



# The Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools





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## Charter for Catholic Schools

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to write a foreword to the Charter for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Hobart.

With the promulgation of the Charter, we bring to a conclusion a long process of consultation about an initiative which is very important. We now begin a new journey into the future in which the Catholic Character and Ethos of Catholic Schools and Colleges will be given high and due prominence.

The Charter will be an instrument to guide those who are involved with individual schools and colleges, as the Principal and the teaching staff, or as members of the Board.

The Charter will offer a reassurance to parents of the students in our Catholic Schools and Colleges, that there is a way of expressing with clarity the Catholic character and the Catholic Ethos of the education facility that their children attend.

When speaking at a symposium on Catholic Education in October 2006, I said:

“... the single most significant thing that sets Catholic schools apart from all others is our Catholic Faith.

We must, as a Faith community, be unashamed in proclaiming that fact – to each other and to the wider world. Catholic schools in Tasmania must be identified clearly and unequivocally as just that – Catholic schools. They are **not** secular schools.”

I believe that the writing of a Charter will be of great assistance in keeping those challenges before all those who have responsibilities associated with Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Hobart.

ADRIAN L DOYLE  
Archbishop of Hobart  
5 August 2008

# The Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools

One of the major responsibilities of an Archbishop is to oversee and support the development of Catholic schools across the diocese. Under Canon Law<sup>1</sup> the Archbishop of Hobart has full ecclesiastical authority for all Catholic schools in Tasmania. In exercising this responsibility the Archbishop has developed a *Charter for Catholic Schools* for the establishment and conduct of schools across the Archdiocese.

1. *Centrality of the Catholic Ethos*
2. *Links to the Parish Community*
3. *Curriculum*
4. *Enrolment Policy*
5. *Leadership*
6. *Staff Selection Policy*
7. *Spiritual Formation*
8. *Disadvantaged and Marginalised*
9. *Features of the School or College*
10. *Social Justice*
11. *Stewardship*

<sup>1</sup> Canon 806: "The diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect Catholic schools in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes. He also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools; those directives apply also to schools conducted by members of a religious institute, although they retain their autonomy in the internal management of their school!"

## Preamble

The 'Charter for Catholic Schools' provides the basis for the Archbishop to 'mandate' Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Hobart. In essence, the term mandate represents an authoritative command to act on behalf of the Church community. The mandate of the Archbishop represents his formal commissioning – his 'sending forth' of a Catholic school community to act as an evangelising agent of the Archdiocese. The Archbishop's mandate reflects the challenge posed at the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel:

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matt 28: 19, 20)*

It is with this same sense of 'being sent' that the Archbishop gives his delegated authority or mandate to those who teach and lead in Catholic Schools.

*Our work in a Catholic organisation is more than using our professional skills in the service of others. In everything we do, we are ministering in the name of the Catholic Church and the Gospel. We must, therefore, represent the values of the Church, presenting the compassionate face of Christ to the world – respecting the dignity of every person as a child of God. (Catholic Ethos Statement: Archbishop Adrian Doyle, 2005)*

The 'Charter for Catholic Schools' draws inspiration from the philosophy and vision expressed in the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission's 'Vision and Mission Statement'. The Commission acknowledges

Catholic schools as 'Communities of Faith; Learning for Life'.<sup>2</sup> As authentic and committed Catholic communities, schools have a call to live out their Baptismal commitment and to witness 'faith in action' within the context of the Catholic tradition. The Commission goes on to state that:

As a community of Catholic Schools we will strive to provide a quality education for our students so each will be:

- a person of faith in relationship with God through Christ and his Church;
- a fully integrated human being, able and willing to give witness to Christ by living according to Gospel values;
- a person who is inspired by a deep passion for life long learning and the promotion of peace and justice; and
- a person who embraces the future with faith in Christ, hope, confidence and the ability to take his/her place in society.

*(TCEC Vision and Mission Statement, 2006)*

For this vision to be realised, the following Charter should guide the operation, self-evaluation and strategic planning of each school and college within the Tasmanian Catholic Education community.

The 'Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools' is a generic document that should be adjusted appropriately to reflect the unique nature and circumstances of each Catholic school within the Archdiocese. In particular, special attention should be given to acknowledging the Charism of the Founding Orders and, in some cases, to incorporating seminal charter documents from the relevant Governing Body. Additionally, the nature and extent of links to the parish community will vary, according to the location and type of the educational institution.

<sup>2</sup> Canon 806: "Those who are in charge of Catholic schools are to ensure, under the supervision of the local Ordinary, that the formation given in them is, in academic standards, at least as outstanding as that in other schools in the area."

*In association with the School Improvement Framework process, all Catholic schools within the Archdiocese are expected to embrace and respond to the 'Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools'. Developing a formal response to the Charter symbolises the school community's willingness to accept the commission of the Archbishop and undertake responsibility for the tasks entrusted to it. A school's or college's formal response demonstrates that it is committed to accepting the Archbishop's mandate and meeting the specific criteria set by the Archbishop. This would entitle the school or college to describe itself as a Catholic School and empower it to live out that Catholicity in both words and action. After receiving a response from each individual school community, the Archbishop will symbolically and liturgically mandate the school as an 'Institute for Catholic Education'. As part of the School Improvement Framework, the mandate is renewable every six years.*

## Responding to the Charter

- 1. Upon receiving a generic version of the Archbishop's Charter, schools and colleges will be encouraged to reflect upon and appropriately word the Charter in a way that reflects the local context and charism.*
- 2. To assist schools in responding to the Charter, a series of professional learning sessions and resources will be developed. In particular, a formation colloquium for key members of the leadership team will be organised and opportunities provided for a school-based, whole-staff colloquium.*
- 3. The initial mandating process will be phased in over a three-year period (2008 – 2010), to allow schools time and the opportunity to develop their initial response to the Archbishop's Charter in line with their internal School Improvement Framework processes and timeline.*
- 4. After a process of reflection and an examination of the school's planned response to the Charter, the Archbishop will symbolically mandate each specific school and commission it to act on his behalf.*
- 5. Mandated schools will be presented with a formal certificate signed by the Archbishop at an appropriate Commissioning ceremony (e.g. an opening school year liturgy, an end-of-year Speech Night, a liturgy as part of a Parish Visitation).*
- 6. Schools will be asked to publish appropriate details of their planned 'Response to the Archbishop's Charter' in their school magazines and on their websites, and to provide summaries of their commitment to the Charter in appropriate promotional material.*
- 7. After the initial response to the Charter, subsequent renewal of the mandate will be aligned to the School Improvement Framework process as determined by the relevant Governing Body. In this process, each school will be asked to identify a particular element of its plan each year for development, implementation and evaluation. Upon receipt of a validation report from the school community, the Archbishop will make a decision about renewing the mandate and re-commissioning the school to act on his behalf for a further six years. If, for a particular reason, a school or college (e.g. Congregational College) is not involved with the Archdiocesan School Improvement Framework and Validation process, the school will liaise with the Archbishop regarding alternative processes by which the mandate to operate as an institute of Catholic Education can be conferred.*





# Centrality of the Catholic Ethos

The Vision and Mission Statement for schools and colleges should give expression to the distinctiveness of the educational ministry as it serves the mission of the Catholic Church in today's world.

- i. *Develop a Vision and Mission Statement that clearly articulates the centrality of the Catholic Ethos in all facets of the development and life of the school or college.*
- ii. *Incorporate concepts from Archdiocesan statements on the Catholic Ethos, the TCEC's Vision and Mission Statement, and the charisms of the relevant Founding Order within the unique culture, context and tradition of the school or college.*
- iii. *Involve all key stakeholders, especially the staff and the parish community, in an ongoing exploration of the vision, mission and values of the school or college.*
- iv. *Develop strategies that ensure the staff is fully immersed in and committed to the Vision and Mission of the school or college. Subsequently provide opportunities for the formation and the induction of new students, parents and staff.*



# Links to the Parish Community

Initiatives to foster the relationship between the local parish and the school should be developed. Expertise should be sought and invited from parishioners to assist in curriculum and programs that support student connection with the Christian community.

- i. *Emphasise that the school or college is an integral part of the evangelising mission of the parish or parishes and broader Catholic community.*
- ii. *Ensure the school or college celebrates regularly as a Eucharistic and prayerful community.*
- iii. *As appropriate, develop links between the school or college into its local parish or parishes, and with the Archdiocesan Youth Ministry.*
- iv. *Explore strategies that give students a vibrant and effective role within the parish community (e.g. linking ICT with parish communications, representation on parish committees).*
- v. *Develop models of family involvement and partnership that positively link the school or college with its parish community.*
- vi. *As appropriate, align the school or college to the parish-based Archdiocesan Sacramental Policy.*



# Curriculum

Each school and college curriculum should have a strong emphasis on meeting individual needs of students in a way that enhances their sense of personal worth. The school or college should be arranged in such a way that challenges each student to realise their full potential.

- i. Give a central place to the implementation, teaching and assessment of the Archdiocesan 'Good News for Living', the Curriculum Framework for the Religious Education of students in the Archdiocese of Hobart.
- ii. Regularly evaluate and infuse the curriculum with Catholic values across all Key Learning Areas.
- iii. Develop a comprehensive Personal Development program that incorporates Catholic social and moral teachings.
- iv. Provide a comprehensive curriculum that emphasises educational excellence for every student.



# Enrolment Policy

Enrolment at each school or college brings with it responsibilities for families to actively support, and form part of, the school and faith community. Structures and processes should be established to bring about this objective.

- i. Set a long-term target to progressively increase the proportion of baptised Catholic students at all entry levels (especially Kindergarten and Year 7) in accordance with TCEC policy, and specifically:

*The governing bodies of each school should structure their individual enrolment policy to respect the overall Archdiocesan goal of working towards a target of 75% of Catholic proportion... (Enrolment for Catholic Schools Policy, 2008, p.4)*

- ii. Develop strategies to explicitly target and encourage Catholic families in the parish or parishes to consider enrolment in the school or college.
- iii. As appropriate, give consideration to the formation of an Enrolment Committee, with representation from the parish community.
- iv. Develop processes to ensure parents, prior to enrolment, are fully aware of the Catholic Ethos of the school or college and the expectations that flow from a commitment to the ideals of a Catholic school or college.



# Leadership

Leadership practices of the school or college should be prayerful, collaborative and consultative, respecting the dignity of both students and staff.

- i. *Formulate a model for the leadership team that nurtures links with the broader ministry priorities of the parish community (e.g. Ministry Coordinator; Youth Ministry Coordinator).*
- ii. *Explore the potential for the appointment of personnel who will explicitly nurture the spirituality and Ethos of the school or college (e.g. School Chaplain, Pastoral Associate, Coordinators of Mission.)*
- iii. *Support the School Board to develop a deep understanding of the Catholic Ethos.*
- iv. *Explore models of student leadership that empower students to contribute to the Catholic mission of the school or college.*
- v. *Ensure that all candidates being considered for appointment to leadership positions meet Accreditation standards for Leadership in a Catholic School.*



# Staff Selection Policy

Staff members should be people whose lives give Christian witness and inspire young people. At the same time, they should be highly competent, motivated and adaptable staff, with a genuine empathy for young people.

- i. *Develop a Staff Recruitment Policy that gives preference to the selection of professionally competent personnel who have a deep and personal commitment to the Catholic faith, especially in the context of teaching Religious Education.*
- ii. *Emphasise the attainment of appropriate levels of Accreditation in the appointment of all staff, especially teachers of Religious Education and those holding Leadership positions.*
- iii. *Ensure that all staff who teach Religious Education meet Accreditation criteria.*
- iv. *As appropriate, invite the Parish Priest (or his delegate) to be directly involved in the selection of Senior Leadership personnel.*
- v. *Where feasible, involve the Parish Priest in the endorsement of all permanent staff appointments carrying responsibility for teaching Religious Education.*
- vi. *Explore staffing models that provide flexibility for the hours of duty of key personnel linked to parish, youth and social justice programs.*





# Spiritual Formation

Substantial opportunities should be provided for staff and students to develop a prayerful personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to become immersed in the greater Catholic Church community.

- i. *Develop a statement that clearly outlines the expectations of all staff employed at the school or college, especially in terms of support for the Catholic vision and mission of the school or college.*
- ii. *Formulate an ongoing spiritual formation plan for both staff and students.*
- iii. *Develop a comprehensive program of spiritual formation for students that links into the broader parish and Archdiocesan community.*
- iv. *Articulate a process of induction and on-going formation to support the spiritual formation of staff.*
- v. *Investigate strategies that will support the induction of new families and school or college students (especially at Year 7 level) into the Ethos and charisms of the school or college.*
- vi. *Explore opportunities for Parish Priests to become involved in nurturing spirituality of staff.*
- vii. *Articulate that all staff are expected to undertake ongoing Professional Development and Accreditation.*



# Disadvantaged and Marginalised

All in the school or college community should recognise it as a place where all people, including those who live in poverty or who are marginalised, disenfranchised or suffering from health conditions, have their rights and dignity upheld.

- i. Develop strategies to extend access for those families, especially of the Catholic faith, who otherwise would not seek enrolment.*
- ii. Ensure that no family is excluded from enrolment on the basis of financial hardship.*
- iii. Design school or college programs to empower all members, especially the marginalised, to participate with dignity and confidence.*
- iv. Develop explicit strategies to both attract and involve Indigenous and Humanitarian Entrant families from the broader parish communities.*
- v. In the allocation of resources, give preference to the provision of services for students with special needs.*



# Features of the School or College

The curriculum, timetable, rituals, symbols and recognition practices should be designed in a way that emphasises faith and Religious Education across the entire curriculum.

- i. *Wherever possible, ensure access for members of the school community to a place of prayer and worship.*
- ii. *Explore ways that enable facilities to be utilised by the parish and wider community (especially for youth and parish ministry).*
- iii. *Ensure that the school or college environment is a visible witness of the mission of the school or college.*
- iv. *Where feasible have suitable facilities for disabled members of the community and, in particular, have the capacity to cater for students with special learning needs.*



# Social Justice

Social justice and 'faith in action' should be central to the school or college program.

- i. *Ensure that the practices and teachings of the school or college reflect solidarity with those who are powerless and marginalised.*
- ii. *Model the Gospel values of forgiveness and reconciliation in the manner in which conflict is resolved, especially in terms of its pastoral care and student management models.*
- iii. *Develop a comprehensive program that provides opportunities for students to be involved in a variety of social justice activities, particularly those that are linked to parish and Archdiocesan initiatives (notably Caritas and the Archbishop's Samaritan Fund).*



# Stewardship

The policies and practices of the school or college should show a commitment to sharing God's gifts justly and wisely, especially in accord with respect for the environment.

- i. *Incorporate a respect for the environment through the practices and teachings of the school or college.*
- ii. *Develop a school or college environment that, wherever feasible, reflects environmental 'best practice'.*
- iii. *Formulate strategies to directly involve students in caring for and respecting the environment (e.g. Landcare programs).*
- iv. *Acknowledge and value the role of Indigenous people and their traditional relationship with the land.*



Centrality of the Catholic Ethos links to the Parish Community Curriculum Enrolment policy Leadership Staff selection policy spiritual formation disadvantaged and Marginalised Features of the school social justice Stewardship Centrality of the Catholic Ethos links to the Parish Community



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Stewardship Centrality of the Catholic Ethos links to the Parish Community Curriculum Enrolment policy Leadership