



ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, ALTONA

PASTORAL CARE / STUDENT WELLBEING POLICY

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of all our pastoral work.
He provides the model on which we base all our dealings with people.

We acknowledge that Pastoral Care involves care of, for and by the total community.

As children come into contact most often with staff, it is they who must provide
A model of 'care' and all that is implicit in that role.

Every person in the St. Mary's School community is a participant in our Pastoral Care Program.

St. Mary's School maintains a 'culture of child safety' by actively implementing strategies in accordance with its moral & legal obligations and Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870.

BELIEFS ABOUT PASTORAL CARE

We believe that **PASTORAL CARE** is a complex process of:

- Building community through a sense of relationships.
- Growth and care of each individual - through personal interaction which acknowledges that each child is a unique gift from God.
- Preparing our children to live a happy and fulfilling life within a community.
- Meeting the specific needs of individuals through early intervention and provision of after care.

METHODOLOGY

At St. Mary's School we practice Pastoral Care in all that we do with other people, particularly with the children in our care.

There are many ways in which our Pastoral nature is displayed, these can include:

- Positive encouragement to all individuals
- Supporting individuals in their endeavours
- Celebrating successes
- Recognising achievements
- Developing personal relationships with each child
- Use of 'stickers'
- Student of the Week awards
- Recognising birthdays
- Celebration of the Liturgy together
- Parent consultation in appropriate situations
- Personal contact from the school to home
- Friendly smiles
- A welcoming attitude to all visitors to the school
- A positive caring role model for children

Much of our Pastoral teaching is done through our Religious Education Program (School Based) and the area of Pastoral Care can never be divorced from this. The attitudes and practices of our R.E. program go a long way to developing caring people who are able to pastorally care for others.

CIRCLE TIME: PHILOSOPHY

Our Circle Time adopts a solution-focussed, strengths based approach. It promotes group agency to encourage our students to take responsibility for themselves and each other. Specific problems and incidents are never discussed in Circles, only issues and directions for change. The focus away from the personal to consideration of topics that impact young lives and make Circles a safer and more comfortable place for both teachers and students. The principles of Circles; respect, agency, positivity, inclusion, democracy and safety should be embedded throughout the day and across the school so that our outcomes can become more sustainable.

Circles aim to promote wellbeing for all students, both vulnerable and the achieving. This includes healthy relationships, resilience in the face of adversity and responsible behaviour. We believe these three aspects together lead to more effective learning environments and flourishing individuals.

CIRCLE TIME STRUCTURE:

- Timetabled at least once a week for a 30min session
- Well planned using specific proforma (appendix)
- Follow set structure that can be adapted
- Focus clearly articulated at the beginning of each session
- Focus is needs based but linked to SEL competencies: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social-awareness, Social management
- Teacher is an active participant to enable and strengthen the students' understanding and skills

STRATEGIES:

Pastoral Carers may implement strategies and actions including:

General:

- Home contact
- Encouraging and supporting others
- Taking the time to learn about others, to 'hear' their story
- Personalising our interaction with others by talking with them
- Being aware of moods, emotions, responses of others
- Encouraging and maintaining positive, honest communication
- Giving affirmation

Children

- Involvement in personal growth programs
- Combining year level experiences i.e. Paraliturgies, Assemblies etc.
- Being active participants in the Pastoral life of the school.

Parents

- To be encouraged to be involved in school and parish activities
- To be active participants in the Pastoral life of the school
- To support and encourage children, teachers and other parents in their roles within our community.

Staff

- Being positive and acting justly in the guidance of children
- Shared staff decision making
- To support and encourage parents in their role
- To support and encourage fellow teachers in their role
- To provide for regular discussion of Pastoral care needs and issues
- To attend specific In services as necessary
- Implement Personal Growth programs
- To demonstrate a commitment to Pastoral Care and Pastoral Care programs.