



**ST CARTHAGE'S**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL LISMORE

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Author:	Assistant Director, Mission Services

# Whole-School Approach to Pastoral Care Guidelines

## PURPOSE

Pastoral care founded in Jesus Christ and the Gospel is imperative in that every student we serve in Catholic schools be enabled to achieve the fullness of life (John 10:10). Pastoral care is at the heart of how we relate to one another in a Catholic school and should be reflected in every action to promote and enhance physical, social, emotional, psychological, intellectual and spiritual wellness. Pastoral care seeks to promote wholeness, resilience and inner strength. As such, wellbeing is viewed as an outcome of pastoral care.

Pastoral care is brought to life in a Catholic School through the actions, attitudes and interactions taken by its leaders and community members. It applies across all dimensions of Catholic education and is centred on relationships and recognition, involving the key elements of caring for, respecting, and valuing each person's inherent human dignity.

The purpose of these guidelines is to confirm St Carthage's Primary School commitment to promoting a whole school, student centred approach to pastoral care that enhances student wellbeing by developing a positive ethos and culture where students feel cared for, valued and respected.

## APPLICATION

These guidelines apply to all employees in schools, Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools (DLCS) and any related entities under the administration of the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited (DLCSL).

They also apply to contractors and volunteers.

These guidelines apply to all students at St Carthage's Primary School and includes students that may visit or attend classes/activities from other schools.

Employees, contractors and volunteers are to make themselves familiar with the requirements of this document and ensure they comply with the behaviours and obligations outlined within it.

## GUIDELINES

### 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **Continuum of Care** means the different types of interventions delivered in varying ways along a spectrum of need to ensure student wellbeing is promoted and enhanced.
- 1.2 **Pastoral Care** means actions taken within a school by its leaders and community members to promote and enhance student wellbeing of a personal, spiritual, physical, social, emotional or psychological nature. It applies across all dimensions of Catholic education and is centred on relationships and recognition, and is grounded in the foundational actions of caring for, respecting, and valuing the human dignity of all.
- 1.3 **Student Wellbeing** means wellbeing experienced by the student physically, socially, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Key elements of wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours, and personal resilience. Student wellbeing is an outcome of a school's pastoral care approach.
- 1.4 **Whole School Approach to Pastoral Care** means a positive and flexible process that is developed in consultation with students, teachers and families. It is designed based on the current and future context of the school and can include clear processes and a continuum of care to address wellbeing needs at a whole school, classroom and individual level.

### 2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 These principles are considered as best practice in whole school pastoral care. A whole school pastoral care approach is enacted by:
  - a) Living the **school's vision and values** to enable all students to achieve the fullness of life;
  - b) Intentionally developing a culture of **positive relationships** where everyone feels cared for, valued and respected;
  - c) Recognising that **learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked**, and that their development are parallel, integrated, complementary processes;
  - d) Effectively collaborating, developing and communicating **priorities** for the provision of pastoral care;
  - e) Developing, implementing and reviewing **clear systems and structures** for the provision of effective pastoral care;
  - f) Collaboratively developing a whole school **continuum of care** for promoting the inclusion and wellbeing of all students;
  - g) A **data-informed approach** that includes regular monitoring and reviewing of the school capacity to address the wellbeing needs of all students;
  - h) Identifying and providing **clarity around roles and responsibilities** of every member of the school community to ensure all students experience a culturally safe, inclusive and respectful environment;
  - i) Identifying opportunities to **build the capacity of all staff** to enact the continuum of care and the school's wellbeing priorities;
  - j) Identifying, promoting and utilising effective community and **external wellbeing support mechanisms**;
  - k) An active seeking of, and incorporation of, **students' perspectives** about learning and wellbeing; and
  - l) Working closely and **collaboratively with parents/carers** and the wider school community in promoting the wellbeing of students.

### 3. GUIDELINES

### 3.1 **School's Mission and Values**

Enabling our students to experience the fullness of life (John 10:10).

At St Carthage's Primary School, we provide a quality faith-filled education enabling students to be inspired to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

At St Carthage's Primary School, we actively promote the values of:

- The dignity and uniqueness of each person
- A love of learning
- Generosity, gratitude and service
- Building respectful relationships, valuing and embracing all.

### 3.2 **Relationships**

At St Carthage's Primary School we believe that positive staff-student relationships have a significant effect on student wellbeing. Positive relationships are built through ongoing interactions, active listening and respect. A positive staff-student relationship occurs when students feel cared for, valued and respected. This is the responsibility of all staff in the school community.

At St Carthage's Primary School we intentionally foster positive relationships by:

- a) Greeting students by name where possible and having intentional conversations
- b) Incorporating students' interests into the curriculum and classroom activities
- c) Using positive reinforcement to acknowledge and celebrate student achievements
- d) Showing respect for each student's cultural background and individuality
- e) Treating all students with fairness and consistency
- f) Providing opportunities for students to express their thoughts and opinions

### 3.3 **Partnering with students**

Actively seeking and incorporating students' perspectives about learning and wellbeing is essential to implementing pastoral care at St Carthage's Primary School. By working in partnership with students we are able to develop agency, promote inclusion, cultural safety and foster belonging.

Partnering with students is essential to implementing pastoral care priorities at St Carthage's and student-driven change is a process of collaboration, shared decision making and action to achieve mutual goals. This includes actively seeking and incorporating students' perspectives about learning and wellbeing. By working in partnership with students, staff and the broader community, we are able to promote inclusion and foster belonging.

At St Carthage's Primary School we actively partner with students by:

- a) Gaining student voice through surveys and interviews, e.g Tell Them From Me
- b) Providing learning experiences and opportunities based on student voice
- c) Developing peer support programs to help foster the wellbeing of younger students (K/6 and Year 1/5 buddy program)

### 3.4 **Partnering with Parents/Carers**

St Carthage's Primary School recognises the integral role families play in their children's education, including in relation to wellbeing. Families are the first and most important educators of their children. It is important to collaborate as partners with families to enhance student learning and wellbeing.

At St Carthage's Primary School we partner with families in pastoral care by:

- a) Hosting events to include parents:
  - a. Parent Information Evening (Term 1)
  - b. Parent Teacher Interviews (Term 1, 2 & 4)
  - c. Open Classrooms
  - d. Community events - Grandparents' Day, Mother's Day Breakfast , Father's Day BBQ, Welcome BBQ, Christmas Concert
- b) Establishing consistent and open communication channels between the school and parents (Compass Connect)
- c) Organising workshops and seminars focused on topics such as mental health, positive parenting, and supporting children's emotional well-being
- d) Inform parents of resources such as counseling services, community support groups, or educational materials that can support their child's well-being.
- e) Use of the Family Connect Worker where appropriate.
- f) Communicating success/achievements to parents via Facebook.

### 3.5 **Data-Informed Approach to Student Wellbeing**

To ensure positive student wellbeing outcomes a data-informed approach is required to align the needs of students with an effective pastoral care approach.

At St Carthage's Primary School we monitor student wellbeing through data such as attendance rates, behaviour incidents and learning days lost due to student disciplinary absences, academic results and staff observations.

At St Carthage's Primary School we measure student wellbeing by using:

- a) Tell Them From Me Data (TTFM) that is gathered from student, family and teacher surveys.
- b) Whole school attendance data. This includes monitoring and auditing attendance rates, as well as the attendance risk rating of students.
- c) Compass Behaviour Data. The Executive analyses whole-school data on major and minor behaviour incidents, including trends by year level and the frequency of incidents for specific students.
- d) Tracking data and information gathered from wellbeing support requests.

### 3.6 **School Priorities**

The St Carthage's Primary School community prioritises and sets goals for improvement in the area of student wellbeing through the discernment of reliable and valid data. During this process, the school will identify where the priorities are situated on the continuum of care, and ascertain the most appropriate intervention. The school also provides the required professional learning for staff so the strategy can be implemented with fidelity. Any school pastoral care priority will need to be evaluated and reviewed, in order to determine the effects, outputs, and outcomes of the wellbeing approach.

Our three (3) year pastoral care priorities are:

- PC1. Develop a whole school Pastoral Care Plan that is evident in the school's policies, curriculum, and practices, and is a shared responsibility of all partners.
- PC2. Establish strategic and sustainable partnerships (with community support and resources ) to foster student well-being outcomes.
- PC3. Co-create (develop and build) physical environments/spaces that respond to the unique and diverse interests and sensory needs of students.

*2024 Annual Improvement Goal/s for Pastoral Care Domain:*

- *Investigate ways to provide playground and break out spaces that meet the emotional, social, behavioural and sensory needs of all students.*
- *This goal aligns to; PC3. Co-create (develop and build) physical environments/spaces that respond to the unique and diverse interests and sensory needs of students.*
- *A whole school Pastoral Care Plan is developed which reflects the voice and agency of students, family and staff*

#### **4. PASTORAL CARE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES**

##### **4.1 Continuum of Care**

All students are supported through a multi-tiered continuum of care that includes primary prevention, early intervention and individual student support. A continuum of care is based on the current and future context of the school and includes clear processes and a multi-tiered response to addressing needs at a whole school, classroom and individual level. Schools provide this care for students through the delivery of practices, programs and services (interventions) by teachers, school staff and specialist staff across the continuum.

##### **4.2 Primary Prevention**

Primary prevention are whole-school prevention approaches that are proactive, and aim to establish and maintain safe, respectful learning environments for all students. These learning environments include classrooms, playgrounds, online platforms and should encourage good mental health, resilience and prosocial behaviour.

The agreed primary prevention approaches to promote wellbeing at St carthage's Primary School are:

- a) Staff prioritise building relationships with their students
- b) Staff foster positive relationships by promoting acceptance and respect
- c) Staff establish clear and consistent expectations and consequences through the implementation of agreed practices
- d) Students are provided with the opportunity to attend wellbeing workshops (i.e Headspace, Safe on Socials)
- e) Grade level meetings to teach expectations and support wellbeing at an age appropriate level.

##### **4.3 Early Interventions**

Early interventions are targeted approaches to strengthen resilience and reduce risk for some students. The school has a range of initial responses and approaches to recognise the early signs that a student, or group of students' wellbeing is at risk. They respond by supporting their specific needs before there is a significant deterioration.

At St Carthage's Primary School we:

- a) Encourage staff and parents (through the classroom teacher) to use the Wellbeing Support Compass Chronicle. This will allow them to identify and communicate specific student wellbeing concerns to the Wellbeing Team. The Wellbeing Team will then be able to provide appropriate intervention and support as early as practicable. The possible early interventions include:

- 1) Season's for Growth
- 2) Get Growing
- 3) Art Groups to support social and emotional wellbeing
- 4) Lunchtime groups
- 5) Stormbirds
- 6) Disaster Education, Resilience and Wellbeing Sessions

- b) Monitor and analyse minor and major behaviour incidents to identify pastoral care concerns.
- c) Classroom teachers communicate with parents early when there are wellbeing concerns.

#### 4.4 **Interventions**

Interventions are processes to respond to individual students who are experiencing barriers to learning. This support is designed to support students to engage positively in education. Intervention may include students with highly complex mental health or challenging behaviours, who need a comprehensive system of support that is overseen by a school leader. At St Carthage's Primary School we:

- a) Use the Request for Wellbeing Support Compass Chronicle for staff and parents (through the classroom teacher) to identify and communicate student specific wellbeing issues to the Pastoral Care Team in order to link appropriate student specific supports.
- b) Utilise the school counsellor who may assist in providing evidence informed intervention that follows a short term therapeutic model.
- c) refer families to Family Connect Worker (Social Futures) for support
- d) Utilise the DLCS staff and process for significant disruptions to regular school involvement. For example, Attendance Improvement Plans, Risk Assessment Management Plans, Return to School from Acute Mental Health process.

#### 4.5 **Postvention**

Postvention refers to restorative practices as a means of developing collective responsibility for wellbeing and problem-solving strategies to repair harm associated with incidents. Postvention approaches aim to restore positive relationships by providing a whole school environment that encourages reintegration through supportive, relational school practices.

At St Carthage's Primary School we:

- a) Implement restorative practices to mend relationships that have been affected, including those impacted by behavior. After any challenges or disagreements, staff follow a planned approach to repair relationships with students.
- b) Utilise a range of bullying interventions and supports; including the CO-LATE Model, Support Group Method and the Method of Shared Concern.

#### 4.6 **Pastoral Care Team**

The pastoral care team plays an important role in planning and implementing school strategies and processes that support the wellbeing of all students across the continuum of care. The school has a pastoral care team that meets every two weeks of term time to:

- a) Prioritise requests for support by utilising the Request for Wellbeing Support Compass Chronicle.
- b) Invest time in understanding the services available in the local region and build relationships with local service providers to support the development of referral pathways.
- c) Communicate clearly with staff using existing structures such as staff meetings.
- d) Raise awareness among the school community about the importance of promotion, prevention and early intervention through a variety of modes.
- e) Monitor and measure the success of current priorities.
- f) Invest time in their own professional learning to best meet the school's needs.

- g) Work with staff to build their capacity to implement approaches with fidelity.

The pastoral care team consists of Principal, Assistant Principal Mission, Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching, Inclusion Teacher, Student Wellbeing Officer, School Counsellor.

#### 4.7 **Request for Support**

The school has a clear process for staff to request wellbeing support for a student. At St Carthage's Primary School we have a pathway for the school to follow once a student has been identified. This pathway is shared with the school staff and families.

Our referral pathway for urgent wellbeing concerns asks teachers and leadership to discuss the matter with the Principal as soon as possible. This will then be documented and appropriate action taken.

Our referral pathway for non-urgent wellbeing concerns asks teachers and leadership to complete the Compass Wellbeing Request for Support Chronicle, which are discussed at Pastoral Care meetings and appropriate action is appended to each request .

For urgent or issues that relate to child protection, staff will communicate these issues to Leadership in an appropriate time and manner.

### 5. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff share responsibility for the pastoral care of students, however some roles have specific responsibilities and require specific clarity of purpose.

#### 5.1 **School Leadership**

School leadership has the responsibility to:

- a) Play an active role in building a positive learning and wellbeing environment where the whole school community feels included, connected, safe and respected;
- b) Ensure the school has clear processes in place for requests for the provision of support for the wellbeing of all students; and
- c) Ensure the school has an identified pastoral care team that actively uses data and oversees requests for support and gains student, parent and staff voice to effectively implement the schools continuum of care.

#### 5.2 **Students**

Students have the responsibility to:

- a) Positively contribute to a safe, supportive and inclusive learning community;
- b) Follow school expectations, policies, procedures and guidelines;
- c) Seek help and report student wellbeing and safety concerns for themselves and others; and
- d) Actively contribute to their school being a culturally safe environment.

#### 5.3 **Teachers and Staff**

Teachers and staff have the responsibility to:

- a) Promote a safe, supportive, respectful and inclusive learning environment that enables all students to thrive;
- b) Request support for students in need, through existing referral pathways within the school;
- c) Understand their duty of care and accountability in regard to legislation;

- d) Foster positive relationships with students in order to maximise wellbeing and learning outcomes;
- e) Work in partnership with students to promote individual growth and achieve their goals;
- f) Involve students in decision-making as they have a unique perspective on what it is like to be a pupil at their school. Involving students can create meaningful change and better academic outcomes, as well as facilitate a sense of empowerment and inclusion;
- g) Maintain high expectations for all students;
- h) Work in partnership with parents/carers to build resilience and promote a positive sense of self for each student; and
- i) Ensure a culturally safe environment.

#### **5.4 Parents and Carers**

Parents and Carers have the responsibility to:

- a) Work collaboratively with schools to support the wellbeing of their student and the wider school community; and
- b) Communicate their child's wellbeing and learning needs in a timely manner.

#### **5.5 School Counsellors**

School counsellors have the responsibility to:

- a) Adhere to the CSO school counsellor expectations document;
- b) Create and maintain positive relationships with students to support their wellbeing;
- c) Draw on their knowledge and skills to promote student wellbeing across the school through evidence-informed practices;
- d) Clearly communicate with school leadership any concerns; and
- e) Communicate their caseload with the school Line Manager and negotiate priorities.

#### **5.6 Student Wellbeing Officers**

Student wellbeing officers have the responsibility to:

- a) To foster the holistic wellbeing of all students; and
- b) Work within the scope of the National School Wellbeing Program and under the direction of the pastoral care team.
- c) Clearly communicate with their Line Manager any concerns; and
- d) Communicate their work priorities with the school Line Manager.
- e) Analyse data and communicate information to the Pastoral Care Team that relates to student wellbeing (i.e behaviour chronicles and wellbeing support requests).
- f) Organise and implement small group Social and Emotional intervention groups (such as Stormbirds and Seasons for Growth).
- g) Facilitate lunchtime clubs and support groups as well as wellbeing walks and check ins.



## **ENQUIRIES**

Assistant Director, Mission Services

Lead, Pastoral Care

## **RELATED DOCUMENTATION**

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore: The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values

Child Safeguarding Policy

Inclusive Practices Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Responding to Concerns about Problematic Sexualised Behaviour of Children and Young People  
(Primary)

Responding to Concerns about Problematic Sexualised Behaviour of Children and Young People  
(Secondary)

Student Anti-Bullying Prevention and Response Procedures

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*

**Attachment One: [PBS Plan](#)**

**Attachment Two: [Attendance Plan](#)**