Working together in mission

Charter for parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

MELBOURNE
ARCHDIOCESE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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St Pius X School, Heidelberg West

Foreword

A message from the Archbishop

Since the earliest days of the Church's mission in Melbourne, the task of providing an education for the children and young people of our families has been a privilege and a joy, as well as a witness of tremendous faith. The inspired pledge to provide schooling experience for every child seeking a Catholic education is a renewed work of evangelisation in our own time, carrying forward the legacy of primary and secondary schools in parishes across our Archdiocese. Countless endeavours of sheer hard work have shared light and wisdom through the evangelical witness of teachers who were committed to providing the best for their students. Young learners from an array of cultural, ethnic, social, economic and linguistic backgrounds have found the Catholic classroom to be a place of knowledge and hospitality, and the Lord has blessed this great effort of previous generations.

In this proud history, and in the work ahead, we build school communities in which the Holy Spirit breathes life and wisdom liberally, and in which that same Spirit inspires new energy for learning the art of wisdom and growing in knowledge and understanding.

In the schools for which the Archdiocese has a particular responsibility, those governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS), I am mindful of the great responsibility we have to honour such a legacy and to protect it in the years ahead. In particular, I would like to recognise here the wonderful contribution of the countless number of priests and consecrated religious, assisted in more recent times by many lay people, who have enriched the provision of Catholic education in the Archdiocese with the many charisms of the founders of their respective religious institutes. The devotion and commitment of their whole lives to the education of the students of our schools have left us a witness that we can follow in the generations to come.

Prayerfully, humbly, but boldly, we pick up what earlier pioneers have built and we shape it so that it will continue to serve the people of Melbourne with integrity.

We live through a time of great challenge and opportunity in the work of Catholic schooling, and the next chapter of its story will require a diligence from every leader in the Catholic community. In particular, strong leadership is required from those in parish and school, particularly parish priests and principals, who are mandated to lead their respective parishes and schools in drawing young people and their families into the knowledge and understanding of Christ. Knowledge of Christ grows and becomes fruitful when centred upon the word of God, which should find a welcome home in the hearts and classrooms of our Catholic schools.

The company I have established, MACS, will govern and operate the schools belonging to the Archdiocese, and it has been tasked with taking up the legacy I describe above. Changes in governance of Catholic schools will require renewed commitment to collegiality and goodwill for it to be a success.

Above all, we trust in the power and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at work among us.

I am confident in the leaders of our mission who carry this renewed faithfulness forward.

I draw your attention to the Statement of Mission that prefaces this charter and is central to the MACS constitution. The essential message of the statement is a call and a challenge for us to provide the best possible Catholic education for our young people as they embark on their life journey as a fruit of the gospel.

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Now as ever, parents are the 'first and most important educators' of their children (John Paul II 1994, n. 16). Parish priests and principals are entrusted with a leadership founded on Christ's model of servanthood to others, and in a Catholic school this means a fundamental care and concern with the families of students and a partnership with parents. I encourage the formation of school advisory councils at primary and secondary levels that fit the pastoral model of each particular parish or association of parishes. These school advisory councils are avenues for parents to contribute to their children's school and build up one another.

For priests who have not been as involved in the work and mission of the school/s in their parish, this new way of operating Catholic schools is an invitation for you to work more closely with your school principals in the common mission we share. For priests who have had a close involvement in their parish school, my expectation is that the new arrangement takes nothing away from your authentic pastoral leadership in the life of your school/s, but fosters new possibilities and a new vitality. The articulation of roles and responsibilities for priests, principals and school advisory councils charts out a path ahead, and I hope we will feel inspired in this moment to take on the work of Catholic education with a new sense of calling, responsibility and inspiration.

I commend this *Working Together in Mission* charter to you, as you lead your parishes and schools which strive to join the work of education with the explicit proclamation of the gospel.

All of us are called to be witnesses in the world to the goodness and mercy of God, and to share with others what we have been blessed to receive.

In a particular way, we draw inspiration from our Mother Mary, blessed and full of grace, who prays for every student and every participant in our school communities. Mary walks with us and encourages us in our common call to holiness, and invites a sharing of our lives with the saints who pray for us in all our needs.

With trust in Mary and in faithfulness to her Son, I offer every blessing in your ministry of witness and leadership.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne

1 January 2021
Solemnity Mary, Mother of God

Statement of Mission

Catholic schooling seeks to provide the young with the best kind of education possible, one that fosters a formation of the whole person that is deeply and enduringly humanising (Francis 2019, n. 223).

> Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth. This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church (Benedict XVI 2008).

With parents and parishes, Catholic schooling seeks to fulfil this mission by providing an environment in which students are enabled to:

- encounter God in Christ and deepen their relationship with him
- pursue wisdom and truth encouraged by a supportive academic culture
- grow in the practice of virtue, responsible freedom and serving the common good.

A Catholic school:

- is actively embedded in the life of the faith communities of the local Church, which in turn is tangibly manifest in the life of each school
- is an essential place for the evangelising of children and young people
- prioritises the forming of missionary disciples of Jesus
- exists to assist students and their families to integrate faith, reason, life and culture (Francis 2019, n. 222)
- is conspicuously Christian in outlook, explicitly Catholic in faith and practice, and intentionally missionary in orientation
- cultivates spiritual, social and emotional growth in a safe and protective environment
- provides a learning environment in which the whole educational community is formed to embrace life in all its fullness (John 10: 10)
- offers a human formation that has the intellectual, practical and moral excellence of learners at its heart
- forms consciences, fosters peace and develops respectful dialogue at the service of intellectual charity
- encourages the discovery of Catholic cultural heritage, especially in art, music, literature and architecture.

> Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture (Francis 2013, n. 134).

The good work of educating the young, undertaken in the light of the Gospel, is a co-responsible task led by every member of the Catholic school community. Modelled by parents, principals and teachers, in prayer and with wisdom, through witness and by example, Catholic schooling is at the service of the integral human formation of children and young people in Christ.

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A Catholic school is eucharistic in character. The sacramental and prayer life of the local Church, especially in the gathering of God's People in Sunday Mass, is integral to the mission of a Catholic school and indispensable to its richness. A fruitful sign of the living witness of faith with parents and parishes is the participation of students and families in the life, mission and work of the local faith community, especially in the call to worship God and to serve the poor and marginalised (Acts 2: 42–47).

By cultivating a maturing of faith and the intellectual life through the modelling of good relationships, Catholic school students are prepared for living fruitfully in the world.

A message from the Executive Director and Chair of the Board, MACS

Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese of Melbourne has a long and proud history dating back to the early years of the colony that became the State of Victoria. Across the nearly 200 years that have elapsed since then, countless committed Catholic families have supported the extraordinary educational work and commitment of thousands of clergy, religious and lay educators to further the nurturance of the faith and the life development of young people in light of the mercy of God revealed in Jesus Christ. In countless ways, the Catholic classroom in our Archdiocese has been a place of witness to that same spirit that animated the life of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, of heartfelt witness to Jesus in the lives of students from a diverse range of backgrounds.

We are inheritors of a great gift in Catholic education, and any changes to governance must continue in the trajectory of the best of what has been achieved in the past, even as our schools respond to the new challenges and opportunities that arise at the interface between our teachers and the social contexts of the students and their families.

The context of the *Working Together in Mission* charter is that governance arrangements for schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne owned by the Archdiocese, its parishes or associations of parishes are being changed from 1 January 2021. Under the new arrangements, schools owned by the Archdiocese, parishes or associations of parishes will be transferred to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS). Governance arrangements for schools owned by religious institutes and ministerial public juridic persons will not be impacted by the governance change, but will continue to be supported as they have always been.

The purpose of this charter is to articulate how the mission is realised by those in key roles such as priests and principals as they work in collaboration with school staff, students, parents and the wider parish community. Authorised by the Archbishop, who as the leader of the local Church lays the foundation of the mission of Catholic education, the guidelines determined by this charter have been developed in consultation with and endorsed by the Council of Priests, and associations of principals and parents.

Jim Miles
Executive Director
Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Gerard Dalbosco
Chair
Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

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Introduction

The purpose of the charter

This charter, *Working Together in Mission,* outlines the roles and responsibilities of those who lead the shared work and mission of Catholic parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It is agreed to and endorsed by the Archbishop of Melbourne and the board of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

As of 1 January 2021, the charter speaks with the authority of the Archdiocese and MACS. Changes to the charter can be authorised by the MACS board, in agreement with the member of the company and in consultation with those who have an interest and involvement in the parish–school relationship.

This new model of governance brings opportunities for a shared and aspiring quality in how we serve students and their families. This change does not lessen the spiritual leadership of parish priests, nor reduce the significance of the local parish community.

Both are crucial to the mission of Catholic education and this charter gives clear definition to their place under these new arrangements, and honours the long and rich legacy of Catholic schools in Melbourne.

Parish priests and principals hold distinctive roles of leadership in their parish and school communities, and therefore it is essential that they work collaboratively to ensure that the relationship between parish and school is central to providing the religious leadership necessary for the success of the mission.

The charter operates in conjunction with the MACS constitution and serves as a clear guide to the building-up of leaders and their collaboration into the future, for the sake of a fruitful and responsible shared witness to the gospel in Catholic schooling.

Summary of roles

Priest and principal

The priest:*

- is the custodian of mission
- leads and is co-responsible with the principal for the religious life of the school
- celebrates liturgy and sacraments
- is spiritual guide and mentor to the principal, staff and community
- participates in primary school senior appointments by being a member of the appointment panel (principal, deputy principal and Religious Education leader)
- participates in the appointment panel for regional college principals and may participate in the panels for other senior appointments
- represents the parish as the beneficial owner of land and buildings
- is responsible for the patrimony and good name of the parish and school
- is an ex officio member of the school advisory council
- forms a collaborative relationship and works closely with the principal in promoting unity, common vision and mission, and purpose
- works together with the principal in promoting mutual support and respect
- meets frequently with the principal
- supports, encourages and guides the school's Religious Education program
- supports the school staff with religious retreats, and spiritual and theological formation

*For parish primary schools, the 'priest' is the parish priest of the school's parish and for regional colleges, the 'priest' is a parish priest who is a member of the college's association of canonical administrators.

The principal:

- works together with the priest in nurturing the Catholic identity, religious dimension and faith formation of the school
- is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all students in the school
- works with others to develop a vision for the school
- connects the school to the school's parish or association of parishes
- works collaboratively and closely with the priest, meeting regularly to promote unity, common vision and mission, and purpose
- collaborates with the priest in supporting the liturgical and sacramental life of the school
- is responsible for the Religious Education program in the school according to diocesan directives
- is the educational leader of the school
- is responsible for promoting a contemporary approach to teaching and learning, and overall educational outcomes of the students
- is responsible for the day-to-day managerial, administrative, compliance and statutory tasks of the school
- has overall stewardship for the people and resources of the school
- encourages outreach to the community, particularly in supporting parent engagement in the school and involvement in their child's education
- is an ex officio member of the school advisory council
- works together with the priest in promoting mutual support and respect

Catholic life

Fidelity to mission

Leaders in Catholic schooling faithfully carry forward the mission of sharing the gospel in the particular contexts of Catholic primary and secondary schools. At the heart of their mission is a living witness to Jesus Christ, whose new life of communion with God is to be shared mercifully and courageously. The Catholic school is a place of encounter with that divine love, worked out in the education of each student so that they can grow in wisdom.

Authentic relationships between the three dimensions of lifelong Christian education – family, parish and school – are central to who we are as messengers of the gospel. This is highlighted in the Statement of Mission: 'A Catholic school is actively embedded in the life of the faith communities of the local Church, which in turn is tangibly manifest in the life of each school.'

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The roles of parish priest, principal, teachers and school advisory council are articulated here to strengthen the mission and lived experience of Catholic schools in serving students and their families. The Statement of Mission orients priests and principals in their collaboration through distinct but complementary responsibilities in the leadership roles they exercise in the school and the parish. The parish priest and the parish will continue to play their vital roles in providing the environment and faith community in which the school's Catholic mission and identity can be expressed as a 'summons to revive our hope' (Francis 2016, n. 57). The Catholic school does not sit isolated from the parish, even if its management and governance is operated through a separate but closely related company.

In selecting a Catholic school, parents specifically choose a school community where learning is steeped in the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church, where the quality of the education matches their aspirations for their child, and where their child is enabled to be a 'beacon of goodness, integrity and justice' in the world (Francis 2014).

The Statement of Mission, endorsed by the Archbishop and pivotal to the MACS constitution, reinforces this when it states: 'The good work of educating the young, undertaken in the light of the Gospel, is a co-responsible task led by every member of the Catholic school community.'

This same theme is developed in *Horizons of Hope*: 'The Catholic school is commissioned by the Church to attend to the full flourishing of the person as created in the image and likeness of God. By its work of educating in openness to the mystery of God and in response to Jesus' commandment of love, the school becomes a presence of the Church in the local and wider society. The Catholic school therefore has a clear religious identity, operating in a context of Catholic faith and promoting the formation of students' identity in dialogue with that faith' (CEM 2017, p. 4).

The modelling of positive and collaborative relationships among key personnel, particularly parish priest, canonical administrator and principal, is fundamental to the success of a school's fidelity to mission, as their leadership roles are critical in forming a school community which responds to the challenge of living the gospel in their daily lives. Collaborating with these key roles are the other vocational expressions of Christian calling, including the bishops, priests and deacons of the Archdiocese, religious sisters and brothers, lay women and men, baptised singles, married spouses and all who will, from time to time, work to support Catholic schools.

Parish priests cannot be expected to carry the work of leading the faith community on complex issues by themselves. Since the Second Vatican Council, lay leaders have been encouraged to take a special responsibility for their particular spheres of influence, no less in education than any other field (see especially Paul VI 1965, n. 20). In the challenging areas of beginning and end of life matters, questions of human dignity and diversity, lifestyles and relationships, marriage and family, lay leaders have a special role of wisdom and integrity to offer. When giving Christian witness in the life of the Catholic school, key leaders such as principals, deputy principals and Religious Education leaders are models of good behaviour, and do so under public scrutiny in their communities with a responsibility on behalf of, and to, the Catholic community.

The religious identity of the school, and the wellbeing of students and families are not and cannot be solely the responsibility of the principal alone. Teachers in our Catholic schools are to see themselves as being privileged to have a particularly important responsibility today in developing quality relationships with their students by modelling good behaviour and in the manner in which they imbue their teaching with a religious perspective. All staff in a Catholic school have both the privilege and the responsibility of contributing to the school's ethos and the pastoral care of the students.

While not invading their privacy, teachers need to know their students and their families to the extent that they are aware of individual needs, and how they may support and enhance the wellbeing of each individual person.

All members of a school community have a role to play in strengthening the many ways the whole of school life is enlivened by Catholic faith that all may come to the fullness of life in accord with the will of Jesus Christ who said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly' (John 10: 10).

Key responsibilities:

- Priests are the primary faith leaders in the parish and work collaboratively with principals in faith leadership of both primary and secondary schools.
- The beating heart of Catholic education is a shared fidelity to mission, and both priest and principal are responsible for sharing trust and goodwill.
- Key leaders such as principals, deputy principals and Religious Education leaders are public witnesses to Catholic faith and freely take up the work of modelling the mission in their leadership roles.
- Teachers as well as all members of the school community play a part in enlivening the school by the way in which they contribute to the school's Catholic ethos and to the pastoral care of the students.

Catholic identity

Catholic schools are different to other educational settings because:

> From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics. The [Second Vatican] Council summed this up by speaking of an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, n. 25).

'Catholic schools are deeply connected to and empowered by the Catholic Church to illuminate education through the light of Christ. It is through the ecclesial nature of the school that the religious dimension has its life' (CEM 2017, p. 12). How the members of the Catholic school pray, learn, celebrate, belong in community and actively reach out beyond that community are all expressions of its religious dimension. The religious dimension is intentionally developed and sustained by the religious leadership of the parish priest or canonical administrator together with the principal and leadership team, with specific attention to ongoing spiritual and faith formation of staff, parents and students.

When Catholic parents or parents from a different faith tradition choose to send their child to a Catholic school, there is an expectation that the religious dimension of the school will be pre-eminent in the educational journey of the child and that the family will be welcomed and included on that journey.

These circumstances present a challenge to those in parishes and schools to continue to find ways to evangelise the students in their care. According to the General Directory for Catechesis, this is achieved primarily through the proclamation and continual reiteration of the kerygma, which simply means the sharing of the gospel (Congregation for the Clergy 1997). Every pope and major teaching document of the Church since the Second Vatican Council has repeatedly insisted that the gospel is to be shared, and the Good News of Christ belongs to the work of all Catholic leaders and their communities. In other words, any major project or work of the Church, including education, is fundamentally shaped by the gospel and has the sharing of the gospel as its mission. This call to action incorporates witness to Christian faith by building authentic relationships and collaboration between parish, family and school.

Liturgical and sacramental life of parish and school

It is especially when gathered at the altar of the Eucharist that Christ's Church is made visible and unity is expressed. School and parish therefore jointly strive for an animated sense of community, above all in the shared celebration of the Sunday Mass. The various forms of prayer and ritual celebrated in the school serve to familiarise students and their families with communal parish worship, with the parish priest leading the school community in liturgy, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist along with Reconciliation.

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Responding to Canon 843 §2, which exhorts priests and other members of the Christian faithful to work collaboratively according to their respective functions in preparing students for the sacraments, the school supports the parish in sacramental programs by assisting with communication and engagement with parents through the formal Religious Education program.

Because this is a work of collaboration, the parish priest has a continual role as the leader with regard to sacramental programs assisted by Catholic lay leaders and educators.

The faith development of the staff and the students, including their preparation for and participation in the sacramental life of the Church, is among the highest concerns of the principal. The principal works with the parish priest in this endeavour as parishes and schools work together to assist parents in the spiritual formation of the students in their care.

In a secondary school, the principal continues the collaboration between the school and the association that established it to support the provision of sacramental programs for eligible students.

Key responsibilities:

- The sacramental and liturgical life of the Church is a distinctive and central aspect of Catholic life and practice, shared by everyone, and in which all leaders have a responsibility to uphold and invest their time and energy.
- Priest and principal work together to ensure that sacramental and liturgical opportunities are provided for the students of that school and their families.
- Parish priests, canonical administrators and principals will encourage students and their families to attend Sunday Mass by invitation and be involved in the wider life of the parish or association of parishes.

Roles and responsibilities

Role of the parish priest and canonical administrators

The parish priest[1] is entrusted by the Archbishop with the canonical responsibility of the parish to which he has been appointed (Can. 515 §1 as cited in Coriden, Green & Heintschel 1985). He exercises pastoral care of the community by gathering the faithful together in the person of Jesus Christ through proclamation of the Word and celebration of the Eucharist and sacraments, and through the life of the local Church in its pastoral care and outreach to those most in need or on the margins. Through his mentoring and formative roles, the parish priest has a central role in the life of the school.

With respect to canon law and the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, the parish priest has defined rights and responsibilities in the life of the parish and the diocese, and is appointed as the pastor of the People of God in a defined location. This is the pastoral context in which Catholic primary schools operate and by virtue of which the parish priest has a duty to serve school communities within that parish or association of parishes.

The canonical responsibilities and authority of the priest for the religious life of the school remain unchanged in the new governance arrangements, even as his duties in areas such as governance, administration and employment are transferred to MACS. In fact, one of the goals of the governance transfer is that the priest is freed from administrative responsibility to be more available to the school for the formation of staff and other forms of pastoral ministry critical to the school's capacity to realise its mission.

An essential role of the priest is his sacramental ministry, which is largely demonstrated by bringing together and growing the parish community, inclusive of the school community. Therefore, he must have a central role in the life of the school, be it a primary school located in his parish or a regional secondary college under the care of an association of surrounding parishes. The presence of the priest in the life of a school is welcome, normative and essential.

The leadership and support of the parish priest is necessary to ensure the school is faithful to its distinctive Catholic mission and identity. As the Eucharist is the source and summit of Catholic faith, the priest plays a critical role in fostering the school's religious identity through his leadership of the liturgical and sacramental life of the school. In a parish primary school, the celebration of the sacraments of initiation and reconciliation provides a particular point of focus for the parish priest along with class Masses, visits to Religious Education classes, the formation of staff and other forms of pastoral outreach.

Each school community presents a unique context for ministry, and the relationship between the priest and the principal and key leaders in the school provides a foundation for discerning how best to respond to the pastoral needs of the students, their families and the staff in the school. The parish priest is easily accessible to the school community to have regular contact with the principal, leadership team, staff and students. The parish school only realises its Catholic mission when it is connected organically and vitally with the parish of which it is a part.

1. References to parish priest also include any priest assigned responsibilities such as an administrator.

The parish priest therefore has a critical role to play in the life of the school, representing the parish community as the custodian of mission. It is crucial that each parish priest and principal work closely together to ensure that the school remains connected to its parish and is an authentic expression of the mission of the local Church.

Each school community presents a unique context for ministry, and the relationship between the priest and the principal and key leaders in the school provides a foundation for discerning how best to respond to the pastoral needs of the students, their families and the staff in the school.

The principal will always keep the parish priest appropriately informed of key elements of the life of the school community. Regular meetings between the parish priest, the principal and the school's leadership team will build relationships that enable all leaders to enrich the life and mission of their school.

The parish priest will continue to participate in the principal selection process through membership of the selection panel, and should be part of the selection panel for the deputy principal and the Religious Education leader. The parish priest is an ex officio member of the school advisory council for parish primary schools in his parish, and ensures that the school advisory council supports the principal and the mission of the parish. Parish priests also play a critical role on school advisory councils as they continue to represent their parish as the beneficial owner of the school's land and buildings. Parish priests must therefore approve any initiative that materially affects the school's land and buildings or other areas of parish property.

It is critical that the parish priest and principal work closely together and that regular, calendared opportunities are scheduled for both to meet and attend to the school's mission and religious identity. The parish priest has a critical role to play in the formation of staff in the school and this formative role can be supported by programs and services offered by MACS and other Catholic agencies.

Association of canonical administrators

The size and complexity of secondary schools generally mean that it is not possible for any parish working alone to establish a secondary college or provide the number of students necessary for it to function effectively. Over time, and as the need arose in growth areas of the Archdiocese, parishes in particular regions joined together to form associations to establish secondary colleges. Each regional college is owned by a canonical association comprising the parish priests of the member parishes of the association. These parish priests collectively are the canonical administrators who own the regional colleges and, as is the case with the parish primary school, the canonical administrators in each association have a duty to serve their college community by providing pastoral outreach to its families and students. The pastoral outreach exercised by canonical administrators has a different focus and shape given the age of the students and the nature of secondary education. The canonical administrators work together collaboratively with the principal as custodians of the college's mission and Catholic identity. Canonical administrators play a key role in the school's liturgies and year-level retreats, staff faith formation programs, family outreach and other forms of pastoral ministry.

As is the case in parish primary schools, canonical administrators of a secondary school will be welcomed into the life of the school by the principal and will be kept appropriately informed of matters in the life of the school. Regular meetings of the association of canonical administrators with the principal and the college leadership team enable relationships to be built that provide a foundation for the college's Catholic life and mission.

The president of the association of canonical administrators has a coordinating role and provides a primary point of contact and support for the principal. The president ensures that meetings occur with and among the association's members, thus enabling them to contribute effectively to the advancement of the school's Catholic mission and life. The president works with the principal to identify opportunities for the involvement of association members in the life of the college, including membership of the senior leadership selection panels, inclusion in school reviews, membership of the school advisory council and participation in the principal's professional review.

As is the case with the parish primary school, ownership of the regional college's land and buildings does not transfer to MACS when the governance transition takes place. Beneficial ownership of the college's land and buildings remains with the association of canonical administrators as the representatives of the parishes that are associated with each regional college. While the president represents his fellow priests in signing off on capital works, he needs to ensure that all members of the association support any initiative that materially affects the college's land and buildings or its Catholic mission.

Key responsibilities:

- Priest and principal work together to ensure that the means by which we enter into the mystery of Christ (the Sacred Scriptures, the sacraments, liturgy and prayer, doctrinal teaching, and the witness of the saints and the Christian community) are given a significant profile for students and parents enrolled in the Catholic school.
- As spiritual guide and mentor in the parish, which includes the school community, the priest is responsible for cultivating a supportive and pastoral relationship with the principal and leadership team of the school.
- The priest is the beneficial owner of the parish and school land and buildings, and the patrimony and good name of the parish ultimately sit within his responsibility. Consideration of use of school space outside normal Catholic education purposes requires agreement between principal and priest. Agreement will need to be reached with the parish for any proposals for a school to make use of parish space. The same is true for the association of canonical administrators.
- The priest participates in the selection panel for appointment of principal in both primary and secondary schools. In primary schools, the priest is also part of the deputy principal and Religious Education leader panels, and may be for secondary schools. He can participate in other selection processes for leaders of a school by common agreement with a principal and, in all cases, consensus for appointments is the objective.
- In both primary and secondary schools, the principal is responsible for the thoughtful nurturing of faith among teachers and students, and brings to the parish priest/canonical administrator decisions of significance to the life of faith in that community, including questions concerning reputation and the general good of the broader parish family.

Role of the principal

The principal is a leader mandated by MACS to model a form of Christian servanthood that maintain the bonds of communion between the school and the wider parish, diocese and the universal Catholic Church. This is a great task for which ongoing formation, support and encouragement are required. Catholic doctrine informs and animates these expressions of unity and pastoral care, and provides the means of giving shape to authentic witness to the whole school community. These are organic relationships built up and made stronger by a responsible attentiveness to the life of faith, hope and charity.

As leader of the school, the principal works most closely with the parish priest to lead the religious mission in the school community. The principal exercises this leadership under the authority of the bishop of the diocese in taking responsibility for the provision of religious instruction by means of a Religious Education program, and for the maintenance of acceptable standards of Religious Education in accordance with the policies and guidelines of diocesan authorities. Ongoing formation of principals is critical for their leadership to be effective, particularly as the cultural context becomes more secularised and pluralised.

As a person with a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church, the principal demonstrates strong religious leadership and the animation of the school community's faith journey.

Ongoing formation of staff is also the responsibility of the principal who works collaboratively with the priest in providing opportunities for personal, professional and faith formation. In the provision of formative opportunities, particularly in faith formation, MACS will offer support to school leadership as the board is committed to enhancing the mission and religious identity of the schools under its care. Of particular interest to principals, Religious Education leaders and other senior members of staff is the opportunity to undertake spiritual direction as a means of deepening one's individual spiritual life.

Key responsibilities of the principal's role include development of the faith community, particular focus on the safety and wellbeing of students, formulation of a vision for the whole school, attention to contemporary teaching and learning in order to engage all students, and stewardship of the people and resources with particular outreach to the parent community.

In particular, the principal is committed to shaping a school community in which teachers are valued as the immediate witnesses in the learning environment. Principals are cognisant of the cultural environment in which a Catholic school works and the irreplaceable role of the teachers with whom they collaborate. As Pope Paul VI observed:

> Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses (1975, n. 41).

The principal works with the leaders and representatives of the local Church, collaborating with staff and members of the school community to achieve the mission of the school. All responsibilities of the principal are executed within a framework of ministry that is inspired by the values and vision of the gospel which seeks to enhance the Catholic identity of the school at all times.

As a person with a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church, the principal demonstrates strong religious leadership and the animation of the school community's faith journey.

The principal has a special responsibility to strike a balance between the commitments of solidarity and subsidiarity, which are linked together in every local community (Benedict XVI 2009, n. 58). Because the principal leads a school that sits within a broader parish context, goodwill and charity will be disposed to the parish priest and parish community. In a governance model that respects canon law and the principle of subsidiarity, the authority, rights and responsibilities of parish priests are recognised, as are the leadership and management that must be exercised at the local level by principals and staff in schools.

This principal recognises that the tensions arising in every school between solidarity and subsidiarity are resolved through quality relationships and communications.

The principal is responsible for creating opportunities for canonical administrators from the association of parishes to be involved in the faith life of the secondary school, and encourages the priests from the respective parishes to make ongoing contact with the students represented in the school from their particular parish.

Key responsibilities:

- By the appointment as principal in a Catholic school, the principal is charged with the duty to build up the school according to the Statement of Mission and the MACS constitution.
- A principal is entrusted by the local Church (the diocese) with a leadership role in modelling and teaching the Catholic faith, encouraging the living out of that faith in the school community, as well as exercising special responsibility under the authority of the bishop for the religious instruction in the school.
- While entrusted with distinct roles of administrative, managerial, educational, compliance and statutory leadership, the principal collaborates closely with the parish priest in the enhancement of the Catholic identity and mission of the school.
- The principal has responsibility for the school's faith community and vision, safety and wellbeing of the students, teaching and learning, people and resources, and community outreach.

Relationship between parish, association of parishes, priest and principal

The Catholic school is an expression of the essential evangelising mission of the parish and it is vital that schools develop and maintain fruitful relationships within the local parish/es. Here it is important to note that Catholic schools cannot be Catholic on their own and, in fact, can only be Catholic when they are in communion with the wider Church and its mission. To be in communion is to be in a deep relationship and the relationships take many forms. For the parish primary school, the relationship with the wider parish plays a central and crucial role in its Catholic mission and identity. Similarly for the Catholic regional college, the relationship with the parishes in the association that founded the college is critical for its mission and identity. Finally, a diocesan college is founded by the Archdiocese (rather than an association of parishes), but the relationships with the wider Church and the parishes of their students are just as critical when it comes to the college's Catholic mission and identity.

The relationship between mission and identity is expressed very well by Pope John Paul II in *Christifideles Laici*: 'Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion' (1988, n. 32).

The school recognises the considerable contribution the parish, and parish families, makes to the school and for the Catholic education of its students. The school therefore plays a key role in parish community life and cannot be thought of in isolation from parish (or parishes in the situation where a school, whether primary or secondary, services more than one parish).

Catholic schools exist because they are Catholic in their mission and identity. The vitality of the mission of the Catholic school is enlivened when the school is embedded in the life of the local parish through the fostering of close and life-giving relationships with families and parishes.

Catholic education is a key ministry of the parish, and the parish priest is the key messenger in the evangelisation and education in faith within the parish. Therefore his leadership and support are necessary to ensure the school is faithful to its distinctive Catholic identity and spirituality.

Likewise the priests recognise the important ministry they have as key educators in faith in Catholic secondary schools as they represent the association of parishes to which the school belongs.

It is therefore critical that the priest and principal foster a strong collaborative relationship and that regular, calendared opportunities are scheduled for both to meet and an agreed record of the discussions maintained. Formal and informal meetings will be necessary as a means for planning and review. Opportunities for priest and principal to engage together with other members of the parishes and school will also assist in developing good relationships between them.

In any situations of dispute or a divergence of directions between parish and school, which cannot be handled satisfactorily locally, resolution will be managed by collaboration between MACS and the Archdiocese.

Key responsibilities:

- Priest and principal are the key leaders for the vitality of the mission of a Catholic school and together share in responsibility for that school community; significant questions of faith, formation and strategic direction must be handled in partnership.
- Investment of time and resources in life-giving relationships between priest, principal and families breathes life into the Catholic school community, requiring of priests and principals that common risks and challenges are brought to one another's attention and resolved collaboratively.
- The priest is a leader and a participant in the school community, and the principal has a responsibility to facilitate a priest's presence and evangelising role within the life of the school.
- A priest and principal must meet frequently to discuss significant matters within parish and school. How this partnership is conducted can be worked out locally, but MACS and the Archdiocese share in a responsibility to cultivate an environment of support and encouragement.
- Dispute resolutions will be managed by collaboration between MACS and the Archdiocese.

Role of the school advisory council

School advisory councils do not share in the governance of Catholic schools, but provide a crucial point of connection between the wider school community and school leaders. While they do not have a decision-making authority, they inform and advise the principal and school leadership.

While the MACS board has fiduciary responsibility for strategic direction and oversight of the management of MACS' operations, a range of powers and functions are delegated to the executive director who in turn determines the appropriate operating model within the company for the delegation to be exercised. Clear lines of authority, reporting and delegation have been established which assign the operational management of the school to the principal and particular advisory responsibilities to the school advisory council. While these responsibilities are outlined in the school advisory council terms of reference, it will be important that council members understand that their role is to give consideration to, and advice on, important school matters in order to support the principal and the strategic interest of the school. The following are some examples of ways the School Advisory Council may support the school and the principal:

- articulating and enacting the school's vision and mission
- promoting the school's Catholic ethos and culture
- promoting faith formation and development
- supporting school policies as required
- giving advice to the principal on issues such as school improvement plans and enrolment trends
- engaging in discussion with the principal about the annual school budget and other financial matters
- giving advice to the principal about the school master plan
- providing capital resource planning and maintenance support to the principal.

As an advisory body, the school advisory council develops processes of consultation that are an important expression of the educational relationship that exists between parents, schools, parishes and the wider parish community to support all students in the enhancement of their outcomes.

In a one-school one-parish situation, there may be a single school advisory council but, in a situation where one parish has multiple schools, then one school advisory council covering all schools may be advisable. Principals and priests have the flexibility to adapt the school advisory council terms of reference to their school's own particular needs.

MACS will provide support to school advisory councils such as policy guidance and templates for their work, but will not be responsible for their activities, utilising principles of subsidiarity and solidarity.

Key responsibilities:

- School advisory councils are an important vehicle for consultation between parish, school and parents.
- They do not share in governance responsibilities, but act as a connection point between the wider school community and school leaders.
- They are an important point of liaison with parish pastoral councils.
- Through this forum, parent representatives share their wisdom with, and offer support to, principals and the strategic interests of the school according to their terms of reference.
- Priests have an important ex officio role to play on these advisory councils, but can adjust their participation according to local need and circumstance, such as the number of schools in the parish, and would normally attend meetings.
- Priests and principals are ex officio members.
- Terms of office on the school advisory council are determined by the council's terms of reference.

Role of parents in the Catholic school

Catholic schools view parents as having a valued role in the education of the students in partnership with educators. It is the privilege of a school to educate the students of families who choose a Catholic school. The Catholic Church defines parents as the first and most important educators of their children. Since the Second Vatican Council, this has been a constant focus of Catholic educators in the life of the Church:

> The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1999, n. 2221).

In a Catholic school, parents are invited to engage in their children's learning and in their school community. Parents can be engaged in schools in a variety of ways, but of utmost importance is that parents know they are supported in the academic, spiritual, moral and emotional guidance they give to their children. Therefore it is vital that priests and principals encourage parents to have a sense of community and belonging with parish and school, and to become engaged in whatever ways possible.

The school advisory council is one means of engagement with parents that enables a fruitful participation in consultation on matters affecting the education of students.

> Parents have a particularly important part to play in the educating community, since it is to them that primary and natural responsibility for their children's education belongs (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 20).

Catholic school communities build relationships between parish and school, between school and home, between parent, teacher and student, between learning and living, focused on formation, learning and wellbeing outcomes for all children (CEM 2020, p. 10).

> There must be the closest cooperation between parents and the teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated. In fulfilling this task, teachers are to collaborate closely with the parents and willingly listen to them; associations and meetings with parents are to be set up and held in high esteem (Can. 796 §2 as cited in Coriden, Green & Heintschel 1985).

Key responsibilities:

- Parents are the first and most important educators of their children, and all leaders in a Catholic school play a crucial role in supporting that vocation by engaging parents in their children's learning.
- Priests and principals work together to evangelise the students in their care, encouraging parent engagement in the parish and school community.
- School advisory councils have their own local history and identity, and are an important way in which a healthy and mutually informed participation is cultivated between parish, school and parents.

Enrolments and staffing

At the heart of a Catholic school enrolment policy is the humble task of evangelisation. If Catholic schools are to fulfill their mission, then it is important to ensure those who populate the school community, staff, parents and students, have as their central focus that Catholic schools exist to educate the whole person in the light of the gospel.

If Catholic schools are to be more than simply a place where students are given an academic education, it is imperative that parents and staff see their role is to challenge students to understand that their education is about a synthesis of faith and wellbeing, as well as academic learning that gives students hope, purpose and optimism for their life journey.

Enrolments

The words of Canon 781 suggest that the Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and this needs to be at the forefront of thinking when enrolling students. While the priority is for Catholic families to be enrolled at both primary and secondary levels in our schools, when students of diverse religious and other backgrounds have been enrolled, the schools will be respectful of this diversity of students and their families and take every opportunity to promote mutual understanding and inclusiveness.

Every effort will be made by the Archdiocese to provide a Catholic education for Catholic families (and others) who have a desire and commitment to have their students educated within a Catholic ethos.

In developing enrolment policies, it is important that parents of students who are not Catholic accept and support the Catholic identity of the school as a condition of enrolment.

Given the joint responsibility owned by the parish priest and principal in ensuring the Catholic identity of the school is paramount, they collaborate in the development and implementation of enrolment processes according to local need; however, it needs to be kept in mind that the archdiocesan enrolment policy acts as a guideline.

Key responsibilities:

- An enrolment policy will be determined by MACS with primary regard for the evangelising mission of the Church and the local needs of the parish.
- The Archdiocese will make every effort to provide a Catholic education for those who wish.

Staffing

In parish primary schools and in secondary schools, the parish priest or canonical administrator will be a member of the appointment panel for principals. The priest will be a member of the appointment panel for deputy principals and Religious Education leaders in primary schools, and may be in secondary schools.

Selection panels will be tasked with reaching consensus to find the best possible candidate. Appointment of principals will be ratified by the Archbishop and carried out by MACS on the advice of the executive director.

Key responsibilities:

- At both primary and secondary levels, the principal makes all other staff appointments.

Property and common spaces

The parish priest has oversight of the temporal assets of all parish-related entities including the school, and is responsible for the patrimony of the land and buildings. While the ownership of all school land remains in the hands of the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation (RCTC), a *Right to Use Land and Buildings Agreement* (RULBA) for the use of land between the parish and school is provided by the company and is also a government registration requirement.

Arrangements for the use of shared facilities at each parish and school site will need to be formalised in a template schedule attached to the RULBA, which will include the overall responsibility of coordinating the usage, maintenance and financial responsibility of all shared facilities. Given the changing demographic of the Archdiocese, parishes and schools will inevitably change in structure. In some instances, parishes or schools will amalgamate as the Archdiocese determines the best way to respond to its mission of meeting the spiritual, pastoral and educational needs of the faithful. In some areas schools will need to close, while in growth areas new schools will develop.

Given the changing demographic of the Archdiocese, parishes and schools will inevitably change in structure.

As education is central to the ministry of the Catholic Church at both archdiocesan and parish level, these changes will need to keep in mind what the Statement of Mission reminds us: that a Catholic school is actively embedded in the life of the faith communities of the local Church. Addressing these changing parish and school needs will necessitate close collaboration between MACS, CAM and its parishes, and the RCTC if the education ministry is to flourish. The Archdiocesan Schools Planning and Collaboration Forum will address the rationalisation of parishes and schools into the future. The forum will also address the changing needs of existing parishes and schools when, for example, the parish priest or school principal wishes to change current arrangements regarding use of land and buildings in a particular situation.

Key responsibilities:

- The parish priest is responsible for the patrimony of the parish and school land and buildings.
- Arrangements for the transition agreements for land, buildings and assets have been made.
- A guiding template will assist priests and principals in making decisions about shared facilities.
- The Archdiocesan Schools Planning and Collaboration Forum will address the changing structures and needs of parishes and schools.

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