



## Good Counsel Parish Schools Board POLICY DOCUMENT

<b>Good Counsel Parish Schools Board</b> (incorporating Good Counsel Primary School, Good Counsel College and St. Rita's Primary School)	
<b>Faith Life Policy</b>	
<b>Policy Domain:</b> Mission and Practice	Adopted: 14 October 2014 To be reviewed: 12 months
<b>STATEMENT</b> In keeping with their Mission Statements, our schools work to develop an environment conducive to active faith expression and living. This is achieved through regular and varied celebrations, including prayer, special liturgies, and sacramental worship. This is acknowledged through an active faith environment enriching both human and divine learning within the wider school communities.	
<b>CONTEXT</b> Our schools are places where a lived faith is as significant to a person as is the human learning that equips people for the future. Catholic education is conducted in an increasingly secular environment where a growing spiritual poverty impacts on how families maintain faith and human integrity. As a consequence, students, as well as staff, in our Catholic schools practise their faith to varying degrees; some not at all. In addition, our schools also attract students and teachers from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds. To ensure high education and human development standards, our schools are expected to maintain and develop their catholic ethos and character amid a rich and strong tradition of prayer, ritual and worship.  <i>Jesus ... taught them ... you are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.</i> (Matthew 5.1-2, 13-16)	

**RATIONALE**

To grow as living faith communities, wherein students and teachers can be nurtured in their faith in Christ and assisted in their total development;

- our schools maintain a Catholic identity in their mission and in their celebration;
- our schools will be respectful of the diversity of faith in their communities.

To provide a nurturing and faith environment, the parish community and the schools' parents expect and value that our schools are places where children and teachers can celebrate an active faith life. This may be achieved through regular expression and worship appropriate to the age and development of the children.

To ensure the development and growth of children's dignity, the parish community and teachers expect and value that the:

- children's faith is primarily awakened and modelled at home.
- parents/carers have and maintain the prime role as faith educators of their children.
- parents/carers may require support in their responsibility as faith educators.
- teachers nurture children's faith through good modelling (in and outside school) as well as active participation in prayer and faith celebration.
- teachers need to nurture their own faith development, to better help children understand and celebrate their faith within a context of human and divine potential.

To express and enrich the community's mission in the world from one generation to the next, the parish community expects and values that:

- the schools play a vital role in the sacramental preparation and ongoing life of the children.
- families encourage and support their children to participate actively in the parish's own faith life and liturgical celebrations.
- the schools, through their mission and practice, publicly nurture key Gospel values, including – positive view of life; community and common good; freedom from oppression; search for truth and wisdom; sacramentality of God's presence in the whole world; reconciliation; courage; hope and resurrection.

Teachers in order to be employed in Good Counsel Parish Schools must fulfil requirements for Accreditation to teach in Catholic schools as outlined by the Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns.

Teachers in order to teach Religion in Good Counsel Parish Schools, they must fulfil requirements for Accreditation to teach Religion in Catholic schools as outlined by the Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns.

**PROCEDURES**

The Good Counsel Parish schools will develop Faith/Life procedures respective to the context of a parish primary school and a parish secondary college in accordance with this policy and following the guidelines and procedures set out by the Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns for this area.

For specific Faith/Life Procedures please refer to Primary and Secondary School Procedures and the Catholic Education Website.

The Principals, and the Assistants to the Principal Religious Education (APRE) actively develop and maintain a culture (within the classroom, across the school community, and embedded in pastoral care practices) of prayer and worship that motivates faith development and practice similarly among students and teachers alike.

The Principals ensure that the school schedules have prescribed practices for prayer, religious and sacramental celebrations, and other liturgical expressions that involve and nourish individual students, classes, staff and the entire school community.

The Principals and the APREs work closely with relevant teachers, the Parish Priest, and parish staff in scheduling, developing, preparing for and conducting sacramental and liturgical events and celebrations that build on the faith life of the school and the parish community.

The APREs meet with the Parish Priest at least once each term to plan for the liturgical needs of the school community.

The APREs meet with the Parish Priest and the Parish Sacramental Program Team at least once each term to plan for the sacramental preparation and liturgical needs of the school and parish communities.

The Principals ensure that parents are made clearly aware of their prime responsibility in the faith development and expression of their children. This is to be undertaken:

Initially at the time of enrolment when parents:-

- are asked to agree to (in writing) the children participating in the faith life practices of the school.
- are encouraged to further their children's sacramental life if their background is catholic instead of listing NONE.

The Principals challenge, encourage and support parents in attending all faith celebrations of their children. Special pastoral care support is considered for needy parents who express concern for their own faith development.

The Principals and supporting staff ensure school statistics identifying the faith background of each student and staff member are kept accurate and up-to-date.

The Principals challenge, encourage and support teachers to attend to their own faith development especially through reflective teaching, learning and practice.

The Principals and the APREs provide teachers with regular professional development opportunities each term to support their role in nurturing prayer and faith celebrations as an integral part of their teaching and learning.

Teachers and school staff model the virtues of - living and acting in a way that respects the religious belief and faith practices of the catholic community in their teaching and in the way they conduct themselves.

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Catholic Schools, Children of Other Faiths and Community Cohesion: Cherishing Education for Human Growth. (2008) Catholic Education Service of England and Wales. London. [www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)

- Congregation for Catholic Education. (1997) The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium. Vatican. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)
- National Catholic Education Commission. *Australian Catholic Schools: why we have them; what they aim to achieve.* [www.ncec.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au)
- All Other related documents as outlined by Catholic Education Services Cairns.

#### **BACKGROUND MATERIAL/REFERENCES**

- Church in the Workplace: A Framework of Vision and Values for Industrial Relations Between Employers and Employees in Catholic Schools in Queensland. (2006) Queensland Catholic Education Commission. Brisbane. [www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au](http://www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au)
- Queensland Catholic Schools and Curriculum. (2008) Queensland Catholic Education Commission. Brisbane. [www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au](http://www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au)
- Strategic Priorities For Catholic Schooling: Diocese of Cairns 2005-2009. (2005) Catholic Education Services, Cairns. [www.cairns.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cairns.catholic.edu.au)
- Treston, Kevin. (2010) What Matters Most: Nurturing Values in Catholic Schools. Creation Enterprises, Wilston, Brisbane.
- Treston, Kevin. (2001) The Teacher A Class Act: Learning Experiences in a Catholic Anthropology. Creation Enterprises, Wilston, Brisbane.