

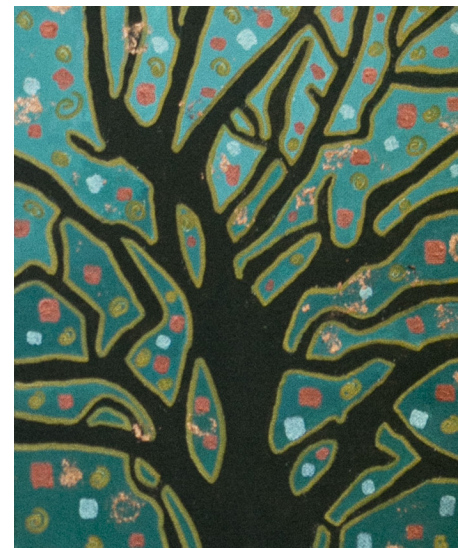


Horizons
of Hope

FOUNDATION STATEMENT:

Leadership

in a Catholic School



Untitled

The tree is a positive shape surrounded by delicate patterns, tones of colour and the richness of gold leaf.

(Bridget, Mia, Joelle, Holly, Renee, Jessica, Julia, Emma and Chiara, Year 7)

What is Leadership?

School leaders are more than just managers of an organization. They are true educational leaders when they are the first to take on this responsibility, which is also an ecclesial and pastoral mission rooted in a relationship with the Church's pastors

(Congregation for Catholic Education 2013, n. 85).

Catholic leadership is synonymous with leading a community of faith. It encompasses the capacity to articulate a clearly defined vision for the future, inspiring others to follow. In such a human-centred endeavour, leadership is both complex and dynamic. The vision and mission evolve from the local context and are aligned with systemic priorities and compliance requirements as determined by government. Within the context of a faith commitment that is lived and shared, educational leaders foster deep learning, ensure student safety and wellbeing,

and demonstrate their effective stewardship of human, financial and environmental resources.

Building the capacity of teachers to lead evidence-informed growth for students lies at the heart of the work of the leader. In a Catholic school, leaders foster a culture of professional learning and growth, where expertise is developed and shared, creating the best conditions for all teachers and students to flourish.

Catholic leaders themselves are required to be both emotionally intelligent and resilient,

recognising that leadership starts from within – they must know their own mission, beliefs, values, gifts, strengths and limitations. This results in an enduring commitment to their own personal, spiritual and professional growth. This, in turn, enhances the leader's capacity to accompany and support the growth of others.

Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student learning (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins 2008, p. 27).

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How is Leadership enacted in a Catholic school?

Formation of Self and Others

Faith formation of Catholic school community members is Christ-centred. It is an intentional, ongoing and reflective process that focuses on the growth of individuals and communities from their lived experiences, in spiritual awareness, theological understanding, vocational motivation and capabilities for mission and service in the Church and the world (NCEC 2016, p. 9).

Leaders draw from the deep well of Catholic faith and bear witness to Scripture, the sacraments, stories, symbols and beliefs. Steeped in the school's culture and charism, leaders extend an open invitation to all members of the school community to participate in the liturgical and spiritual life of the school. Following Christ's model of 'servant leadership', the leader places emphasis on prioritising the needs of others,

and providing space for reflection and interpretation. Leaders in Catholic schools provide opportunities for both educators and learners to grow and discover meaning as future stewards of God's creation.

Leaders are committed to their own personal, spiritual and professional growth and that of their school community. Leaders recognise individual strengths and areas for

development, which enables them to create opportunities to extend and support the growth of others. Through fostering deep relationships, they know how to engage the hearts and minds of everyone and accept responsibility for nurturing an environment of trust, one that invites dialogue and challenges everyone.

Leaders in Catholic schools provide opportunities for both educators and learners to grow and discover meaning as future stewards of God's creation.

Enabling Diverse and Inclusive Communities

Leaders embrace diversity within and beyond their own school. They facilitate positive relationships, welcome diverse voices, and communicate with respect and care for the dignity of each member of the school community. They build welcoming and inclusive school communities, where difference and diversity provide the context for dialogue that ensures parents

and teachers are authentic partners in each student's learning and wellbeing.

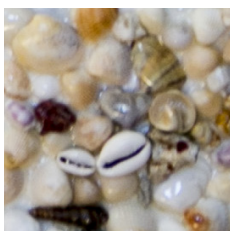
Leaders in Catholic schools enact inclusive policies and practices to accurately identify the diverse learning needs of all students. They facilitate effective and appropriate levels of support for students with additional learning needs and liaise with parents and external agencies to maximise student achievement.

Affirming that Catholic schooling is a partnership with the home and the parish (NCEC 2016, p. 6), leaders recognise that families are the first educators and remain vital to the ongoing development of their children (Second Vatican Council 1965, n. 3). Effective leaders welcome families as active partners in student achievement, fostering continuous engagement and dialogue with parents.



Where I see God

For my painting I wanted to show people where I see God, where I feel calm. I used acrylic on canvas where I tried to capture where the waves crash on the sand. (Matilda, Year 4)



Improvement, Innovation and Change

Leaders are agents of change who work collaboratively in pursuit of improvement. They play a pivotal role in creating an organisational climate that engenders trust and motivates all staff. They ensure a holistic approach to the development of initiatives and schoolwide policies and strategies, which are based on an analysis of their local context and system priorities. Leaders set the tone for critical reflection on practice and analysis of student learning data.

An articulate and compelling vision, informed by the context and charism of their school, underpins the core belief that all students have the potential to achieve success. This is known by the school community and serves as a constant point of reference to the school's priority improvement goals.

Growth and Progress

Leaders are committed to the core business of improving outcomes for all students. They ensure an evidence-based approach that enables students to progress in all aspects of their learning and to grow in the fullness of life. Leaders accept responsibility for the unique learning and developmental journey of each student.

Effective school leaders are the people in schools who create the conditions for others to understand their impact on student outcomes and continually improve their teaching practice (AITSL 2017, p. 6).

Leaders facilitate regular dialogue about teacher practice, student learning and outcomes. Inherent in this dialogue is the use of student data drawn from multiple sources, both internal school-based data and external testing including, but not limited to, NAPLAN and subject-specific testing. They participate in classroom observations, as well as giving and receiving feedback to enhance student outcomes. Leaders monitor student learning programs to ensure they are evidence-based and focused on growth in student achievement. They also recognise the benefits of modelling lifelong learning, and support and encourage their staff to engage in further study and share this with their colleagues and students.

Untitled

A highly textural and abstract piece that represents key moments and stages of my life through a domestic lens. Each tile is symbolic of pivotal events and experiences throughout my 18 years. [Sarah, Year 12]



Old is Contemporary Again

The students were immersed in a series of workshops focussing on stewardship of our planet and how, through visual art, we can raise awareness of the negative impact of being a throw away society. (Year 1 & 2)

Leaders place importance on interpersonal and participative skills. They create a culture where there is belief and confidence in the learning community taking risks, making informed decisions and being accountable for results. Leaders acknowledge that challenging conversations are an important part of building collaborative knowledge. They listen with empathy and honour people's ideas. They maintain focus by knowing when to be decisive and when to move a group forward to action.

Stewardship and Sustainable Resourcing

Leaders hold stewardship of a complex interplay of resources: human, financial and environmental. They steward these resources in support of the core business of schools – learning and teaching and improving the educational outcomes of all students. While leaders serve for today, they remain ever conscious of the needs of tomorrow and the interaction between the present and future. They are responsible for maintaining good governance,

aligning school-based policy and practice with the requirements of systemic and government compliance.

Leaders draw on Christian values and ethics in their decision-making and are accountable for the financial management and viability of the school. When addressing infrastructure and planning, leaders take account of the need for learning spaces to be well designed, equipped and maintained, with technology provision aligning with contemporary program delivery.

Leaders ensure an evidence-based approach that enables students to progress in all aspects of their learning and to grow in the fullness of life.





Why is Leadership in a Catholic school important, given the Vision and Context?

Leaders of a Catholic school community inspire and influence others to bring the Vision and Context of Catholic education to fruition.

Honour the sacred dignity of each person

Leaders believe that everyone can experience success and be supported to see their lives as being shaped by the God who is at work in all of creation.

Leaders privilege each person's sacred right to flourish and become all that they may dream to be.

Search for truth

Leaders promote the continuous critiquing, questioning, inquiring, imagining and re-imagining of themselves and their world in an ongoing engagement with Catholic beliefs and practices.

The search for truth is integral to what it means to be fully human, and in a Catholic school this search unfolds as a dialogue with the liturgy, life and tradition of the wider Catholic community.

Honour equitable access and opportunity for all

The needs of those who are marginalised or vulnerable always assume a particular priority and focus for the Catholic leader, who attends to these needs at both an individual and structural level.

Leaders believe that everyone can experience success and be supported to see their lives as being shaped by the God who is at work in all of creation.





Embrace difference and diversity

Leaders see difference and diversity as the context for dialogue, engagement and a deeper understanding of self, others and God. Leaders facilitate the creation of an environment where the diversity and charisma of the school are valued, expressed, celebrated and shared with the wider local community.

Build a culture of learning together

Leaders build shared beliefs and promote high-quality teaching through a focus on effective performance-and-development processes and continuous school improvement.

All school community members are authentic partners in each student's learning and wellbeing. Leaders and teachers work alongside students as co-contributors to their learning, ensuring student voice and building a culture of 'learning together'.

Engage with the deep questions of life

Leaders constantly open up spaces of meaning where members of the school community can engage in dialogue with the Catholic faith and with what matters most in their hearts and minds.

Commit to achieving the highest standards possible

Leaders develop a professional culture underpinned by high levels of trust, where community members collaborate and assume a collective responsibility for all students to meet high expectations.

Leaders lead an improvement agenda which is informed by evidence. Leaders are highly focused and discerning, and understand that dialogue built on trust invites others to be emboldened, to make informed decisions and be accountable for results.

Make a difference in the world

Leaders are inspired by the gospel and led by the Holy Spirit to bring God's love to the world. Filled with the hope of Christ, they are committed to action for justice and peace, in their school community and beyond, and in promoting the common good.

The Equality Tree

My artwork represents human dignity in many ways. There are different coloured leaves on the tree, depicting that we are all different in culture and religion. The trunk of the tree is God and as leaves, we are all in God's world and we have forgiveness in God no matter what mistakes we have made in our lives. The coloured leaves that have fallen on the dirt are the people in the world that have no faith and no forgiveness in God. To make our world a better place we should all have human dignity in one another and all remember we were made in God's image. (Ella, Year 5)



Resources

What resources are available to support Leadership in a Catholic school?

- *To Serve and Lead: Catholic Education Melbourne Strategic Plan 2015–2019* (CEM 2015)
- *Horizons of Hope: Vision & Context* (CEM 2016)
- *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL 2011)
- *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles* (AITSL 2015)
- *CEM Leadership Continuum* (revised December 2018)
- *CECV Leadership Standards Framework* (to be revised 2019)

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Acknowledgments

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Untitled
**Bridget, Mia, Joelle, Holly, Renee, Jessica,
Julia, Emma and Chiara (Year 7)**
Catholic Ladies College, Eltham



Untitled
Sarah (Year 12)
Loyola College, Watsonia



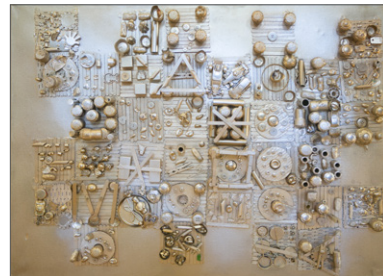
The Equality Tree
Ella (Year 5)
Sacred Heart Primary School,
Sandringham



Our Community
Whole school collaboration (P-6)
St Michael's School, Ashburton



Where I see God
Matilda (Year 4)
Holy Trinity School, Eltham North



Old is Contemporary Again
Collaboration (Year 1 & 2)
St Joseph's School, Mernda

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