

# K-12 Pastoral Care Statement 2021

## Rationale

God's word, as revealed in the Bible, is the authority for living and learning in each Lutheran school and ECS. Its central message is that of the gospel, the good news that our acceptance by God does not depend on our own worth or achievements but on his unconditional commitment to us as evidenced in the life and death of Jesus. Lutherans believe that through the process of Christian education God's Spirit is active in the lives of the community leading children and families to know and trust God.

In a Lutheran school each student is seen as a unique person created by God. He made them and loves them and provides each of them with dignity and worth. All of them have their own talents and needs as well as the potential to live useful and fulfilled lives in the world.

Lutherans believe that all positive knowledge and learning is a great gift of God for the growth and welfare of human beings. Each school considers it important to develop a spirit of service in its students so that their lives, studies, relationships, ambitions, values and attitudes they reflect a commitment to living useful lives for the good of others.

While there is a major focus on teaching and learning, at Eastside Lutheran College, the College strives to offer far more than that. When a family joins ELC they become part of a community which strives to be a secure place which offers warm, caring relationships and a safe environment. The College sees each student as being unique with their own particular gifts and needs. The approach is not to ask what students and their families can do for the College, but what the College can do for them.

As a Christian learning community the College aspires to provide a culture and ethos permeated by the core Lutheran values of love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation.

The College aims to:

1. Maintain and strengthen a K-12 perspective in all areas of Pastoral Care
2. Meet the requirements of the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF )
3. Promote and strengthen the 'whole child' approach - mind, body, spirit
4. Provide students with a sense of connection, significance, affirmation as well as a feeling of 'being known and loved'.
5. Grow a vision for the individual student and provide opportunities for personal development.
6. Ensure, to the best of our ability, that all people are safe and secure within the College - physically, psychologically and spiritually.
7. Care for the whole community pastorally, providing systems for this to occur.
8. Communicate effectively with all stakeholders in pastoral care issues.
9. Provide effective transition procedure between year levels and sub-schools.
10. Provide effective staff welfare policies and procedures
11. Provide staff with effective training to enable them to care "pastorally" and effectively
12. Ensure that pastoral care factors are included in the interview process for new staff and at enrolment for new students/families.

## Principles

1. Foundational to the nature of pastoral care in our College is the belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), with the inherent dignity that this implies.
2. Respectful and cooperative school-family relationships provide an effective channel of pastoral care for students. The College and families share responsibility for developing and maintaining such relationships of trust, characterised by respect for the goodwill of the other and a willingness to engage collaboratively.

3. Student wellbeing is best achieved within an environment that is safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering, where diversity is respected and valued, where human rights and the common good are honoured, where inter-relationships are positive, where students experience connectedness and engagement, and where those experiencing difficulty or special need receive particular care and support.
4. Enhanced student wellbeing contributes significantly to improved student learning outcomes. Effective pastoral care is recognised as promoting the achievement of learning outcomes.
5. An effective whole school approach to pastoral care requires age-appropriate explicit skilling of students, and pastorally driven management of student behaviour through processes focused on both individual and community wellbeing, and on ensuring a just and reasonable balance of individual and community rights, needs and responsibilities.
6. Effective school-community partnerships offer opportunities for networks of pastoral care for students.

## **Dimensions and Distinctive Features of Pastoral Care**

The following dimensions and features of pastoral care are suggested from an analysis of current practice at Eastside Lutheran College:

- **Focus on the Whole Child**

A whole child is: intellectually active; physically, verbally, socially and academically competent; empathetic, kind, caring and fair; creative and curious; disciplined, self-directed and goal oriented; a critical thinker, confident; cared for and valued.

- **Quality of Relationships**

In the College's daily life, the ways in which people interact with each other greatly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being. The fostering of quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and support staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.

Teachers in particular set the tone and priority of pastoral care by their attitude, witness and example. Teachers need to be known as caring, compassionate adults who take a real interest in the lives of their students and who set appropriate boundaries within those teacher-student relationships.

Teachers must always remember that when relating to students, the use of any kind of physical coercion or humiliation is entirely inappropriate.

All staff at the College must always be aware that their interactions with students are based on a special trusting relationship, and that those relationships are open to intense scrutiny. Similarly, students need to clearly understand the role of College staff, particularly their teachers and support staff.

## **Service Learning**

At ELC, service learning promotes social-emotional and academic development through active engagement in community activities. It empowers students to think beyond themselves and to develop a commitment to serve others. In so doing, service learning builds connections with school and community and adds to the Pastoral Care capacity of the College.

Service learning at the College begins in Kindergarten as they engage with and oversee the recycling program of the College and continues through to the Senior College whereby students can participate in overseas volunteer campaigns as well as local and national initiatives.

The College actively seeks service-learning projects for all year levels, and it is an expectation that each year level is engaged in some form of service learning throughout the year.

## Pastoral programs

- Pastoral programs represent a specific and planned means of helping students to value themselves and to experience well-being. At the College, these programs include:
  - Sex Education Program
  - Social Skills Program
  - Cyber Education Program
  - Drug Education Program
  - Leadership Program
  - Student Voice Program
  - Drumming Program
  - SRC Council
  - Youth Group
  - Prayer group
  
- **Comprehensive and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning**

The provision of a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum is inextricably linked to the highest ideals of pastoral care. The College's curriculum is comprehensive and differentiated so that students gain the competence, confidence and right to participate in the cultural and productive life of society. Flexibility of timetabling and delivery always assists students to learn as does addressing the underlying principles of:

- how individual students learn
- improvement in the quality of teaching and learning
- fair and just assessment procedures.
- In developing curriculum that is responsive to students needs the College endeavours to redress disadvantage brought about by such factors as socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity.

## In the Curriculum pastoral care is particularly strengthened through:

- Health Studies
- Christian Studies
- Drama
- Vocational Education
- Work Studies
- Work Experience
- Outdoor Education
- Camps
- Primary Bush Experiences
- Extra Curricula Sport Teams
- Special Interest Groups (Pottery Group etc.)
- Young Leaders Program
- Outdoor Education
- Active Recreation
- Daily Fitness
- Duke of Edinburgh Program
- Christian Surfers Program
- Community Gardening
- Regis Aged Care regular visitation
- Service-Learning Programs

- **Supportive school-family relationships**

It is essential that relationships of trust, cooperation and partnership be developed between the College and the home. It is vital that College personnel always respect and are sensitive to, diverse cultural values and family structures. While pastoral care initiatives must respect the privacy of students' lives, many students and their families actively seek the College's support in times of crisis and instability. Within the limits of its resources and expertise, the College is committed to the total well-being of its students and their families and endeavours to provide support.

The College provides parenting advice and programs as the need arises in the Community and the Parents and Friends Association welcomes new families and provides social outlets for the College Community.

- **Formation in self-discipline and responsibility**

Pastoral care is vitally concerned with the fostering of 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.

The College Behaviour and Wellbeing Policies and school rules and expectations are intended to promote the good order of the Community, in a positive manner. They are supports for the fostering of self-discipline and responsibility, so that students progressively grow in their capacity to exercise moral judgement, democratic values and a concern for the common good.

- **Effective networks of care**

Pastoral care involves every member of the College community. A commitment to partnership and shared responsibility among staff, students, parents and other family constructs is an integral feature of pastoral care. There are many resources within the wider community which support pastoral care, including the St Peter's Lutheran Church Congregation Church groups who provide meals and other care for families in need.

The College Operates a daily healthy breakfast program and a share the dignity (for period poverty). These programs and daily fruit are free for all student of the College.

There are many indigenous students and students at the College has a strong Indigenous Program that includes Indigenous camps and cultural celebrations as well as drawing on Elders for consultation and to advise students.

- **Organisational structures**

All teachers at the College are provided with professional learning in teaching students with trauma and many are trained in 'mental health first aid' as well as teaching students who are gifted and with disabilities. All staff must complete the Lutheran Education Training 'Valuing Safe Communities' and have a working knowledge of the Disability Standard for Education 2005 (reviewed 2020).

The Teacher and Support Staff of the Integration Unit (The Billabong) is highly trained in working with students with disabilities and designs individual social skills programs for some students.

In the Primary School, the class teacher takes the primary responsibility for the daily pastoral care of students. In the Secondary School, Pastoral Care Teachers (PC) undertake this significant role. In the Senior Secondary School, this role is shared more broadly by teachers and Well Being personnel.

A Wellbeing Team operates K-12 and consists of five staff members – Two part time College Chaplains, the College Social Worker, the Director of Staff and Student Wellbeing and the Coordinator of Learning Support.

- **Counselling**

Personnel are designated to provide pastoral counselling for students, depending on the need of the students.

Day to day concerns and general subject/school related concerns can be addressed by the Class teacher in Primary School, PC teachers in Secondary School or the Wellbeing Team and Teachers in Senior School or generally by the relevant Coordinator or Lead Teacher. Other teachers, by nature of their rapport with particular students may be better able to provide pastoral care for certain students.

Pastoral Care and counselling needs that may require ongoing support are addressed by the Wellbeing Team. A student can be referred to the Wellbeing Team or can self-refer. The Wellbeing Team provides regular times for the students and parents to meet and talk through issues.

The College Social Worker provides small group social intervention with groups such as the Drumming Group, the Craft and Chat group, The Card Playing Group and the Colouring Group.

The College Social Worker and Chaplains provides interventions regarding a wide range of social, school and family issues that can impact negatively on engagement and learning, including:

- Social and Emotional Concerns
  - Grief and loss
- Mental health issues
  - Trauma, abuse and neglect
- Life transitions and family change
- Personal and social skill development, e.g. problem-solving, anger management
  - Bullying and anti-social behaviours
- Disability
  - Social relationships and supports
- Family issues
  - Family relationships and parenting
  - Family poverty
  - Family violence
  - Child abuse and neglect
  - Housing and transience
- Community and social supports
- Schooling issues
  - Home-school relationship.
  - Support for students with disabilities
  - Engagement and attendance

Students may also be referred to external Counselling support agencies by the Director of Staff and Student Wellbeing or the Learning Enrichment Coordinator. These agencies provide psychological counselling and or educational psychological services.

The College has an excellent relationship with and utilizes the services of some private Hobart pediatricians and psychologists as well as Clare House, Headspace, The Link, Mission Australia and Anglicare. Life Without Barriers and Catholic Care also work in partnership with the College with students in Out of Home Care.

## **Statement Scope**

This statement has important implications for all areas of the College. Since every area of the College has students, families or staff members involved, there will be a pastoral aspect to what takes place. This orientation helps shape our College culture in a very positive and Godly way.

- Policies that significantly contribute to Pastoral Care:
  - Attendance Policy
  - Code of Conduct
  - Grievances and Complaints Policy and Procedures
  - Managing Student Behaviour Policies
  - Evacuation Procedures (and Lockdown Procedures)
  - Excursion Policies
  - Home School Communications
  - First Aid Policy
  - Supervision Policy
  - Staff Wellbeing Policy

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