



MATER DEI

CATHOLIC COLLEGE

PASTORAL CARE AND WELLBEING POLICY

Purpose: To ensure a community of care is established where individuals know they will be supported in their endeavours, crises and celebrations.

Relevant to: All staff, students and parents

Responsible officer(s): College Leadership Team
Leader of Students
College Psychologist
House Leaders
KLA Leaders

Date of Introduction: June 2018

Date of Review: June 2020

Modification History:

Related Policies: Discipline policy
Anti Bullying Policy
Behaviour management Policy
CEWW Duty of Care Policy

Vision

In keeping with the vision statement of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, Mater Dei Catholic College strives to be a nurturing community which;

- Is founded in Catholic faith, justice and love
- Is inclusive
- Is learner centred
- Seeks excellence and wisdom

Mission

“The person of each individual human being, in her or his material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching; this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic School.” JP11 (#9)

As nurturers we are called to;

- Care for each individual, affirming their dignity and uniqueness
- Foster the right relationships with God, creation, self and others
- Provide particular attention to those most in need
- Build a welcoming, safe and supportive school environment

“The Catholic School fosters a particular climate where students, teachers, parents, clergy, non-teaching staff and the wider community feel welcomed and valued.” (Barry Dwyer)

We are entrusted to;

- Nourish our spiritual life and ministry
- Connect with the Parish, Diocesan and wider community
- Strengthen relationships and communicate between members of the education community
- Make present the spirit of Nano Nagle, Edmund Rice and Mary, Mother of God

“...knowledge set in the context of faith becomes wisdom and life vision.” JP11 (#14)

As faithful we are called to;

- Strive for an understanding of ourselves and others as dignified and loved by God
- Value the unique contributions made by each person
- Practice justice through tolerance, empathy and service
- Pray, celebrate and evangelise with a Catholic perspective
- Build hope in a faith filled future

“...all human values find their fulfillment and unity in Christ.” JP11 (#3)

“...there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom.” JP11 (#14)

As learners we are encouraged to;

- Develop the values, knowledge and skills necessary to undertake lifelong personal, spiritual and intellectual growth
- Strive for excellence through programs which cater to the needs, interests and abilities of the individual

Mater Dei Catholic College is a nurturing and caring community that places a strong emphasis on Pastoral Care and Wellbeing. We provide support structures and engage in proactive initiatives aimed at developing positive relationships, resilience and responsibility. These areas of focus are extremely important in the growth and wellbeing of our students.

The student is at the centre of everything we do at Mater Dei. It is essential that the college offers appropriate support for students. The pastoral role of teachers makes a positive difference in the lives of students. Effective Homegroup teachers engage in a balance of Pastoral Care and Academic Care as well as Administration requirements.

Rationale:

The College promotes the integration of pastoral and academic domains of the school. Academic Care enhances student learning, wellbeing and resilience through pedagogies sympathetic to students needs and embedded in student learning experiences. Our teaching and learning culture is steeped in Catholic ethos, Mission and College values. Learning is supported by positive relationships, attention to wellbeing and high academic expectations.

The members of our school community have a right to be supported with care and compassion

in their endeavours, crises and celebrations. Pastoral care at Mater Dei Catholic College is a total expression of our school service to all members of the school community.

Aims:

All members of the College community are encouraged to develop respectful relationships so that a co-operative and collaborative environment exists, reflecting Gospel values.

Parents are recognised as the primary carers and educators of their children.

All College staff are committed to the implementation of formal structures to facilitate a network of care and connectedness.

All College staff have special responsibilities for fostering a positive school environment and to be aware of and adhere to all pertinent legislation and associated College policies.

To build a community where every person is accepted, respected and feels safe and secure.

Through words and actions, the members of the Mater Dei Catholic College community will know they are valued and have a significant contribution to make to our school. At Mater Dei Catholic College all members endeavour to make pastoral care a total expression of Gospel values in our daily lives.

Implementation:

The implementation of this policy will permeate all aspects of school life. A community of care will be established where individuals know they will be supported in their endeavours, crises and celebrations.

- All members of our school community will feel valued and recognized for their self-worth.
- The students of our school will know of the structures in place to keep them safe while at school.
- Efforts and achievements of the school community will be recognised at fortnightly assemblies and through the newsletter.
- Our school community will promote an environment where all members are confident and supported to take risks, socially, professionally and educationally.
- All members of our school community will realise their responsibility in the building of a safe, loving and just community.
- Support programs are available to all students and families through a School Psychologist.
- Members of staff will utilise restorative practices training as part of our pastoral care.
- Peer support programs run throughout the school. These can take the form of special days/theme days where the students work in peer and buddy groups.
- The staff and students are supported by the CSO in regards to regular communication with CSO personnel to identify student needs and offer the support with Intervention programs.
- A wellbeing committee headed by the Leader of Students will be in place and wellbeing will be a staff meeting agenda item
- Students are invited to discuss any worries, or concerns with their Homegroup teacher, House Leader or School Psychologist.
- Students are organised vertical structure based on House membership. Students belong to one of the five Houses. These classes meet every morning to touch base, check notices and provide grounding for each girl. Homegroup time first thing in the morning is when students to set themselves up for a successful day of learning.
- All students have access to school camps and excursions and attention is given to needs of families and students.
- The school community provides support for pastoral care across all KLAs.
- Incoming year students are encouraged to participate in transition to High School orientation days in order to make the transition easier, and participate in Peer Support throughout their first year in high school.

All students are encouraged to:

- Respect and value themselves and others and live by the College mission.
- Develop learning goals to strive towards personal excellence.

- Be involved in the community life of the College.
- Seek advice and assistance from significant others.
- Respect and appreciate the College environment.
- Parents are encouraged to:
 - Respect and support the teachers and other members of the College community together in partnership.
 - Support the College through engaging with the available communication systems and opportunities be involved in a range of College activities.
- Teachers are encouraged to:
 - Understand and practice their duty of care and professional responsibilities
 - Know and value each student for who they are as a whole person. This requires developing an understanding of their strengths and interests as well as their abilities and goals as a learner through discerning use of quantitative and qualitative data.
 - Be proactive in the early detection of students at risk.
 - Respond to the breadth of individual needs of students.
 - Create a positive learning environment conducive to the development of the individual's potential.
 - Deliver a creative, dynamic teaching style which challenges and stimulates all students as individual learners.
 - Implement learning programs and practices, which build positive and respectful relationships.
 - Encourage and guide students to be involved in the co-curricular life of the College as well as opportunities for faith formation.

All College Staff are encouraged to:

- Nurture and contribute to a positive welcoming environment which provides opportunities for each individual's needs, gifts and talents.
- Use the appropriate network and avenues for shared dialogue, decision making and routine communication.
- Respect confidentiality and the privacy of others.
- Support initiatives taken to celebrate and recognise significant occasions in the life of the College.
- Ensure that formal programs and associated school policies relevant to Pastoral and Academic Care are understood, implemented, supported and adhered to.
- Be encouraged to volunteer their services, by participating in any program where their gifts and talents are shared by others.

The Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Team and the College Leadership are encouraged to: Develop and facilitate support structures and processes within the school to facilitate ongoing student wellbeing and academic care. Ensure these structures are effectively organised and co-ordinated, well resourced and flexible according to the needs as they arise.

- Collaborate to develop and implement academic care and pastoral programs which meet the needs of adolescents in their contemporary world.
- Lead and engage teams of teachers in the design of academic care and the development of learner profiles for students.
- Identify areas of need and develop the pastoral skills of staff.
- Facilitate networks and avenues for shared dialogue, decision making and effective communication to all members of the College community.
- Develop and facilitate the induction of new students and parents into the College, especially its value system and culture.
- Develop and nurture processes and opportunities for students and staff to develop meaningful positive relationships and a sense of community.
- Ensure the implementation of the College Strategy supports the integration of the academic, social and spiritual life of the college, especially in the event of celebrations with a specific pastoral dimension.
- Ensure that the Student Wellbeing and Academic Care Guidelines are implemented consistently and effectively across 7-12.
- Provide occasions for reflective and evaluative feedback on these guidelines to inform the ongoing implementation of the guidelines.
- Critique and strengthen the value system and culture of the College.
- Ensure that in the process of staff selection the requirement for staff to implement these guidelines is articulated and explored.
- Understand and implement the pertinent legal requirements and ensuring that such requirements are met.

Purpose of Homegroup

Preamble

Mater Dei Catholic College is a nurturing and caring community that places a strong emphasis on Pastoral Care and Wellbeing. We provide support structures and engage in proactive initiatives aimed at developing positive relationships, resilience and responsibility. These areas of focus are extremely important in the growth and wellbeing of our students.

The student is at the centre of everything we do at Mater Dei. It is essential that the college offers appropriate support for students. The pastoral role of teachers makes a positive difference in the lives of students. Effective Homegroup teachers engage in a balance of Pastoral Care and Academic Care as well as Administration requirements.

During Homegroup the following will take place:

- Prayer
- Mark attendance
- Read notices and prepare students for the day/week

- Check uniform and presentation

Most importantly Homegroup is also an opportunity for:

- Sense of belonging
- Sense of security
- Social connectedness, and
- Communication

The vertical Homegroup and house structure creates the opportunities to:

- Further develop a Family spirit within the College (5 Houses, 1 Home)
- Create better relationships between senior and junior students, and
- Provide enhanced leadership opportunities

It is the role of the Homegroup teacher to:

Know their names, interests, strengths, family situation, difficulties, how they are going academically and in sport/other activities.

TO BUILD A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BELONGING IN YOUR GROUP AND WITHIN THE HOUSE

Talk with each student, listen to them, encourage interaction with yourself and amongst each other; celebrate their successes, provide leadership opportunities, zero tolerance of put downs, prayer/reflection each day; be actively involved in House activities.

MENTOR AND ENCOURAGE EACH OF THE STUDENTS IN YOUR GROUP

- Follow up issues which arise; monitor progress by encouraging conversations about learning, speak with other teachers and review students reports.
- Keep House Leader informed –discuss issues with House Leader and parents when necessary.
- Assist students with organisation and planning (E.g. Assessment booklets, term plans, use of school calendar etc).

BE A CONSISTENT PRESENCE TO THE STUDENTS IN YOUR GROUP

- Be at your group on time and each day.
- Sit with your students in House gatherings, College mass and College assemblies.
- Establish a routine that best suits you to ensure admin. is completed quickly at the start of Homegroup time.

GUIDE AND ENCOURAGE YOUR HOUSE SENIORS

- Assist and guide the Yr 11 and 12's in your group in their leadership skills.
- Assist the Yr 12 students and House Captains in the organisation and running of any group activities.

HOW CAN I BEST CARE FOR STUDENTS IN MY HOMEGROUP?

- Create an atmosphere in the group where students feel safe and connected
- Get to know each individual in the group well so that at least one teacher in the school really knows each student thoroughly
- Assist students in your group to get to know each other
- Connect with what your students are doing (through curricular, co-curricular involvement etc.)
- Maintain a working relationship with your House Leader
- Support and foster House ideals, spirit and activities such as Peer Support
- Follow up parent inquiries promptly and thoroughly
- Attend to required administration

BE SENSITIVE TO THE SIGNALS

Be sensitive to 'distress signals' and, when appropriate, draw them to the attention of your House Leader. The cause(s) of any changes may be elusive; they may be part of the natural turmoil of adolescence or they may be symptoms of deeper issues.

Signals include:

- Behaviour- actions which are out of character or attention seeking
- Loss of interest- a falling away in sport and activities or academically, lack of participation, a falling away in quality and perseverance, failure to attend
- Tiredness- lethargic behaviour
- Truancy
- Failure to return a greeting, unusual rudeness
- Change in relationships
- Change in personality
- Unusual defensiveness or silence

Be aware of some of the underlying causes, in consultation with your House Leader or School Wellbeing Practitioner:

- Discord at home
- Parents separating
- Bereavement or sickness in the family
- Relationship issues- with peers or girlfriend/boyfriend
- Keeping poor company out of school
- Poor health
- Course of study – too demanding, over academic, not sufficiently challenging
- Personal disappointment- missed selection, poor results etc
- Stress
- Target of bullying

SOME INFORMATION THAT MAY BE USEFUL FOR HOMEGROUP TEACHERS:

ABSENCES/ LATES/ SMS / DAILY ABSENCE WITHOUT NOTE REPORTS

See attachment for the policy regarding phone calls home after consecutive absences. In the instance where a student is absent on 3 consecutive days it is the Homegroup teacher's responsibility to check with the front Office as to whether the absence has been explained. If it hasn't, the Homegroup teacher should make a phone call home and liaise with their House Leader. Attendance should be monitored by the Homegroup teacher. If you become aware of a number of absences for an individual student please inform your House Leader so that enquiries can be made.

LATE ARRIVALS

If a student is late without a valid reason they are to be given a lunchtime detention. If a student is late on multiple occasions to Homegroup, the Homegroup teacher should liaise with their House Leader and make a phone call home to discuss why this is occurring.

BIRTHDAYS

It is important to celebrate birthdays in Homegroup. Some Homegroups will create a Birthday roster and/or chart. It is up to the Homegroup teacher as to whether you celebrate with a cake. Some Homegroups will celebrate multiple birthdays with a cake at the end of the month.

COUNSELLOR (SCHOOL WELLBEING PRACTITIONER) - REFERRALS

Homegroup teachers should make referrals to the School Wellbeing Practitioner via the House Leader. The Wellbeing Practitioner will liaise with both the House Leader and Homegroup teacher in regards to appointments made. See attachment for further information about our School Wellbeing Practitioner).

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

The SRC was introduced in the College in 2016. The SRC's primary role is to act as a voice for students and to speak on behalf of the College as a representative. These may include suggested improvements, the support of whole and part school initiatives and representing the image and interests of the College in the wider community. The SRC is made up of the elected Year 12 Student Leaders as well as 2 representatives nominated from each year group.

HOUSE MEETINGS

House Leaders will facilitate House Meetings prior to carnivals and events. Whole House gatherings may occur during extended Homegroup for specific purposes. House Leaders will lead a Staff House meeting once a term with their team. This is part of the usual Monday meeting rotations.

LOCKER ALLOCATION

Lockers can be allocated on a needs basis through the College Office.

SEMESTER REPORTS

Homegroup teachers are required to complete a Homegroup report for each reporting period.

Please refer to the Report Manual when preparing these. House Leaders can provide teachers with a Brag Sheet to support teachers in preparing information to write the Homegroup comment for each individual student.

HOMEGROUP TIME

Homegroup time is held each day. The Homegroup breaks down a large school into small manageable units for the delivery of effective pastoral and academic care.

UNIFORM AND GROOMING

Refer to Uniform policy and Mater Dei Appearance policy.