsmanship.
- Obeying the playground rules.
- Being courteous.

*

At class lines and assemblies

- Listening and obeying teacher's instructions immediately.
- Following correct procedures without being asked.

The St Mary's community is where students, staff, parents and friends and the wider parish all contribute in their own way to building a strong and supportive community where all members feel valued.

Staff Pastoral Care

Staff pastoral needs are considered in the following ways in our school community;

- Celebrating special occasions. (morning teas)
- Supporting staff members through trying and sad times in their lives as appropriate (ie. cards of encouragement, prayer).
- Staff are encouraged to develop and enjoy positive and supportive staff relations.
- Casual Staff are welcomed and supported through the use of organised outlines of the day (class) and our Casual Teacher Policy (School) and by other staff reaching out to support and advising relief staff as appropriate.
- Provision of support in the teaching process and role (executive teachers, grade partners, mentor teachers for new teachers, informal sharing and support).
- Through the support of and adherence to policies and routines and by every staff member accepting the responsibility appropriate to their role and position.
- Social events are organised for staff (birthday lunches, Christmas dinner, farewell presentations, staff drinks etc.)
- Specialist attention at Centacare is available to provide support and counselling for staff members who are experiencing difficulties and challenges at school.

Generally, staff contribute to the Pastoral Care in the school community in the way they interact with one another, the students and families and through their Christian Witness and kind thoughts and actions. Their respect of parents demonstrated through the professional way they communicate with them and their professionalism and commitment to the all-inclusive nature of teaching/working in a Catholic Primary School all enhance the level of Pastoral Care offered in our school community.

Family Pastoral Care

Family pastoral needs are considered in the following ways in our school community;

- Parents are invited to join the school Parents and Friends' Association.
- Parents are invited to be involved in the school as parent helpers.
- Opportunities for Parent Development are provided when possible to support parents in their role as parents.
- Parents are recognised in their role as the prime faith educators of their children and with the support of the parish, the school endeavours to empower parents in this role.
- Communication with parents is as meaningful and effective as we can make it (ie. weekly newsletters, information letters, parent/teacher meetings and interviews, parent information meetings and/or handouts, sacramental parent meetings, informal chats and school communication diaries).

- The school makes every effort to support and assist families in times of crisis or tragedy or when support and assistance is needed.
- Appreciation demonstrated through the annual Parent Helper Morning Tea.
- School celebrations (Sacraments, sporting events, liturgies, Year 5 fund raising evenings, Year 6 Night of the Notables, School concerts, Graduation BBQ)

Families support the Pastoral Care in the school community in the way they interact with one another, the staff and the students and their families. Their Christian Witness and kind thoughts and actions, their respectful interactions with staff and their support of school polices and routines all enhance the level of Pastoral Care offered in our school community.

Parish Pastoral Care

St Mary's Primary Catholic School is part of the Parish of St Brigid's Dubbo and as such enjoys a special and mutually supportive relationship with the parish.

- School community members are encouraged to integrate into the life of the parish (Altar Server Training, School Masses, Sacramental Programme).
- Welcoming and supportive relationships are enjoyed with our parish priests who contribute to the life of the school both formally and informally.
- Parish news is regularly included in the weekly newsletter
- Parish Priests are invited to attend staff social functions, staff drinks and school functions.
- Stronger links with the parish are established for parents through the Sacramental Preparation Programmes for Reconciliation (Year 2), Eucharist (Year 3) and Confirmation (Year 6)

The St Brigid's Parish support the Pastoral Care in the school community in the way our priests play an active role in the life of the school. The Parish sacramental programs give all students the opportunity to experience the different faith milestones through the sacraments and reinforce the importance of the wider parish community of which we are all members.