



Charting New Maps of Hope, Peace and Joy in Christ: Shaping Future Directions for Catholic Education in Western Australia

BISHOPS' MANDATE FOR CATHOLIC
EDUCATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2027–2033



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*Lumen Christi College (Martin)
and Good Shepherd Catholic
Primary School (Kelmscott)*

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The person of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Catholic education.

Catholic schools “aid... the fulfillment of the mission of the People of God and to the fostering of the dialogue between the Church and mankind, to the benefit of both...”¹ Through this essential ministry of the Church, Catholic education nurtures the holistic formation of the human person, proclaims the Gospel, and invites ongoing dialogue between faith and culture.² At its centre, Catholic education fundamentally seeks to allow students to know the living Jesus. In educating children, we must shift the focus from simply learning about the historical figure of Jesus Christ. Catholic educators are called upon to provide opportunities for their students to experience a personal, engaging and dynamic relationship with Christ. Catholic education requires an integration of academics with faith, encouraging each student to encounter Jesus’ presence daily through Religious Education, prayer, scripture, sacramental opportunities and service to others.

As a vibrant ministry, Catholic school communities work in collaborative partnerships with parents, parishes and the Bishops of the Province of Western Australia. Understanding the mission and purpose of Catholic education is critical to ensure that those children attending Catholic schools and centres receive an education through which they flourish, live good lives, contribute to a just society and come to know Jesus and His Gospel message more fully.

In 1971, the four diocesan bishops of Western Australia and the superiors of the major religious teaching orders agreed to create the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) and an office to carry out executive functions related to the administration of Catholic schools across Western Australia.

This is a unique arrangement within Australia whereby the four diocesan Bishops within one state have delegated responsibility for Catholic education to one administrative governing body, CECWA.

In 2020, the Bishops of the Province of Western Australia established a legally constituted, incorporated body, Catholic Education Western Australia Limited (CEWA), to administer those Catholic schools over which they had direct ownership and governance. Under incorporation, the Bishops delegate their leadership of these Catholic schools to the CECWA.

The Archbishop of Perth, the Bishop of Bunbury, the Bishop of Geraldton and the Bishop of Broome communicate their requirements for the operation of Catholic education and Catholic schools within Western Australia through a mandate document.

Thus, the following Mandate outlines the requirements for Catholic education and Catholic schools as required by the Bishops of Western Australia. It stipulates the Bishops’ canonical, pastoral and legislative responsibilities in relation to Catholic education, Catholic schools and CEWA across their four dioceses.

This Mandate offers Gospel insights and Church teachings to guide all those involved in the ministry of Catholic education in Western Australia. It also provides clarity regarding the purpose of Catholic schools, as well as the roles and responsibilities of leaders, staff members, and all who serve in this ministry. In doing so, this Mandate promotes the great hope and joy which accompanies Catholic education, with Christ at the centre and children as the focus. Additionally, this Mandate enables all engaged in Catholic education to reflect on its purpose and to plan strategically, guided by the Gospel message of Jesus, to build on its current strengths and chart future directions.

This Mandate recognises and celebrates the primary role played by parents as the first and most important Catholic educators for their children. Catholic education aims to ensure that the baptised are properly formed in their faith to bear witness and promote the common good. Catholic education must also represent an authentic and respectful collaboration and partnership between parents and Catholic schools.

For clarity, ‘*Catholic education*’ is the shared ministry for education exercised as part of the mission of the wider Church which seeks to integrate holistic human development inspired by Jesus and the Gospels.

‘*Catholic schools*’ refers to all those schools operating under the ecclesial authority of the diocesan bishop or a competent ecclesiastical authority, such as a religious institute or a public ecclesiastical juridic person³ and includes primary, secondary, early years learning and care and long day care programs. For avoidance of doubt, this Mandate does not extend to other levels or types of Catholic education in Western Australia (for example, education provided by the University of Notre Dame Australia, the Catholic Institute of Western Australia or other Catholic tertiary education providers).

‘Catholic Education Western Australia Limited’ (CEWA) refers to the company limited by guarantee that acts as the governing body for the system of schools, centres and offices, and which is governed by the *Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA)* on behalf of the provincial bishops of Western Australia.

Additionally, this Mandate recognises the role played by the diocesan Bishops related to those schools which are owned and operated by religious institutes, a ministerial public juridic person (MPJP) or those legally incorporated bodies which align their policies with CEWA. The Bishops of Western Australia are grateful for the presence of Religious Institutes and the MPJPs in offering Catholic education to children in the State. Their contributions to the vibrancy and nature of Catholic education in Western Australia, both historically and within contemporary contexts, are significant and must be acknowledged and celebrated.

This Mandate acknowledges and respects the canonical autonomy related to the internal direction of schools which are owned and operated by religious institutes, ministerial public juridic persons or other legally incorporated bodies.⁴

The Bishops’ Mandate encompasses the Catholic education of children from six weeks old to school-aged young adults delivered through Catholic schools and centres. It is important that the leaders of Catholic

schools, regardless of their context, location or the age of their students, use this Mandate to guide their leadership and decisions.

Pope Leo XIV, in his Apostolic Letter, *“Drawing New Maps of Hope”*⁵, identifies seven pathways which are the foundation of Catholic education:

- ❖ Putting the person at the centre.
- ❖ Listening to children and young people.
- ❖ Promoting the dignity and full participation of women.
- ❖ Recognising the family as the first educator.
- ❖ Opening ourselves to welcoming all and inclusion.
- ❖ Renewing the economy and politics in the service of humanity.
- ❖ Caring for our common home.

These foundations are the inspirations for Catholic schools and find prominence in this Mandate.

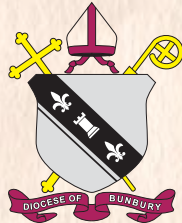
This new Bishops’ Mandate builds on the rich heritage of Catholic Education in Western Australia and responds to the contemporary challenges and opportunities of the present age. Pope Leo XIV reminds us that *“The Church celebrates a fruitful educational history but also faces the imperative to update its proposals in light of the signs of the times.”*⁶

Sacred Heart Catholic School (Goomalling) and St Joseph’s School (Northam)





Catholic Archdiocese
of Perth



Catholic Diocese
of Bunbury



Catholic Diocese
of Geraldton



Catholic Diocese
of Broome

MANDATE LETTER FOR ALL IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with great hope and confidence that we promulgate the **Bishops' Mandate for Catholic Education in Western Australia 2027–2033**.

This Mandate communicates our vision, requirements and expectations for all who share in the mission of Catholic education throughout Western Australia, including students, parents and caregivers, teachers, support staff, school leaders and all who contribute to the life of our Catholic learning communities.

Catholic education is a vital ministry of the Church. Its purpose extends beyond academic excellence to the formation of the whole person, enabling children and young people to flourish in the light of the Gospel. The Mandate seeks to provide guidance and support for our Catholic school communities as they continue this important work, remaining faithful to their mission in a rapidly changing world.

At the heart of Catholic education is Jesus Christ. Our schools are called to be authentically Christ-centred communities where the Gospel inspires every aspect of school life. Equally, they must remain steadfastly child-focused, ensuring that the dignity, wellbeing, growth and flourishing of every child are at the forefront of all endeavours. The Mandate reaffirms this vision and encourages all involved in Catholic education to remain united in this common purpose.

The development of this new Mandate has been undertaken in a genuinely synodal spirit. Through a process of listening, reflection, discernment and dialogue, many voices from across the Catholic education community have contributed to shaping its direction. We are grateful for this collaborative journey, which has been guided by the Holy Spirit and reflects our shared commitment to walking together in faith as we chart future directions for Catholic education in Western Australia.

We express our deep gratitude and appreciation to all who serve in the ministry of Catholic education. We acknowledge the dedication of principals, system leaders, teachers, support staff, volunteers and all who work tirelessly to nurture young people intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and socially. Your service is much more than a profession; it is a vocation through which you participate in the Church's mission and provide students with opportunities to encounter the living presence of Jesus Christ.

We also extend our sincere thanks to parents and caregivers who entrust their children to our Catholic schools. The Church recognises and honours parents as the first and primary educators of their children. We remain committed to supporting you in this sacred responsibility through authentic partnerships between home, school and parish, working together for the benefit of every child. We especially encourage all within Catholic schools to nurture close and intentional relationships with priests and parish communities. This will provide an indispensable foundation for nurturing faith, deepening discipleship, and strengthening the Catholic identity of the school.

Finally, we assure every child enrolled in a Catholic school in Western Australia of our continued prayerful support. We pray that each young person may grow in wisdom, faith and understanding; discover their God-given gifts; and come to know the hope, peace and joy that are found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

As we entrust this Mandate to the Catholic education community, may the Holy Spirit continue to guide and strengthen all who share in this mission. Together, may we remain faithful in our commitment to Christ-centred and child-focused Catholic education, helping young people to flourish and become people of faith, hope and service in our world.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



+ Timothy Costelloe SDB

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB DD
Catholic Archbishop of Perth



+ M. Morrissey

Bishop Michael Morrissey DD
Catholic Bishop of Geraldton



Tim Norton SVD

Bishop Tim Norton SVD DD
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+ George Kolodziej

Bishop George Kolodziej SDS DD
Catholic Bishop of Bunbury



The Most Reverend
Tim Norton SVD DD
Catholic Bishop of Broome



The Most Reverend
Michael H Morrissey DD
Catholic Bishop of Geraldton



The Most Reverend
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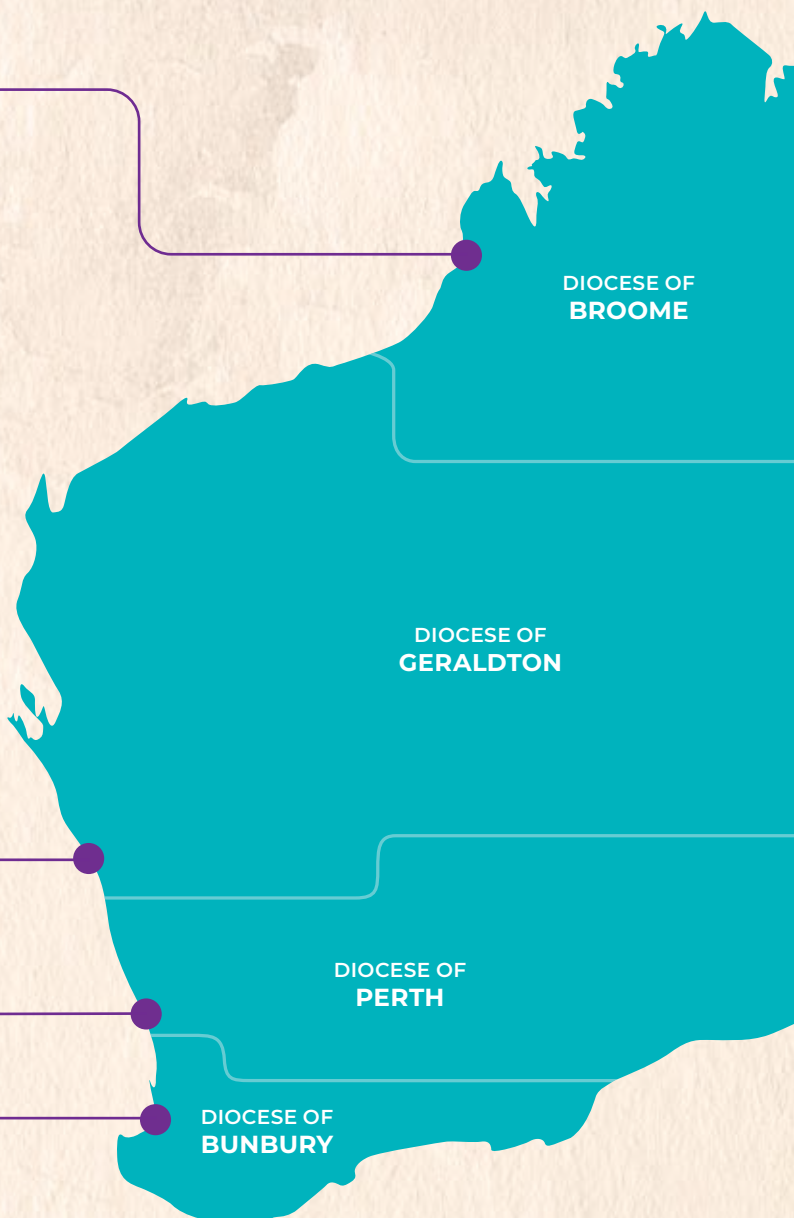
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Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Perth



The Most Reverend
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The Most Reverend
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Catholic Bishop of Bunbury



Photos courtesy of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (Giovanni Portelli) and the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth



CATHOLIC IDENTITY

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

1. Our Catholic identity requires Christ to always be at the forefront of all endeavours in Catholic education. This involves a commitment to the Catholic worldview and compels those engaged with Catholic education to understand reality, evaluate choices, culture and relationships in the light of the teachings of Jesus and the Catholic Church. In Matthew (18:20) Jesus assures us that: *“where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them”*. Therefore, Catholic school communities which place Christ at their centre and celebrate and live out His Gospel teachings, will be communities where Jesus is tangible, not as a historical character but as a real living presence, providing guidance and inspiration.

It is our Catholic identity which distinguishes the reason and purpose for Catholic education. In Luke (4:18) Jesus made clear His public ministry *“to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free...”* Further, in Luke (19:10), Jesus states that *“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

2. In Matthew (9:13), Jesus stated His mission: *“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”* Jesus’ goal was to save by proclaiming the joy of the Good News and the Kingdom of God. In Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32) we hear of God’s unconditional love and endless mercy, reflected in the joy of the father when He sees His returned son.
3. The work of Catholic schools can be viewed through the themes of peace and leaven.⁷ Pope Francis reminds us that the mission of the Church *“is to bring hope and salvation of God to the world: to be a sign of the love of God who calls everyone to friendship with Him, to be the leaven that makes the dough rise, the salt that gives flavour and preserves from corruption, to be a light that enlightens.”*⁸
4. Pope Leo XIV began his papacy with the words, *“Peace be with you”* witnessing a commitment to peace-making, not simply at the global or national level, but in the soul of the Church and the heart of our mission.⁹ In the same address, Pope Leo invited all to become *“a small leaven of unity, communion and fraternity within the world.”*¹⁰ Catholic schools should be places of peace, form peacemakers, and offer ‘leaven’ to help students realise their potential as individuals and contributing members of the community.
5. In this way, Catholic schools are not only places of learning but sanctuaries of formation and instruments of peace, where young people are formed not to dominate but to dialogue, not to conform but to discern.¹¹
6. Young people face many challenges including, but not limited to, relativism, superficiality, and emotional instability. Pope Leo reminds us that these are not merely social issues, but spiritual wounds which can undermine young people’s capacity to know God, to love one another, and to be peacemakers.¹²
7. Given these many challenges, all those engaged in Catholic education are urged to transform these challenges into *“springboards to explore ways, develop tools and adopt new languages to continue to touch the hearts of pupils, helping them and spurring them on to face every obstacle with courage in order to give the best of themselves in life, according to God’s plans.”*¹³

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IS A MISSION OF THE CHURCH

8. In the Gospel of Matthew (28: 18-20) Jesus commissioned His followers stating, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”* These were Jesus’ final words as He ascended into Heaven.

It must be emphasised that Catholic schools are an important ministry assisting with the mission of the Church; as such they should be viewed as ecclesial entities. Ecclesial relates to the Church as a community of believers and describes matters pertaining to the Church’s faith, structure, and mission. Therefore, Catholic education fundamentally supports and commits to the mission of the Church, with service to integral human development. Catholic education relates to *“human flourishing in a deeply Christian understanding – whatever makes a student more wise, more loving, more fully human is making the student reflect more fully the image of God.”*¹⁴

9. Pope St John Paul II reminds us that *“without witnesses there can be no witness, just as without missionaries there can be no missionary activity. Jesus chooses and sends people forth to be His witnesses and apostles, so that they may share in His mission and continue in His saving work.”*¹⁵ Catholic education is a missionary activity that requires those who have been called to engage with the mission to be authentic witnesses in assisting students to develop as integrated human persons, formed by the Gospel message of Jesus.

10. A Catholic school is identified by a number of unique and identifying characteristics:

- ❖ it is a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation;
- ❖ it is a community of faith, inspired and guided by the Gospels;
- ❖ members’ witness to the teachings of the Church;
- ❖ it has an ecclesial and cultural identity;
- ❖ it is defined by its mission of education as a work of love;
- ❖ it is a community of hope and inclusion;
- ❖ it acts to serve society and the common good; and
- ❖ it is focused on providing the best education possible to its students.¹⁶

Those involved in Catholic schools must participate *“in the evangelising mission of the Church and [represent] the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out.”*¹⁷ As a community of faith, a Catholic school is guided by Jesus, proclaims the Gospel, and seeks to support the integral human development of each child.

11. Catholic schools assist the wider Church in accomplishing its purposes and mission in society. This means that Catholic education exists to support the Church in teaching the Gospel that Jesus revealed to His disciples. Additionally, as an integral agency of the Church, Catholic schools are faith communities which transmit and reveal the presence of the living Christ through opportunities to proclaim and witness the Gospel, and to have opportunities to receive the Sacraments. Therefore, *“the Catholic school must be able to speak for itself effectively and convincingly... [with a] missionary thrust, the fundamental duty to evangelise.”*¹⁸

12. A Catholic school is much more than classrooms where lessons are taught; it is a community of faith that has a core educational philosophy which is attentive to the needs of today’s young people and illuminated by the Gospel message of Jesus.¹⁹

13. Pope Leo XIV reminds us that *“the Catholic school is an environment in which faith, culture and life intertwine.”*²⁰ A Catholic school is not merely a secular institution, but a welcoming community of faith in which the Christian vision permeates every subject, interaction and activity.

14. As an important ministry of the Church, and one which supports the development of the whole child, Catholic education should be available to all parents who seek to have their children enrolled in a Catholic school, within the resources and means which are available.²¹ It is important that parents have the choice of a Catholic education for their children.

15. Catholic schools play a role in offering catechesis to their students. Through catechesis, young people are provided with opportunities to deepen their experiences of God revealed by Christ.²² They do so within a contemporary context where many students receive little, if any, catechesis from their family or parish. For some students their first exposure to Jesus Christ and Gospel teachings will occur when they attend a Catholic school.

16. This situation can be especially challenging for schools, given that many students commence their Catholic education journey without many of the foundational experiences and practices which have traditionally occurred in the home and parish.

17. The percentage of people in Australia professing an affiliation with the Catholic Church, or other Christian denominations is steadily declining.²³ The number of Catholics who are engaged with their parish is even smaller. Educators working in Catholic schools should not be disheartened by this trend; rather they should view this situation as an opportunity for evangelisation and a means to share the Gospel message and provide their students with opportunities to experience the real loving presence of Jesus.

Therefore, Catholic schools must strategically plan for students to have catechetical opportunities which should include:

- ❖ opportunities for students and staff to attend Eucharistic celebrations;
- ❖ where possible, opportunities for students and staff to access the sacrament of Reconciliation;
- ❖ class, year group and whole school liturgies;
- ❖ class and school prayer, including as a minimum commencing each day with prayer;
- ❖ retreats and reflection days;
- ❖ Easter and Christmas celebrations;
- ❖ assemblies which should always have some spiritual focus;
- ❖ staff meetings which always commence with prayer;
- ❖ recognition of Mary as the model for Christian discipleship;
- ❖ celebrations of important saints' feast days, especially saints whose spirituality are associated with the school;
- ❖ the prominence of Catholic symbols and icons;
- ❖ classroom prayer spaces and religious focal points; and
- ❖ customary signs of respect, particularly for the Eucharist.

Where circumstances, such as remote locations, do not allow for a parent to easily enrol their child into a Catholic school, CEWA should, wherever possible and within the resources available, provide support through the CEWA Catechist Team to parents and parishes, especially for faith instruction and sacramental preparation. Additionally, alternative modes in the delivery of Catholic education, such as online learning, should be considered by CEWA for these children.





OUR LIVED CATHOLIC IDENTITY

18. At the very heart of Catholic education is our Catholic identity, which is the lived expression of our Vision and Mission. The Vision of Catholic education, common to all four dioceses in Western Australia, is for a

Christ-centred and child-focused community of engaged learning environments, inspiring all to actively live the Gospel.

Our Catholic schools must be places where students have opportunities to come to know Jesus and His Gospel message.

19. There must be no doubt that Catholic education receives its inspiration and direction from the Gospels. For a Catholic school to be authentically and distinctly Catholic it will express and proclaim a belief in God, made known in Jesus Christ, and made accessible in the life of the Church.²⁴ In an authentic Catholic school, *“the inspiration [and Gospel message] of Jesus must be translated from the ideal into the real.”*²⁵ This allows students to have the opportunity to come to know and experience the loving message of Jesus who is authentically present to them.
20. Our Catholic identity is at the forefront of the reason why our Catholic schools exist. In a time of increasing secularisation and disengagement by many with formal religion, our Catholic schools remain a beacon of light and hope for Christ’s message as proclaimed in the Gospels.
21. Pope Francis urged Catholic schools not to be *“nostalgic refuges”* but rather *“laboratories of discernment”* along with being *“prophetic witnesses.”*²⁶ The context within which Catholic education now serves its students is significantly different from the past. This challenge presents an opportunity for those leading and serving in Catholic schools to evangelise in a manner which is authentic and contemporary.
22. There is a clear imperative for Catholic schools to be communities of *missionary discipleship* with the focus centred on placing Jesus as the inspiration and at its centre (*discipleship*). This calls for those in leadership and positions of influence on young people (staff members) to witness, share and live the Gospel message (*mission*).
23. In presenting this core tenet of our faith, our Catholic schools are required to offer and propose opportunities for students to come to know Jesus Christ and His message of love and forgiveness. This should be done in an authentic and invitational manner by offering students with sacramental, service, prayer and learning opportunities.



THE MISSION OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

24. In an increasingly secular Australian society, not all students in Catholic schools are members of the Catholic Church; not all are Christians. There is the real possibility that there will be a time when the majority of students are, in fact, not Catholics. The Congregation for Catholic Education (now the Dicastery for Culture and Education) reminds us that the religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected, and this freedom is explicitly recognised by the Church.²⁷ Children of other faiths are welcome to attend Catholic schools, and the tenets of their faiths must be respected. Importantly, children, and their parents, who profess and practise other faiths must be supportive of their Catholic school's ethos and respectfully engage with Religious Education and catechetical opportunities.
25. In response to the growing number of non-Catholic children attending Catholic schools, there is a danger that the "*narrow*" Catholic school model develops. This view holds that there is no room for those who are not "*totally*" Catholic.²⁸ This approach contradicts the vision of a Catholic school which is open and welcoming to all who seek a Catholic education, and which promotes the model of a "*Church which goes forth*", in dialogue with everyone.²⁹
26. It is incumbent upon Catholic schools to continue a missionary impetus and genuine outreach to all and not become self-obsessed with day-to-day trivialities. Central to the mission of the Catholic school is its Catholic identity, which is an authentic "*place of encounter, a tool promoting convergence of ideas and actions.*"³⁰
27. Those who lead and serve in Catholic schools require a deep and confident understanding of the Church's origins, mission, and the place of Catholicism within its living tradition. Such understanding enables them to engage authentically with contemporary expressions of faith and to foster meaningful dialogue with colleagues and students, helping others to discover the relevance and significance of the Catholic tradition in their own lives.³¹
28. This missionary outreach of Catholic schools presents a potential dilemma to leaders and all who are committed to Catholic education. By welcoming and accepting all who seek a Catholic education, including those who are not of the Catholic faith, there is the danger that our Catholic Identity can be diluted and diminished to accommodate those who are not Catholic. It must be emphasised that a Catholic school must not "*relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Christian education... [however] to proclaim or to offer is not to impose.*"³²

SYNODALITY AND DECISION MAKING

29. Relationships and interconnectedness are central to the community of Catholic schools and offices. Imbedded in the way in which the Catholic education community operates is an expectation for, and a clear commitment by, all those engaged in Catholic education to operate in a spirit of genuine synodality.
30. This spirit of synodality should shape the Church's everyday life and work.³³ Synodality refers to the distinctive way the Church lives and carries out its mission. It reflects the Church's identity as the People of God, journeying together, gathering as one community, and responding to the call of the Lord Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel. Synodality is an attitude, and openness, a willingness to understand. It involves a commitment and trust to be open and willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit. This means that through the process of synodality, each and every member of the Church has a voice and a role to play through prayer and reflection.³⁴
31. We are reminded by the Synod on Synodality, that *"authentic discernment is made possible where there is time for deep reflection and a spirit of mutual trust, common faith, and a shared purpose... [and that] synodality represents the path by which the Church can be renewed by the action of the Holy Spirit."*³⁵
32. An essential requirement for authentic synodality to be revealed is the art of deeply listening to each other. Essentially, *"if we do not listen, and listen with open hearts and minds, then we have no chance of hearing what the Holy Spirit might be trying to say to us through the other."*³⁶ Therefore, acting in a synodal manner requires not only listening to each other, but also taking the opportunity and time to listen, reflect and discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us.
33. It is important to discern the current social, cultural, and global trends through the lens of the Gospel to understand where God is acting and where humanity is heading. Authentic discernment of the current reality of the contemporary world will assist those delivering Catholic education to understand the challenging and fluid contexts which confront children and young people attending Catholic schools.³⁷ Discernment *"...comes out of our readiness to stop, to slow down, to reflect, to listen, to let go, so as to make room for new things to happen inside of us."*³⁸
34. A genuine commitment to the practice of synodality should pervade all levels of decision making within Catholic education, providing time and space for prayer, listening, reflection, discernment and dialogue inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit.
35. Robust and honest discussions are essential when decision makers gather to discern strategy and priorities or to reach decisions on key matters. In a spirit of authentic synodality, however, we are reminded of the principle that *"time is greater than space."* Pope Francis suggests *"initiating processes rather than trying to defend positions and spaces of power. For those who seek perfect solutions and fight passionately for their realisation – often unrealistic – will end up by damaging conflict resolution even more with their attempts."*³⁹
36. Further, Pope Francis reminds us that *"synodality is not a chapter in an ecclesiology textbook, much less a fad to be bandied about in meetings. Synodality is an expression of the Church's nature, her form, style and mission."*⁴⁰

Leaders in Catholic schools and offices should be encouraged to become familiar with and practise genuine synodality in their decision making.
37. In journeying together to foster Catholic schools which are Christ-centred and child focused, Catholic education must ensure that its structures and operations reflect participation, transparency, equity and collaboration. It is only through authentic participation, with a commitment to strong transparency, equity and collaboration, that we ensure that decisions have been well considered and are focused on the mission and vision of Catholic education.
38. In making decisions, those involved in Catholic education must recognise the importance, value and efficacy of subsidiarity and participation. All people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Subsidiarity requires that decisions are made by the people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of their communities. Genuine subsidiarity should be promoted and practised by all levels of Catholic education, inspired by a genuine spirit of synodality.

39. It is at the local classroom level that the most impactful interactions will occur between teachers and students. There must always be an awareness and recognition that decisions made at a system or school level have the real potential to have a direct impact on each child. Consequently, where it is possible and age appropriate, principals and leaders in Catholic education should seek and authentically listen to the voice of the child.
40. Therefore, there are requirements for those engaged in Catholic education. Catholic educators:
- ❖ will be inspired and driven by our Catholic identity;
 - ❖ ensure that, in our decision making and interactions with all members of Catholic educational communities, we act in a synodal and respectful manner;
 - ❖ allow the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak to us, and create time for prayerful reflection to be imbedded into our decision-making processes;
 - ❖ use language and discourse, and display relationships which reflect the Catholic social teaching principles of subsidiarity, co-responsibility, common good, participation and equity; and
 - ❖ ensure that decisions are always Christ-centred, transparent, evidence-based and place the child as the focus.

GIFTS OF RELIGIOUS CHARISMS AND THEIR SPIRITUALITY

41. The Church has recognised and celebrated that over the course of its history, various religious institutes and congregations, inspired by their founders, have established Catholic schools.⁴¹ Catholic education in Western Australia traces its origins to 1846, when Sr Ursula Frayne led a group of Irish religious Sisters imbued with the gifts of Mercy.

The life of Australia's first saint, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, also provides evidence of the gifts of charism. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we see in the life of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop the gifts of the charisms of teaching, mercy and administration.⁴² Other religious teaching orders, inspired by their respective founders, through their charisms have also had an enduring impact on the development and spread of Catholic education across Western Australia. The contributions of these religious congregations must be recognised and celebrated.

42. The spirituality of these religious charisms has enriched both the global and local church. Those religious institutes and congregations who have faithfully served Catholic education in this State since the early years of the Colony, have left an enduring legacy on generations of children.

Catholic schools, especially those which have a foundation anchored in a religious charism, should recognise and celebrate the tangible gifts that these charisms provide, not only in the past, but now and into the future. Where possible, these Catholic schools should take advantage of ongoing connections with these religious orders and through their faith story, ensure that the ongoing gifts of that charism are realised.

43. In acknowledging and celebrating the gifts of religious charisms, it is important that the centrality of Jesus is not replaced or substituted by a sole focus on the founder of that charism. The founders of religious orders are characteristically inspired by a love of Jesus and a commitment to His Gospel message. Their contributions to the mission of the Church should be recognised and remembered, but always as a means of coming to know Jesus. Charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit that lead us on a pathway to Jesus as the centre of our faith.



PROMOTING THE DIGNITY AND FULL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

44. It is important to acknowledge that *“for the most part, [the Church’s] educational mission and professional commitment are principally sustained by women.”*⁴³ The 2018 Synod of Bishops advocated for an increase in the inclusion of women in Church decision-making structures, noting that there was a *“duty of justice”* that requires a *“courageous cultural conversion.”*⁴⁴ The Synod further noted that *“many women play an essential part in Christian communities, but often it is hard to involve them in decision-making processes, even when these do not require specific ministerial responsibilities... The absence of the feminine voice and perspective impoverishes debate and the Church’s journey, depriving discernment of a precious contribution.”*⁴⁵

For synodality and discernment to manifest themselves in decision making, every effort should be made for authentic inclusion of women in decision making in Catholic education. This will provide a richness and wisdom that ensures decisions are inclusive and participatory. We also should not forget that, for the most part, this educational mission and professional commitment are principally sustained by women.

The Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference has also recognised that for many decades women have constituted the majority of those attending Mass and participating in parish ministries.⁴⁶ The situation in Catholic education in Western Australia is similar, with lay women making up most staff members working in Catholic schools across the State. They continue the tradition established by religious women of strong, inspirational leadership within the Church.

Acknowledging the significant progress and commitment already made by CEWA, there remains an ongoing requirement to ensure that women are provided with equal opportunities for leadership in schools and offices and that the contributions of all lay people working in Catholic education are acknowledged, appreciated and celebrated.



CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

45. A model of contemporary Catholic leadership that reflects Christian service, following the principles of participation and subsidiarity should be promoted among all who hold leadership positions in Catholic education. Jesus proposed a revolutionary inverted model of leadership, evidenced by His example in washing the feet of His disciples as recorded in John's Gospel (13:1-17). Through His ministry, Jesus exemplified His service to humanity and His profound humility. Authentic Christian leadership is distinctive and centred on the model and inspiration of Jesus Christ. Rather than seeking power and control, servant leadership is characterised by humility, a focus on serving others and a commitment to Christian stewardship.
46. On the most fundamental level, principals and senior leaders are commissioned to ensure that Catholic education witnesses to its vision of being a Christ-centred, child-focused community of engaged learning environments, inspiring all to actively live out the Gospel. Pope Francis calls on leaders to be bold and passionate and reminds us of the words of Jesus recounted in Mark 6:50, *"do not be afraid."*⁴⁷
47. Inherent in accepting senior leadership in a Catholic school or office is the importance of committing to the nurturing of one's own formation in faith, knowledge of Catholic Church teaching and involvement in a parish community. Leadership in Catholic education represents a call by God to serve. *"You did not choose me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last."* (John 15:16) A Catholic educational leader's role is vocational – a call to serve and commit to a special ministry of the Church. Their work involves *"an ecclesial and pastoral mission rooted in a relationship with the [Church]."*⁴⁸
48. Those who are appointed to serve in Catholic education, and who freely accept those positions which have a distinctive character, are obliged to respect that character and give their active and tangible support to it. In Catholic schools it especially falls to the principal and other senior leaders to provide direction and support to ensure that our Catholic identity is recognised, celebrated and enhanced.⁴⁹ Catholic leaders should not be passive observers in the formation and education of their students but be active co-creators with God, helping to shape a world where all can truly flourish.⁵⁰
49. Guided by Jesus' example of servant leadership, the Catholic leader, inspired by the model of Jesus, empowers others and reduces the distance between 'governors' and the 'governed' and draws out the potential gifts in others. To reveal the presence of God, modelled on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, all leaders in Catholic education need to embrace a leadership style compatible with the same Gospel.⁵¹

LEADERSHIP AND THE PROMOTION OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY

50. Those given responsibility to lead and promote Catholic identity in Catholic education must commit to the following:
 - ❖ Nurturing one's personal faith formation through active participation in their parish community.
 - ❖ Promoting the Catholic Church's objectives for Catholic schools.
 - ❖ The integration of faith, life and culture as a Catholic worldview.
 - ❖ Our Catholic education principles permeating all elements of quality Catholic education.
 - ❖ Providing abundant and meaningful opportunities for catechesis through opportunities to receive the Sacraments, the Word, worship and prayer, retreats, service and community outreach.
 - ❖ Recognising, celebrating and leveraging the contributions of the laity and religious orders, charisms and their spirituality in witnessing to the mission of Catholic Education and its faith story.
 - ❖ Displaying meaningful and distinctly Catholic icons and symbols which are visible in both internal and external environments.
 - ❖ The integration of our Catholic faith and Church teaching across all aspects of the school's life and curriculum.



EDUCATION

EDUCATION

51. As a Christ-centred and child-focused ministry of the Church, Catholic education promotes and understands that education is an intentional process which enables young people to fulfil their potential, *"so that they might have life, and have it more abundantly."* John (10:10).
52. Pope Leo XIV has reminded us that Catholic education is not measured in efficiencies or output but rather *"in dignity, justice and the capacity to serve the common good."*⁵² To be an authentic Catholic school, the focus must not be solely on the achievement of academic results. Academic progress is only one dimension of the human person; therefore, Catholic schools must prioritise, educate and form the whole person. *"Catholic schools... when they are faithful to their name, are places of inclusion, integral formation and human development. By combining faith and culture, they sow the seeds of the future, honour the image of God and build a better society."*⁵³
53. When parents choose a school for their child, they wish for the best education possible. They seek *"dedicated teachers, a quality curriculum, good discipline, the best possible facilities, and a nurturing and supportive environment where their children can thrive and grow to their full potential."*⁵⁴ These should be the characteristics and aspirations of all good schools, whether faith based or secular. Therefore, it is essential that all Catholic schools have the features of all good school institutions, *"which are characterised by an organised and systematised teaching activity, [and which] offer a culture aimed at the integral education of the individual."*⁵⁵ Catholic schools seek to encourage each student to achieve to their potential.
54. What is taught within a Catholic school's programmes must be harmonised with its vision and mission. The offerings of the Catholic school *"cannot be content merely with an up-to-date didactic offering that simply responds to the demands deriving from the ever-changing economic situation."*⁵⁶
55. At its heart, Catholic education seeks to develop the whole person in an integrated and holistic manner by providing a curriculum inspired by the Gospel, effective and contemporary pedagogy, and the provision of other faith and learning experiences. Catholic education cannot be restricted solely to the constraints of classrooms and academic exercises but must also offer a plethora of fulfilling experiences which engage and support students' faith, intellect, relationships, emotions, wellbeing and physical development.
56. The support of those children who have disabilities or who live with personal circumstances and challenges which may impact upon their progress must be especially supported to assist in their holistic development as children of God.
57. System leaders, principals and school leaders must be committed to ensuring that Catholic schools fulfil the civil and legal requirements which apply to all schools, while additionally providing opportunities for each child to develop as a whole person within a committed and supportive community of faith.

HALLMARKS OF A GOOD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

58. There are significant hallmarks⁵⁷ which distinguish a good Catholic school including:
 - ❖ genuine faith communities inspired and committed to Jesus, Gospel values and Catholic social teaching;
 - ❖ a shared responsibility with the parish and wider Church for its evangelising mission;
 - ❖ a welcoming community where relationships between students, parents and staff members can flourish, underpinned by respect, understanding and acceptance;
 - ❖ the ability for students and staff members to interact and work together within a culture of care and support;
 - ❖ adaptation of the educational processes that acknowledges the circumstances and uniqueness of individual students with respect and dignity;
 - ❖ celebration of each child's genuine efforts and achievements;



- ❖ achievement of academic results which reflect high aspirations and concerted effort;
- ❖ a range of opportunities that are offered to young people for them to grow and develop their God-given abilities and talents;
- ❖ balanced focus on cognitive, affective, social, professional, ethical and spiritual aspects which seek integrated human development;
- ❖ the promotion of research and inquiry as a rigorous commitment towards truth and the respect of ideas;
- ❖ an ongoing commitment to review and improvement;
- ❖ a commitment to synodality, collaboration and genuine dialogue;
- ❖ committed staff members who are focused on the school's vision and mission; and
- ❖ servant leadership which is inspired by Jesus.

CURRICULUM INSPIRED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

59. Catholic education seeks to ensure that the curriculum, delivered through all learning areas, practises effective, contemporary pedagogy and inspires students to become committed to service of the common good and contribute as Christians to society today.
60. Catholic schools are not only required to expertly deliver the government mandated curricula, but the delivery of courses must be presented through the lens of the teachings of the Church and the Catholic worldview. This provides confidence in a Catholic school's ability to ensure that Catholic social teaching and Gospel values are imbedded in curriculum delivery.⁵⁸
61. Curriculum delivery in Catholic education must continue to be adaptive and responsive to changes in technology for the capacity for learning to be delivered across a range of contexts and platforms. Where the curriculum is delivered to students remotely and/or online, attention must be given to the development not only of students' intellectual and academic dimensions, but also to their spiritual, physical, social and emotional development and wellbeing.



Archbishop Timothy Costelloe and an Aranmore Catholic College student at LifeLink Day (photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Perth)

CATHOLIC VIEW OF EXCELLENCE

62. The Catholic education understanding of excellence must be appreciated from a Christian anthropological perspective, in that *“the dignity of the human person is rooted in [being created] in the image and likeness of God; and is fulfilled in [the human] vocation to divine beatitude.”*⁵⁹
63. The Church understands that each person is called to fulfil a divine purpose, whereby they grow in virtue toward the *“perfection of charity.”*⁶⁰ In other words, – loving as God loves. This growth must therefore be the priority of Catholic education as an essential activity and responsibility of the Church.
64. The Congregation for Catholic Education makes clear that the task of Catholic education is *“...the development of [students] from within, freeing them from that conditioning which would prevent them from becoming fully integrated human beings. The school must begin from the principle that its educational program is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person.”*⁶¹
65. Understanding the concept of excellence is fundamentally tied to the growth and development of the whole person – cognitive, affective, physical, social, ethical and spiritual – encouraging every student to develop their talents in an environment of solidarity.⁶² Catholic education, in valuing the uniqueness of each individual, and believing in the growth of the whole person, pursues excellence primarily by focusing on, and meeting the diverse needs of, each of its students.⁶³
66. Ultimately, *“the kind of education that is promoted by Catholic schools is not aimed at establishing an elitist meritocracy; the pursuit of quality and excellence is indeed important, but we should never forget that students have very specific needs: they are often going through difficult circumstances and deserve a pedagogical attention that takes their needs into account.”*⁶⁴

DISCERNING THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

67. Catholic schools educate people, first and foremost, through the living context; that is the climate that both students and teachers establish in the environment where teaching and learning activities take place.⁶⁵ Many challenges confront both the wider Catholic Church and Catholic schools. The Australian community is revealing a diminishing alignment to traditional Gospel values. In response to these numerous challenges, Pope Francis noted that *“we are not living in an era of change but a change of era.”*⁶⁶
68. Teachers and educators especially should understand their students’ contexts and realities. It must be recognised that *“every student is in some respect like all others, like some others and like no other.”*⁶⁷ Every effort should be made by staff members in Catholic schools to exhibit genuine empathy for their students’ diverse contexts. In seeking to understand students’ contexts and realities, educators in Catholic schools are reminded that the Church has always had the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Those who educate children in Catholic schools should resist the tendency to isolate or insulate their students from the secular world; rather they should encourage and assist their students to recognise the presence of God in their lives and celebrate the hope, peace and joy of Jesus’ Gospel message.⁶⁸
69. Children and young people attending Catholic schools must navigate multiple influences and factors which impact on their lives. The complexity of the modern world means that children in Catholic schools will be exposed to some, or many, of the following:

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| ❖ fractures in family and home life; | ❖ poverty and lack of access to the necessities of life; |
| ❖ loneliness; | ❖ modern day slavery; |
| ❖ questioning of traditional religious beliefs and social norms; | ❖ racism; |
| ❖ confusion and lack of clarity regarding culture and traditions; | ❖ environmental issues and the exploitation of resources; |
| ❖ influences, both positive and negative, of friends and the peer group; | ❖ terrorism; |
| ❖ influence of social and traditional media; | ❖ war; |
| ❖ artificial intelligence and its impact on independent and critical thinking; | ❖ dislocation of people due to conflict; |
| ❖ rate of change in technology; | ❖ child sexual abuse; |
| ❖ consumerism; | ❖ pornography; and |
| | ❖ egoism. |

These factors can inhibit or negatively impact on a young person’s capacity to develop as a wholly integrated human being. However, those in Catholic education must always remember that *“at the heart of Catholic education there is always Jesus Christ: everything that happens in Catholic schools ... should lead to an encounter with the living Christ. If we look at the great educational challenges that we will face soon, we must keep the memory of God made flesh in the history of mankind – in our history – alive.”*⁶⁹

70. Every student is unique, with the potential for expressing differing beliefs, values, and experiences. Additionally, students do not necessarily merely live in one stable environment. They move, sometimes with great fluidity, between different “worlds,” such as the home, school, parish, online environments and social circles. These “worlds” help them make sense of life, shape their identity and values, and influence how they understand new ideas.
71. The challenge arises when children and young people are exposed to conflicting messages, ideas and values. Some or many of these views to which students are exposed in their everyday lives, especially from peers or media, may conflict with Catholic teachings and challenge what the home and school are trying to teach about faith and values.

72. Students may come from a wide range of family situations, with some families having strong religious beliefs and practices while others may have little or no religious experience. This means that Catholic school principals, leaders and teachers cannot assume all students share the same faith foundation. This presents both challenges and opportunities for Catholic schools.
73. Principals, leaders, curriculum developers, and teachers are challenged to engage their students, but especially those who may not share or understand the Catholic faith. In presenting an integrated and holistic Catholic education, teachers:
- ❖ must understand the context, background and diversity of their students;
 - ❖ witness to the Catholic faith;
 - ❖ have the necessary knowledge and pedagogical skills to deliver content which is reflective of Gospel values;
 - ❖ make the subject relevant to students' real lives; and
 - ❖ deliver lessons which are well prepared, engaging and meaningful.
74. These challenges reinforce the requirement for teachers to be well supported both at a school and system level. This embraces requirements for expert training from universities, especially, but not limited to the University of Notre Dame Australia and the Catholic Institute of Western Australia, and ongoing and high-quality formation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

75. Religious Education is a form of the Ministry of the Word and an activity of evangelisation. It is, therefore, one of the primary instruments for faith formation in Catholic schools and an essential pillar of its Catholic identity.
76. Catholic identity must be made manifest in a Catholic school's curriculum. This requires each Catholic school to make explicit its goals and objectives, the content of its teaching and the means for communicating it effectively.⁷⁰ The epitome of this exists in the delivery of Religious Education, which needs to be the priority in every Catholic school.
77. The role of Religious Education is to complement catechesis⁷¹ and wherever possible, Religious Education teachers should seek opportunities for this to occur. Religious Education in Catholic schools has its own aims, different from those of catechesis. Fundamentally, *"catechesis promotes personal adherence to Christ and maturing of the Christian life, school teaching gives the students' knowledge about Christianity's identity and the Christian life."*⁷² However, while the aims of Religious Education and catechesis are different, they should not be viewed as discrete or unconnected. Rather, Religious Education will be enriched and supported by catechesis and assist students in their development as whole persons.
78. The Religious Education curriculum and its delivery must be accessible for students who have had little or no family or parish religious experience. The growing secular nature of Australian society, and the associated increasing number of non-Catholic children seeking Catholic education creates special challenges for teachers. Catholic schools must remain welcoming of all who seek a Catholic education while ensuring that there is no dilution of the school's purpose and Catholic identity.
79. The teaching of Religious Education must be responsive to context. For some students, religion classes may be their first encounter with Jesus and Gospel teachings. For others, these classes create opportunities to deepen interior life and prayer, to prepare for the sacraments, and to encourage participation in youth movements and service to the wider community.⁷³ This challenge is further accentuated when students within the same class have divergent knowledge and faith experiences. This will require the teacher to adjust instruction to address students' differing readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles while maintaining shared learning intentions.

80. The importance of Religious Education within a Catholic school's curriculum requires the recruitment and appointment of suitably formed and competent teachers. Principals and school leaders must provide every support and encouragement to teachers of Religious Education.
81. Acknowledging that each Catholic school is different, it is vital that those involved in planning the Religious Education curriculum recognise that there is a genuine requirement for having an empathy for the context and setting of that school community.

Therefore, *"each school will have to look carefully at the religious behaviour of the young people 'in loco' to discover their thought processes, their lifestyle, their reaction to change."*⁷⁴ This will enable students to be appropriately supported in their personal faith journeys.

82. It is important to note that studies of Religious Education in Catholic schools are centred on the transmission of knowledge and students' progress, and achievement should be recorded against this, not about what they believe or their level of faith.⁷⁵
83. Principals must work collaboratively with their Religious Education teachers and CEWA Catholic Identity and Religious Education Directorate to ensure that appropriate teaching strategies, modifications and resources are considered, while not diluting the core elements of the Bishops' mandated Religious Education curriculum.
84. The teachers of Religious Education must be especially supported to assist them in ameliorating these external factors by providing curriculum and support materials which assist them to provide relevant and engaging content in delivering the school's mission and Catholic identity.
85. It is essential that Catholic schools provide every student with high quality Religious Education instruction. This requires well-formed, trained and accredited teachers who are committed to their faith and are provided with opportunities for ongoing formation and renewal. Since Religious Education courses fall under the direct responsibility of bishops, *"it is extremely important to always remember that this teaching cannot be neglected, although it should constantly be renewed."*⁷⁶
86. Principals and school curriculum leaders must actively promote and appropriately resource Religious Education as the first learning area and ensure that the Religious Education program promulgated by the Bishops of Western Australia is delivered.

CATHOLIC VISION FOR LEARNING

87. In seeking to develop the whole Christian person, Catholic schools must commit to a Catholic Vision for Learning, ensuring that along with strong academic skills and achievement, young people will be able to collaborate, create, innovate, appreciate, and think critically to be a positive influence in a rapidly changing world. This will enable students to experience success through strong academic skills, learner agency and lifelong capabilities for learning.
88. Catholic schools must ensure that the quality of instruction, pedagogy, learning opportunities and facilities offered to students is at least as academically distinguished as those provided by the state. In other words, Catholic schools must be good schools – well run and appropriately resourced learning environments where students can flourish academically.⁷⁷
89. Pope St Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio*,⁷⁸ highlighted the importance of the good of every person and of the whole person, and covers all aspects of life including the social, economic, political, cultural, personal and spiritual dimensions. The promotion of the dignity of the human person, equality between every person, and the common good of all people are cornerstones of integral human development.
90. Every Catholic school has a responsibility to foster and enhance the integrated human development of each child. In achieving this goal, Catholic schools must not be simply factories for learning of content and various skills and competencies to satisfy the requirements of the secular world.⁷⁹

91. In providing for the integrated human development of each child, Catholic schools will:
- ❖ create a culture which is Christ-centred and child-focused;
 - ❖ rejoice and celebrate the uniqueness of each child;
 - ❖ integrate human education which supports the development and enhancement of each child's spiritual, academic, social, emotional, physical and psychological dimensions, accompanied by comprehensive pastoral care;
 - ❖ deliver the government mandated curricula by expert teachers with the lens and precepts of Gospel values, Church teaching and the Catholic worldview;
 - ❖ deliver Religious Education programs which are taught by well qualified teachers who inspire their students by their personal witness;
 - ❖ support Religious Education teachers by a Religious Education curriculum framework which is sequential and reflecting the developmental requirements of students, and with contemporary resources readily available;
 - ❖ provide age-appropriate Christian service-learning opportunities which enable students to put their faith into action;
 - ❖ provide opportunities for access to the Eucharist, liturgical experiences, sacraments and prayer and an engagement with the local parish community; and
 - ❖ deliver research informed, evidenced based wellbeing programs which reflect Catholic social teaching.
92. The Catholic school curriculum is unique, in that it must deliver the mandated government curriculum through a Catholic perspective. This requires all involved in Catholic education, and especially teachers, to view the world through the lens and reality of the Catholic faith and its teachings. This involves the practise of evaluating choices, culture and relationships in light of the teachings of Jesus and the Church. This Catholic worldview must be present in the delivery of all aspects of the curriculum and other school activities. Catholic schools must not revert to secularism – a realm where Catholic teachings and Gospel values are totally absent. A Catholic school must be distinctive as it is *“a school for the human person and of human persons”*⁸⁰ concentrating on the integral human development of each child.
93. Practically, Catholic schools must be educational communities of excellence in which the culture, pedagogies and practices:
- ❖ foster Christ-like healthy and respectful relationships between students and staff members, enabling all to learn and grow in the image of God;
 - ❖ encourage and facilitate student engagement;
 - ❖ empower each student to achieve his/her God-given potential through the provision of quality learning experiences and comprehensive pastoral care;
 - ❖ utilise a wide instructional range that reflects contemporary pedagogies that engage, challenge and progress student learning;
 - ❖ ensure all aspects of the learning environment scaffold and accelerate each student's learning; and
 - ❖ utilise evidence and resources to ensure child safety and wellbeing.



Hammond Park Catholic Primary School (Hammond Park),
Mater Christi Catholic Primary School (Yangebup)
and Emmanuel Catholic College (Success)

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

94. A culture of ongoing renewal and improvement must permeate Catholic schools. This culture should be imbedded in each Catholic school's vision for learning, characterised by strong pastoral care and a commitment to Gospel teaching. Processes to review, discern, identify and implement improvement will ensure that students in Catholic schools continue to receive the best opportunities to flourish, inspired by the example of Christ.
95. A positive and enriching school climate is fundamental to effective learning and teaching. School climate is *"the sum total of the different components at work in the school which interact with one another in such a way as to create favourable conditions for a formation process."*⁸¹ Principals and school leaders should take great care and devote considerable attention to creating a productive and enriching school climate which allows for the growth of all students across all domains of the human person. All sectors of a Catholic school, students, parents and staff members, must be authentically engaged to create and maintain a school climate which is Christ-centred and child-focused.

THE DIGITAL WORLD, TECHNOLOGY AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION

96. The curriculum in a Catholic school must be flexible and adapted where required to ensure that each child enrolled in a Catholic school is provided with opportunities to flourish. In delivering this curriculum, Catholic schools are *"called upon to offer an educational service appropriate to the present times."*⁸² This encompasses the significant opportunities and challenges associated with the use of digital technology, artificial intelligence and online learning.
97. In a time of the misuse of artificial intelligence, a proliferation of unreliable sources of information and the phenomenon of *'fake news'*, students in Catholic schools must be provided with the skills to discern information and determine the accuracy of what is presented to them. Pope Francis noted that: *"Today's vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness."*⁸³
98. Additionally, when presenting information to students, teachers should be guided by the Church's teachings. This will provide *"confidence based not on a feeling, but on faith... and the ability to make judgements about what is true and what is false."*⁸⁴



99. The wonderful gifts and potential of technology, manifested by artificial intelligence (AI), the internet, and social media must be viewed with caution and appropriate oversight, especially when used by young people. Catholic education, in partnership with parents, must ensure that all students enrolled in Catholic schools are educated and supported in the correct application of these technological gifts.
100. The Church's document *"Antiqua et Nova"*⁸⁵ warns of the specific dangers of the inappropriate use of AI and highlights the importance and gifts of human intelligence. Pope Leo XIV reminds us that *"artificial intelligence and digital environments must be oriented towards the protection of dignity, justice and work; they must be governed according to criteria of public ethics and participation; they must be accompanied by adequate theological and philosophical reflection."*⁸⁶
101. Additionally, Pope Leo XIV in his encyclical *"Magnifica Humanitas"* cautions that AI may imitate positive human communication. Such programs may provide words of advice, empathy, friendship and love which at times might be helpful; however, *"for less discerning users, it can also be misleading, creating the illusion of a relationship with a real personal subject."*⁸⁷ Nothing can replace the importance of human relationships and interactions, inspired by Gospel values. Catholic schools must assist students in developing the necessary skills to use AI in a productive manner and discern its shortcomings and dangers.
102. Equally, the document *"The Church and the Internet"*⁸⁸ outlines the significant benefits and real challenges and threats to children when accessing and using the internet. Catholic education must ensure through its policies and procedures, imbedded in a deliberate curriculum, that all students are provided with opportunities to appropriately access, discern and use the internet. Technology must also be used appropriately and lawfully, in a manner that ensures the privacy and personal information of students and stakeholders are protected.
103. In an ever widening and pervasive digital environment, people are increasingly interconnected with each other in a manner which is unprecedented in world history. This is especially true for young people. Utilising the unprecedented capacity for digital connectedness, there is a real opportunity for Catholic schools, and the wider Church, to recognise the potential for greater pastoral engagement and evangelisation.
104. The Synod of Bishops notes that *"rather than seeing digital spaces as secondary and supplementary, the Church must recognise them as integral to its mission, particularly in a world where many people's primary means of engagement is online."*⁸⁹ Therefore, leaders and teachers in Catholic schools must provide students with the necessary and age-appropriate skills to appreciate the incredible opportunities and benefits of technology while being able to discern its limitations and capacity for misuse.



COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY

105. St Paul reminds us in Romans (12:5), *"In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."* Therefore, the Church views Catholic schools and parishes not so much as institutions but as communities of Christian life and learning. Further, in Corinthians 12: 14-29 we are reminded that *"the body does not consist of one member but of many... But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body."*
106. Apart from the special and unique faith communities which exists in every Catholic school across the State, all Catholic schools can also be viewed as a singular Catholic community of multiple parts, that places Christ at the centre and with the focus being unequivocally on each child. Further, as a part of the wider ecclesial ministry, Catholic schools are part of the whole body of the Church, both locally and at a universal level.
107. It is important to highlight and affirm that the Catholic school's mission is carried out in a spirit of cooperation between students, parents and staff members.⁹⁰ It is these groups who constitute a tripartite arrangement within the Catholic school community. Pope Leo XIV refers to Catholic education as a collective endeavour. *"The educational community is a 'we' where teachers, students, families, administrative and service staff, pastors and civil society converge to generate life."*⁹¹
108. In a spirit of collaboration and solidarity, the whole Catholic school community has a responsibility for implementing its mission, not only those who have designated leadership positions. However, this mission is not pursued or realised in isolation but within, and supported by, the local parish faith community and the wider universal Catholic Church.
109. Catholic schools of excellence are communities of faith animated by communion and a spirit of pastoral care, where the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of every child are paramount. Parents are recognised as the primary educators of their children, and schools must actively partner with families, parishes, and the wider Church to support the holistic development of each student.
110. Catholic schools, supported by CEWA, should integrate research and evidence to continue to support the integral human development of all children, provide outstanding pastoral care, and develop wellbeing programs which reflect Catholic social teaching.

CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION

111. The protection of children and vulnerable people is an essential dimension of the Gospel proclaimed by the Church. Christ himself entrusts us with the care of those who are weakest and most defenceless, reminding us that *"whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me"* (Matthew 18:5). For this reason, all involved in Catholic education have a responsibility to welcome children and vulnerable people with openness and compassion, and to ensure that they are safeguarded through the creation of environments in which their dignity, safety, and well-being are always the highest priority.⁹²
112. *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse*⁹³ highlighted the shameful historical shortcomings of the Church and Catholic education across Australia in protecting many young people. All Catholic schools must continue to reflect on the learnings of the Royal Commission and embed child safety as their first priority.
113. Pope Francis reminds us that *"the effective protection of minors and a commitment to ensure their human and spiritual development, in keeping with the dignity of the human person, are integral parts of the Gospel message that the Church and all members of the faithful are called to spread throughout the world."*⁹⁴
114. Pope Leo XIV has reaffirmed this position: *"Your mission is to help ensure that abuse is prevented. Yet prevention is never just a set of protocols or procedures. It is about helping to form, throughout the Church, a culture of care, in which the protection of minors and persons in vulnerable situations is not seen as an obligation imposed from outside, but as a natural expression of faith."*⁹⁵



St Mary Star of the Sea College (Carnarvon)

115. All Catholic schools and offices must be totally committed to the care and safety of everyone within their communities, but especially children and vulnerable persons. All civil and Church requirements related to child safeguarding must be met and there can be no tolerance for any actions or behaviours which place children at risk of harm. All Catholic schools and offices must ensure that they always remain fully compliant with, and adhere to, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards⁹⁶ and the aligned CEWA processes.
116. Mandatory child safety protection training and procedures must remain as the cornerstone in placing children and their safety as the first and paramount priority for all engaged with Catholic education.
117. In creating, monitoring and maintaining child-safe communities, Catholic schools must undertake strategies and create safe environments which allow the voice and concerns of children to be heard. Principals and school leaders have an essential role to ensure that these requirements are met.

ROLE OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

118. Parents are the first and primary educators of their children.⁹⁷ In exercising this right, they should have the opportunity to enrol their children into a Catholic school. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that *"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues."*⁹⁸
119. Catholic schools support parents as first educators by fostering a collaborative partnership that recognises them as the primary influence in their child's academic, spiritual, and emotional development.⁹⁹ Through the provision of resources, clear communication, and meaningful opportunities to connect home life with school values, Catholic schools promote a shared approach to faith formation, learning, and wellbeing.
120. It is the responsibility of the whole Catholic community to strive towards the goal of making Catholic schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and children.¹⁰⁰ In accessing a Catholic school, parents should be able to freely choose the Catholic school community which will best support their child's educational requirement.¹⁰¹
121. Through the operations of CEWA and their provision of Catholic schools across the State, parents should have the choice to access an education for their children which has at its core the message of Jesus Christ espoused in the Gospels.
122. To fulfil their Gospel mandate, Catholic schools need to be accessible to all parents who seek a Catholic education for their children, as far as resources allow. It is essential for each school community to minimise potential barriers for parents such as fees and other school costs, for *"... (these) can result in the exclusion from Catholic schools of those who cannot afford to pay, leading to a selection according to means which deprives the Catholic school of one of its distinguishing features, which is to be a school for all."*¹⁰²

ENGAGEMENT WITH PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

123. Parents should be reminded that Catholic schools play an important role in assisting them in the education and faith development of their children.¹⁰³ There needs to be an authentic and complementary partnership between parents and members of staff working in Catholic schools. Further, parents, students and staff members, as parts of the Catholic school community, must always be supportive of the Catholic school's ethos and purpose – to be Christ-centred and child-focused. The obligations of parents related to their engagement and support of Catholic schools should be published in a parental code of conduct.
124. There are likely many reasons as to why parents choose a Catholic education for their children. Among some of the significant factors are:
- ❖ the attraction of a school community which combines and balances both the Catholic faith and teachings along with academic excellence resulting in an integration of faith, culture and life;
 - ❖ a desire to partner with the Catholic school in the faith formation of their children;
 - ❖ the high standards for student achievement supporting student success;
 - ❖ the availability of technology to enhance their children's education;
 - ❖ the requirement for students to undertake service to others;
 - ❖ the emphasis on teaching children respect of self and others;
 - ❖ the focus on moral development and self-discipline;
 - ❖ the preparation of children to be productive citizens and future leaders;
 - ❖ the relative success achieved by students attending Catholic schools;
 - ❖ the presence of dedicated and committed staff who provide high teaching standards; and
 - ❖ the provision of safe, welcoming and pastorally caring learning environments
- It is likely that there will be different priorities for different parents, and all of the above factors are important and would be characteristic of a good Catholic school.
125. However, Principals and leaders in Catholic schools must manage these expectations and ensure that their communities are characterised by an unequivocal commitment to providing the best possible *Catholic* education. It must be made clear that support for the ethos of a Catholic school, its Catholic teachings and values apply equally to the parents of children who are Catholic, and to those of other Christian faiths, other religious groups, and those of no faith. There must be a clear understanding by parents that a Catholic school is a place of evangelisation which invites all members of the community to come to know and experience the love and saving message of Jesus proclaimed in the Gospels.
126. Parents and caregivers are to be encouraged to be engaged and involved with their school communities noting their family and work commitments. Possible membership in groups such as the School Advisory Council, parents' and friends' groups, parent councils and other school community groups allow parents to make valuable and considerable contributions to their child's Catholic school community.



St Lawrence's Primary School (Bluff Point)

127. Catholic schools can engage with parents in a variety of ways including:¹⁰⁴

- ❖ Spiritual partnership: supporting the spiritual journey at home by encouraging family prayer, discussing Gospel values, and fostering a deeper connection to faith.
- ❖ Accompanying parents in their support of their children's sacramental preparation.
- ❖ Active engagement opportunities: involving parents through parents' and friends' groups, School Advisory Councils, and volunteering, enabling parents to contribute meaningfully to school life and decision making.
- ❖ Communication and resources: providing clear communication and practical resources to help parents understand the curriculum, support learning at school and home, and navigate key transitions (e.g. Catholic School Parents Australia resources).
- ❖ Targeted support: strengthening parental engagement to enhance student motivation and learning outcomes, with tailored support that responds to the diverse needs of families.
- ❖ Welcoming environment: creating an inclusive and respectful school culture that values the home-school partnership and recognises parents as the first educators of their children.
- ❖ Early childhood support: offering playgroups and early learning experiences that support parents and children from the earliest stages of education.

128. Those children who have been baptised into the Catholic Church will have the opportunity to deepen their faith and have access to the Church's sacraments. For this reason, the parents of baptised Catholic children are especially encouraged to seek a Catholic education for them.¹⁰⁵

129. Enrolment into a Catholic school is not automatic. This requires involvement in an application process which will allow parents and caregivers to understand the requirements of attendance at a Catholic school. By enrolling their child into a Catholic school, parents or caregivers must understand that they become members of a Catholic faith community which will promote Gospel values and Catholic social teaching.

In those situations where the number of applications for places in a particular Catholic school exceeds the number of places which are available, clear enrolment priorities must be published and be transparently applied. In transitioning from primary to secondary education, children who have attended a Catholic primary school should be viewed favourably for enrolment in Catholic secondary schools.



130. There is an obligation on parents to cooperate closely with the principals, leaders, teachers and staff members of the Catholic schools to which they entrust their children to be educated.¹⁰⁶ This includes, but is not limited to, attendance at parent-teacher meetings and other opportunities where their child's progress can be discussed with staff members. Similarly, principals, leaders, teachers and staff members, in fulfilling their duties as Catholic educators, should collaborate and work in authentic partnership with parents.

Notwithstanding these obligations, there must be a recognition and understanding of some of the complex contexts which exist in Catholic school communities in Western Australia. Within some cultures, there may be a reluctance for parents to play an active and participatory role in their child's formal education. Equally, in some communities there may be social complexities which make direct parental involvement challenging. Principals and leaders must understand their community's context and provide other opportunities for parental involvement. This may involve engagement with extended family members, community elders and community groups.

131. In "*Amoris Laetitia*"¹⁰⁷ Pope Francis highlights the real dangers when rifts arise between the family and the Catholic school. Principals and leaders in Catholic schools are urged to be proactive in attempting to heal rifts and reset relationships with parents who may be disengaged or disenchanted with their Catholic school. This should occur through dialogue and in a synodal manner, ensuring that parental concerns are respectfully heard. CEWA must ensure that there are clear, transparent and published processes for dispute and complaint resolution which apply to all CEWA schools.
132. In a society which is increasingly impacted by fractured families, the role played by caregivers should be acknowledged and supported by the Catholic school. Many children enrolled in Catholic schools live in diverse family settings and circumstances. This requires principals, leaders and staff members in Catholic schools to be sensitive to these complexities and understand the challenges which might arise by complex family dynamics. Structures and procedures in Catholic schools need to be sympathetic to these complexities to ensure that every child feels loved and supported, while ensuring compliance to legislative requirements.
133. The role of grandparents, and other extended family members, must be highlighted and acknowledged by Catholic schools. It is important to recognise that many grandparents and extended family members have assumed increasing support roles in the lives of their grandchildren and relatives due to the commitments and circumstances of parents. Principals and school leaders should take advantage of the skills, experience, witness to faith and availability that grandparents and extended family members can bring to a Catholic school community.
134. Catholic School Parents Western Australia (CSPWA) is recognised as the peak body in providing representation, advocacy and support for parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools in the State. The CSPWA especially provides a unified voice for Catholic school parents when advocating for support and financial assistance from both State and Federal governments. Principals are encouraged to seek affiliation for their P&F with CSPWA.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AS WELCOMING AND PASTORAL COMMUNITIES

135. Jesus consistently showed love, compassion and inclusion for the poor and marginalised, challenging the social norms of His society (including Luke 6:20-23, Luke 4:18-19, Matthew 25:40). The values of the Gospel lead to genuine peace and harmony. They make easier the promotion of reconciliation, justice, compassion and mercy, as well as a special commitment to those whose lives are lived at the margins, including the poor, those with physical or intellectual disability and to all with special needs.
136. Our Catholic schools must always be places which authentically promote the essence of a Christ-inspired community. Catholic schools must be invitational, inclusive and welcoming and provide opportunities for all students to come to know Jesus Christ and His Gospel message. Non-Catholic children and their families must be genuinely welcomed and invited to appreciate and experience the real love and message of Jesus.
137. At the heart of a Catholic school community is the dignity of the human person. This dignity is promoted and celebrated through inclusive practices, where each person, formed in the image of God, is welcomed, valued, recognised and celebrated for their uniqueness. Inspired by the example of Jesus who actively welcomed everyone across cultural, physical, ethnic and religious divides, authentic Catholic school communities must be committed to inclusion and diversity. In a Catholic school *“psychological, social, cultural and religious diversity should not be denied, but rather considered as an opportunity and a gift.”*¹⁰⁸
138. Catholic school communities which seek to live out Catholic social teaching will exhibit a spirit of solidarity with, and service to others, and especially the disadvantaged. They will exhibit a genuine and demonstrative respect for the dignity and rights of every human person, be they born or unborn.
139. Additionally, some students, often due to circumstances beyond their control, become disengaged with formal and structured education. Often these students suffer from emotional, psychological and physical trauma. Modified courses, with additional support and more flexible educational opportunities should be offered to these students to best support and encourage educational success.
140. Often small adjustments and some degree of flexibility on behalf of Catholic school principals and leaders can create a more welcoming environment to those who feel alienated or alone. While not undermining the requirements for, and the value of consistency, discipline and standardisation, simple adaptations or modifications to items such as school uniforms, should be permitted for students.
141. Additionally, appropriate and loving support should be provided to those students who are struggling with their sense of self and sexual identity.¹⁰⁹ Young people, especially in their formative years, may struggle with their sense of who they are, where they fit in, and question whether they are valued and appreciated. These struggles may manifest themselves in a variety of ways. Questions of gender and sexual identity are complex matters for schools to manage. The overriding consideration, however, is that every person is loved unconditionally by God. As a community of faith inspired by the Gospels, Catholic education has a responsibility to witness to this love and be supportive of each person.
142. During their time in a Catholic school, some children and young people may experience isolation, disengagement, alienation and a lack of acceptance for a number of reasons, including:

❖ disability and additional needs;	❖ alienation from their families and friends;	❖ grief and loss;
❖ physical or mental illness;	❖ alienation from their community;	❖ lacking self-worth or purpose in life;
❖ physical, sexual or emotional abuse and trauma;	❖ struggle with sense of self and sexual identity;	❖ loneliness;
❖ violence and oppression in their country of birth;	❖ homelessness;	❖ not feeling loved; and
	❖ living in poverty;	❖ not knowing the real presence and love of Jesus.

With Christ as our inspiration and guide, Catholic education must always be responsive and supportive, in a holistic and life-giving manner, to the pastoral needs of the children in its care.



PASTORAL CARE OF STUDENTS WITHIN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

143. Catholic schools must educate their students within a culture of care centred on the example of Christ's unconditional love. The essence of this care originates in the home with the family and must extend to Catholic schools. This involves passing *"on a system of values based on the recognition of the dignity of each person, each linguistic, ethnic and religious community and each people, as well as the fundamental rights arising from that recognition... This culture of care is dedicated to patient listening, constructive dialogue and mutual understanding."*¹¹⁰
144. Catholic school communities must work closely with parents and caregivers to support the formation and welfare of their children. Children need to be supported in a holistic manner, and this is best achieved when the home and Catholic school are working together. Because of the many pressures, challenges and complexities present in society, Catholic schools must place pastoral care at the forefront of their activities.
145. Pastoral care focuses on all aspects of a child's development and is based on the integral human development of each child. Each child, created in the image and likeness of God, should be able to flourish in the light of the Gospel message of Jesus. In this way students will have a true sense of worth and belonging and recognise that they are part of a genuine loving Christian community. Therefore, with Christ as our foundation and guide, holistically Catholic schools must place the spiritual growth, physical development, and emotional and psychological wellbeing of each person as a priority.
146. The physical and mental health, wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is foundational to the Catholic faith and traditions, and of the utmost importance to Catholic school communities. Additionally, the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration,¹¹¹ agreed to by all Australian governments, highlights the responsibility of schools, together with students, parents, carers, families and the broader community, to promote the development and wellbeing of young Australians.
147. It is necessary for staff members who have specific responsibility for the pastoral care of students to have appropriate qualifications, experience, ongoing training and formation in light of the Gospel to provide the required support to students in need. While qualified staff members will provide high level support to students with additional needs, whether physical, emotional or psychological, it is incumbent upon all staff members in Catholic schools to deliver high quality and appropriate pastoral care to support the holistic development and wellbeing of all students. In this way, staff members accompany students in their personal faith journeys.
148. With pastoral care of each child as a priority, schools must develop well planned and resourced programs to promote the integral human development of all students. This will include specific programs to support wellbeing, which is an important component of a Catholic school's commitment to pastoral care. These programs must be informed by appropriate research and be evidence informed.



STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FIRST NATIONS FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

149. Catholic education must be committed to strengthening relationships with First Nations families and communities. This includes improving educational outcomes for First Nations students, while acknowledging, respecting and reflecting on First Nations peoples' histories and cultures for the benefit of all in our school communities. This will be achieved by developing strategies which strengthen relationships between Catholic schools and their local First Nations communities.
150. Catholic education must demonstrate respect for First Nations culture and traditions and aspire to develop culturally responsive schools where the rich and thriving culture, story, knowledge and experience of First Nations Peoples are celebrated by all. This will involve developing initiatives which address educational and cultural needs, appropriate "On Country Learning", and characterised by authentic partnerships with families and communities.
151. As a priority, Catholic education staff must undertake formation and ongoing training which permits them to become culturally responsive. This requires the development of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours necessary for Catholic educators to respect, include, and effectively teach First Nations students, fostering culturally safe environments. It is a continuous, reflective journey focusing on understanding history, racism, and building respectful relationships, rather than a one-time training.
152. It is essential that First Nations students have equitable access and participation in Catholic schools, and every opportunity to achieve educational outcomes. Additionally, there must be a strategic intent and commitment to providing educational opportunities to First Nations children to enable them to reach their full potential with a strong sense of identity and agency.
153. Catholic education must work ceaselessly to achieve genuine harmony and reconciliation. This will be manifested in practical terms by prioritising the enrolment and ongoing support of First Nations children.



Gija Day at Ngalangangpum School (Warmin Community)

OLA Kindness Kitchen supporting
St Vincent de Paul and the parish community,
at Our Lady's Assumption School (Dianella)



PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH PARISHES

154. Catholic education is an integral part of the wider Church and its mission. The various communities within the Church that draw their inspiration from the values of the Gospels, including families, schools, groups, youth organisations, *"must give voice and reality to an education truly based around the human person... There must be new commitment to the individual seen as 'person in communion' and a new sense of his or her belonging to society."*¹¹²
155. Students in Catholic schools thrive when there is a vibrant, authentic, reciprocal and complementary relationship with the parish, parish priest and clergy. This relationship must be complementary, respectful and based on a real willingness to work cooperatively to support children, their families and staff members. There are also great benefits which can be created for parish communities when the local Catholic school is genuinely viewed as an important and integral part of the parish community. In those schools where Priest chaplains minister, there are also opportunities to promote positive engagements between the Catholic and parish.
156. Positive, life-giving and spiritually enriching relationships between a Catholic school and the parish need to be timely, well planned and rely on mutual understanding. This relationship can be enhanced by:
 - ❖ intentional collaboration between the parish and school leadership team;
 - ❖ generous opportunities for the school community to have access to Masses, liturgies and community prayer;
 - ❖ strong collaboration for Sacramental programs between the parish and school;
 - ❖ real and visible presence of the parish priest within the school community and grounds. This may require the principal to be proactive in inviting the parish priest to appropriate events and celebrations;
 - ❖ opportunities for shared celebrations between the parish and school;
 - ❖ pastoral attentiveness to families who wish to know more about the Catholic faith and practice;
 - ❖ cooperation between parish and school around property, resources and staff;
 - ❖ more deeply appreciating the school's effectiveness in mission and outreach; and
 - ❖ greater understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the parish priest, principal and teachers.¹¹³



Bishop George Kolodziej, CEWA executive, staff and students at the opening of St Marcellin Catholic College (Madora Bay)

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY

157. Appropriate advocacy across a range of religious, social and political realms is required to ensure that the Catholic voice is articulated and well represented within the educational sphere in Western Australia. This is especially important at a government level where State and Australian governments, on behalf of Australian taxpayers, provide significant funding to Catholic schools. In an increasing secular world, the value and benefits of Catholic education and its impact on the formation and development of its students must be articulated, promoted, communicated and celebrated. There should be active promotion of the benefits of Catholic education across a range of media, including school communities, parishes and across the broader society.
158. Many community leaders who have made significant contributions to Australian society have been educated in Catholic schools. Governments must be regularly reminded of the value and contributions of Catholic education, and that without appropriate recurrent and capital funding, the accessibility and affordability of Catholic education in Western Australia is threatened. Additionally, it is important to celebrate the fact that CEWA is the sole provider of education in several locations in this state, especially in remote areas such as the East Kimberley. This should be made known to the wider community to ensure that the value of Catholic education to the community of Western Australia continues to be acknowledged.
159. To sustain Catholic education into the future, CEWA should continue to explore opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and relationships which enhance and support our system of schools. Principals should ensure that where their school community enters partnerships or collaborations with third parties, its values and that of the external party, are in alignment with Catholic social teaching and aligned to CEWA priorities.





VOICE OF THE CHILD

160. Children and young people should be active participants in the educational process. As they grow older, they should become increasingly involved in their own education and the decisions which impact it.¹¹⁴ In line with this sentiment and our vision of Catholic education to be Christ-centred and child-focused, it is critical that leaders, and all who work in Catholic Education, genuinely and authentically listen to the voice of children. This listening should then lead to reflection, discernment, and where appropriate, action. Children should have the opportunity in age-appropriate ways, to have agency and voice in their learning.
161. In a spirit of subsidiarity, Catholic schools should establish, if they have not already done so, student councils, or similar bodies, which enable students to express their thoughts and ideas, especially on matters which have a direct impact on them. Additionally, such student bodies have the capacity to provide students with opportunities to practise synodality and leadership.
162. Additionally, in line with best practices centred on child safety and protection, schools must encourage all children to express to a trusted adult whenever they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Staff members, through CEWA's Child Safety Training, should be familiar with signs of child abuse and ensure that children are supported and the matter reported to the appropriate person or agency in line with legislative requirements and CEWA policies.

CODES OF CONDUCT

163. The Congregation for Catholic Education states that it is essential for Catholic schools, irrespective of their governance structures, to be clear about the mission and the conduct of its members.¹¹⁵ CEWA must ensure that the Code of Conduct is regularly reviewed and updated, and that it is clear and unequivocal regarding behavioural expectations of all members of school and office communities, including staff members, religious, clergy, students, parents, caregivers and volunteers. Specific codes of conduct must be produced for staff members, parents and caregivers, and students. Equally, members of religious orders and members of the clergy, including parish priests, must understand the importance of adherence to the Code of Conduct, including the requirements regarding visiting classrooms and school events.



STEWARDSHIP

STEWARDSHIP

164. The essence of Christian stewardship revolves around care for the gifts which we have received from God. Pope Francis calls for gratitude and stewardship, stating, *"Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all."*¹¹⁶ The ultimate gift is our human life and that we are created in the image and likeness of God. Every person has inherent dignity and every life is sacred. The innate dignity of each person is the foundation and inspiration for the foundation of Catholic schools.¹¹⁷
165. In 1 Peter (4:10) we are reminded that: *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God."* Jesus teaches that we are all stewards of the gifts, resources, abilities and time which we have received from the Creator. There is an obligation on the recipients of these God-given gifts to use them in a positive and actionable manner, rather than simply receive them. Jesus teaches us that we are also responsible for the gifts and talents which we receive and that there is an expectation to use them wisely and for the common good. (Matthew 25:14-30)
166. Underpinning stewardship is the absolute requirement for it to be directed towards mission; in the case of Catholic education this means providing students with an excellent Christ-centred education which supports the integral development of the whole person. To promote and deliver the mission, resources are required. However, the maxim *"no money, no mission"* must also be accompanied by the position that where there is *"no mission, [there is] no need for money."*¹¹⁸

ACCESSIBILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

167. Catholic education must be committed to equity, identified through the lens of Catholic social teaching. This means that every child has inherent human dignity and a right to quality education, centred on Christ. Therefore, Catholic schools must remain accessible and affordable to all parents who seek a Catholic education for their children. This requires an unequivocal commitment to parents whose financial and material circumstances might ordinarily preclude access to a Catholic education for their children, to have a dignified and confidential pathway to enrol in a Catholic school.

Catholic education must always remember *"losing the poor is losing the [Catholic] school."*¹¹⁹ Additionally, Pope Leo XIV states that for the Christian faith *"the education of the poor is not a favour but a duty."*¹²⁰ We must ensure that a Catholic school is *"a school for all, especially the weakest."*¹²¹

168. The fundamental proposition for a Catholic school to be a school for all, and especially those children who are disadvantaged, have a disability or require special support, demands principals and leaders to especially encourage these children to attend a Catholic school. In essence this is the *'raison d'être'* for Catholic education. The founders of the great teaching orders within the Church recognised this, establishing Catholic schools which actively sought to educate those children whose lives were lived at the margins of their societies. We continue to celebrate the inspiration and example of women and men such as St John Baptist de La Salle, St Marcellin de Champagnat, St Emilie de Vialar, St John Bosco, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Blessed Edmund Rice, the Venerable Catherine McAuley, the Venerable Mary Ward and Euphrasie Barbier who established Catholic schools to educate the poor and disadvantaged.
169. Catholic schools rely on parents to make financial contributions to their operations through the payment of school fees and charges. In fact, Catholic schools cannot operate solely on funding from the State and Australian Governments.

Justice requires that where parents have the capacity to do so, they should be expected to pay school fees and charges in a timely manner. This obligation for parents who have the financial means to pay school fees, enables Catholic schools to offer support and programs which would not be possible without these monetary contributions.

170. Where parents have difficulties in meeting their financial commitments to their child's school, they should approach the school principal, as soon as possible, to make confidential arrangements regarding options for fee relief or the rescheduling of payments.

171. It must be emphasised that no child should ever be denied enrolment in a Catholic school because of their parents' inability or failure to pay school fees. However, where parents have the capacity to pay school fees and refuse to do so, principals must seek the support of CEWA to make parents aware of their financial obligations.
172. The CEWA Concession Card Fee Discount Scheme and Affordable Schools Project are cornerstones supporting the affordability of, and accessibility to, Catholic education in Western Australia. These schemes should be widely published and their ongoing implementation encouraged. The application of the Concession Card Fee Discount Scheme is mandatory for CEWA schools.
173. In order to ensure that CEWA schools remain accessible and affordable, the setting of school fees must be managed by CECWA in an empathetic, sensitive and strategic manner. The level of school fees and charges must reflect parents' or carers' capacity to contribute and be referenced to the Australian Government's school funding model.¹²² This model centres on actual parental income and therefore requires Catholic schools in different areas, based on their parents' capacity to contribute, to necessarily charge different levels of fees and charges.
174. CEWA must continue to promote and insist on system co-responsibility. This requires those CEWA school communities which have the capacity, to provide material support through appropriate levies and contributions established by CECWA, provided that such support may be lawfully provided. Additionally, the system funding allocation model for government grants must allow for the appropriate funding of all CEWA schools to enable access by students to a quality Catholic education.
175. The operation of a Catholic school cannot always be determined simply by demographics and/or economics. System co-responsibility is a cornerstone of the CEWA system. There must be a commitment by CEWA to financially support Catholic schools, which due to their demographics or location, might not be financially viable. This issue is especially important in some regional, rural and remote locations where the Catholic school might be the only day to day presence of Church.
176. When Catholic schools focus only on economic sustainability and abandon their mission to the poor, they lose their distinct, faith-filled identity. Without this commitment to system co-responsibility and outreach to support Catholic schools which struggle financially, there is a danger that some wealthier Catholic school communities could begin to favour privilege to the potential exclusion of the marginalised and poor. Catholic social teaching demands a 'preferential option for the poor'. Pope Leo XIV reminds us that *"this 'preference' never indicates exclusivity or discrimination towards other groups, which would be impossible for God. It is meant to emphasise God's actions, which are moved by compassion toward the poverty and weakness of all humanity."*¹²³
177. CEWA has a responsibility, within resource parameters established by the CECWA and legal frameworks through which CECWA operates, to provide opportunities for parents to access Catholic education for their children irrespective of their location, social status or financial position. This reinforces missionary discipleship which must pervade Catholic education.



Christ the King Catholic School (Djarindjin Lombadine)

FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMPLIANCE

178. Catholic schools, and the Catholic education system, are called to act with integrity, with Christian values and Catholic social teaching inherently imbedded into their operations. In a pluralistic society the values and teachings of the Church are not always necessarily aligned to all those in the wider community. It is therefore essential that CEWA ensures that its operations and practices are always aligned to its vision and mission.
179. A central consideration for financial decisions within Catholic education must be the priority to assist students to realise their God-given potential and to be supported in their learning journeys. This will often require schools to offer diversified pedagogical approaches for learners and the provision of specialised equipment. However, the availability of alternative courses and opportunities will depend on the availability of sufficient financial and human resources, including skilled and well-prepared teachers and leaders.¹²⁴
180. Systemic CEWA co-responsibility means that the financial and material challenges on individual schools supporting the needs of specific students is to be shared through the central distribution of government grants and funding. This must occur with full compliance to all governmental legislative and regulatory frameworks, and in a transparent and equitable manner.
181. Catholic social teaching is centred on the common good and human dignity rather than profit maximisation. Principals, business managers and finance officers, must exercise a stewardship within Catholic schools which reflects these teachings.
182. Those who exercise financial leadership in Catholic schools are required to manage significant funds from both parents and State and Federal Government grants and subsidies, along with capital investments and resources. They have a legal and regulatory responsibility to ensure that factors such as the '*bottom line*' in financial terms are considered and that there is full compliance with all accounting standards. However, these financial stewards must always remember that finances find their rightful place as enablers of mission, not as the mission itself.
183. To fully understand the mission of Catholic education requires a clear understanding and commitment to Catholic social teaching. This knowledge is especially important for those involved in making decisions regarding matters such as equity, sustainable growth, environmental impacts, procurement processes and an awareness of the dangers of modern slavery. The interconnectedness of the world's economy and supply chains requires a commitment to undertake concerted and reasonable steps to ensure that Catholic social teaching is reflected in the procurement of goods and services.
184. Leaders in Catholic schools and offices involved in making investment decisions, and the allocation and expenditure of resources, must ensure that these transactions are made with moral and ethical considerations in mind and reflect Catholic social teaching.
185. Decision makers and stewards within CEWA should:
 - ❖ ensure that buildings are constructed and maintained in a manner which gives witness to, and reflects, genuine Christian simplicity, and avoids ostentation and outward signs of excess;
 - ❖ operate in a future-focused and strategic manner that embraces good governance and full compliance with regulatory requirements;
 - ❖ commit to environmental sustainability and impacts, just and transparent procurement practices, including supply chains which reflect Catholic social teaching, including a commitment to end modern slavery;
 - ❖ commit to providing safe and healthy work and learning environments for teachers, staff and students;
 - ❖ be appropriately resourced, financially prudent and sustainable, accessible and affordable, especially for the marginalised and disadvantaged;
 - ❖ understand that finances are important enablers of the mission, not the mission itself; and
 - ❖ commit to equity of opportunities and access for all students attending Catholic schools.



186. Catholic education's mission is to serve and support all students in their growth as fully integrated human people. Along with curriculum delivery, this is achieved by proclaiming and witnessing Jesus' message and Gospel teachings. Placing the vision and mission of Catholic education at the forefront must precede every business decision and allocation of resources.

187. Scripture calls upon us to "*till and keep*" the garden of the world (Genesis 2:15). Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* reminds us that humans are caretakers, or guardians of the created world.¹²⁵ This requires protection of the planet and all of its resources. Therefore, all involved in Catholic education must recognise that:

- ❖ the greatest gift from God is human life;
- ❖ all people have a right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- ❖ there must be an unequivocal commitment to the work environment, health and safety of all members of Catholic school communities, including students, staff members, volunteers and visitors. This safety extends to all dimensions of the human person;
- ❖ God provides us all with talents and gifts which should be realised and used for the common good;
- ❖ leaders in Catholic education have a responsibility to assist those with relevant talents to be formed and developed in the service to our students;
- ❖ the natural environment and resources are also gifts from God for the benefit of all;
- ❖ there is a responsibility to care for these resources, not only now but for future generations;
- ❖ these resources can never be absolutely owned;
- ❖ caring for these resources demonstrates our respect for God the Creator;
- ❖ there is an obligation to minimise the ecological footprint by reducing waste, conserving resources and, wherever possible, using products which are sustainable;
- ❖ purchasing and consumption are moral acts with social consequences; and
- ❖ we have a responsibility to seek a fair distribution of resources providing for a fair distribution based on need.

Those engaged in Catholic education must commit to stewardship as a fundamental dimension of Christianity that implements the social teaching of the Catholic Church.



EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF MEMBERS TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION

188. In addition to State mandated requirements for employment to work with children and teach, CEWA and leaders of Catholic schools must establish the necessary personal attributes, qualifications and experience which are required for various positions.¹²⁶
189. Through their role-modelling and witness, all staff members in Catholic schools are educators, although it is teachers and education assistants who undertake formalised learning, teaching and student support functions.

Principals must ensure that all staff members, regardless of their roles, have the appropriate qualifications and experience for the positions to which they have been appointed. Additionally, all staff members must have undertaken the appropriate child protection checks and completed all necessary child protection training required for appointment to Catholic schools. Where staff members are mandatory reporters, regular training and reminders must be undertaken to provide that all Catholic schools demonstrate a fundamental priority for child safety.

190. Principals must ensure that anyone employed as a teacher in a Catholic school has the necessary State registration to legally allow them to teach children in Western Australia. These civil requirements must be enforced and monitored to the highest level. Additionally, the role that staff members exert on the faith development of children, and the creation of Christian faith communities is very significant. For that reason, principals must ensure that all staff members possess the appropriate accreditation level consistent with their position within the school. The monitoring of accreditation requirements should be undertaken in association and consultation with the Catholic Identity and Religious Education Directorate.
191. These requirements and expectations must be published and promoted as part of the employment recruitment process. It is especially important that anyone invited to work, teach or lead in Catholic education must have a clear understanding of what is required of them to carry out their duties within the mission and teachings of the Catholic faith. Every Catholic school is an important extension of the Catholic Church.

192. The following considerations should be noted with respect to the employment of staff members in CEWA:
- ❖ All staff members appointed to Catholic education must be made aware of, and commit to, supporting its Catholic ethos.
 - ❖ All recruitment checks, especially related to child protection, must be completed prior to commencement.
 - ❖ Wherever possible, principals and leaders in Catholic education should seek to recruit and appoint practising Catholics. This is especially important in the appointment of those staff who hold leadership positions, teach Religious Education and who occupy positions of influence. In making these staffing appointments, the level of competency of candidates cannot be ignored.
 - ❖ A committed and practising Catholic who does not fulfil the essential competencies for a position should not be appointed; but where a practising Catholic candidate clearly demonstrates that they possess all the necessary requirements for a particular position, their witness to their faith should be viewed as a distinct advantage in the selection process.
 - ❖ It is essential that those people wishing to be appointed to the positions of principal, vice principal, deputy/assistant principals (or however so called), and leaders of the Religious Education Learning Areas must be committed Catholics who are actively involved in parish life.
 - ❖ Staff members should be provided with opportunities to witness their faith, and engage with faith formation, professional learning and development.
 - ❖ The care for staff members through the provision of quality human resource practices should reflect the principles of Catholic social teaching.
 - ❖ Staff members, including those involved in support roles, must undertake and complete all ongoing professional development, training and formation requirements related to their position, including the appropriate accreditation level, child safety and work health and safety requirements.

WORKING IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL OR OFFICE

193. Christians have a foundational belief that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27), meaning each person has an inherent, irrevocable dignity that cannot be taken away. Jesus taught, *“Do to others as you would have them do to you”* (Matthew 7:12), emphasising that treating others with the same respect and dignity one desires for themselves.
194. All who work and serve in Catholic education must be treated with dignity and respect. Employees are people first, created in the image and likeness of God; therefore, they cannot be defined or treated as only units of labour to be used for economic ends.
195. Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*¹²⁷ outlined the teachings of the Church regarding work. As the Australian Catholic Bishops note, *“work exists for the person, not the person for work.”*¹²⁸ Therefore, leaders in Catholic education must ensure that all who work and serve in this essential mission of the Church:
- ❖ receive respect and that their human dignity is always maintained;
 - ❖ receive a fair living wage;
 - ❖ are provided with safe working conditions;
 - ❖ enjoy a working environment which prioritises their physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing;
 - ❖ undertake work that furthers the vision and mission of the Church and serves humanity; and
 - ❖ are given the opportunity to receive formation and support to allow for the growth and realisation of the talents and gifts given by God.
196. Underscoring the importance of staff members working in Catholic schools and offices, there must be an unequivocal commitment to staff wellbeing for all who work and volunteer within Catholic education. This requires Catholic education to be viewed holistically, inspired by Gospel values and committed to creating a positive *“culture of care.”*

WORKING IN REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE LOCATIONS

197. Those staff members who are prepared to serve Catholic education in regional, rural and remote locations are to be especially commended, supported and recognised. CEWA has a responsibility to provide a quality Catholic education to every child across the State. The quality of the Catholic education provided in regional, rural and remote locations is largely the consequence of the commitment and competence of the leaders, teachers and support staff working in those schools. Ensuring that regional, rural and remote schools are staffed by the best available staff members reinforces the importance of equity and co-responsibility for the CEWA system.

In remote locations, there is a particular requirement on behalf of CEWA to ensure that safety and wellbeing of staff members is always paramount. Many of these staff members are required to live and work in very remote and isolated locations, removed from their family and friends. They can be confronted with very complex social situations which can sometimes involve dysfunction and violence within the community. CEWA must ensure that staff members confronting these complexities and challenges continue to be supported. This involves ongoing training in cultural responsiveness, protective behaviours and high quality personal, emotional and professional support.

198. Noting the crucial role that staff members play in enhancing a Catholic school's Catholic identity, delivering excellent educational outcomes and providing outstanding pastoral care, the recruitment, appointment and retention of staff members working in regional, rural and remote communities must be prioritised by CEWA. These staff members must also be provided with rich opportunities for personal faith and professional development. CEWA should continue to support the orientation and induction of staff members working in these locations, and especially in those areas that are remote.

After committed service in regional, rural and remote locations, staff members wishing to return to their home locations should receive appropriate consideration in applying for positions in other Catholic schools. These considerations must also extend to those who have served in leadership positions seeking to be appointed to senior leadership positions in larger regional centres or metropolitan locations.

THE INFLUENCE AND IMPACT OF STAFF MEMBERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

199. Young people are greatly influenced and formed by the members of staff with whom they interact. All staff members have a responsibility to witness to the Church's teachings. All those involved in Catholic education are called to witness to the Gospel, and this responsibility goes beyond their work contract. This witness is worth as much as the formalised curriculum and lessons which students are taught.¹²⁹ As the patron saint of educators, St John Baptist de La Salle reminds us, educators are "*ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ*" and they must act in a way that allows their students to see and hear Christ through their instruction.¹³⁰
200. While all staff members make significant contributions to the life and mission of a Catholic school, it is teachers who have the most direct and meaningful impact on their students.¹³¹ It is through "*their teaching skills, as well as by bearing witness through their lives, [that] they allow the Catholic school to realise its [mission].*"¹³²
201. Teaching in a Catholic school is a vocation and requires an unequivocal commitment to the integrated holistic development of each child inspired by Gospel teaching. Professional preparation and technical competence are necessary prerequisites for teaching, but they are not enough.

The work of teachers in Catholic schools is inherently professional but cannot be reduced to professionalism alone. It is elevated by a supernatural Christian vocation. A Catholic teacher's life should reflect a personal vocation within the Church, not merely the practice of a profession.¹³³ The Catholic school will be enriched by the appointment of staff members who "*enthusiastically endorse its distinctive ethos, for Catholic education is enriched by witnesses to the Gospels.*"¹³⁴



202. It must always be remembered that *"Christ is the Teacher in Catholic schools. Nevertheless, in its very simplicity, [this] can be overlooked."*¹³⁵ Catholic schools cannot become so obsessed with their secular functions, civil obligations or quests for high academic results that they place Christ and the understanding of the whole person as a secondary consideration. To ensure the primacy of Jesus within Catholic schools, teachers are required to promote the Catholic worldview and its social teaching in their interactions with their students.
203. For the Catholic schools to fulfil their mission as an extension of the Church's evangelising outreach, they should not so much focus only on subject matter or methodology but fundamentally on the people who work there. The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on teachers working in Catholic schools.¹³⁶
204. This constitutes an essential difference between a Catholic school and a school which seeks only to teach academic subjects. In addition to teaching content, teachers in a Catholic school have a responsibility to safeguard and develop its unique features. Christ and the teachings of the Church must be at the heart of any Catholic school, and this must be distinctly advocated, promoted and celebrated.
205. It is recognised and acknowledged that all who work in Catholic education play the most important role in promoting and facilitating among their students the vision and mission of Catholic education. Pope Leo XIV appeals to leaders and staff members to *"be servants of the world of education, choreographers of hope, tireless seekers of wisdom and credible creators of expressions of beauty."*¹³⁷
206. Those working in Catholic education who are actively engaged in the sacramental and faith life of their parish, will naturally have insights and an outlook which is already formed and supported by the teachings of the Church. These staff members can be especially influential and important in supporting students in their own faith journeys.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

207. Teachers of Religious Education in Catholic schools have a special responsibility and obligation to assist the Catholic school in living its vision and mission. They are at the vanguard of why Catholic schools exist and have the opportunity to form and instruct children, both in providing knowledge of the Catholic faith and through personal witness.
208. Access to Religious education in a Catholic school is a right – with the corresponding duties – for students and of the parents.¹³⁸ Consequently, a Religious Education program, approved by the Bishop of the diocese, must be developed, resourced and offered to every child attending a Catholic school. The coordination of this function is undertaken by the CEWA Catholic Identity and Religious Education Directorate.
209. Catholic schools are not immune from many of the challenges and impacts present in the secular world. The values and practices which students experience in their communities, or even within their homes, may not be aligned to the Gospel message of Jesus and the teachings of the Church.
210. Proposing the Christian faith to the young people who attend Catholic schools will inevitably need to be done in ways that differ from the past.¹³⁹ Young people are confronted with a range of views and opinions which can be antithetical to Catholic social teaching and Gospel values. These ideas are often presented in an unfiltered manner through social media. This makes the role of the Religious Education teacher particularly challenging. These challenges should be recognised by principals who should provide every support and encouragement to teachers of Religious Education. Access to high quality professional development and faith formation for teachers of Religious Education should be prioritised and provided by school leaders.
211. The primary task of teachers of Religious Education is not to promote their own or others' views or beliefs but to witness to and proclaim the teachings of Jesus and the Church.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, Religious Education teachers must appreciate that in undertaking their role they are engaged in the ministry of the Word as a means of evangelisation. Therefore, in assigning teachers to teach Religious Education, principals and school leaders should select those teachers who are not only committed to their Catholic faith, but who are very good practitioners of the art of teaching.

212. Therefore, inspired by the supreme teacher, Jesus Christ, the role of the Religious Education teacher is to:

- ❖ witness to their students their own faith and commitment to Christ;
- ❖ present and explain the Gospel message of Jesus and the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- ❖ provide appropriate and high-quality learning experiences and opportunities to enable students to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of Jesus' message and Church teaching;
- ❖ create learning environments where students feel free to reflect upon and express their own faith journeys;
- ❖ provide support to students in their yearnings to seek truth and answers to matters of faith;
- ❖ guide and support those students who are struggling with their own faith and beliefs;
- ❖ provide a welcoming environment to students who are of other faiths or who are unsure in a belief in God; and
- ❖ participate in high quality faith formation and meet all accreditation requirements.

PRIEST CHAPLAINS

213. Canonically, the title of chaplain in a Catholic school is one that is reserved for priests. Catholic schools that have specialised pastoral workers must not refer to them as chaplains due to the potential confusion which could occur. Chaplain priests are appointed by the Bishop of the diocese to serve within a Catholic school or schools to pastorally minister to the community.¹⁴¹
214. While the chaplain priest should offer students, staff members and parents' access to sacraments such as Reconciliation and Eucharist, their role should not replace or substitute the special relationship which should exist between the members of a Catholic school and their local parishes.
215. Students, staff members and parents in Catholic schools can greatly benefit from the presence of chaplains. Where it is not possible for a chaplain to be appointed to a school, especially to secondary schools, principals should work with the priests of surrounding parishes to explore creative ways in which the provision of this important pastoral ministry can occur.

St Joseph School (Boulder)



PRINCIPALS AND SENIOR LEADERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

216. In exercising leadership in Catholic education, principals and senior leaders are responding to a call by Jesus to serve. *"You did not choose me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last."* (John 15:16) Principals and senior leaders in Catholic education are engaged in a vocational calling – a call to serve and commit to a special ministry of the Church. Their work involves *"an ecclesial and pastoral mission rooted in a relationship with the [Church]."*¹⁴²

217. Therefore, principals, and senior leaders in Catholic schools and offices, receive a commission from the Church to evangelise and help those whom they serve come to know Jesus Christ. They consequently occupy positions of significant authority, responsibility and influence.

They are much more than simply managers of an organisation, although they have an obligation to ensure compliance with all civil obligations, especially as they relate to school registration with the Western Australian Government. They are pedagogical and educational leaders and in the case of principals, should be viewed as the *'lead teacher'* among their staff.

218. Principals and senior leaders of Catholic schools must:

- ❖ provide personal witness to their faith and active involvement in their parish communities;
- ❖ ensure that each child's safety, pastoral care and wellbeing are prioritised;
- ❖ create and maintain safe, respectful and orderly learning environments for all who learn and work within the school;
- ❖ commit to serve all students, but especially those who are most vulnerable and in need;
- ❖ ensure that the school's educational program is centred on the integral human development of each child;
- ❖ ensure the delivery of a curriculum which is imbued by the school's Catholic identity, reflective of Catholic social teaching and characterised by the Catholic Worldview;
- ❖ commit to synodal and collaborative decision making;
- ❖ create an enduring quest among students for excellence in its broadest sense and a commitment from students to always seek personal best;
- ❖ provide leadership which is inspired by Jesus and based on serving others;
- ❖ display the courage to make decisions which are always centred on Christ with the child at the centre;
- ❖ promote a sense of joy, peace and hope among the school community;
- ❖ display a genuine sense of enthusiasm for their leadership roles;
- ❖ create authentic, respectful and complementary relationships with staff members, parents and caregivers and students;
- ❖ collaborate and cooperate with the local parish community and priests, especially, but not limited to, Eucharistic and other sacramental opportunities;
- ❖ pursue recruitment practices, and the supervision and formation of staff members which reflect the school's Catholic identity;
- ❖ commit to the stewardship of the school's resources and environment which reflects Catholic social teaching;
- ❖ comply with all regulatory and legislative requirements;
- ❖ commit to regular and intentional school reviews, improvement processes and renewal; and
- ❖ commit to personal wellbeing and professional renewal.¹⁴³



PARISH PRIESTS AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

219. The local parish priest plays a very important and invaluable role in working with the principal and senior staff in ensuring the Catholic school is authentically Catholic and places Christ at the centre. In collaboration with the principal, the parish priest should be a builder of unity between the parish and the school and share a relationship focused on realising a Christ-centred community.¹⁴⁴
220. When the parish priest is part of the Catholic school community, joining staff members, parents and students, they form a rich ecclesial community which is part of the wider Church. These groups present a visible and living image which can contribute to a better understanding of the nature of the Church.¹⁴⁵
221. Catholic schools have an evangelising outreach, and the parish priest should support the principal and school leadership team to systematically plan for opportunities for this to occur within the life of the school. Additionally, parish priests have an obligation to assist parents in accessing a Catholic education for their children.¹⁴⁶
222. The relationship between the parish priest and the Catholic school principal, especially in parish schools, should be complementary, respectful, be based on trust and characterised by open and honest dialogue.
223. The parish priest can support the school's mission and Catholic identity through the parish's sacramental program, especially through the availability of the celebration of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. He can also play an important pastoral role in supporting members of the Catholic school community. The parish priest is an important member of the Catholic School Advisory Council, and his attendance at meetings should be prioritised.
224. Parish priests should be invited by the principal to serve on appointment panels for the selection of senior staff members. Additionally, where appropriate, parish priests should also be invited to participate in selection panels for the appointment of Religious Education teachers.
225. Parish priests play an important role in the principal appointment process. The parish priest should work collaboratively with the school community, within the approved CEWA Principal Appointment Process. This involves developing with CEWA and the school community the essential and desired qualities of the new principal. The CEWA Executive Director should ensure that the parish priest, or priest representative if the parish priest is not available, is invited to be an integral part of the principal appointment panel.
226. The Catholic school principal and the school community should be welcoming and provide ample opportunities for the parish priest to engage in both structured and less formal events. Equally, the parish priest should seek opportunities to engage with the school community at events such as sports carnivals, feast day celebrations and parent evenings, where appropriate.

DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

227. The Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education occupies a senior ecclesial leadership role within Catholic education in Western Australia, entrusted with safeguarding, articulating and advancing the Catholic identity and evangelising mission of Catholic education on behalf of the Bishops of Western Australia.
228. The Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education, appointed by the Bishops of Western Australia, provides theological, pastoral and educational leadership, ensuring that Catholic schools remain authentically Catholic in identity, purpose and practice, and that all dimensions of Catholic education are coherently aligned with the mission of the Church.¹⁴⁷
229. Grounded in the Church's understanding that education is an essential expression of its salvific mission, the Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education ensures that Catholic identity permeates the life of the school as a unifying and animating principle, rather than as a discrete programme or compliance requirement.
230. Pope Paul VI affirms that the Church's educational mission is concerned with the integral formation of the human person, holding together intellectual, moral, spiritual and cultural development in light of the Gospel.¹⁴⁸ The Director, therefore, exercises leadership that is interpretive and integrative, enabling faith, culture and life to be held together across curriculum, leadership, policy and formation.
231. In fidelity to the Church's evangelising mission, the Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education provides strategic leadership for the transmission of the faith within contemporary cultural contexts.
232. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*¹⁴⁹ calls the Church to a missionary transformation in which structures, leadership and institutional cultures are orientated toward proclamation, accompaniment and witness rather than self-preservation.¹⁵⁰ The Director plays a pivotal role in shaping missionary orientation within Catholic education, ensuring Catholic identity is expressed not only in Religious Education, but also in leadership formation, pedagogical vision, community life and public witness.
233. The Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education ensures that Religious Education in Catholic schools is theologically sound, educationally rigorous and pastorally responsible, while also recognising that catechesis and identity formation extend beyond the classroom into the life and culture of the school community.¹⁵¹ Religious Education is therefore understood not as an isolated discipline, but as a privileged expression of the Church's mission within a school whose entire life is shaped by the Gospel.
234. As a presence on the CECWA, the Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education provides a distinct ecclesial and theological lens to governance deliberations, supporting the Bishops and CECWA in ensuring that strategic decisions, policies and future directions remain faithful to the Church's mission in education. In doing so, the Director contributes to the Church's responsibility to ensure that Catholic schools are communities 'animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity', in which all aspects of human culture are illumined by faith.¹⁵²



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- 235. The Executive Director of CEWA is appointed by the Bishops of Western Australia and is accountable to them.¹⁵³ The Executive Director is responsible to CECWA for the day-to-day control, management and conduct of CEWA.
- 236. The Executive Director exercises dual leadership roles within Catholic education. Firstly, they are the chief executive leader of CEWA Limited and report to the CECWA to ensure that all legislative requirements are met. They also have responsibility to the CECWA, in collaboration with the CEWA Executive Team, to deliver the strategic priorities, set from time to time, by the CECWA. The Executive Director is the principal public representative and spokesperson for Catholic education.
- 237. Of equal and central importance, is the ecclesial leadership role which the Executive Director undertakes, not only within Catholic education but also within the Catholic Church in Western Australia. The Executive Director, through their witness and involvement within their parish and wider Church, exercises servant leadership. The Executive Director, along with the Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education, has a special responsibility to the Bishops of Western Australia to provide leadership and witness in promoting Catholic education's commitment to Jesus Christ and the message of the Gospels.
- 238. Reflecting the spirit of the Church's teaching on subsidiarity and synodality, the Executive Director should develop structures and processes and make staffing appointments to assist them in fulfilling their accountabilities to the Bishops and responsibilities and reporting obligations to the CECWA.
- 239. Strategically, the Executive Director unites leadership across dioceses and services, nurturing an environment where faith, mission, educational quality, and sound governance are closely intertwined. The role is essential for maintaining Catholic education as mission-focused and forward-looking, addressing new challenges with agility while sustaining the trust and credibility of Church, government, and community partners. This stewardship ensures that schools within CEWA remain true to their purpose and responsive to contemporary societal needs.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT AND FORMATION FOR STAFF MEMBERS

- 240. Staff members in Catholic schools are unquestionably the most important resource who contribute to the creation of authentic Catholic faith communities. They exercise positions of significant trust and influence over students, both explicitly and implicitly.
- 241. For this reason, the faith development and formation for staff members working in a Catholic school must be afforded the highest priority by principals and leaders. This faith development and formation should be directed at providing both knowledge of the Catholic faith and its teachings, and opportunities for personal faith experiences.
- 242. Faith development and formation should be strategic and appropriately resourced. Such planning must be an integral part of a Catholic school's improvement plan. Adequate time must be set aside for faith development and formation in a Catholic school's overall annual professional development plan.
- 243. Because staff members will be at different stages of their faith development, from those with little knowledge of the Catholic faith through to those who are practising Catholics who have a solid understanding of the Church's teachings, it is important that professional development opportunities are tailored to support all those who work within the school community.
- 244. Staff members who are involved in support roles in Catholic schools also play an important role in creating and nurturing faith communities. For this reason, all staff members, not only teachers, should be provided with appropriate opportunities for faith development and formation. There is an expectation that all support staff members will be involved in faith development and formation opportunities.
- 245. Principals and leaders are encouraged to liaise and work with their local parish priests to explore ways in which faith development and formation for staff members can be complemented and enriched by the activities of the parish community. Equally, there may be opportunities for parish communities to access faith formation opportunities offered by the local Catholic school.



Salvado Catholic College (Byford)

SCHOOL FORMATION PLANNING

246. To ensure that Catholic schools continue to develop and flourish as authentic faith communities, it is essential that principals and their leadership teams undertake systematic planning for school and evangelisation opportunities and growth within their schools. This planning should be undertaken in collaboration with the Catholic Identity and Religious Education Directorate. The purpose of formation and evangelising planning is to ensure that schools can make informed and purposeful decisions regarding their approach to staff faith formation. This permits principals and school leaders to focus on the practicalities of faith formation of staff within a school's given context.
247. The CEWA Formation for Mission Team is required to work with schools to assist them in the development of a staff faith formation plan, including the allocation of resources, engagement with presenters or facilitators and the design of school-based faith experiences that will target the specific faith formation needs of their school staff. The Catholic Institute of WA (CIWA) is a valuable resource which can support the faith development and formation of staff members in Catholic schools. Principals are encouraged to liaise with the Formation for Mission Team to assist them in accessing appropriate courses offered by CIWA.

FORMATION FOR LEADERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

248. The Catholic Identity and Religious Education Directorate must provide those in leadership positions in Catholic schools with a high-quality Gospel-inspired platform from which to develop their knowledge and expertise. The programs and courses offered to leaders, and those aspiring to such positions, should offer participants the opportunity to grow their professional capacity in alignment with quality Catholic education. These learning opportunities should provide for extensive personal, professional and faith formation at each stage of leadership in Catholic schools in Western Australia.
249. CEWA must provide ongoing formation to staff members in both schools and offices. Ongoing formation is a requirement of Accreditation to Work, Teach or Lead within Catholic education in Western Australia. The Catholic Education and Religious Education Directorate must continue to collaborate with Australian tertiary educational providers to broaden the formation opportunities available for staff to meet Accreditation requirements. The Catholic Identity and Religious Education Directorate must continue to use the expertise of its teams to deliver customised formation and professional learning for Accreditation renewal directly to schools.
250. To ensure that formation programs offered to staff members in Catholic schools and offices remain of high quality and aligned to Gospel values and contemporary Church teaching, continual review and development of leadership programs must occur. This will ensure that the formation programs offered to staff members continue to effectively integrate faith and life within Catholic school communities.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

251. The Earth is our common home. Catholic schools must commit to fulfilling and promoting Christian responsibility for care of the natural environment and the planet's resources. The resources and environment that are collectively enjoyed must be viewed as gifts from an all-loving God. Those engaged with Catholic education, including staff members and students, are called to action to respond to a range of ecological crises through a process of *"ecological conversion."*¹⁵⁴
252. Catholic education must align to a world view which places our Earth as a precious God-given gift, but a gift which is finite. Catholic education must reflect a reduced involvement in materialistic forms of consumer culture. Initiatives such as recycling, use of solar power, conservation of resources, and the use of sustainable materials must be promoted and implemented. Teachers are encouraged to work with their students through both the curriculum and school-based projects to *think globally, act locally*.
253. The Gospels reveal the essence of Christian stewardship and our responsibility to care for the gifts which we have been given. In Luke (12:42), Jesus presents the faithful steward as the model for action in managing what has been entrusted to Him. Those in Catholic education must understand that they are the custodians of God's gifts to the world, and that they have a responsibility to care, use and work with these gifts for the benefit of all people and for future generations.
254. Pope Francis highlights that *"in today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia."*¹⁵⁵ This is a call to action for those involved in Catholic education to commit to these ideals and reaffirm the importance of Gospel stewardship of our world.
255. Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*¹⁵⁶ emphasises the interconnectedness of humans and the environment, urging care for our *"common home"*. Further, he compels us to *"regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it."*¹⁵⁷
256. Integral ecology highlights the concept that *"everything is connected."* Pope Francis reminds us that environmental degradation is not separate from social inequality, but rather a single, complex crisis where the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are intertwined, calling for combined, holistic solutions.¹⁵⁸ The interconnectedness of the world, whether through technology and digital communication, supply chains, production platforms, migration, economic specialisation or transport, can lead to exploitation and inequality. Catholic education must be mindful of these consequences and take the necessary steps to advocate and promote a world which is reflective of Catholic social teaching.



GOVERNANCE

Bishop Tim Norton at the Chapel of
St Michael the Archangel (West Leederville)



GOVERNANCE

257. The vision of Catholic education in Western Australia requires a flourishing community comprised of students, parents and caregivers, and staff members, inspired by the Gospels, and centred on Christ with a focus on children. Good governance in Catholic education must be characterised by clarity, transparency and an unequivocal commitment to Catholic social teaching focusing on mission, stewardship, and accountability. Equity, subsidiarity, participation and co-responsibility must be primary considerations and inspirations for the good governance of Catholic education.
258. As a registered charity in receipt of public funding, along with a range of legislative requirements, CEWA must also ensure that it maintains full compliance with all its civil obligations. This obligation also extends to other governing bodies who administer Catholic schools in Western Australia.
259. The key sources of direction and guidance in respect of governance of Catholic education in Western Australia are:
- ❖ *The Bishops of Western Australia* who provide the overarching direction and mission for Catholic education in Western Australia, as articulated in this Mandate. The Bishops have both canonical and civil obligations in carrying out their roles in providing Catholic education.
 - ❖ *Catholic Education Western Australia Limited* which is the civil legal entity that acts as the legal governing body for the Catholic education system. The four diocesan Bishops are the members of this company limited by guarantee.
 - ❖ *The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia* which sets the strategic direction for CEWA. Commissioners are appointed by the bishops as members of the company. The Commissioners are directors of the company. The CEWA Executive Team, led by the Executive Director, provides executive leadership in delivering the strategic directions established by the CECWA and are accountable for the progress of these priorities.
 - ❖ *Religious Institutes, Ministerial Public Juridic Persons*, and those incorporated bodies aligned to CEWA's policies which have been established to provide Catholic schools in Western Australia, under the approval of the Bishop of the diocese.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

260. The CECWA is the board of directors for CEWA, through which the Bishops have appointed to work together to govern, guide and oversee CEWA. It provides overall strategy, leadership and governance for Catholic schools, serving the system with a shared sense of purpose and mission.
261. The CECWA is responsible and accountable to the Bishops of Western Australia for:
- ❖ the creation of Catholic schools and Early Years Learning and Care and Long Day Care Programs which are Christ-centred and focused on the development of the whole child;
 - ❖ the direction and development of Catholic schools that fulfil the purpose and goals of Catholic education;
 - ❖ the development, promulgation and evaluation of appropriate policy for CEWA schools;
 - ❖ the provision of good governance within CEWA;
 - ❖ ensuring that CEWA fulfils its obligations under the School Education Act of Western Australia;
 - ❖ planning and providing for the future development of Catholic schools to enable access for those parents who seek a Catholic education for their children;
 - ❖ ensuring the ongoing viability and sustainability of CEWA; and
 - ❖ ensuring that CEWA pursues and advances the charitable objects of CEWA as set out in its Constitution.
262. The leadership of the CECWA is provided by a chairperson who is appointed by the Bishops of Western Australia. The chairperson:
- ❖ provides overall leadership to the CECWA;
 - ❖ chairs meetings in a manner which reflects synodality and collaboration, creating an environment of discernment, prayerful listening, mutual respect, subsidiarity and co-responsibility;
 - ❖ sets the agenda for CECWA meetings in consultation with the Executive Director and Company Secretary; and
 - ❖ provides support for the Executive Director in their role as the executive leader of CEWA.
263. In fostering the continuous development and improvement of Catholic schools, and the planning for the future provision of Catholic education in Western Australia, the CECWA should establish appropriate committees to assist it with the overall good governance of CEWA.
264. At a broader level, the CECWA balances commitment to the Church's mission with active involvement in the educational, social and community life of Western Australia. It sets strategic priorities, provides shared policy direction for Catholic education, making sure Catholic schools remain authentically Catholic, trusted by the wider community and committed to high-quality education.
265. Commissioners of the CECWA are appointed by the Bishops of the Province of Western Australia based on their witness to their Catholic faith, personal qualities, professional experience and qualifications, and availability to provide the highest level of strategic leadership. It is important that Commissioners of the CECWA have a familiarity with the purpose and scope of Catholic education, developed through their own experiences and by a coordinated induction program. This should be supported by ongoing connections, interactions and experiences with Catholic schools and the work which they undertake.
266. In developing the precepts for good governance for Catholic education, there must be alignment of both canonical and civil obligations.¹⁵⁹ CEWA is an incorporated legal entity, with the Bishops of the four dioceses of Western Australia serving as members of the company. Their respective roles and that of CEWA is encompassed in the constitution of CEWA Limited.¹⁶⁰

267. The CECWA assumes a strategic role in ensuring that Catholic Education is delivered and managed by Catholic Schools through the system of CEWA in a responsible and effective manner, working within appropriate standards, regulations and Catholic Mission.¹⁶¹
268. As stewards of CEWA's resources, the CECWA must ensure that CEWA prepares true and fair financial statements that correctly record the transactions, financial performance and position of CEWA (the company). The Financial Statements must be prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and be independently audited.
269. The specific objectives of the CECWA are:¹⁶²
- ❖ providing leadership for the betterment and quality of Catholic education in Western Australia;
 - ❖ coordinating Catholic education in Western Australia;
 - ❖ developing, promulgating and evaluating Catholic school policy and programs;
 - ❖ acting on behalf of Catholic education in Western Australia, including for all Catholic students not enrolled in Catholic schools;
 - ❖ developing and evaluating Catholic school policy where the Bishops elect to adopt a joint policy and act for each Bishop in specified matters concerning the education of Catholic children in the Dioceses;
 - ❖ ensuring the adequate formation of Catholic education personnel so that they can fulfil their respective roles and responsibilities in Catholic educational institutions, as set out in the Bishops' Mandate;
 - ❖ ensuring that the curriculum in Catholic educational institutions fulfils the Catholic education goals, as set out in the Bishops' Mandate;
 - ❖ fulfilling any other goals and functions that are set out in this Bishops' Mandate;
 - ❖ acting as an Approved Authority and Approved System Authority (if applicable) in accordance with the Australian Education Act;
 - ❖ acting as the Governing Body for its Catholic schools by assuming the role of overall governance and ultimate responsibility of its Catholic schools and fulfilling its obligations under the School Education Act;
 - ❖ receiving from Federal and State Governments monies for Catholic schools for distribution in the manner determined by the Company and the Federal and State Governments;
 - ❖ ensuring that funding for Catholic schools in Western Australia is distributed in accordance with relevant legislation;
 - ❖ complying with Governmental obligations at both Federal and State levels with regards to Federal and State funding;
 - ❖ ensuring its Catholic schools observe the registration standards and meet the other requirements for non-government schools;
 - ❖ responding to Federal and State educational issues;
 - ❖ liaising with other organisations for the benefit of Catholic education in Western Australia;
 - ❖ providing representation on Federal and State bodies as appropriate and as requested; and
 - ❖ undertaking any other activities in furtherance of Catholic education in accordance with Catholic teaching.





RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES AND MINISTERIAL PUBLIC JURIDIC PERSONS

270. The gifts and contributions to Catholic education in Western Australia by religious institutes, and more recently by MPJPs, are significant and must be acknowledged and celebrated. Schools owned and governed by these bodies enrich our Catholic community and enrich Catholic education through the examples of their founders and unique spiritual gifts or charism.¹⁶³
271. These schools, which are often guided by the unique spiritual gifts of the order by which it was founded, should be seen as complementing, not competing against, CEWA schools. They provide parents with real choice regarding the type of education that is offered, including single gender opportunities. They add significantly to the richness of Catholic education in Western Australia and their shared focus on the inspiration of Jesus, grounded in Gospel teachings, reflects our *"unity in diversity."*¹⁶⁴
272. Schools governed by religious institutes and MPJPs provide support to the Church's mission for Catholic education. These ministries of the Church have their own governance structures, canonical responsibilities and operate within various contexts.
273. Where Catholic schools are owned and/or governed by religious institutes, MPJPs, or other approved legal entities, these Catholic schools should be guided by the requirements for their ongoing commitment and celebration of each school's Catholic identity.
274. If any of these schools choose to seek their school registration required under the Western Australian School Education Act (1999), through the governance structures of CEWA, these schools must recognise the role of CEWA as the governing body of the Catholic Education System as described in the System Agreement with the Western Australian Minister for Education and associated obligations.
275. The Bishops of Western Australia welcome the presence of religious institutes and MPJP governed schools within their four dioceses. These Catholic schools operate within the precepts of the Code Canon Law.

Canonically, the Bishop of each diocese:

- ❖ prescribes the mandated Religious Education program, its sequencing and time allocation;
- ❖ through the CEWA accreditation framework, approves teachers of religious education to ensure correct doctrine, witness of a Christian life, and teaching skills;
- ❖ watches over and visits Catholic schools in his territory. Aspects of this function may be delegated to the CEWA Executive Director and Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education; and
- ❖ issues prescripts which pertain to the general regulation of Catholic schools.¹⁶⁵



Bishop Michael Morrissey, CEWA Executive Director Annette Morey and Auxiliary Bishop Donald Sproston

276. Therefore, all Catholic schools, whether governed by CEWA, religious institutes, MPJPs or those Catholic schools whose policies are aligned to those of CEWA, must adhere to the content and sequencing of the Bishops' approved Religious Education curriculum and the mandated time allocations for course delivery.¹⁶⁶ These requirements also extend to the qualifications and witness of staff members teaching Religious Education and the obligations related to achieving and maintaining the elements of CEWA's accreditation framework as approved by the Bishops of Western Australia.
277. The responsibility for supervising the Bishops' requirements related to the provision and delivery of Religious Education and the accreditation levels for the teachers of these programs, in any Catholic school, is delegated by the Bishops to the Director of Catholic Identity and Religious Education.
278. The relationship between CEWA and religious institutes and MPJPs which operate schools within the province of Western Australia is articulated in the document *"In Communion and Mission."*¹⁶⁷ This Mandate describes the shared mission undertaken to further Catholic education in Western Australia and confirms the significant gifts which religious congregations have made in the past and continue to make in schools which they govern.
279. It is important that the relationship between CEWA and the governing bodies which operate Catholic schools across the four dioceses, is characterised by witness to our common vision for Catholic education, centred on Christ and focused on the child. This will occur by an ongoing commitment to a spirit of mutual exchange and trusting conversation, while maintaining an ongoing dialogue.¹⁶⁸

REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

280. Review and improvement within Catholic education should be associated with a process of continuous renewal. This process should align practice with faith guided by Catholic social teaching and inspired by the Catholic worldview. Additionally, there must always be a commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all its members, especially the children attending Catholic schools and centres, which promotes and encourages the integral human development of each person.
281. Catholic education must ensure that there are platforms and frameworks which encourage and facilitate continuous renewal. Using data and a lens framed by improvement, all in Catholic education should engage with constant self-reflection. This process should be characterised by a synodal approach which allows for authentic listening, reflection and discernment as prerequisites for action. It is essential that review and improvement processes are evidence based and utilise both internal and external instruments to validate observations and conclusions.

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Our Lady of Mercy Primary School (Girrawheen)

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*Photo (above): St Jerome's Primary School (Lake Coogee)
Photo (back cover): Catholic Youth Ministry hosting the Migrant Jubilee Cross Summit
and Procession at St Mary's Cathedral (photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Perth)*



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